

of a grievous sin of omission in suffering such a change to come upon us.

The fact, however, seems generally to have escaped observation, that the spirit of emulation which existed in the days of archery was in a great measure owing to the character of the weapon itself, whose efficiency was so largely dependent upon the strength and skill of the one who used it, as to furnish a never failing incentive to exertion in perfecting himself in its use by constant practice.

With the invention of gunpowder, with a projectile force entirely independent of the strength of the shooter, while the weapons in which it was first used afforded little scope for the display of superior skill, the archery meetings and prize shootings which for so long a time had formed an important feature of the life and education of the English people, passed into disuse except as a mere sport.

For the two centuries prior to 1854 the British soldier was armed with a weapon possessed of no responsive power to the exertion of skill in its use, which should lead to a feeling of reliance, amounting almost to affection on the part of its owner, but whose execution could only be estimated in the aggregate, and of course afforded no evidence of individual skill or prowess. The improvements which have been made in our own day, however, in the construction of the rifle, have wrought a revolution in the use of arms, which bids fair to awaken a popular spirit not at all inferior to that of the days of archery, with the substitution of a weapon whose amazing power and efficiency, as well as its wonderful precision, and the readiness with which it seems to acknowledge its obedience to the will of a skilful master, constitute such an arm as has never before been wielded in the struggles between right and might, which comprise so large a portion of the world's history. The day is past when battles could be won with so feeble a weapon as the smooth-bored musket, and the Governments of Europe have awakened to