



The Book of Archery: Being the Complete History and Practice of the Art(1841)(illustrated)

George Agar Hansard

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fuerat quisquam, qui in generosum equum salire, aut tractare elegantior potuit?"—No one could vault upon a high-mettled steed, or launch his arrows at the mark, with a more noble and becoming grace.

Perhaps there lives not throughout the whole realm of merry England a single educated youth who has not dreamed through the pages of that little volume, elegantly entitled "The Garland," which contains a poetic chronicle of the exploits of Sherwood's famous Robber Chief. Stout of heart and ready of hand, we see him reign lord paramount over its finest glades, in defiance of lion-hearted Richard, and his still more inveterate enemy, the "Sheriffe of Nottingham," to boot. With a manly dexterity, which few could rival in that age of stalwart archery, he launches the grey goose wing,

To cleave the willow wand; or

Hit the mark a hundred rod,

And cause a hart to die.

At the close of life, influenced by that chivalrous bravery which had formed its guiding star, he forbids retaliation upon the treacherous woman who drained the life's blood from his heart.

I never hurt fair maid in all my time,

Nor at my end will I now. *

And, finally, how natural and impressive appears the ruling passion, strong in death, exhibited in this expiring forester's attachment to the trusty yew which had extricated him from a

* Local tradition asserts that, being taken ill, Robin Hood applied for surgical assistance at Sopwell Abbey, where a nun purposely bled him to death. No doubt the lancet was thrust through the vein upon the artery, which produces aneurism, generally followed by mortification and death; that such a man should have submitted literally to be "bled to death" seems improbable. In the latter case, I believe, a swelling of the limb ensues, with other symptoms, especially fatal to an archer.

hundred dangers, and the green woodlands and sunny hills where he had run his race.

Give me my bent bow in my hand,

And a broad arrow I 'll let flee;



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