

care was exercised by the Government to maintain the supremacy they had acquired. Every able-bodied man between the ages of seventeen and sixty was obliged, under a severe penalty, to have a bow of his own length, and a certain number of arrows, and to practice habitually in shooting at the butts or targets which were established in every parish, at distances prescribed by law.

On holidays and festive occasions, prize shooting was always one of the standard sports, and every effort was used to dignify and excite an interest in the attainment of an art on which the power and even the very existence of the nation was felt to be dependent.

A little reflection upon the obvious results of such a tone of public feeling, as compared with those arising from the prevailing sentiment of the present day, will enable us, in some degree, to realize the change which has taken place, and to appreciate the danger of neglecting so important a branch of popular education as that of the use of arms.

The use of the gun has been regarded by many among us as a species of idle dissipation, which at best could only be looked upon as a mere waste of time. Instead of making it a part of every boy's education, and having him instructed and drilled till he became so familiar with the weapon that no danger was to be apprehended to himself or others, it has been a forbidden implement in the house, and he has had no other instruction than he could gather for himself, perhaps by stealth ; for whatever may be the explanation, the fact cannot be denied, that a craving for its use is one of the strongest instincts of a boy's nature, and with many it is so strong as to be irresistible.

How different would be our situation at this moment did the old English laws and customs prevail, under which every man was trained to the familiar use of his weapon, and the attainment of the greatest possible perfection was stimulated by the prospect of public honor, and a certainty of the most vigorous competition, no one can fail to acknowledge that we have at least been guilty