

THE CANTERBURY ARCHERY CLUB, ST. JOHN'S GROUNDS, CANTERBURY.

ARCHERY, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

BY LILIAS DAWSON.

THE art of aiming and hitting is "as old as the hills," and the use of the bow and arrow dates from patriarchal times. Assyrian sculpture and Egyptian hieroglyphics show that the people of these lands, as well as those of Thrace, Crete, and Parthia, were skilled archers. It is also extremely probable that the auxiliary troops of Rome were armed with bows and arrows, and we read that Domitian and others were accomplished in the use of these weapons of war. Archery, although now only practised as a pastime in civilised countries, is still in active use among the Tartars, Hottentots, and North American Indians, who frequently amuse themselves by shooting at a target while rapidly galloping past it, their skilled marksmen usually putting three out of four shots in the bull's-eye.



Photo by King, Holland Park Avenue, W.

MR. G. E. FRYER, L.C.C.
Champion, 1875, '92, '95, '96, and '97.

The bow was undoubtedly used in England many years previous to the Conquest, by both Anglo-Saxons and Danes, not only as a weapon of warfare, but also for purposes of hunting,

and it is extremely probable that the Romans were responsible for its introduction into Britain as a military weapon. Under the Norman Kings, marked improvement in the practice of archery was manifest, and English archers were soon distinguished for excellence of aim, taking precedence of those of other nations. The sovereigns themselves were not behind their subjects in skilful marksmanship and feats with the bow. William the Conqueror, who owed his victory at Hastings to the skill and intrepidity of French archers, was the possessor of a bow that yielded to few experts besides its owner. Little did he think that three and four centuries later the tables would be turned at the battles of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt, when the long-bows of English archers won the laurels of victory on French soil.

Richard Cœur de Lion and his archers performed great exploits against Turks and Saracens in the Holy Land, while at home the fame of the renowned, if mythical, Robin Hood and his trusty band of Sherwood Forest celebrity resounded throughout the country. Switzerland can also boast of the traditional story of William Tell, which probably has its real origin in the Scandinavian fable of Toko, treating of the matchless marksmen.

In succeeding reigns, the practice of archery became compulsory by law. Edward the Third embodied a company of soldiers called "Archers of the Guard," and in 1363 commanded the general practice of archery on Sundays and holidays, instead of the ordinary rural pastimes. In 1485 Henry the Seventh instituted the "Yeomen of the Guard," who

were then all archers, and archery was also prominent among the fashionable amusements of the nation. Several Acts for the encouragement of archery were passed in the reigns of Edward the Fourth and Henry the Eighth, one of which ordered that butts should be erected and kept in repair in all townships, and that the inhabitants should practise shooting there on holidays.

There seems no means of ascertaining the precise period when the use of the bow in this country as a weapon of war entirely ceased. It was regarded so favourably by the Army, however, that it remained in use long after the adoption of firearms. We learn, on the authority of Neade, a celebrated archer of the time of Charles the First, that "the ordinary range of a bow was from 16 to 20 score yards, and that so rapid was the shooting of the archers, or so slow the firing of the musketeers, that an archer could shoot six arrows in the time occupied in charging and discharging one musket."

The full equipment of an archer consisted of bow, arrows, drawing-glove, arm-guard, waist-belt, ivory grease-pot, and quiver. For the manufacture of bows yew was generally preferred to all other woods; but to prevent a too rapid



Photo by]

[Davis, Lancaster.

MR. B. P. GREGSON.

Holder of Northern Championship,

1883-'86, 1889-'90, 1892-'93, 1897.

consumption of yew, bowyers were, in the 14th century, ordered to make four wych-hazel, ash, or elm bows to one of yew. At the present time the implements for the practice of archery are largely made in London and Edinburgh. Yew is still the favourite wood, but lancewood, snakewood, and other kinds are also used, and are said by some to be more durable and much cheaper than yew bows, which are by others preferred for sweetness of material and steadiness of "cast." Bows are made of three pieces, two pieces, and one piece, called respectively three-woods, two-woods, and self, the first-named make possessing additional pliancy and strength. Gentlemen's bows measure from 5 feet 10 inches to 6 feet in length, and the power required to draw these ranges from 40 to 60 lb. Ladies' bows are lighter, 5 feet 3 inches to 5 feet 6 inches in length, and can be drawn by a power from 24 to 32 lb. The string is usually of gut.

Old English arrows were made of ash, weighing from 20 to 24 pennyweights, and being tipped with steel and feathered with goose feathers. The standard length of a gentleman's arrow is 28 inches, a lady's being 25 inches long. Red pine is the usual material from which arrows are now made, and the best are footed with a piece of hard wood upon the point of which the iron pile is fixed. At the other end is the "nock" or notch for the reception of the bowstring when shooting is to take place. An arrow has three feathers affixed edgewise at the "nock" end. These are much shorter than they were formerly, the guide-feather being differently coloured from the rest. They



BANNER DESIGNED BY HER MAJESTY, WHEN PRINCESS VICTORIA, FOR THE QUEEN'S ROYAL ST. LEONARDS CLUB.



Photo by Savory,]

MRS. BOWLY.

[Cirencester.

Lady Champion, 1893-'94-'97.

are now usually taken from a turkey's wing, but were in earlier times plucked from a goose.

The drawing-glove which protects the fingers of the right hand is often a species of doeskin glove, with the first three fingers tipped with smooth calf or pigskin, and having a strap to buckle round the wrist. Many archers, however, prefer screw tips fitting each finger separately, with a strap in front, while others use the ordinary draw-glove, with cylindrical points and straps up the back of the hand. The arm-guard is made of stout leather to shield the left arm from the stroke of the string after the discharge of an arrow. The waist-belt serves to carry one's arrows when shooting, and the ivory grease-pot contains the particular compound fancied by the archer to grease the fingers of the drawing-glove. The quiver carries reserve arrows and preserves them from damp. Targets consist of straw busses with painted canvas covers. The "National" targets are 4 feet in diameter, having on their faces five circles or divisions, the centre one being gold, representing a

score of 9; a red scores 7, a blue 5, a black 3, and the white or outer circle 1. The targets are supported on stands constructed of three ribs of iron, jointed at the top, and rest on spikes projecting from the two side ribs, while the centre rib is thrown behind as a spur to support the triangle. Honours are awarded by a majority of points, the reckoning varying according to the terms on which a medal or prize is offered for competition.

The uninitiated are probably unaware of the fact that the science of archery is provided with its own peculiar terms for technicalities of the sport. For instance, an arrow is said to be "gone" when it may, from its "flight" or path in which it flies, be judged to fall wide of or far from the mark. An arrow is said to be drawn "home" when it is drawn to the full extent. The "limbs" of the bow are the parts above and below the handle. Persons passing between the shooter and the mark are cautioned to stand still by the cry "Fast." In archery, three arrows are termed a pair, on account of the liability of one to break. The term "roving" implies shooting at casual marks of uncertain distance, while "clout shooting" is practised at a small white target, placed near the ground. To "sink a bow" is to reduce its force or stiffness; and "nocks" are notches in the horns of bows and arrows, the maker of the latter being termed a "fletcher," and of the former a "bowyer." A bow is said to "follow the string" when by use it has lost its original straightness and has obtained a curve or inclination forward. The "five points of archery" are described by Ascham in his celebrated work as "standing, nocking, drawing, holding, and loosing." It is extremely difficult to explain verbally the correct attitude of standing, which should be perfectly graceful. Nocking designates the operation of placing the arrow in its proper position on the string. Drawing is the next point to be noted, the arrow being drawn to the level of the chin and below the ear. When fully drawn it is held for a moment or two to steady the aim, after which it is loosed or discharged by allowing the string to pass smoothly over the finger points without jerking.

The conditions of shooting are now classified as the York round, consisting of 72 arrows at 100 yards, 48 at 80 yards, and 24 at 60 yards, and the National round, consisting of 48 arrows at 60 yards, and 24 at 50 yards. Ladies shoot

the latter round, and gentlemen the former, unless other conditions are specified. Sometimes a double York round is shot. Club rounds are regulated according to the members' capabilities, a strong club shooting the York and National while those of moderate power adopt a less severe test.

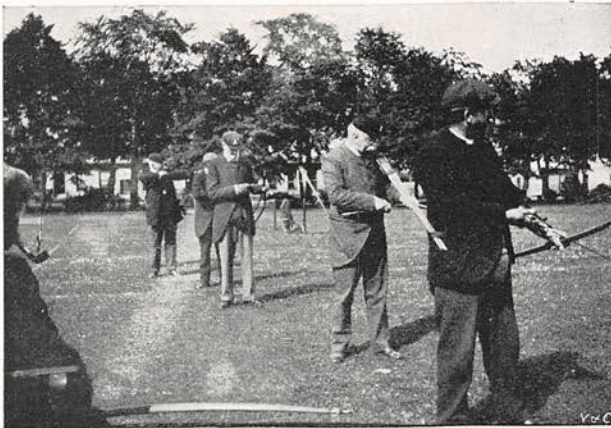
While it is generally admitted that of late years archery has had formidable rivals in lawn tennis, cycling, and golf, statistics show that during the last fourteen years more than fifteen clubs have been started or revived. Of the sixty-five clubs and societies enumerated in the *Archers' Register*, three compel merited notice on account of their historical associations—these are the Royal Company of Archers, the Royal Toxophilite Society, and the Woodmen of Arden. The Royal Company of Archers is of very ancient origin, having been remodelled in the year 1676, though existing long before that date. Down to the year 1822 it was purely an Archery Company, though comprising the *élite* of Scottish society then as now. At that date the R. C. A. were granted the privilege of being the Sovereign's Body-Guard for Scotland, and since then the Royal Company's position as an archery society has been overshadowed by its high position as Body-Guard for Scotland. Shooting is, however, still regularly maintained by the members who reside in or near Edinburgh, who number about one-eighth only of the total number. The butts are 112 feet long, and are covered in and heated with hot-water pipes, so that



CHELTEMHAM ARCHERS: "PREPARING TO SHOOT."

shooting may take place comfortably in any weather. The round consists of twenty-one ends of two arrows each, and the Butt medal is awarded for the highest aggregate score of the three meetings. An interesting relic of olden times—the "Goose Prize"—is shot for at the butts, and goes to the archer who first breaks a glass globe one inch in diameter. This is supposed to represent a goose's head, the bird having originally been buried in the earth at the butts, with the exception of its head, which was shot at until it was struck, and the bird killed. The Company's list of prizes is long and varied, including the Musselburgh arrow, silver bowl, Dalhousie sword, Selkirk arrow, and the Queen's Prize of £20. Once in three years a match is shot against the Woodmen of Arden for a handsome silver cup provided jointly by the two Societies.

The Royal Toxophilite Society was founded in 1781 by Sir Ashton Lever, and represents the ancient society called Finsbury Archers, and the Archers' Company of the Honourable Artillery Company. It possesses a large silver shield, presented by Catherine of Braganza, Consort of Charles II., several prize arrows of the same and earlier periods, and many valuable challenge prizes, which are shot for on the four target days. Summer and autumn handicap meetings are held, and there is also a "ladies' day" in July, when about one hundred ladies compete (by invitation) for prizes given by members of the Society. The President of the Society is



CHELTEMHAM ARCHERS: "TAKING AIM."

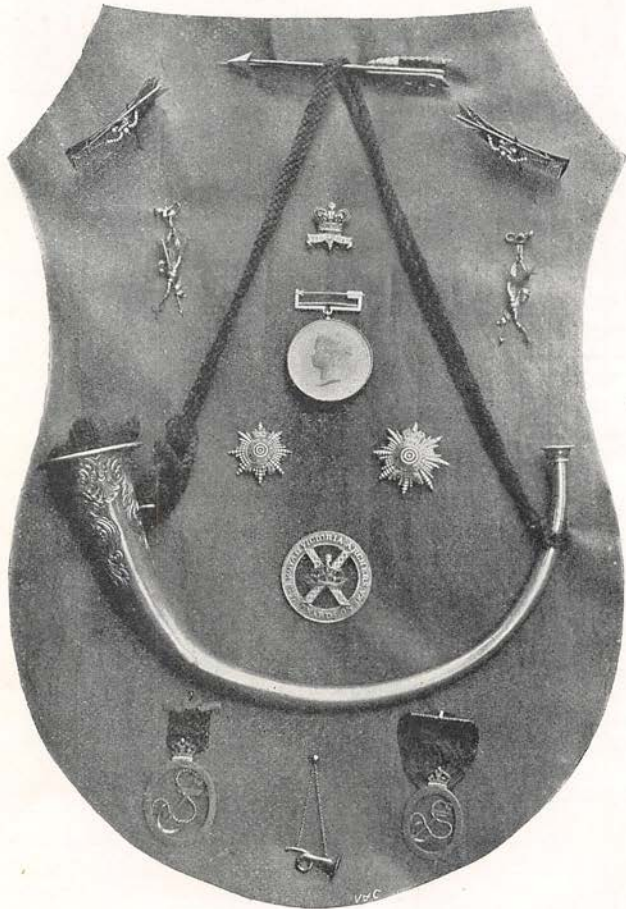
the Duke of Portland, and the Hon. Secretary Col. Walrond, present editor of the *Archers' Register* and a well-known contributor to literature on archery. The Society became permanently settled in its present home in Regent's Park in 1832, built the Archers' Hall, and laid out the grounds at a cost of more than £4,000. For many years the Society enjoyed the special

customs in vogue when it was founded, and alone of all the English societies shoots longer distances than one hundred and twenty yards. The annual wardmote, or grand target, is held in the beautiful forest grounds, when the winner of the first gold gains the Master Forester's medal, the second gold secures the Senior Verderer's medal, while the first scarlet confers the title of lieutenant of the target. The silver bugle of Arden is also eagerly competed for by the Woodmen.

John O'Gaunt's Bowmen constitute a society supposed to have been formed at a very early period, revived in 1788, and again in 1820. It has its own peculiar shooting arrangements and rules, which have been handed down by tradition. The number of members is limited to forty-two, and the meetings are held in Springfield Park, Lancaster, by permission of the trustees of Ripley Hospital. Valuable prizes are competed for at the annual prize meeting, and the York Round is shot by all first class members.

Of the more modern clubs, that known as the Cheltenham Archers occupies a prominent position, on account of the excellence of its shooting. Established in 1860 by Mr. Horace Ford, the well-known archer, then resident in Cheltenham, it dropped into abeyance after he left the town, but was reconstructed in 1871, mainly through the exertions of Mr. Piers F. Legh, who took a great interest in the pastime, and acted as Hon. Secretary till 1881, when Miss Carnegy was elected to the post. The club is managed by a President, Committee of eight members, an Hon. Secretary, and an Hon. Treasurer. The York and National rounds are shot.

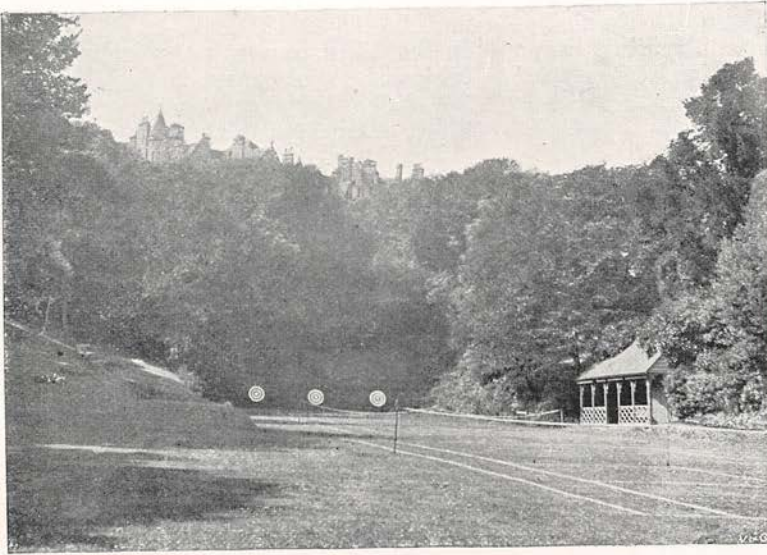
Meetings are held on the club grounds in the Montpellier Gardens, one of the most picturesque ranges in the country. Eight bow meetings, with an occasional extra one, are held during the season at intervals of about four weeks. Two of these are prize days. The ladies are divided into four classes, a score of three hundred and thirty admitting into the first class, of two hundred and eighty into the second, and of two hundred



CHALLENGE PRIZES PRESENTED BY THE QUEEN, WHEN PRINCESS VICTORIA, AND HER MOTHER, THE DUCHESS OF KENT; AND OTHER VALUABLE BADGES IN THE POSSESSION OF THE QUEEN'S ROYAL ST. LEONARDS ARCHERS.

patronage of King George IV., who was fond of archery, and, when Prince of Wales, shot in its gardens at Leicester House. Subsequent Royal patrons were William IV. and the late Prince Consort, the present patron being H.R.H. Prince of Wales.

The Society of the Woodmen of Arden is the oldest archery club in England, with the exception of the Royal Toxophilite Society. It still adheres to many of the quaint



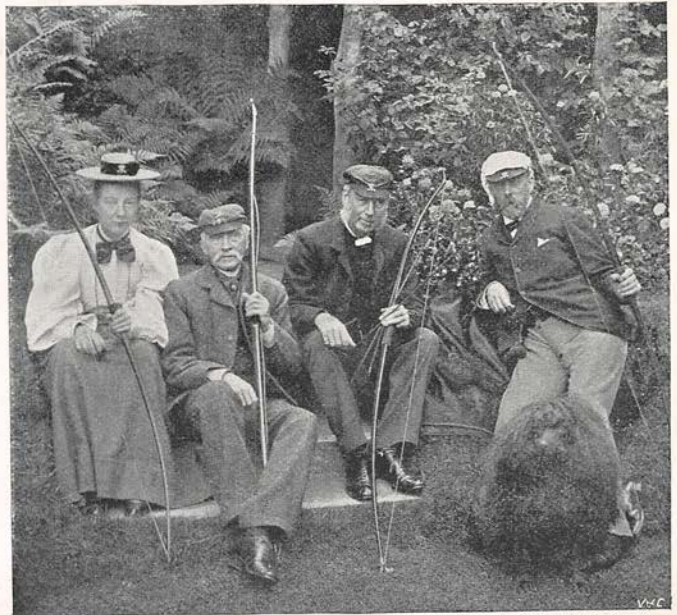
ARCHERY GARDENS AND PAVILION, ST. LEONARDS.

then in 1886-92, in 1895, and again in 1899. Mrs. Piers Legh was championess from 1882-1885. Mrs. Bowly won it in 1893, 1894, and 1897, and Miss Bagnall Oakley in 1896. Major C. H. Fisher, President of the club, is an ex-champion, having won the badge in 1871-1874, and again in 1887. Mr. Eyre Hussey, who is on the Committee, was champion in 1894, and again in 1899, while the Glou-

into the third, all below this being placed in the fourth class. A prize for score and for best gold is given in each class. The gentlemen are not divided into classes. There are two challenge medals for ladies and two for gentlemen who make the highest scores and hits for the season, compiled from four bow meetings. Mr. Agg Gardener's challenge brooch for most golds during the season is awarded at the last meeting to the successful markswoman. The archery ground is open for practice every day, and target meetings are held every Thursday from April to the end of October, weather permitting. There is no club house, but the band pavilion is always at the service of the archers for afternoon tea, and there is a room at the lodge for bow cases, etc. The club is at present in a most flourishing condition, and numbers among its members some of the finest shots in England, Mrs. Bowly, the championess, being a member. There are no less than four ex-championesses in the club—Mrs. Lister, Mrs. Legh, Miss Legh, and Miss Bagnall Oakley. The championess badge was first won by Miss Legh in 1881,

chester Ladies' Team have held the brooch since 1888.

The "Queen's" Royal St. Leonards Archers boast of interesting records and prizes, and are the proud possessors of a silk banner designed by Her Majesty the Queen when she was Princess Victoria, at the time when both the Princess and H.R.H the Duchess of Kent became patrons of the



Miss L. Scholfield. Rev. C. R. Scholfield. Mr. F. Follett (the late).
Mr. W. F. Heideman. (Hon. Sec.) Editor of the "Archers' Record."

LEADING MEMBERS OF THE ST. LEONARDS CLUB.

Society. Upon her accession to the throne, Her Majesty was pleased to remain a patron of the Club, and to signify her command that the Society should henceforward bear the title of "The Queen's Royal St. Leonards Archers," its former name having been "The Society of St. Leonards Archers" and its date of establishment 1833. The Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria also instituted the Royal Victoria Challenge prizes of a gold inlaid arrow shawl-pin, for ladies, and a small gold bugle with shield and chain, for gentlemen, to be shot for annually and awarded to the members making the highest scores. In 1836 two additional prizes were presented by the Royal patrons. These consisted of a jewelled tortoiseshell comb and earrings for ladies, and a large silver winding horn for

men shooting at either 30, 40, or 50 yards. In the latter country many archery clubs exist, and the American National Archery Association holds an annual meeting at which valuable medals are shot for.

The interest of the archery world centres in the leading annual meetings and tournaments at which the championships and valuable prizes are shot for by competitors from all parts of the country. First there is the Grand National Meeting held at Malvern, Brighton, and other centres. This might be termed the blue riband of the ancient sport, as the principal item of the programme is the shooting which is to decide who is to be the proud holder of the title of champion or championess of the year. The Grand Northern Meeting usually takes place at Southport. Then there is the Grand Western Meeting, frequently held at Bath. A very pleasant and popular archery meeting is that of the Leamington and Midland Counties, held in the Jephson Gardens at Leamington. The Crystal Palace Meeting is an annual institution well attended by celebrities in the archery world.



LAST YEAR'S GRAND NATIONAL AT BRIGHTON: MRS. HIGSON PRESENTING THE CHAMPION CUP TO MR. EYRE W. HUSSEY.

gentlemen. In 1838 Her Majesty subscribed £21 to provide a grand prize for ladies. This gift was continued annually for eleven years, and usually served for the purchase of a gold bracelet.

It is impossible to give particulars of, or even to mention, the numerous other clubs distributed throughout the United Kingdom whose members are devoted to the practice of archery. In Australia enthusiasm for the pastime is manifested by the Rippon Lea Archery Club of Melbourne. This club is under the active presidency of Sir F. Sargood, who takes a keen interest in its welfare. The members do not yet shoot the York and National rounds, but are content with the shorter ranges which prevail in the United States of America, ladies and gentle-

men. The shooting is at 100 yards, two arrows at an end, and the number of arrows varies according to the state of the weather, the number of competitors, and the number of targets. The silver arrow is awarded for the first hit in the gold, and the winner becomes "captain" for the ensuing year.

Good eyesight, early training, unlimited perseverance, and constant practice, are the factors requisite for the production of a successful archer, and no personal trait is perhaps so persistently manifested in the archery field as that of good fellowship and *esprit de corps*, set forth in the couplet on the title-page of the *Archers' Register* as follows—

"Stout arm, strong bow, and steady eye,
Union, true heart, and courtesie."