

string, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

Hubert resumed his place, and, not neglecting the caution which he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very centre of the target.

"A Hubert! a Hubert!" shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. "In the clout! in the clout! a Hubert forever!"

"Thou canst not mend that shot, Locksley," said the prince, with an insulting smile.

"I will notch his shaft for him, however," replied Locksley. And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers! The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamor. "Who can this be?" whispered the yeomen to each other; such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

"And now," said Locksley, "I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North country, and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it."

He then turned to leave the lists. "Let your guards attend me," he said, "if you please—I go but to cut a rod from the next willow-bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape; but the cry of "Shame! shame!" which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing, at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used was to put shame upon his skill. "For mine own part," he said, "and in the land where I was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round-table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years," he said, "might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but," added he, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, "he that hits that rod at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, though it were the stout king Richard himself."

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "drew a good bow at Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life, and neither will I."

"Cowardly dog!" said Prince John. "Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark, I will say thou art the first man that ever did so. Howe'er it be, thou shalt not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill."

"I will do my best, as Hubert says," answered Locksley; "no man can do more."