

reached the height of its popularity about the year 1600, and not long after, the sport was scarcely known at all. The training of hawks was then carried to its greatest perfection. In the reign of James the first, Sir Thomas Monson gave a thousand pounds for a "cast" or couple of hawks. Various attempts have been made to revive this pastime in England, but in vain; the vast expense and labour involved being sufficient to discourage the renewal of a sport, which the more modern fowling piece and rifle so effectively supersede.

III. It remains, that we glance shortly at the pastime of Archery. The bow was used by the Saxons, Danes and Normans, both with a view to recreation, and as a weapon of war. The "Cross Bow, or Arbalist," though frequently named in history, does not appear to have continued long in use among the archers in England. It was in shooting with the long bow, that they acquired an unapproached perfection. Many were the edicts in olden times for the encouragement of this exercise. Among others, an ordinance was made in the fifth year of Edward IV., commanding every Englishman and Irishman dwelling in England, to have a Long Bow of his own height; and further, requiring butts to be set up in every township, and the inhabitants to shoot thereat on all fast days, under a penalty of one half-penny for each individual omission. Similar edicts were passed by Henry VII. and Henry VIII., in whose reigns the use of the cross bow was altogether prohibited, and parents commanded to teach their children to shoot with the long bow, and masters to see that their apprentices engaged in the same exercise on every holiday. Of the deadly skill which the English attained in the use of the bow, as a weapon of war, the fields of Cressy and Agincourt bear a terrible record.

Robin Hood, and his "hundred valiant men" were the most expert marksmen that ever roamed through the green forests of England.

"All made of Spanish yew, their bows wereondrous strong;

They not an arrow drew, but was a cloth yard long—

Of archery they had the very perfect craft—

And of these archers brave there was not any one
But he could kill a deer his swiftest speed upon,
Which they did both and roast in many a mighty wood,
Sharp hunger the fine sauce to their more kindly food.
Then taking them to rest, his merry men and he
Slept many a summer's night under the green-wood tree."

Many are the trials of skill in archery recorded in the ballad poetry of England, in which the prize given to the best marksman was sometimes a sum of money; but oftener an arrow of distinction, as in the "Merry Geste of Robin Hood" it is recorded:—

"He that shooteth al of the best,
Furthest, fayre, and lowe,
At a gayre of goodly buttes
Under the greenwood shawe—
A ryght good Arrowe he shall have,
The shaft of sylver whyte,
The head and feathers of rich red gold—
In England is none lyke."

There is a bold, free spirit speaking from every line of these merry old ballads, a breath of daring and of chivalry which passes over the mind as it reverts in imagination to those stirring "times of yore." The every day romance of the former ages strikes the more forcibly, by its contrast with the uniformity and peculiarly realizing tendency of ours. It would be foolish to regret that progressive change in the character of national amusements, which aims at making the pleasures of sense subservient to the gratifications of mind—the feast of reason, and the flow of soul; but there is a glow of manly boldness and enthusiasm about much that tradition tells of the rougher sports of a ruder period, so congenial to the mind, that we cannot turn from the contemplation of them, without some such feeling lingering on the heart, as a modern poet has thus happily expressed:

"No! those days are gone away,
And these hours are old and gray,
And their minutes buried all
Under the down-trodden pall
Of the leaves of many years.

"No! the bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow is o'er;
Silent is the ivory shrill,
Beside the heath, and up the hill;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone echo gives the hail
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

"So it is; yet let us sing
Honour to the old bow-string!
Honour to the bugle-horn!
Honour to the woods unshorn!"

THE MELODY OF SONG.

- If even words are sweet, what, what is song
When lips we love the melody prolong?
How thrills the soul, and vibrates to that lay,
Swells, with the glorious sound, or dies away!
How to the cadence of the simplest words
That ever hung upon the wild harp's chords,
The breathless heart lies listening; as it felt
All life within it on that music dwelt,
And hush'd the beating pulse's rapid power,
By its own will, for that enchanted hour.

Hox. Mrs. Norton.