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SHAKESPEARE AN ARCHER

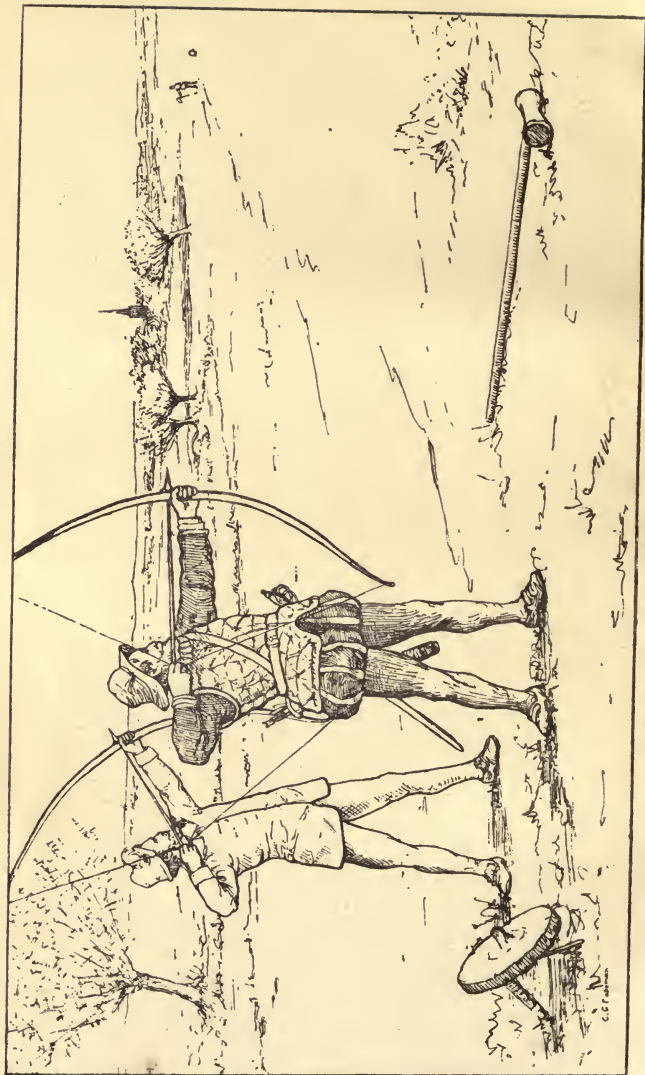
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SHAKESPEARE AN ARCHER



FORE HAND AND UNDER HAND SHOOTING.  
OLD DOUBLE AND YOUNG SHAKESPEARE SHOOTING AT THE CLOUT.

# SHAKESPEARE AN ARCHER.

BY

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NOTICE.

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*This small book is an attempt to illustrate and explain obscure passages and words and expressions of doubtful meaning in the works of Shakespeare.*

28, CROXTETH ROAD,

LIVERPOOL, *January, 1897.*

### ERRATA.

Page 11, Line 2,—for *time* read *tune*.

„ 16, „ 8,—for *dumpith* read *dumpish*.

„ 40, „ 15,—for *marking* read *nocking*.

„ 40, „ 17,—for *good* read *fine*.

„ 41, „ 15,—for *gnten* read *guten*.

„ 41, „ 15,—for *sogur* read *sogar*.

„ 63, „ 8,—for *air withes* read *our wishes*.

„ 67, „ 32,—for *ye* read *yet*.

„ 68, „ 28,—for *had* read *has*.

„ 88, „ 14,—for *a row* read *arrow*.

„ 108, „ 31,—for *piere'd* read *piec'd*.

„ 113, „ 34,—for *St. Paul's* read *Paul's*.

„ 113, „ 37,—for *a* read *at*.

For *knock* and *knocking* (*passim*), read *nock* and *nocking*.



“A well-experienced archer.”—*Pericles*.

“O luce, O gloria della gente umana.”—*Dante*.



ARCHERY terms, phrases, metaphors, and similes are very numerous in the works of Shakespeare, and some of the passages in which they occur cannot be thoroughly understood and appreciated unless the reader has a practical knowledge of the art of shooting in the long bow.

“Toxophilus: The School of Shooting,” first published in the year 1545, was written by Roger Ascham when he lived in Cambridge. Shakespeare was very familiar with this admirable treatise on the art of shooting in the long bow, wherein I see the origin of many passages in his works.

I will first show that Shakespeare was familiar with “Toxophilus,” and then I will give evidence of his practical knowledge of archery.

*Hamlet.* O, it *offends* me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise.

O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that, neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's *journeymen* had *made* men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.—*Act 3, Scene 2.*

Of the makynge of the bowe, I wyll not greatly meddle, lest I shoulde seeme to enter into an other mannes occupation, whyche I can no skyll of. Yet I woulde desyre all bowyers to season theyr staues *well*, to woorke them and synke them *well*, to giue them heetes conuenient, and tyllerynges plentye. For thereby they shoulde bothe

get them selues a good name, (And a good name encreaseth a mannes profyte muche) and also do greate commoditie to the hole Realme. If any men do *offend* in this poynte, I am afraid they be those *iourney men* whiche labour more speedily to *make* manye bowes for theyr owne monye sake, than they woorke diligently to make good bowes, for the common welth sake, not layinge before theyr eyes, thys wyse prouerbe

Sone ynough, if wel ynough.

Wherwyth euere honest handye craftes man shuld measure, as it were wyth a rule, his worke withal. He that is a *iourney man*, and rydeth vpon an other mannes horse, yf he ryde an honest pace, no manne wyll dysalow hym: But yf he make Poste haste, bothe he that oweth the horse, and he peraduenture also that afterwarde shal bye the horse, may chaunce to curse hym.

In these passages Shakespeare and Ascham speak in disparaging terms of the work of journeymen, and use the same words. It *offended* Hamlet "to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags," and he says "I have seen players who have so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of nature's *journeymen* had *made* men and not *made* them *well*, they imitated humanity so abominably;" and Ascham, in desiring all bowyers to season their staves *well*, to work them and sink them *well*, to give them heats convenient and tillerings plenty, says, "if any do *offend* in this point I am afraid they be those *journeymen* which labour more speedily to *make* many bows for their own money sake, than they work diligently to make good bows for the common wealth sake."

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#### ACT I.

SCENE 1. *On a ship at sea; a tempestuous noise of thunder and lightning heard.*

*Enter a Ship-Master and a Boatswain.*

*Mast.* Boatswain!

*Boats.* Here, master: what cheer?

*Mast.* Good, speak to the mariners: fall to't, yarely, or we run ourselves aground: bestir, bestir. [*Exit.*]

*Enter Mariners.*

*Boats.* Heigh, my hearts! cheerly, cheerly, my hearts! yare, yare! *Take in the topsail.* Tend to the master's whistle. Blow, till thou burst thy wind, if room enough!

. . . . .

*Re-enter Boatswain.*

*Boats.* Down with the *topmast*! yare! lower, lower! Bring her to try with *main-course*.

. . . . .

*Boats.* Lay her a-hold, a-hold! set her two *courses* off to sea again; lay her off.—*Tempest, Act 1, Scene 1.*

Shakespeare's knowledge of seamanship displayed in "The Tempest," has been explained by several naval officers, including Lord Mulgrave, Sir Henry Mainwaring, Captain A. G. Glascott, and Captain E. K. Calver.

Lord Mulgrave says:—"The first scene of the 'Tempest' is a very striking instance of the great accuracy of Shakespeare's knowledge in a professional science, the most difficult to attain without the help of experience. He must have acquired it by conversation with some of the most skilful seamen of that time. The succession of events is strictly observed in the natural progress of the distress described; the expedients adopted are the most proper that could have been devised for a chance of safety; and it is neither to the want of skill of the seamen or the bad qualities of the ship, but solely to the power of Prospero, that the shipwreck is to be attributed. The words of command are not only strictly proper, but are only such as point the object to be attained, and no superfluous ones of detail. Shakespeare's ship was too well manned to make it necessary to tell the seamen how they were to do it, as well as what they were to do."

Some of the commentators have supposed that the circumstances attending the storm by which Sir George Somers was shipwrecked on the Island of Bermuda, in the year 1609, gave rise to Shakespeare's "Tempest," and suggested to him the

title as well as the incidents of the play. All this may be true, but I think the following passages in "Toxophilus" may have suggested to Shakespeare the name of the play, and also the sea phrases used in the first scene:—

The greatest enemy of shootyng is the wynde and the wether, wherby true kepyng a lengthe is chefely hindred. If this thing were not, men by teaching might be brought to wonderful neare shootyng. It is no maruayle if the little poore shafte being sent alone, so high in to the ayer, into a great rage of wether, one wynde tossing it that waye, an other thys waye, it is no maruayle I saye, thoughe it loose the lengthe, and misse that place, where the shooter had thought to haue founde it. Greter matters than shootyng are vnder the rule and wyll of the wether, as saylyng on the sea. And lykewise as in sayling, *the chefe poynt of a good master, is to knowe the tokens of chaunge of wether, the course of the wyndes*, that therby he maye the better come to the Hauen: euen so the best propertie of a good shooter, is to knowe the nature of the wyndes, with hym and agaynste hym, that therby he may the nerer shote at hys marke. Wyse maysters when they canne not winne the best hauen, they are gladde of the nexte: Good shooters also, yat can not whan they would hit the marke, wil labour to come as nigh as they can. All thinges in this worlde be vnperfite and vnconstant, therefore let euery man acknowledge hys owne weakenesse, in all matters great and smal, weyghtye and merye, and glorifie him, in whome only perfyte perfitenesse is. But nowe sir, he that wyll at all aduentures vse the seas knowinge no more what is to be done in a *tempest* than in a caulme, shall soone becumme a marchaunt of Eele skinnes: so that shoter whiche putteth no difference, but shooteth in all lyke, in rough wether and fayre, shall always put his wynnings in his eyes.

Lytle botes and thinne boordes, can not endure the rage of a tempest. Weake bowes and lyght shaftes can not stande in a rough wynde.

. . . . .

A *mayster of a shippe* first learneth to knowe the cummyng of a *tempest*, the nature of it, and howe to behaue hym selfe in it, eyther with *chaungynge his course*,



or *poullynge downe his hyc toppes and brode sayles*, beyng glad to eschue as muche of the wether as he can : Euen so a good archer wyl fyrst wyth dilligent vse and markynge the wether, learne to knowe the nature of the wynde, and wyth wysedome, wyll measure in hys mynde, howe muche it wyll alter his shoote, eyther in lengthe kepynge, or els in streyght shotynge, and so with chaunging his standynge, or taking an other shafte, the whiche he knoweth perfytyllye to be fitter for his pourpose, eyther bycause it is lower fethered, or els bycause it is of a better wyng, wyll so handle wyth discretion hys shoote, that he shall seeme rather to haue the wether vnder hys rule, by good hede gyuyng, than the wether to rule hys shafte by any sodayne chaungyng.

And after describing the “uncertain and deceivable wind,” Ascham says—

But seyng that a Mayster of a shyp, be he neuer so cunnyng, by the vncertaynte of the wynde, leese many tymes both lyfe and goode, surelye it is no wonder, though a ryght good Archer, by the self same wynde so variable in hys owne nature, so unsensyble to oure nature, leese many a shoote and game.

The more vncertaine and disceryuable the wind is, the more hede must a wyse Archer gyue to know the gyles of it.

A shipmaster and a boatswain enter in a tempestuous noise, and the sailors are ordered to do the very things Ascham says a master of a ship, who knows how to behave himself in a tempest, would do, being glad to eschew as much of the weather as he can ; and the reader will see that Shakespeare and Ascham use almost the same words signifying the same actions.

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*Prospero.* Where was she born ? Speak ; tell me.

*Ariel.* Sir, in *Argier*.—*The Tempest, Act 1, Scene 2.*

The old form for Algiers, used by Ascham :

And nowe last of all, the emperor his maiestie himselfe, at the Citie of *Argier* in Aphricke had his hooste sore handeled wyth the Turkes arrowes, when his gones

were quite dispatched and stode him in no seruice, bycause of the raine that fell, where as in suche a chaunce of raine, yf he had had bowmen, surelye there shoote myghte peradventure haue bene a little hindred, but quite dispatched and marde, it coulede neuer haue bene.

*Toxophilus.* "Of the first finders out of shoting, divers men diverslye do wryte. Claudiane the poet sayth, that nature gave example of shotyng first, by the *Porpentine*, which doth shote his prickes, and will hitte any thinge that fightes with it: whereby men learned afterwarde to immitate the same in fyndyng out both bowe and shaftes."

Shakespeare uses this word in "Hamlet," "Comedy of Errors," "Troilus and Cressida," and 2 "Henry VI.,"; and in the first folio it is always spelt as Ascham spells it porpentine, not porcupine.

*Hamlet.* Refrain to night,  
And that shall lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence: the next more easy:  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature.

—Act 3, Scene 4.

Ascham says:—"And hereby you may see that is true whiche Cicero sayeth, that a man by *use*, may be brought to a newe *nature*. And this I dare be bould to saye, that any man whiche will wisely begynne, and constantly perseuer in this trade of learnynge to shote, shall attayne to perfectness therein."

In "The Twelfth Night," the word breast is used for voice, and the word affectioned for affected.

*Sir Andrew.* By my troth, the fool has an excellent breast.—Act 3, Scene 3.

*Maria.* The devil a puritan that he is or anything constantly, but a time pleaser; an *affectioned* ass, that can state without books and utters it by great swoths.

—Act 2, Scene 2.

In "Love's Labour's Lost," Act 3, Scene 1, Moth says:—

"Keep not *too long in one* <sup>*time*</sup> ~~time~~, but snip and away."

And in the first part of Henry IV., Act 3, Scene 3, Falstaff says:—

"Why she is neither *fish nor flesh*; a man knows not where to have her."

*Fool.* Pray ye stay a little! let's hear him sing, he has a fine *breast*.—*The Pilgrim, Act 3, Scene 1, Beaumont and Fletcher.*

Some times breast is used for the voice of birds.

*Alguazier.* I like his feature well; a proper man,  
Of good discourse, fine conversation,  
Valiant, and a great carrier of the business,  
Sweet-breasted as the nightingale or thrush!

—*Love's Cure, Act 3, Scene 1, Beaumont and Fletcher.*

*Timon.* Crack the lawyer's voice,  
That he may never more false titter plead.  
Nor sound his quilllets shrilly.

—*Timon of Athens, Act 4, Scene 3.*

All these passages may be illustrated by a few extracts from the "Toxophilus" of Ascham and the "Euphues" of Lyly.

The godlie use of praying God, by singinge in the churche, nedeth not my prayse, seing it is so prayed through al the scripture, therefore nowe I wil speke nothing of it, rather than I shuld speke to litle of it.

Besyde al these commodities, truly ii. degrees of menne, which haue the highest offices vnder the king in all this realme, shall greatly lacke the use of Singinge, preachers and lawiers, bycause they shal not without this, be able to rule their *brestes*, for every purpose. For where is no distinction in telling glad thinges and fearfull thinges, gentilnes and cruelness, softenes and vehementnes, and suche lyke matters, there can be no great perswasion.

For the hearers, as Tullie sayeth, be muche *affectioned*, as he that speaketh. At his wordes be they drawn, yf he stande still in one facion, their mindes, stande still with hym: If he thundre, they quake: If he chyde, they feare: If he complayne, they sory with hym: and finally,

where a matter is spoken, with an apte voyce, for every affection, the hearers for the moste parte, are moued as the speaker woulde. But when a man is *alwaye in one tune*, lyke an Humble bee, or els nowe vp in the top of the church, nowe downe that *no manne knoweth where to haue hym* : or piping lyke a reede, or *roring lyke a bull*, as some lawyers do, whiche thinke they do best, when they crye *lowdest*, these shall neuer greatly mooue, as I haue knowen many wel learned, haue done, bicause theyr voyce was not stayed afore, with learnyng to syng.

Walking alone into *the field* hath no token of courage in it, a pastime lyke a simple man which is *neither fish nor flesh*.

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*Friar.* Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf  
Change slander to remorse : that is some good :  
But not for that dream I on this strange course,  
But on this travail look for greater birth.  
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,  
Upon the instant that she was accused,  
Shall be lamented, pittied, and excused  
Of every hearer : for it so falls out  
That what we have we prize not to the worth  
Whiles we enjoy it, but being *lack'd* and lost,  
Why then we rack the value, then we find  
The virtue that possession would not show us  
Whiles it was ours.—*Much Ado about Nothing, IV. 1.*

Shakespeare may have written these verses remembering the following passage in Ascham, where the same thought appears :—

*Philologus.* Well, Toxophile, is it not ynoughe for you to rayle upon musike, excepte you mocke me to? but to say the truth, I never thought myselfe these kindes of musike fit for learninge, but that whyche I sayde was rather to prove you, than to defende the matter. But yet as I woulde haue this sorte of musicke decaye amonge scholers, even so do I wysshe from the bottom of my heart, that the laudable custome of Englande to teache chyl dren



their plainesong and priksong, were not so decayed throughout all the realm as it is. Which thing howe profitable it was for all sortes of men, those knewe not so wel than whiche had it most, as they do nowe which *lacke* it moste. And therefore it is true that Teucer sayeth in Sophocles—

“Seldome at all good things be knowen how good to be  
Before a man such things do misse out of his handes.”

In these passages Shakespeare and Ascham use the word “lack.”

*Sebastian.* I prithee, vent thy folly somewhere else :  
Thow know'st not me.

*Cloun.* Vent my folly ! He had heard that word of some great man and now applies it to a fool. Vent my folly ! I am afraid this *great lubber*, the world, will prove a cockney.—*Twelfth Night, Act 4, Scene 2.*

I remember when I was young, in the North they went to the grammer school little children ; they came from thence *great lubbers*, always learning and little profiting ; learning without book everything, understanding within the book little or nothing.—*The Schoolmaster.*

According to Ascham a great lubber was one who was always learning and little profiting.

*Polonius.* Marry, sir, here's my drift ;  
And I believe it is *fetch* of wit.—*Hamlet, Act 1, Scene 4.*

*Lear.* Deny to speak with me ? They are sick ? They are weary ?  
They have travell'd all the night ? Mere *fetches* :  
The images of revolt and flying off.  
Fetch me a better answer.—*Lear, Act 2, Scene 4.*

Three things chiefly, both in Plautus and Terence, are to be specially considered : the matter, the utterance, the words, the metre. The matter in both is altogether within the compass of the meanest men's manners, and doth not stretch to anything of any great weight at all, but standeth chiefly in uttering the thoughts and conditions of hard fathers, foolish mothers, unthrifty young men, crafty servants, subtle bawds, and wily harlots ; and so is

much spent in finding out fine *fetches*, and packing up pelting matters, such as in London commonly come to the hearing of the masters of Bridewell.—*The Schoolmaster*.

*Isab.* You do blaspheme the good in mocking me.

*Lucio.* Do not believe it. Fewness and truth, 'tis thus :  
Your brother and his lover have embraced :  
As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time  
That from the seedness the bare *fallow brings*  
*To teeming foison*, even so her plenteous womb  
Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

—*Measure for Measure, Act 1, Scene 5.*

*Tox.* That Aristotle and Tullie spake earnestlie, and as they thought, the earnest matter which they entreate vpon, doth plainlye proue. And as for your *husbandrie*, it was more *probable* tolde with apt wordes propre to ye thing, then throughly proued with reasons belongynge to our matter. Far contrariwise I herd my selfe a good husbände at his boke ones saye, that to omit studie somtime of the daye, and sometime of the yere, made asmoche for the encrease of learning as to let the land lye sometime *fallow*, maketh for the better encrease of corne. This we se, yf the lande be plowed euerye yere, the corne commeth thinne vp, the eare is short, the grayne is small, and when it is brought into the barne and threshed, gyueth very euill faul.

And where that you have vow'd to study, lords,  
In that each of you have forsworn his *book*,  
Can you still dream and *pore* and thereon look ?  
For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,  
Have found the ground of study's excellence  
Without the beauty of a woman's face ?  
From women's eyes this doctrine I derive ;  
They are the ground, the books, the academes  
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.  
Why, universal *plodding* poisons up  
The nimble spirits in the arteries,  
As motion and long-during action tires  
The sinewy vigour of the traveller.

—*Love's Labour Lost, Act 4, Scene 3.*

So those which neuer leaue *poring on their boke*s, haue oftentimes as thinne inuention, as other poore men haue, and as smal wit and weight in it as in other mens.

*Biron.* Why, all delights are vain ; but that most vain, Which with pain purchased doth inherit pain :

As, painfully to *pore upon a booke*

To seek the light of truth ; while truth the while Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look ;

Light seeking light doth light of light beguile :  
So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,  
Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.  
Study me how to please the eye indeed

By fixing it upon a fairer eye,  
Who dazling so, that eye shall be his heed

And give him light that it was blinded by.  
Study is like the heaven's glorious sun

That will not be deep-search'd with saucy looks :  
Small have *continual* plodders ever won

Save base authority from others' books.

— *Love's Labour's Lost, Act 1, Scene 1.*

And thus youre husbandrie me thinke, is more like the life of a couetouse snudge that oft very euill preunes, then the labour of a good husband that knoweth wel what he doth. And surelie the best wittes to lerning must nedes houe moche *recreation* and ceasing from their boke, or els they marre them selves, when base and dompysshe wittes can neuer be hurte with *continual studie*, as ye se in luting, that a treble minikin string must alwayes be let down, but at suche time as when a man must nedes playe : when ye base and dull stryng nedeth neuer to be moued out of his place.

*Biron.* So study evermore is overshot :  
While it doth study to have what it would  
It doth forget to do the thing it should,  
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,  
'Tis won as towns with fire, so won, so lost.

But is there no quick *recreation* granted ?

— *Love's Labour's Lost, Act 1, Scene 1.*

Shakespeare and Ascham both speak of study and of poring on a book. Biron associates poring on a book with *continual* plodders and universal plodding, and he asks, "is there no quick *recreation* granted?" and Ascham says, "those who never leave poring on their book have oftentimes as thin inventions as other poor men have," and, "the best wits to learning must needs have much *recreation* and ceasing from their book when base and dumpish wits can never be hurt with *continual* study."

To pore upon a book was a common expression in Shakespeare's time. It is used by many old authors, and Ascham also uses it in his "Schoolmaster."

*Malvolio.* Daylight and champion discovers not more:  
this is open.

Agayne, shooting hath two Tutours to looke vpon it, out of whose companie shooting neuer stirreth, the one called *Daye light*, ye other *Open space*, whyche. ii. keepe shooting from euyl companie, and suffers it not to haue to much swinge, but euermore keeps it vnder awe, that it darre do nothyng in the open face of the worlde, but that which is good and honest.

*Lucio.* By my troth, Isabel, I loved thy brother: if the old fantastical Duke of *dark corners* had been at home he had lived.—*Measure for Measure, Act 4, Scene 3.*

And althoughe to haue vvritten this boke either in latin or Greke (vvhich thing I vvold be verie glad yet to do, if I might surelie knovv your Graces pleasure there in) had bene more easier and fit for mi trade in study, yet neuerthelesse, I supposinge it no point of honestie, that mi commodite should stop and hinder ani parte either of the pleasure or. profite of manie, haue vvritten this Englishe matter in the Englishe tongue, for Englishe men: vvhere in this I trust that your Grace (if it shall please your Highnesse to rede it) shal perceauie it to be a thinge Honeste for me to vvrite, pleasaunt for some to rede, and profitable for manie to follovv, contening a pastime, honest for the minde, holsome for the body, fit for eueri man, vile for no man, vsing the *day and open place* for Honestie to rule it, not *lurking in corners* for disorder to abuse it.

*Leontes.* Is whispering nothing?  
 Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?  
 Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career  
 Of laughing with a sigh?—a note infallible  
 Of breaking honesty—horsing foot on foot?  
*Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?*

*The Winter's Tale, Act 1, Scene 2.*

My minde is, in profitynge and pleasyng euey man,  
 to hurte or displease no man, intendencyng none other purpose,  
 but that youthe myght be styrred to labour, honest pastyme,  
 and vertue, and as much as laye in me, plucked from  
 ydlenes, vnthrifitie games, and vice: whyche thing I haue  
 laboured onlye in this booke, shewynge howe fit shootyng  
 is for all kyndes of men, howe honest a pastime for the  
 mynde, howe holsome an exercise for the bodye, not vile for  
 great men to vse, not costlie for poor men to susteyne, *not*  
*lurking in holes and corners* for ill men at theyr pleasure, to  
 misvse it, but abiding *in the open sight and face of the worlde*,  
 for good men if it fault by theyr wisdom to correct it.

Ascham says shooting hath two tutors, one called *daylight*,  
 the other *open place*; and Shakespeare says "*daylight* and  
 champion discovers not more: this is *open*."

I will quote some other passages in Toxophilus in which  
 Ascham contrasts the two tutors of shooting, "*daylight*" and  
 "*open place*" with the tutors of dicing and carding,  
 "*Solitariousness which lurketh in holes and corners, and*  
*night an ungratious cover of nautyness.*"

*Macbeth.* Come seeling night,  
 Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day;  
 And with thy bloody and invisible hand  
 Cancel and tear to peaces that great bond  
 Which keeps me pale! Light thickens; and the crow  
 Makes wing to the rooky wood:  
*Good things of day* begin to droop and drowse;  
 Whiles night's black agents to their preys do rouse.

—*Act 3, Scene 2.*

The Fosterer vp of shoting is Labour, ye companion of  
 vertue, the maynteyner of honestie, the encrease of health



and welthinesse, which admytteth nothinge in a maner in to his companie, that standeth not, with vertue and honestie, and therefore sayeth the ould poete Epicharmus very pretelye in Xenophon, that God selleth vertue, and all other good things to men for labour. The Nource of disease and cardes, is werisome Ydlenesse, enemy of vertue, ye drowner of youthe, that tarieth in it, and as Chauser doth saye verie well in the Parsons tale, the greene path waye to hel, hauinge this thinge appropriat vnto it, that were as other vices haue some cloke of honestie, onely ydlenesse can neyther do wel, nor yet thinke wel.

Lykewyfe, dysinge and cardynge, haue. ii. Tutours, the one named Solitariousenes, whyche lurketh in holes and *corners*, the other called Night an vngratious couer of noughtynesse, whyche two thynges be very Inkepers and receyuers of all noughtynesse and noughtye thinges, and thereto they be in a maner, ordeyned by Nature.

*King Henry.* The owl shrieked at thy birth, an evil sign ;  
The *night-crow* cried, a boding luckless time.

*3 Part Henry VI., Act 5, Scene 6.*

For on the nighte tyme and in *corners*, Spirites and theues, rattes and mise, toodes and oules, *nyghtecrowes* and poulcattes, foxes and soumerdes, with all other vermine, and noysome beastes, vse mooste styrringe, when in the *daye lyght*, and in *open places* whiche be ordeyned of God for honeste thynges, they darre not ones come, whiche thinge Euripides noted verie well, sayenge.

Il things the night, *good things the daye* doth haunt and use.

Moreover that shooting of all other is the most honest pastyme, and hath leest occasion to noughtynesse joynd with it, ii. thinges very playnely do prove, which be as a man would saye, the tutours and overseers to shotinge : *Daye light* and *open place* where every man doeth come, the maynteyners and kepers of shoting, from all dishonest doing. If shotinge faulte at any tyme, it hydes it not, it *lurkes not in corners* and hudder-mother : but openly accuseth and bewrayeth it selfe which is the beste waye to amendement, as wyse men do saye. And these things I

suppose be signes, not of noughtinesse, for any man to disalowe it: but rather verye playne tokens of honestie, for everyeman to prayse it.

*Duke.* What is the news from this good deputy?

*Isabella.* He hath a garden circummured with brick,  
Whose western side is with a vineyard back'd.

—*Measure for Measure, Act 4, Scene 1.*

Therefore if a man woulde haue a pastyme holesome and equall for euerye part of the bodye, pleasaunt and full of courage for the mynde, not vile and vnhoneste to gyue ill example to laye men, not kepte in *gardens and corners*, not *lurkyng on the nyght and in holes*, but euermore in the face of men, either to rebuke it when it doeth ill, or els to testifie on it when it doth well: let him seke chiefly of all other for shotynge.

The garden of Angelo seems to have been one of those holes and corners, "an ungratious cover of naughtynesse," one of the tutors of dysinge and cardynge.

*Duke.* "Upon this warrant shall you have access  
Where you with Silvia may confer at large;  
For she is *lumpish, heavy*, melancholy,  
And, for your friend's sake, will be glad of you's  
Where you may temper her by your persuasion  
To hate young Valentine and love my friend."

*Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

And to offend, in these contraries commeth much yf men take not hede, throughe the kynd of wood, wherof the shaft is made: Ffor some wood belongs to ye exceeding part, some to ye scant part, some to ye meane, as Brasell, Turkiewood, Fusticke, Sugar cheste, and such lyke, make deade, *heavy lumpish*, hobblyng shaftes.

Ascham in "Toxophilus" applies the adjectives heavy and lumpish to some woods of which shafts are made, and in "The Schoolmaster" to some wits in youth.

A wit in youth that is not over dull, *heavy*, knotty, and *lumpish*; but hard, tough and though somewhat stuffish, (as Tully wisheth, otium quietum non languidum, and

negotium cum labore, non cum periculo), such a wit, I say, if it be at the first well handled by the mother, and rightly smoothed and wrought as it should, not overthwartly, and against the wood, by the schoolmaster, both for learning, and the whole course of living, proveth always the best. In wood or stone, not the softest, but hardest, be always aptest for portraiture, both fairest for pleasure and most durable for profit.

So forth he went

With *heavy* look and *lumpish* face.

Spenser, "*Faerie Queene*," Book iii.,  
Canto iv., S. LXI.

These words heavy and lumpish are often used together by old authors.

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*Antony.* There's a great spirit gone! Thus did I  
desire it:

What our contempt doth often hurl from us,  
We wish it ours again; the *present pleasure*,  
By revolution lowering, does become  
The opposite of itself: she's good, being gone;  
The hand could pluck her back that shoved her on.

—*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 1, Scene 2.

*Cæsar.*

If he fill'd

His vacancy with his voluptuousness,  
Full surfeits, and the dryness of his bones,  
Call on him for't: but to confound such time,  
That drums him from his sport, and speaks as loud  
As his own state and ours,—'tis to be chid  
As we rate boys, who, being mature in knowledge,  
Pawn their experience to their *present pleasure*,  
And so rebel to judgement.

—*Antony and Cleopatra*, Act 1, Scene 4.

But to him that compared gamning with shoting somewhat wyll I answere, and bycause he went afore me in a comparison: and comparisons sayth learned men, make playne matters: I wyl surely folowe him in the same. Honest thynges (sayeth Plato) be knowen from vn honest



things, by this difference, dishonestie hath euer *present pleasure* in it, hauing neyther good pretence going before, nor yet any profit folowing after; which saying descrybeth generallye, bothe the nature of shooting and gaming whiche is good, and which is euyl, verie well.

Gamninge hath ioyned with it, a vayne *presente pleasure*, but there foloweth, losse of name, losse of goodes, and winning of an hundred gowtie, dropsy diseases, as euery man can tell. Shoting is a peynfull pastime, wherof foloweth health of body quiknes of witte, habilitie to defende our countrie, as our enemies can beare recorde.

Ascham quoting Plato says, "dishonestie hath ever present pleasure in it, having neyther good pretence going before, nor yet any profit folowing after," and Shakespeare speaks of the evils which follow those who pawn their experience to their present pleasure.

Fashion of heades is diuers and that of olde tyme: two maner of arrowe heades sayeth Pollux, was vsed in olde tyme. The one he calleth ὄγκινος descrybynge it thus, hauyng two poyntes or barbes, looking backwarde to the stele and the fethers, which surely we call in Englishe a brode arrowe head or a swalowe tayle. The other he calleth γλωχίς, hauing. ii. poyntes stretchyng forward, and this Englysh men do call a *forkehead*: bothe these two kyndes of heades, were vsed in Homers dayes, for Teucer vsed *forked heades*, sayinge thus to Agamemon.

Eighte good shaftes haue I shot sithe I came, eche one wyth a *forke heade*.

Pandarus heades and Vlysses heads were broode arrow heades, as a man maye learne in Homer that would be curious in knowyng that matter. Hercules vsed *forked heades*, but yet they had thre pointes or forkes, when other mennes had but twoo. The Parthyans at that great battell where they slawe ritche Crassus and his sonne vsed brode Arrowe heades, whyche sticke so sore that the Romaines could not poule them out agayne. Commodus the Emperoure vsed *forked heades*, whose facion Horodiano

doeth lyuely and naturally describe, sayinge that they were lyke the shap of a new mone wherwyth he would smite of the heade of a birde and neuer misse, other facion of heades haue not I red on.

*Duke S.* Come shall we go and kill us venison?  
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,  
Being native burghers of this desert city,  
Should in their own confines with *forked heads*  
Have their round haunches gored.

Our Englyshe heades be better in war than eyther *forked heades*, or broad arrowe heades. For firste the ende beyng lyghter they flee a great deele the faster, and by the same reason gyueth a far sorer stripe. Yea and I suppose if ye same lytle barbes whiche they haue, were clene put away, they shuld be far better. For thys euery man doth graunt, yat a shaft as long as it flyeth, turnes, and whan it leueth turnyng it leueth goyng any farther. And euery thyng that enters by a turnyge and boring facion, the more flatter it is, the worse it enters, as a knife thoughte it be sharpe yet because of the edges, wil not bore so wel as a *bodkin*, for euery *rounde thyng* enters beste and therefore nature, sayeth Aristotle, made the rayne droppes rounde for quicke Percyng the ayer. Thus, eyther shaftes turne not flyeng, or els our flatte arrowe heades stoppe the shafte in entrynge.

*Hamlet.* For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit from the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare *bodkin*?—*Act 3, Scene 1.*

It appears from this passage that the *bodkin* was not an edged dagger, but round and pointed, for Ascham says, "a knife though it be sharp, yet because of the edges, will not bore so well as a *bodkin*, for every round thing enters best."

The reason why no book on archery had been published in England before "Toxophilus" is thus explained by Ascham, who says :—

And that no man hitherto hath written any booke of shoting the fault is not to be layed in the thyng whiche was worthie to be written vpon, but of men which were negligent in doying it, and this was the cause therof as I suppose. Menne that vsed shootyng most and knewe it best, were not learned: men that were lerned, vsed litle shooting, and were ignorant in the nature of the thyng, and so fewe menne hath bene that hitherto were able to wryte vpon it.

Before "Toxophilus" was published the knowledge of archery in England, accumulated by centuries of experience, existed only in the minds of men, to whom it had been transmitted from generation to generation. I think that Ascham obtained his great knowledge of the art of shooting in the long bow from experienced archers of his time, for he was, according to his own acknowledgment, "an imperfect shooter."

Yet in writing this booke some man wyll maruayle perchaunce, why that I beyng an *vnperfyte sholer*, shoulde take in hande to write of making a perfyte archer: the same man peradventure wyll maruayle, howe a whettestone whiche is blunte, can make the edge of a knife sharpe: I woulde ye same man shulde consider also, that in goyng about anye matter, there be. iiij. thinges to be considered, doying, saying, thinking and perfectnesse: Firste there is no man that doth so wel, but he can saye better, or elles summe men, which be now starke nought, shuld be to good. Agayne no man can viter wyth his tong, so well as he is able to imagin with his minde, and yet perfectnesse it selfe is far aboue all thinking. Than seeing that saying is one steppe nerer perfectnesse than doying, let euery man leue marueylyng why my woorde shall rather expresse, than my dede shall perfourme perfecte shootinge.

For many centuries before Shakespeare's time Englishmen excelled in archery. The use of the long bow had been ordained by many Acts of Parliament from the reign of Edward I.

Ascham says—

If I should rehearse the statutes made of noble princes of Englande in parlamentes for the setting forward of shoting, through this realme, and specially that acte made for shoting the thyrd yere of the reygne of our moost drad soueraygne lorde king Henry the. viii. I could be very long.

I think it only necessary for my purpose to quote a few sections of the 33rd Henry VIII., cap. ix., which was passed in the year 1541, for the maintaining artillery, and debarring of unlawful games.

This Act remained in force during Shakespeare's lifetime and many years after his death. The 3rd section enacts—

III.—That every man being the king's subject, not lame, decrepit nor maimed; nor having any other lawful or reasonable cause or impediment, being within the age of sixty years (except spiritual men, Justices of one Bench and of the other, Justices of the Assize and Barons of the Exchequer), shall from the Feast of Pentecost next coming, use and exercise shooting in Long-Bows, and also have a Bow and Arrows ready continually in his house, to use himself and do use himself in shooting; and also the Fathers, Govenors and Rulers of such as be of tender age, do teach and bring them up in the knowledge of the same shooting; and that every man having a man-child or men-children in his house, shall provide, ordain, and have in his house for every man-child being of the age of seven years and above, till he shall come to the age of seventeen years a Bow and two shafts to induce and learn them and bring them up in shooting, and shall deliver all the same Bow and Arrows to the same young men to use and occupy, and if the same young men be servants, that then their masters shall abate the money that they shall pay for the same Bows and arrows out of their wages; and after all such young men shall come to the age of seventeen years, every of them shall provide and have a Bow and four arrows continually for himself, at his proper costs and charges, or else of the gift or provision of his friends, and use and occupy the same in shooting as is before rehearsed; and if the master suffer any of his servants taking wages, being



in his household, and under the age of seventeen years ; or the father suffer any of his sons being in his household, and under the age of seventeen years, to lack a Bow and two arrows, contrary to the form of this estatute, by the space of one month together ; then the master or father in whom such negligence shall be, shall for every such default forfeit vi.s. viii.d. and that every servant, passing the age of seventeen years, and under the age of sixty years, and taking wages, which can or is able to shoot, and shall lack a Bow and four arrows by the space of one month together, for every such default shall forfeit and lose vi.s. viii.d.

IV.—Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no man under the age of twenty-four years shall shoot at any standing Prick except it be at a Rover, wherat he shall change at every shoot his mark, upon pain for every shoot doing the contrary, iv.d., and that no person above the said age of twenty-four years shall shoot at any mark of eleven score yards or under, with any Prick-shaft or Flight, under the pain to forfeit for every shoot six shillings eight pence ; and that no person under the age of seventeen years, except he or his father or mother have lands or tenements to the yearly value of ten pounds, or be worth in moveables the sum of forty marks sterling, shall shoot in any bow of yew which shall be bought for him, after the feast of the purification of Our Lady next coming, under the pain to lose and forfeit vis. viiid. and also that Butts be made on this side the feast of St. Michel the Archangel next coming in every city, town and place, by the inhabitants of every such city, town and place, according to the law of ancient time used ; and that the inhabitants and dwellers in every of them be compelled to make and continue such Butts, upon pain to forfeit for every three months so lacking xxs. and that the inhabitants shall exercise themselves with long bows in shooting at the same, and elsewhere in holy days and other times convenient.

The X. Section enacts—

That no manner of person not being born within the King's obeisance, nor made denizen, use within the King's obeisance shooting with long-bows, without the King's

licence, upon pain of forfeiture of such bows, arrows and shafts as they shall be found so shooting with; and every of the King's subjects may have authority to take and seise the same forfeitures to his own use.

Although the Act obliged Englishmen to practise shooting in the long bow, this X. Section shows that the Legislature did not desire the art to be acquired by foreigners.

From the preamble of the statute enacted in the third year Henry VIII. it appears that by the feat and exercise of the subjects of this realm in shooting in long-bows—

There hath continually grown and been within the same great number and multitude of good archers, which hath not only defended this realm, and the subjects thereof, against the cruel malice and danger of their outward enemies in time heretofore past, but also with little number and puissant in regard have done many notable acts and discomfitures of war against the infidels, and other, and furthermore subdued and reduced divers and many regions and countries to their due obedience, to the great honour, fame, and surety of this realm and subjects, and to the *terrible dread and fear of all strange nations.*

Thus, according to the law in Shakespeare's time, every man within sixty years, not lame, decrepit, nor maimed, nor having any other lawful or reasonable cause or impediment, except spiritual men, Justices of one Bench and of the other, Justices of the Assize and Barons of the Exchequer, were bound to use and exercise shooting in long-bows. But there were other causes besides Acts of Parliament which induced the people to practise archery during Shakespeare's lifetime. The XI. Section of the 33rd Henry VIII., cap. 9, prohibiting many games, enacts—

That no manner of person or persons, of what description, quality, or condition soever he or they may be, from the Feast of the Nativity of St John the Baptist now next coming, by himself, factor, deputy, servant, or other person, shall for his or their gain or lucre, or living, keep,

have, hold, occupy, exercise, or maintain, any common house, alley, or place of bowling, coytynge, clogs-cayls, half bowl, tennis, dicing table or carding, or any other manner of game prohibited by any estatute heretofore made, or an unlawful new game now invented or made, or any other new unlawful game hereafter to be invented, found, had or made, upon pain to forfeit and pay for every day keeping, having, or maintaining, or suffering any such game to be had, kept, executed, played or maintained within any such house, garden, alley or other place, contrary to the form and effect of this estatute, forty shillings.

And by the following Section, XII.—

Every person using and haunting any of the said houses and plays, and there playing, to forfeit for every time for so doing, six shillings and eight pence.

So the lower orders, when deprived by law of the recreation these games afforded would be, in a great measure, constrained to practise archery for their amusement. Shooting was encouraged by Queen Elizabeth and James I., as it had been by Henry VIII. Ascham, speaking of King Henry, says—

Agayne ther is an other thing which aboue all other doeth moue me, not onely to loue shotinge, to prayse shotinge, to exhorte all other to shotinge, but also to vse shotinge my selfe; and that is our kyng his moost royall purpose and wyll, whiche in all his statutes generallye doth commaunde men, and with his owne mouthe moost gentlie doeth exhorte men, and by his greate gyftes and rewardes, greatly doth encourage men, and with his moost princelie example very oft doth prouoke all other men to the same. But here you wyll come in with temporal man and scholer: I tell you plainlye, scholer or vnscholer, yea if I were xx. scholers, I wolde thinke it were my dutie, bothe with exhorteinge men to shote, and also with shotinge my selfe to helpe to set forwarde that thing which the kinge his wisdom, and his counsell, so greatlye labourerth to go forwarde: whiche thing surelye they do, bycause they know it to be in warre, the defence and wal of our countrie,

in peace, an exercise moost holsume for the body, a pastime moost honest for the mynde, and as I am able to proue my selfe, of al other moste fit and agreable with learninges and learned men.

Then many would desire to excel and become "defenders of the commonwealth," and, in addition, to these inducements to practice, there were two very strong ones—fondness for a fascinating and invigorating exercise and the fashion of the time.

The universal practice of archery only a few years before the birth of Shakespeare is well described by Giovanni Michele, who was sent by the Pope, some years before the Spanish Armada, to ascertain the military power of England.

But, above all, their proper and natural weapons are the bow and arrows, of which so great is the number, owing to the general use made of them by all sorts of persons without distinction of grade, age, or profession, that it exceeds all belief. This does not proceed from choice, but also from the obligation imposed generally on all heads of families to provide each individual in his household with them, including all the boys when they come to the age of seven years, all for the sake not only of suppressing every other exercise, but with all diligence to increase this one, in which the English place all their strength and all their hope, they, to say the truth, being the most expert archers, so that they would not yield to any other people more trained and experienced than they are; and such is their opinion of archery and their esteem for it, that they prefer it to all sorts of arms and to harquebuses, in which they trust less, feeling more sure of their bows and arrows, contrary, however, to the judgment of the captains and soldiers of other nations.

*Shal.* Death is certain. Is old Double of your town living yet?

*Sil.* Dead, sir.

*Shal.* Jesu, Jesu, dead! a' drew a good bow; and dead! a' shot a fine shoot: John a Gaunt loved him well,



and *betted* much money on his head. Dead a' would have clapped i' the clout at twelve score; and carried you a *forehand* shaft a fourteen and fourteen and a half, that it would have done a man's heart good to see. How a score of ewes now?

*Sil.* Thereafter as they be: a score of good ewes may be worth ten pounds.

*Shal.* And is old Double dead?

—2 *Henry IV.*, Act 3, Scene 2.

I think Shakespeare in this passage refers to a celebrated archer of his day, and that Double was his real name; and I think his carrying a forehand shaft 290 yards was a greater feat in archery than the commentators have supposed.

Double is an English name. It is possible he may have been a contemporary of Shakespeare's. Halliwell has proved that men and women named Sly, Curtis, Page, Ford, and Herne, the names of characters in "The Taming of the Shrew" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor," were contemporaries of Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon.

If my conjecture is correct, it is probable that his name may appear in one of the registers of births or deaths in the Church of the Holy Trinity at Stratford-on-Avon, or in some of the old churches in Warwickshire, and that Shakespeare may have received the news of old Double's death when he was writing this play, somewhere about the year 1597 or 1598.

To understand and to appreciate thoroughly the good shooting of old Double, the reader must know the difference between ancient and modern English bows and arrows, between ancient and modern shooting distances, between the objects of ancient and modern archery, and between under hand and over hand shooting.

## ANCIENT AND MODERN BOWS AND ARROWS.

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The arrows used in Shakespeare's time were heavier and stronger than our modern arrows for two reasons, their piles were two or three times as heavy as those we now use, and the arrow was made heavier and stronger to bear the greater strength of the old bow. Our modern bows seldom exceed sixty pounds in weight. The weight of the bow means the strength required to draw it home to the full extent of the arrow. The bows used by our forefathers were much stronger, they were weapons of war, and they had a driving power of 70, 80, or 90 pounds and upwards, according to the strength of the archers using them. To obtain the power of drawing and loosing such strong bows with ease, a long and laborious system of practice, commencing at an early age, was necessary. Bishop Latimer in his sixth sermon preached before King Edward VI. says :—

The arte of shutyng hath been in tymes past much esteemed in this realme, it is a gyft of God that he hath geuen us to excell all other nacions wyth all. In my tyme, my poore father, was as diligent to teach me to shote, as to learne anye other thyng, and so I thynke other menne dyd theyr children. He taughte me how to drawe, how to lay my bodye in my bowe, and not to drawe with strength of armes as other nacions do, but with the strength of the bodye. I had my bowes boughte me accordyng to my age and strength as I encreased in them, so my bowes were made bigger and bigger, for men shal never shoote well excepte they be brought up in it. It is a goodly arte, a wholesome kynd of exercise, and much commended in physicke.

The effect of this method of practice on a strong man, enabling him to apply all the parts of his body together

to their utmost strength, is described by Ascham. After commemorating the signal victories obtained in war by the English long-bow, he says—

*Philogus.* These examples surelye apte for the prayse of shotynge, nor feyned by poetes, but proued by trewe histories, distinct by tyme and order, hath delyted me excedyng muche, but yet me thynke that all thys prayse belongeth to stronge shootynge and drawynge of myghtye bowes not to prickynge and nere shotinge, for which cause you and many other bothe loue and vse shootyng.

*Toxophilus.* Euer more Philologe you wyl haue some ouertwhart reason to drawe forthe more communication withall, but neuertheless you shall perceauie if you wyl, that vse of prickynge, and desyre of nere shootynge at home, are the onely causes of stronge shootyng in warre, and why? for you se, that the strongest men, do not drawe alwayes the strongest shoote, whiche thyng prouethe that drawinge stronge, liethe not so muche in the strength of man, as in the vse of shotyng, And experience teacheth the same in other thynges, for you shal se a weake smithe, whiche wyl wyth a lipe and turnyng of his arme, take vp a barre of yron, yat another man thrise as stronge, can not stirre. And a stronge man not vsed to shote, hath his armes breste and shoulders, and other partes wherewith he shuld drawe stronglye, one hindering and stoppinge an other, euen as a dosen stronge horses not vsed to the carte, lettes and troubles one another. And so the more stronge man not vsed to shote, shootes moost vnhansumlye, but yet if a strong man with vse of shooting coulde applye all the partes of hys bodye togyther to theyr moost strengthe, than should he both drawe stronger than other, and also shoote better than other. But nowe a stronge man not vsed to shoote, at a girde, can heue vp and plucke in sunder many a good bowe, as wild horses at a brunte doth race and pluck in peces many a stronge carte.

I think it is probable that, obeying the law and following the fashion of the time, Shakespeare's father, or some well-experienced archer taught him, when a child, to shoot, to wrestle with his gear and lay his body in the bow.

Modern archers draw with the strength of their arms, they do not lay their bodies in the bow, for their bows are not sufficiently strong to make such a method necessary.

Neither Ascham nor Shakespeare speak of laying the body in the bow, which the old archers found necessary in drawing their strong weapons; but, as the method is mentioned in Latimer's sermon, a few words of explanation may be acceptable to many readers. According to an approved method of drawing in use at the present day, the archer shoves the bow from him with the left hand, at the same time that he draws the string to him with the right hand and, before the arrow is drawn to the head, he raises it to the position it ought to occupy when he takes his aim. When the old archer drew his strong bow he held the string firmly, in a fixed position, with the right hand, and with the left hand he *lay* or pressed the weight of his body against the bow, shoving it from the string; and when, by this pressing, the arrow was in a great measure drawn, he raised his arms to finish the draw and take his aim. Chapman refers to this method of drawing in "*Byron's Conspiracy*," Act 2, Scene 1.

*Savoy.* It rests now then, noble and worthy friend,  
That to our friendship, we *draw* Duke Byron,  
To whose attraction there is no such chaine,  
As you can forge and shake out of your brain.

*Laffin.* I have devised the fashion and the weight;  
To *valures* hard to *draw*, we use retreats;  
And, to pull shafts home (*with a good bow arm*)  
*We thrust hard from us.*

We thrust hard from us, that is, we lay our bodies in the bow.

This method of learning to shoot, would develop archers capable of managing perfectly bows of far greater strength than those we use in the present day for recreation and amusement; and amongst the many thousands who learned to shoot in this manner, there would be found in every



generation, probably every year, some men possessing an exceptional combination of great strength and skill, which would enable them to use very strong bows, and to shoot with greater accuracy and force than the great majority of archers; and I fancy that old Double must have been, according to Shakespeare's account, one of these exceptionally strong and good shots.

There is no doubt that the old archers provided themselves with bows suited to their strength, and with arrows strong enough to bear the power of their bows. As Ascham says—"Wise archers have always their instruments fit for their strength;" and, speaking of the best wood for a shaft, he says—"Let every man *when he knoweth his own strength*, and the nature of every wood, provide and fit himself thereafter."

"When he knoweth his own strength," that is, when he knows how strong a bow he can "maintain," or draw and loose easily, let him provide and fit himself with shafts strong enough to bear the power of his bow.

Again,—

Now howe big, how small, how heuye, how lyght, how longe, how short a shafte shoulde he particularlye for everye man (seynge we must taulke of the generall nature of shootyinge) can not be toulde no more than you Rhetoricians can appoynt any one kynde of wordes, of sentences, of fygures fyt for every matter, but *even as the man and the matter requyreth so the fyttest to be used.*

In the reign of Edward IV. an Act was passed ordaining that every Englishman, and every Irishman dwelling with Englishmen, shall have an English bow, of his own height; to be made of yew, wych, hazel, ash, or awborne, or any other reasonable tree, *according to their power*: and according to a description of an archer in the reign of Queen Elizabeth:—"Captains and officers should be skilful in that most noble weapon, and to see that their soldiers, *according to their draught*

*and strength*, have good bows, well ~~X~~knocked, well stringed, every string whipped in their ~~X~~nock, and in the myddes rubbed with wax; braser and shooting glove, some spare strings, trimmed as aforesaid; every man one sheaf of arrows, with a case of leather, defensible against the rain, and in the same four and twenty arrows; whereof eight should be lighter than the residue, to gall or astoyne the enemy with the hail shot of light arrows, before they shall come within the danger of their harquebutt shot. Let every man have a brigandine or a little cote of plate, a shull or hufkin, a *maule* of lead, of five feet in length, and a pike, and the same hanging by his girdle, with a hook and a dagger; being thus furnished, teach them by musters to march, shoote and retire, keeping their faces upon the enemy's. Sametime put them into great numbers, as to battell appeerteyneth, and there use them often times practised till they be perfect; for those men in battell or skirmish cannot be spared. No other weapon maye compare with this same noble weapon."

*King John.* They shoot but calm words folded up in smoke,  
To make a faithless error in your ears:  
Which trust accordingly kind citizens,  
And let us in, your king, whose labour'd spirits,  
*Forewearied* in this action of swift speed,  
Crave harbourage within your city walls.

—*King John, Act 2, Scene 1.*

This uncommon word *forewearied* is used by Ascham in his "*Toxophilus*" twice or three times.

But trulye as for the Parthians, it is playne, in Plutarche, that in chaungyng theyr bowes in to speares, they brought theyr selfe into vtter destruction. For when they had chased the Romaynes many a myle, through reason of theyr bowes, at the last the Romaynes ashamed of their fleing, and remembrynge theyr owlde noblenesse and courage, ymaged thys waye, that they woulde kneele downe on theyr knees, and so couer all theyr body wyth theyr shyldes and targattes, that the Parthians shaftes might slyde ouer them, and do them no harme, which thing

when the Parthians perceyued, thinking that ye Romaynes wer *forweryed* with laboure, watche, and hungre: they layed downe their bowes, and toke speres in their handes, and so ranne vpon them: but the Romaynes perceyuinge them without their bowes, rose vp manfully, and slewe them euery mother son, saue a fewe that saued them selues with runnyng awaye. And herein our archers of Englande far passe the Parthians, which for suche a purpose, when they shall come to hande strokes, hath euer redy, eyther at his backe hangyng, or els in his next fe'owes hande a leaden *maule*, or suche lyke weapon, to beate downe his enemies withall.

*Bustard.* Thou wert better gall the devil, Salisbury:  
If thou but frown on me, or stir thy foot,  
Or teach thy hasty spleen to do me shame,  
I'll strike thee dead. Put up thy sword betime;  
Or I'll so *maul* you and your toasting-iron  
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.

—*King John, Act 4, Scene 3.*

*Eros.* They are beaten, sir; and our advantage serves  
For a fair victory.

*Scarus.* Let us score their backs,  
And snatch 'em up, as we take hares, behind:  
'Tis sport to *maul* a runner.

—*Antony and Cleopatra, Act 4, Scene 7.*

I think it is probable that the use the old archers made of their mauls in beating down their enemies may have given rise to the verb, which is used at the present day, signifying to beat roughly. The archer's weapon was similar in shape to the modern mallet joiners use, and the two words are derived from the Latin *malleus*.

When the old archers went into the field of battle they carried in their sheaves 24 arrows, and the deadly use they made of them give rise to the proverb quoted by Ascham, that "Every English archer beareth under his girdle 24 Scots."

We read that the old archers, after they had, in the field of battle, shot all their arrows, rushed at their enemies and

beat them down with their mauls. It is probable that after each archer had discharged his 24 shafts, the enemy would sometimes be retreating, and that the archers would run after them and *maul the runners*. *Scarus* in "Antony and Cleopatra" probably refers to this use of the maul.

Archers provided themselves with bows according to their draught, or length of arm and strength. The longer the draw, the greater the force of the bow ; so Peele says—

But as an archer with a bended bow,  
The farther from the mark he draws his shaft  
The farther flies it, and with greater force  
Wounds earth and air.—*Anglorum Ferieae*.

*Lear*, in Act 4, Scene 6, seems to ask for this greater force when he says—

Draw me a clothier's yard.

And so Spenser, in the "Faerie Queene," Book 4, Canto 7, describing *Belphebe*, says—

With bow in hand an <sup>d</sup>arrowes ready bent.

. . . . .  
She sent an arrow forth with mighty draught.

It appears to me probable that the old archers would be arranged in the field of battle according to the power of the bows they were capable of using, or, at least, that those of exceptional strength and skill, capable of drawing and loosing with ease "strong bows mighty of cast," and of carrying their heavy fore hand shafts long distances, would be placed together and used for special service. The effect of a few hundred archers capable of using perfectly 90 or 100 pound bows and shooting the fore hand shafts right afore them, might well be called "the greatest stroke in war." I have thought that Shakespeare may refer to these fore hand shots in "Troilus and Cressida" and play upon the word :—

The great Achilles, whom opinion crowns  
The sinew and forchand of our host.



Achilles may be compared to the forehand shots, for he was "the greatest stroke in war."

A few quotations may be sufficient to give the reader a proper idea of the great power and skill of the old archers, of the long distances at which they were able to hit the mark, and of the great penetrating power of their arrows when driven by their strong bows.

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### ANCIENT AND MODERN DISTANCES.

The usual long distance for archers of the present day is one hundred yards, although that distance is sometimes exceeded. Two hundred and forty yards, old Double's twelve score, was the usual long distance for the old archers, but some of their marks were much further off. Even in 1628, twelve years after Shakespeare's death, "The Ayme for Finsburie Archers" describes the true distance of one Mark as 390 yards, 100 yards beyond the distance old Double used to carry a forehand shaft.

Carew says:—To give you some taste of the Cornish archers' sufficiency for long shooting, their shaft was a cloth yard; their pricks twenty-four score (480 yards); for strength they would pierce any ordinary armour.

In the reign of Henry VI. a French captain, Guion du Coing, accompanied by one hundred and twenty lances, went out to seek an adventure with the English, and was met by Sir William Olde, with sixteen or twenty archers on horseback, who dismounted, and formed in a broad way, whence the lances could not charge but in front; and the French charging them, the volleys of arrows of these few archers wrought such notable effect against the French horsemen, that they broke and overthrew them in such sort that there were divers of the French slain, and many taken prisoners.—*Sir John Smith.*

John Lord Bellay, being accompanied with two hundred lances at the least, met, by chance, with an English captain

called Berry, who had to the number of eighty archers. Perceiving the French, he presently reduced his men into the form of a hearse, turning their backs to a hedge, that the lances might only charge them in front; and giving their vollies of arrows at the French lances charging, did so wound and kill men and horses, that they overthrew them, slew many, and took divers of them prisoners.—*Sir John Smith.*

At one time Richard with seventeen knights and three hundred archers, sustained the charge of the whole Turkish and Saracen army.—*Gibbon.*

Ascham says—

The excellent prince Thomas Hawarde nowe Duke of Northfolk, for whose good prosperitie with all his noble familie al English hertes dayly doth pray with bowmen of England slew kyng Jamie with many a noble Scot euen brant agenst Flodon hil, in which battel ye stoute archers of Cheshire and Lanchasshire for one day bestowed to ye death for their prince and country sake, hath gotten immortall name and prase for euer.

The feare onely of Englysh Archers hathe done more wonderfull thinges than euer I redde in anye historye greke or latin, and moost wonderfull of all now of late beside Carlile betwixt Eske and Leuen at Sandy sikes, where the hoole nobilitie of Scotlande for fere of the Archers of Englonde (next the stroke of God) as both Englysh men and Scotyshe men that were present hath toulde me were drowned and taken prisoners.

Nor that noble acte also, whyche althoughe it be almost lost by tyme, commeth not behynd in worthinesse, whiche my synguler good frende and Master Sir William Walgrau and Sir George Somerset dyd with a few Archers to ye number as it is sayd of. xvi. at the Turne pike besyde Hammes where they turned with so fewe Archers, so many Frenchemen to flight, and turned so many oute of theyr lackes, whych turne turned all fraunce to shame and reproche and those. ii. noble knightes to perpetuall prayse and fame.

Ford, in his "Perkin Warbeck," probably following Hall, Act 3, Scene I., refers to the long arrows of the Cornish men.

*Dawbeney*, speaking of the Cornish under Audley, says, to  
*King Henry*—

this morning,  
When in the dawning I, by your direction,  
Strove to get Deptford-Strand-bridge, there I found  
Such a resistance, as might shew what strength  
Could make : here arrows hail'd in showers upon us,  
*A full yard long at least ; but we prevail'd.*

—*Perkin Warbeck, Act 3, Scene 1.*

and Ascham mentions the use of this long arrow at Agincourt:—

King Henrie V., a prince pereles and moste victoriouse  
conqueroure of all that ever dyed yet in this parte of the  
world, at the battel of agincourt with vii. thousand  
fythyng men, and yet many of them sycke, beyng suche  
archers as the Chronycle sayeth that *most parte of them*  
*drewe a yarde*, slewe all the chevalrie of France to the  
numbre of xl. thousand and moo, and lost not paste xxvi.  
Englyshe men.

## THE OBJECTS OF ANCIENT AND MODERN ARCHERY.

Apart from the recreation and exercise archery affords, the archers of Queen Victoria's reign have, in shooting, one object in view, to shoot well; but the archers of Queen Elizabeth's reign had, in shooting, two objects in view, to shoot well and to shoot strong, not only to hit the mark, but also to drive their arrows with force sufficient to penetrate the well tempered armour of their enemies.

In Ascham's time archers were said to shoot strong, well, and fair.

*Phi.* I graunte Toxophile, that vse of shotyng maketh a man draw strong, to shoote at most aduantage, to kepe his *gere*, which is no small thinge in war, but yet me thinke that the customable shoting at home, specialye at buttes and prickcs, make nothyng at all for *stronge shooting*

*which doth moste good in war.* Therefore I suppose yf men shulde use to goo into the fyeldes, and learne to shote myghty stronge shootes, and neuer care for any marke at al, they shulde do much better.

*Tox.* The trouthe is, that fashion muche vsed, woulde do muche good, but this is to be feared, least that waye coulde not prouoke men to vse muche shotyng, bycause ther shulde be lytle pleasure in it. And that in shoting is beste, yat prouoketh a man to vse shotinge moste: For muche vse maketh men shoote, bothe *strong and well*, *whiche two thinges in shootinge, every man doeth desyre.*

They shot strong when they drove their arrows with force sufficient to penetrate the well tempered armour of their enemies, they shot well when they hit the distant mark frequently, and they shot fair when they did the standing, <sup>the</sup> marking, drawing, holding and loosing as they ought to be done; and, when they shot strong and well and fair they shot a good shoot, and were the most perfect archers of their time.

Ascham says, every man desired two things in shooting, to shoot strong and well, and he places strong shooting first, as if he thought it was, of the two things desired, the most important. Excellence in modern archery consists in shooting well; excellence in ancient archery consisted in shooting well and strong. Strong shooting in heavy bows was necessary and did most good in war. Shooting with light bows would not avail.

What Ascham calls "mighty strong shots" were necessary in war.

Everye bodye shoulde learne to shote when they be yonge, defence of the commune wealth, doth require when they be olde, which thing can not be done mightelye when they be men, excepte they learne it perfitalye when they be boyes.

Modern archers do not begin to learn shooting by laying their bodies in the bow, nor do they wrestle with their gear from childhood to manhood for the purpose of acquiring the



power of drawing and loosing easily heavy bows "mighty of cast." We, who now use the bow for exercise and recreation, and not as a military weapon, desire only to shoot well.

Schlegel and other translators and commentators suppose that the forehand shaft was a light arrow.

*Schaal.* Auf zwei hundert und vierzig schritt traf er ins Weisse, und trieb euch einen *leichten Bolzen* auf zwei hundert und achtzig, auch neunzig schritt, dass Einem das Herz im Leibe lachen musste. — *Schlegel.*

They seem to have thought it was a light arrow merely because old Double carried it 50 yards beyond the distance at which he had clapp'd an arrow in the clout. Delius says—

Er traf mit seinem Schusse das Weisse in der Schiess-Scheibe auf zwei hundert und vierzig Ellen Distance, und einen *besonders guten Pfeil* schoss er sogar noch vierzig bis funfzig Ellen weiter,

thinking that a *particularly good arrow*, which he supposes the forehand shaft to have been, was necessary to enable old Double to reach the extra distance.

So, according to Schlegel, and other translators and commentators, old Double required, to shoot as far as 290 yards, a lighter arrow than the arrow he could clap in the clout at 240 yards; and, according to Delius, he required a particularly good arrow for that purpose. I think they are all mistaken. I believe the forehand shaft was the heaviest arrow used by our forefathers: heavy because it was strong, and strong because it was heavy.

I will now quote what Ascham says about the forehand shaft and the underhand shaft, and then I will venture to describe what sort of an arrow I think the forehand shaft must have been.

#### THE UNDERHAND AND FOREHAND SHAFT.

Agayne lykewyse as no one wood can be greatlye meet for all kynde of shaftes, no more can one facion of the stele be fit for euery shooter. For those that be *lytle brested* and



big toward the hede called by theyr lykenesse taperfashion, reshe growne, and of some merrie fellowes bobtayles, be fit for them whiche shote *under hande* bycause they shoote wyth a *soft lowse*, and stresscs not a shaft muche in the breste where the weyghte of the bowe lyethe as you maye perceyue by the werynge of every shafte.

Agayne the bygge brested shafte is fytted for hym, which shoteth *right afore him*, or els the brest being weke shoulde neuer wythstande that *strong piththy kynde of shootyng*, thus the *underhande* must haue a small breste, to go eleane awaye oute of the bowe, the *forehande* muste haue a *bigge breste* to bere the great myghte of the bowe. The shafte must be made rounde nothyng flat wyth out gal or wemme, for thys purpose. For bycause roundnesse (whether you take example in heauen or in earthe) is fittest shappe and forme both for fast mouing and also for sone Percyng of any thyng. And therefore Aristotle saythe that nature hath made the raine to be round, bycause it shoulde the easelyer enter throughe the ayre.

These two methods of shooting, under hand and over hand, were noticed by Giovanni Michele. Speaking of the English archers he says,—“They draw the bow with such force and dexterity, that some are said to pierce corslets and armour and there are few among them, even those that are moderately practised, who will not undertake at a convenient distance, either aiming point blank or in the air, as they generally do, that the arrow may fly further, to hit within an inch and a half of the mark.”

The aiming point blank observed by Michele was over hand shooting, the aiming in the air under hand shooting.

The old archers, when practising at the butts or clouts, or when engaged in actual warfare, had to shoot under hand or over hand according to their distance from the mark or the enemy.

The stress, to which Ascham refers, is caused by the arrow being forced against the side of the bow when it is cast from the string. The arrow, after it is loosed, receives two shocks, one on the breast, when it leaves the string, the

other on the head, when it hits the mark. When the arrow is loosed it passes smoothly along the side of the bow until the string stops travelling, and then the sudden stoppage of the string imparts a shock to the arrow which forces it against the side of the bow and causes the stress, at a spot which varies according to the height of the bend.

Ascham describes the little bend and the great bend, and he recommends the great bend because it has many commodities, and the little bend hath but one commodity.

But it is best by my iudgemente, to gyue the bowe so muche bent, that the stryngge neede neuer touche a mannes arme, and so shoulde a man nede no bracer as I knowe manye good Archers, whiche occupye none.

. . . . .

But a gayne in stringynge youre bowe, you must loke for muche bende or lytle bende for they be cleane contrarye.

The *lytle bende* hath but one commoditie, whyche is in shootyng faster and farther shoote, and ye cause therof is, bycause the stryngge hath so far a passage, or it parte wyth the shafte. The *greate bende* hath many commodities: for it maketh easyer shootynge the bowe beyng halfe drawen afore. It needeth no bracer, for the stryngge stoppeth before it come at the arme. It wyl not so sone hit a mannes sleue or other geare, by the same reason: It hurteth not the shaft fedder, as the lowe bende doeth. It suffereth a man better to espye his marke. Therefore lette youre bowe haue good byg bend, a shaftement and. ii. fyngers at the least, for these which I haue spoken of.

. . . . .

A bracer serueth for two causes, one to saue his arme from the strype of the stryngge, and his doublet from wearynge, and the other is, that the stryngge glydyng sharpelye and quicklye of the bracer, may make the sharper shoote. For if the stryngge shoulde light upon the bare sleue, the strengthe of the shoote shoulde stoppe and dye there. But it is best by my iudgemente, to gyue the lowe so muche bent, that the stryngge neede neuer touche a mannes arme, and so shoulde a man nede no bracer as I knowe many goode Archers, whiche occupye none.

*Lear.* The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.

*Kent.* Let it fall rather, though the fork invade  
The region of my heart.

*Lear.* . . . . . Out of my sight !

*Kent.* See better, Lear ; and let me still remain  
The true blank of thine eye.

*Lear.* Now, by *Apollo*,—

*Kent.* Now, by *Apollo*, king,  
Thou swear'st thy *gods* in vain.—*Act 1, Scene 1.*

A bow is bent when it is strung. It is full bent when the archer draws the string until the head of the arrow touches the bow.

*Lear* warns *Kent* that the shaft is ready to fall. If the bow was merely bent, the danger would not be imminent, because the shaft could not be loosed ; but the bow was bent and also drawn, and the loose was only wanted to make the fork invade the region of his heart. *Lear* and *Kent* both allude to archery ; *Lear* swears by *Apollo*, and *Ascham* says—

The first bringer into the world of shooting was *Apollo*, which, for his wisdom, and great commodities brought amongst men by him, and esteemed worthy to be counted as a *god* in heaven.

*Hamlet.* They fool me to the top of my bent.

—*Act 3, Scene 2.*

*Benedict.* This can be no trick : the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from *Hero*. They seem to pity the lady : it seems her affections have the full bent.

—*Much Ado About Nothing, Act 2, Scene 3.*

*King.* My honour'd lady,  
I have forgiven and forgotten all :  
Though my revenges were *high bent* upon him,  
And watch'd the time to shoot.

—*All's Well That Ends Well, Act 5, Scene 3.*

Here the *King* refers to the full bent of the bow mentioned by *Lear*.

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*Duke.* Then let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent ;  
For women are as *roses*, whose fair *flower*  
Being once display'd doth fall that very hour.

*Viola.* And so they are ; alas, that they are so ;  
To die even when they to *perfection* grow !

— *Twelfth Night, Act 2, Scene 4.*

I think Shakespeare here refers to the following passage in Ascham's "Schoolmaster."

*No perfection* is durable. Increase hath a time, and decay likewise ; but all perfect ripeness remaineth but a *moment* : as is plainly seen in fruits, plumbs, and cherries ; but more sensibly in *flowers*, as *roses*, and such like ; and yet as truly in all great matters. For what naturally can go higher, must naturally yield and stoop again.

Ascham and Shakespeare use the same words in expressing the same truth. Ascham says, "No *perfection* is durable but all perfect ripeness remaineth but a moment, sensibly in *flowers*, as *roses* and such like : " and Shakespeare says, "Women are as *roses*, whose fair *flower* being once display'd doth fall that very hour, even when they to *perfection* grow."

Fair flowers that are not gather'd in their prime  
Rot and consume themselves in little time.

— *Venus and Adonis.*

Ascham says, "All perfect ripeness remaineth but a *moment*," and Shakespeare says—

When I consider *everything that grows*  
*Holds in perfection but a little moment*,  
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shews  
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment ;  
When I perceive that men as plants increase,  
Cheered and check'd even by the self same sky,  
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,  
And wear their brave state out of memory ;  
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay  
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight,

Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,  
 To change your day of youth to sullied night;  
 And all in war with Time for love of you,  
 As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

— *Sonnet XV.*

The forehand shaft used for over hand shooting had a big breast to enable it to bear the great weight of the bow which stresses a shaft so much; and I think it must have had in addition to the big breast, what it required, a thickening of the wood about the pile end, much beyond the thickness necessary for the little breasted shaft used for under hand shooting, to enable it to bear the shock of impact against well tempered armour or any hard mark: for if the archer shot with a strong bow, loosing sharp and hard, the head of the arrow, unless it was made sufficiently strong to bear the shock at the pile end when it struck a hard mark, would almost certainly break off.

This extra strength would be given the forehand shaft by increasing the thickness of the wood at the pile end, and this increase in thickness would help to make it "compass" heavy. The necessity of preserving the balance of the arrow is mentioned by Ascham—

Peecyng of a shafte with brasell and holie, or other heavy woodes, is to make the end compasse heavy with the fethers in flying, for the stedfaster shootyng. For if the ende were plumpe heavy with lead and the wood next it lyghte, the head ende would ever be downwarde, and never flye straight."

The little breasted shaft was "fit for them that shot under hand," because they shot with a soft loose which stresses not a shaft much. If a soft loose was used when shooting with a little breasted shaft, what sort of a loose was necessary when shooting with a big breasted shaft? Ascham mentions two kinds of loosing, and says "the mean betwixt both is best."



He says loosing must be "so quick and hard, that it be without all girds; so soft and gentle, that the shaft fly not as it were sent out of a bow case."

Now as the little breasted shaft, used in under hand shooting, required a soft and gentle loose, it is, I think, reasonable to conclude that the big breasted shaft used in over hand shooting required a loose quick and hard.

*Oberon.* That very time I saw but thou could'st not,  
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,  
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took  
At a fair vestal throned by the west,  
And loosed his love shaft *smartly* from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.

—*Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 2, Scene 1.*

Cupid loosed his shaft not with a soft loose, but smartly, that is, sharp and hard, as it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts.

Many years ago, in testing the penetrating power of an arrow shot from a strong yew bow, I found that when I used what Ascham calls a quick hard loose on the draw, the arrow went further into soft deal than when I loosed gently from the hold. A quick hard loose can be made more easily and better on the draw than from the hold, and I think I am correct in stating that a loose on the draw will carry an arrow farther than a loose from the hold.

Now, I will quote passages in "Toxophilus" which will, I think, show that the forehand shaft was a heavy arrow.

And here I consider the wonderfull nature of shootynge, whiche standeth all togyther by that fashion, which is moste apte for quicke mouynge, and that is by roundenesse. For firste the bowe must be gathered rounde, in drawyng it must come rounde compasse, the strynge must be rounde, the stele rounde, the best nocke rounde, the feather shorne somewhat rounde, the shafte in flyenge, muste turne rounde, and if it flye far, it flyeth a round compace. For eyther aboue or benethe a *rounde compace*, hyndereth the flyenge. Moreouer bothe the fletcher in makynge your shafte, and

you in nockynge your shafte, muste take heede that two fethers equallye runne on the bowe. For yf one fether runne alone on the bowe, it shal quicklye be worne, and shall not be able to matche with the other fethers, and agayne at the lowse, *yf the shafte be lyght, it wyl starte, if it be heuye, it wil hoble.* And thus as concernyng setting on of your fether.

Again,—

The wonderfull worke of God in makyng all the members so obedient to the eye is a pleasaunte thyng to remember and loke upon: therefore an archer maye be sure in learnyng to looke at hys marke when he is yong, always to shoote streyghte. The thynges that hynder a man whyche looketh at hys marke, to shote streyght, be these: A syde wynde, a bowe either to stronge, or else to weake, an ill arme, when the fether runneth on the bowe to much, a *byg brested shafte*, for hym that shoteth under hande, because it will *hobble*, a *little brested shaft* for hym that shoteth above ye hand, because it will *start*: a paire of windynge prickes, and many other thinges mo, which you shal marke your selfe, and as ye knowe them, so learne to amend them.

The forehand shaft was a big-breasted shaft, and Ascham says the big-breasted shaft will hobble if it is shot underhand. Why? Because it is too heavy for that kind of shooting, which requires a soft loose; and the little-breasted shaft, if shot overhand, will start. Why? Because it is too light for that pithy kind of shooting. And again Ascham says—"At the loose, if the shaft be light, it will start, if it be heavy, it will hobble." So the little-breasted shaft starts because it is light, and the big-breasted shaft hobbles because it is heavy. This explanation is, I think, sufficient to show that the big-breasted, or forehand shaft, used in overhand shooting, was a heavy arrow.

Now, although Ascham says "that which is most perfect in shooting, as always to hit the prick, was never seen nor heard tell of as yet amongst men, but only imagined and thought upon in a man's mind," I think the accounts of the skill and power of our old archers, hereinbefore contained,

will satisfy the reader that Shakespeare does not mean that old Double shot well in clapping an arrow in the clout now and then, because if he could only "stumble sometime on the marke" at 240 yards, he would not deserve, in those shooting days, the name of a good shot, but rather answer Ascham's description of that "archer which ignorantly shooteth considering neyther fayer nor foule, standying nor nockyng, fether nor head, drawying nor lowsynge, nor yet any compase, shall alwayes shote shorte and gone wyde and farr off, and never come nere, except perchance to stumble some tyme on the marke;" and I think the accounts of the power of our old archers will also satisfy the reader that Shakespeare does not mean that old Double shot strong in carrying a light arrow 290 yards, shooting under hand, with the elevation necessary to make the arrow fly a round compass, for strong and skilful archers of the present day, with little or no practice in long distance shooting, would do the same. Such a performance does not need a bow of "great might," or an archer who had been accustomed from his childhood to wrestle with his gear and to lay his body in the bow. What then does Shakespeare mean? Does he mean that old Double could carry a fore hand shaft, which was a heavy arrow, 290 yards shooting under hand, a round compass, a far greater feat than shooting a light arrow the same distance, or does he mean that old Double accomplished that distance shooting over hand, point blank, right "afore" him. Shakespeare had a practical knowledge of archery, and he knew that the fore hand shaft was used in over hand shooting. Many archers of the present day, who are not accustomed to shoot at long distances, or to use very strong bows, may think it impossible to reach 290 yards shooting point blank. "In the year 1795 Mahmond Effendi, Secretary to the Turkish Ambassador, a man possessing very great muscular power, shot an arrow, with a Turkish bow, four hundred and eighty-two yards, in the presence of three members of the Toxophilite Society in London."

This distance would, I suppose, be accomplished shooting under hand a round compass, but any one who can reach 480 yards shooting under hand a round compass, could drive an arrow a long distance shooting over hand "right afore him."

In considering this matter it should be remembered that our forefathers in the sixteenth century practised shooting from childhood to manhood, that they were early taught to lay their bodies in the bow and to wrestle with their gear, and that strong shooting in those days was of the greatest importance.

It is merely a matter of strength and skill. Given a self yew bow sufficiently "mighty of cast," and an archer capable of "maintaining" it, and the feat could be performed. However this may be, I think I have shown that the forehand shaft was a heavy arrow.

When thousands of years have passed away, when nations now living have ceased to exist and their languages are heard no more, when blind oblivion has swallowed cities up, and

Mighty States characterless are grated  
To dusty nothing,

the shooting of old Double may be the only remaining evidence of the great skill and power of those famous English archers who were, for centuries, "the chief stroke in war" and "the terrible dread and fear of all strange nations"; and what a poor opinion that remote posterity will form of their long distance shooting if they are led to believe that it consisted in carrying a light arrow 290 yards, shooting under hand, a round compass. How much more worthy of the old English archers' fame, and how much nearer the truth will be the belief, that a great shot, such as Shakespeare describes old Double to have been, could not only carry a heavy arrow 290 yards, but reach that distance, shooting point black, "right afore him."

When first I imagined that old Double was a real character, I fancied that Shakespeare refers to him whenever he uses



the word double in connection with bows and arrows, as in the following passage—

*Scroop.* The very headsmen learn to bend their bows  
Of double-fatal yew against thy state.

—*King Richard II., Act 3, Scene 2.*

It is, however, possible that Shakespeare, as a commentator\* supposes, calls the bow double-fatal because the leaves of the yew are poisonous, and the bows made of yew were, in the hands of English archers, fatal instruments of war. I once thought that Shakespeare alludes in this passage to the yew backed yew, a bow which came into use in his time. It is a bow made of two pieces of yew joined together, and therefore double.

It is said that the yew backed yew and other backed bows were first made by the Kelsals of Manchester, who had been for centuries celebrated as bow makers. Surprise has been expressed that the English backed bow should have originated in Lancashire, but it seems to me not at all surprising, considering that archery was much practised in that county, and that Lancashire men were long celebrated for their great power and skill in shooting in the long-bow. There is an old saying—

Lancashyre faire archerie.

And, according to a line in Drayton's "Baron's Wars," there came—

From Lancashire men famous for their bows.

and Ascham speaks of "the stout archers of Cheshire and Lancashire."

*Maria.* All this I believe, and none of all these parcels  
I dare except against; nay more, so far  
I am for making these *the ends I aim at*,  
These idle outward things, these women's fears,  
That were I yet unmarried, free to chuse

---

\* Warburton, I think.



Through all the tribes of men, I would take Petrucio  
 In 's shirt, with one ten groats to pay the priest,  
 Before the best man living and the ablest  
 That e'er leap'd out of Lancashire: and they are right ones.

—*The Woman's Prize, Act 1, Scene 3.*

The words "the ends I aim at" show that Beaumont and Fletcher, when they wrote this passage, were thinking of archery, and it is probable that, in speaking of the "ablest that e'er leap'd out of Lancashire," they may refer to the ablest archers of that county. It is known that Henry VII. established a royal body-guard, and that he ordered fifty tall men to be selected from the Lancashire archers to form the guard.

Ben Jonson uses the word double in connection with archery.

Thus have you seen the maker's double scope,  
 To profit and delight; wherein our hope  
 Is, though the clout we do not always hit,  
 It will not be imputed to his wit:  
 A tree so tried, and bent, as 't will not start:  
 Nor doth he often crack a string of art;  
 Though there may other accidents as strange  
 Happen, the weather of your looks may change,  
 Or some high wind of misconceit arise,  
 To cause an alteration in our skies:  
 If so, we are sorry, that have so misspent  
 Our time and tackle; yet he's confident,  
 And vows the next fair day he'll have us shoot  
 The same match o'er for him, if you'll come to 't.

—*The Epilogue.*—"The Staple of News."

Though the archer admits that he does not always hit the clout, he seems to be well satisfied with the tree or yew bow which has been so tried and bent; as Ascham says, so "well seasoned and truly made with heatings and tillerings that it will not start:" and he handles his bow with such skill, that he does not often crack a string of art,—not an "ill string that breaketh many a bow," but a good string made by an honest

stringer: and though the weather may change or some high wind arise making an alteration in the sky and causing him to misspend his time and tackle; yet he is confident and vows, the next fine day, he will shoot the same match over again.

Jonson may use the word maker in a double sense, signifying the poet or maker of plays, and the bowyer, or maker of bows: for the double scope of the poet or maker is to profit and delight, and the double scope of the bowyer, or maker of bows, was to profit in war and to give pleasure in peace. Jonson begins the "Epilogue" with mentioning the maker's *double* scope, and then he speaks of nothing else but archery. He speaks of the maker's double scope to profit and delight, and Ascham uses this word profit in connection with shooting.

But now if you can shewe that halfe so moche *profyte* in warre of shotynge, as you have proved pleasure in peace, then wyll I surely judge that there be fewe things that have so manifold commodities, and uses joynd to them as it hath.

Again—

Howe longe shotynge hath continued, what common wealthes hath most used it, howe honesto a thyng it is for all men, what kynde of living so ever they follow, what *pleasure* and *profit* cometh of it, both in peace and warre, all manner of tongues and writers, Hebrue, Greke, and Latine, hath so plentifulle spoken of it, as of fewe other things like.

So in shooting there was profit in war and also delight and pleasure in peace.

Ascham also describes the profit or advantage of shooting in war in his translation of a passage in "Euripides," to which Shakespeare may allude in Richard II.

*King Richard.* For within the hollow crown,  
That rounds the mortal temples of a king,  
Keeps death his court: and there the antic sits,  
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;  
Allowing him a breath, a little scene

To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks ;  
 Infusing him with self and vain conceit,—  
 As if this flesh, which *walls about* our life,  
 Were brass impregnable, and, humour'd thus,  
 Comes at the last, and with a little pin  
 Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell, king !

—*Act 3, Scene 2.*

Against the wittie gifte of shoting in a bowe  
 Fonde and lend woordes thou leudlie doest out throwe,  
 Whiche, if thou wylte heare of me a worde or twayne  
 Quicklie thou mayst learne how fondlie thou doest blame,  
 Firste, he that with his *harneis* him selfe doth *wal about*,  
 That scarce is lefte one hole through which he may pepe out,  
 Such bondmen to their harneis to fight are nothing mete  
 But sonest of al other are troden vnder fete.  
 Yf he be stronge his felovves faynt, in whome he putteth  
     his trust,  
 So loded with his harneis must nedes lie in the dust,  
 Nor yet from death he cannot starte, if ones his weapon  
     breke,  
 Howe stoute, howe stronge, howe great, how longe, so euer  
     be suche a freke.  
 But who so euer can handle a bowe sturdie stiffe and stronge  
 Wherwith lyke haylemanie shaftes he shootes into the  
     thickest thronge :  
 This *profit* he takes, that standing a far his enemie he may  
     spill  
 Whan he and his full safe shall stande out of all daunger  
     and ill.  
 And this in War is wisdomes moste, which workes our  
     enemies woo.  
 Whan we shal be far from all feare and ieoperdie of our foo.

The king, infused with self and vain conceit, imagines the flesh, that walls about our life, to be like harness or brass, impregnable.

Some old authors call the bow a tree, as Jonson does in the Epilogue to "The Staple of News," and also, probably, in "Love's Welcome at Welbeck"—

*Acci.* Well run, Green-hood, got between,  
 Under the sand-bag he was seen,  
 Lowting low like a forester queen.

*Ritz.* He knows his *tackle* and his *treen*.

A Lancashire archer, desirous of joining the royal body-guard of archers, recommends himself to the king by giving an account of his strong shooting in the following old verses:—

They called me craven to my face  
 When I was at my supper sat,  
 And bade me flie all from that place  
 Unto that coward, the Earle of Derby.  
 Whilst I was little, and had small geare,  
 He was my help and succour true;  
 He took me from my father dear,  
 And kept me with his own,  
 Tyll I was able of myself  
 Both to shoot and prick a stone,  
 Then under Greenhithe on a daye,  
 A Scottish mynstrell came to thee,  
 And broughte a bowe of eugh to drawe,  
 But alle the garde might not stir that *tree*.  
 Then the bowe was given to the Earle of Derby,  
 And the Earle deilvered it to me.  
 Seven shots before your face I shot,  
 And at the eighth in sunder it did flee.  
 I bade the Scot bowe down his face,  
 And gather up the bowe, and bringe it to his  
 kinge.  
 Then it liked your noble Grace,  
 Into your garde me to brynge.

The tree the guard could not stir was a bow. The word tackle used by Jonson signifies archery gear.

*Lancaster.* Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?

When every thing is ended, then you come:  
 These tardy tricks of yours will, on my life,  
 One time or other break some gallows' back.

*Fal.* I would be sorry, my lord, but it should be thus: I never knew yet but rebuke and check was the reward of valour. Do you think me a swallow, *an arrow*, or a bullet? have I, in my poor and old motion, the expedition of thought? I have *speeded* hither with the very *extremest*

*inch of possibility*; I have foundered nine score and odd posts: and here travel-tainted as I am, have, in my pure and immaculate valour, taken Sir John Coleville of the dale, a most furious knight and valorous enemy.

*2 Part, Henry IV., Act 4, Scene 3.*

Falstaff wishes Lancaster to believe that he has come with all the speed of which he was capable, and he signifies that by stating that he has speeded with the very extremest inch of possibility, comparing the effect produced by his own exertion on his poor and old motion, to the effect produced by the exertion of the archer when he draws the arrow up to the extremest inch of its length, thereby causing its greatest possible speed.

The arrow when drawn to the extremest inch of its length and properly loosed flies with the greatest speed which it is capable of attaining, and it is, I think, through this simile that Falstaff wishes to convey that he had speeded as quickly as he could.

*Iachimo.* Some dozen Romans of us and your lord—  
The *best feather of our wing*—have mingled sums  
To buy a present for the emperor.

*—Cymbeline, Act 1, Scene 7.*

*Cæsar.* Let him appear that's come from Anthony.  
Know you him?

*Dolabella.* Cæsar, 'tis his schoolmaster:  
An argument that he is pluck'd when hither  
He sends so *poor a pinion of his wing*,  
Which had superfluous kings for messengers  
Not many moons gone by.

*—Antony and Cleopatra, Act 3, Scene 12.*

According to Ascham *the best feather of the wing* for arrows is the pinion feather, and I think it probable that Iachimo alludes to the pinion feather.

A fenny goose, euen as her flesh is blacker, stoorer, vnwholsomer, so is her fether for the same cause courser stoorer and rougher, and therefore I haue heard very good



fletchers saye, that the seconde fether in some place is better then the *pinion* in other some. Betwixt the winges is lytle difference, but that you must haue diuerse shaftes of one *flight*, fethered with diuerse winges, for diuerse windes: for if the wynde and the fether go both one way the shaft wyll be caryed to moche. *The pinion fethers as it hath the first place in the winge, so it hath the fyrst place in good fetheringe.* You maye knowe it afore it be pared, by a bought whiche is in it, and agayne when it is colde, by the thinnesse aboue, and the thicknesse at the grounde, and also by the stifnes and finesse which wyll cary a shaft better, faster and further, euen as a fine sayle cloth doth a shyppe.

Suche hastinesse I am afrayde, maye also be found amonges some of them, whych through out ye Realme in diuerse places work ye kinges Artillarie for war, thinkynge yf they get a bowe or a sheafe of arrowes to some fashion, they be good ynough for bearynge gere. And thus that weapon whiche is the chiefe defence of the Realme, veye ofte doth lytle seruyce to hym that shoulde vse it, bycause it is so negligentlye wrought of him that shuld make it, when trewlye I suppose that nether ye bowe can be to good and chefe woode, nor yet to well seasoned or truly made, wyth hetynge and tillerynge, nether that shafte to good wood or to thorowely wrought, with the best *pinion fethers* that can be gotten, wherwith a man shal serue his prince, defende his countrie, and saue hym selfe frome his enemye. And I trust no man wyll be angrye wyth me for spekyng thus, but those which finde them selfe touched therein: which ought rather to be angrye wyth them selfe for doynge so, than to be discontent wyth me for saynge so. And in no case they ought to be displeased wyth me, seinge this is spoken also after that sorte, not for the notynge of anye person seuerally, but for the amendynge of euery one generallye.

*Benedict.* "Prince, thou are sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife: There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn."

I think Shakespeare here uses a bowyer's phrase. When the horns are fitted to the ends of the bow stave they are said

to be tipped. I once thought that Shakespeare in this passage may refer to Cupid's bow stave. Staff and stave have the same derivation.

*Bastard.* Near or far off, well won is still well shot.

*King John, Act 1, Scene 1.*

Shakespeare may have a double meaning in this line: one referring to the arrows falling near or far off the mark, the other to the short or long butts which are near or far off the shooter.

*Morton.* I am sorry I should force you to believe  
That which I would to God I had not seen;  
But these mine eyes saw him in bloody state,  
Rendering faint quittance, wearied and out-breathed,  
To Harry Monmouth; whose swift wrath beat down  
The never-daunted Percy to the earth,  
From whence with life he never more sprung up.  
In few, his death, whose spirit lent a fire  
Even to the dullest peasant in his camp,  
Being bruited once, took fire and heat away  
From the best-temper'd courage in his troops;  
For from his metal was his party steel'd;  
Which once in him abated, all the rest  
Turn'd on themselves, like dull and heavy lead:  
And as the thing that's heavy in itself,  
Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed,  
So did our men, heavy in Hotspur's loss,  
Lend to this weight such lightness with their fear  
That arrows fled not swifter toward their aim  
Than did our soldiers, aiming at their safety,  
Fly from the field.—2, *Henry IV., Act 1, Scene 1.*

Morton says—

The thing that's heavy in itself

Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed.

And as there is here an evident allusion to archery, I have thought that Shakespeare may refer to the following passage in the "Toxophilus":—

For of all other woodes that euer I proued Asshe being  
big is *swiftest and agayne heuy* to giue a greate stripe with

all, which Aspe shall not doo. What heuynes doth in a stripe euery man by experience can tell, therefore Asshe being both swyfter and heuier is more fit for sheafe Arroes then Aspe, and thus muche for the best wood for shaftes.

According to Ascham, although ash is heavier than asp, an arrow made of ash is swifter than an arrow made of asp; in other words the arrow made of ash

Upon enforcement flies with greatest speed.

*Nestor.* In the reproof of chance  
Lies the true proof of men : the sea being smooth,  
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail  
Upon her patient breast, making their way  
With those of nobler bulk !  
But let the ruffian Boreas once engage  
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold  
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,  
Bounding between the two moist elements  
Like Perseus' horse : where's then the saucy boat,  
Whose weak *untimber'd* sides but even now  
Co-rivall'd greatness ? Either to harbour fled  
Or made a toast for Neptune.

—*Troilus and Cressida, Act 1, Scene 3.*

Lytle botes and thinne boardes, can not endure the rage of a tempest.

Under the greenwood tree  
Who loves to lie with me,  
And turn his merry note  
Unto the sweet bird's throat.  
Come hither, come hither, come hither :  
Here shall he see  
No enemy

But *Winter and rough weather.*

—*As You Like It, Act 2, Scene 5.*

In consydering the tyme of the yeare, a wyse Archer wyll folowe a good shipman. In *Winter and rough weather*, small bootes and little pinkes forsake the seas : and at one tyme of the yeare, no Gallies come abrode ; so lyke wyse weake Archers, usyng small and *holowe shaftes*, with bowes

of little pith, muste be content to gyve place for a tyme. And this I do not saye, eyther to discommende or discourage any weake shooter: For lykewyse, as there is no shippe better than Gallies be, in a softe and a caulme sea, so no man shooteth cumlier or nerer hys marke, than some weake Archers doo, in a fayre and clear daye.

*King.*

The other motive

Why to a public count I might not go,  
Is the great love the general gender bear him;  
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,  
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,  
Convert his gyves to graces; so that my arrows,  
Too *slightly timber'd* for so loud a wind,  
Would have reverted to my bow again,  
And not where I had aim'd them.

—*Hamlet, Act 4, Scene 7.*

*Lytle botes* and *thinne boordes*, can not endure the rage of a tempest. *Weake bowes* and *lyght shaftes* can not stande in a rough wynde. And lykewyse as a blynde man which shoulde go to a place where he had neuer ben afore, that hath but one strayghte waye to it, and of eyther syde hooles and pyttes to faule into, nowe falleth in to this hole and than into that hole, and neuer commeth to his iourney ende, but wandereth alwaies here and there, farther and farther of: So that archer which ingnorauntly shoteth considering neyther fayer or foule, standynge nor nockynge, fether nor head, drawynge nor lowsying, nor yet any *compace*, shall alwayes shote shorte and gone, wyde and farre of, and neuer comme nere, excepte perchaunce he stumble sumtyme on the marke. For ignoraunce is nothyng elles but mere blyndenesse.

According to Ascham, weak archers, who use small and hollow shafts with bows of little pith, must, in winter and rough weather, when small boats and little pinks forsake the seas, be content to give place for a time. The rough weather which makes the saucy boat, whose weak untimber'd sides co-rivall'd greatness, flee to the harbour, or became a toast for Neptune, causes the too slightly timber'd arrows to revert to the bow again.

The elevation of the arrow in compass shooting is given by raising the bow hand, not by lowering the shaft hand.

When the old archers shot at long distances they looked at the mark and took their aim under the bow hand, which was raised to elevate the head of the arrow, so as to cause it, when loosed, to describe a round compass, or parabolic curve in the air.

Spenser seems to compare the descent of the "Sonne of Maia" to the fall of the arrow in long distance shooting:—

The Sonne of Maia, soone as he receiv'd  
That word, streight with his azure wings he cleav'd  
The liquid cloudes and lurid firmament ;  
He staid, till that he came with steep descent  
Unto the place, where his prescript did shoue.  
There stouping, like an arrowe from a bowe,  
He soft arrived on the grassie plaine.

And Ben Jonson in "The Fox" seems to refer to this stouping of the arrow in compass shooting.

*Mosca.* But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise  
And *stoop*, almost together, like an arrow ;  
Shot through the air as nimble as a star ;  
Turn short as doth a swallow ; and be here,  
And there, and here and yonder all at once.

Ascham, speaking of the flight of the arrow, says—

If it flieth far, it flieth a round compass, for either  
above or beneath a round compass hindereth the flight.

And he then describes the three things necessary for securing true compass:—

Then drawe equally, loose equally, with holding your  
hand ever of one height to keep true compass.

Without this elevation and high aim necessary for the great distances, the arrow would fall short of the mark.

When the old archers shot over hand they looked at the mark and took their aim over the bow hand, shooting right afore them, and holding their arrows horizontal, parallel with the ground on which they stood, so that the arrow when loosed would take a low flight.



Therefore under hand shooting was necessary when the mark was far off, the overhand shooting when the mark was near at hand.

The word compass is sometimes used by Shakespeare's contemporaries and by old English authors in this sense. I give a few quotations:—

*Friar Lawrence.* Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief;  
It strains me past the compass of my wits:  
I hear then must, and nothing may prorogue it,  
On Thursday next be married to this County.

—*Romeo and Juliet, Act 3, Scene 1.*

*Roderigo.* Well, what is it? is it within reason and compass.

—*Othello, Act 4, Scene 2.*

*Gloucester.* Hast thou not worldly pleasures at command,  
Above the reach or compass of thy thought?

*Second Part Henry VI., Act 1, Scene 2.*

And in “Morte Arthure” within the compass signifies within the reach.

Ffor Sir Marrake was mane merrede in elde,  
And Sir Mordrede was myghty, and in his most strenghis;  
Come none with-in the compas, knyghte ne none other,  
With-in the swyng of swerde, that ne he swete leuyd.

*Norfolk.* When these suns,  
For so they phrase 'em by their heralds challenged  
The noble spirits to armes, they did perform  
Beyond thought's compass.

—*Henry VIII., Act 1, Scene 1.*

I think Shakespeare uses the word compass in these passages in the sense in which it is used by Ascham, signifying the extent or space encompassed by the arrow in shooting.

*Vitelli.* This place affords no privacy for discourse;  
But I can tell you wonders: my rich habit  
Deserves least admiration; there is nothing  
That can fall in compass of your wishes,  
Then it were to redeem a thousand slaves

From the Turkish gallies, or, at home, to erect  
Some pious work, to shame all hospitals,  
But I am master of the means.

*The Renegade, Act 2, Scene 6.—Massinger.*

Cozimo. May the passage prove,  
Of what's presented, worthy of your love  
And favour, as was aimed, and we have all,  
That can in compass of air <sup>over</sup>wishes fall.  
—*The Great Duke of Florence, Act 5, Scene 3.—Massinger.*

Massinger in these passages refers to compass shooting.

Sapho. But what do you think best for your sighing  
to take it away?

Phao. Yew, madam.

Sapho. Me?

Phao. No madam, yew of the tree.

Sapho. Then will I love yew the better. And indeed  
I think it would make me sleep too, therefore all other  
simples set aside, I will use only yew.

Phao. Do, madam: for I think nothing in the world  
so good as yew.

Sapho. Farewell for this time.

Venus. Is not your name Phao?

Phao. Phao, fair Venus, whom you made so fair.

Venus. So passing fair! O fair Phao, O sweet Phao,  
what wilt thou do for Venus?

Phao. Any thing that cometh in the compass of my  
poor fortune.

Venus. Cupid shall teach thee to shoot.

—*Sapho and Phao, Act 3, Scene 4.*

Duke. One that doth seem to loath all womankind,  
To hate himself because he hath some part  
Of woman in him, seems not to endure  
To see or to be seen of any woman,  
Only because he knows it is their nature  
To wish to taste that which is most forbidden:  
And with this show he may the better compass  
(And with far less suspicion) his base ends.  
—*The Woman-Hater, Act 2, Scene 1.*

*Somerton.* Come, frolick, Ned, were every man master of his own fortune, Fate might pick straws, and Destiny go a wool-gathering.

*Warbeck.* You hold yours in a string, though: 'tis well; but if there be any equity, look thou to meet the like usage ere long.

*Somerton.* In my love to her sister Katherine? Indeed, they are a pair of arrows drawn out of one quiver, and should fly at an *even length*; if she do run after her sister,—

*Somerton.* She'll keep a surer compass; I have too strong a confidence to mistrust her.

*Warbeck.* And that confidence is a wind that has blown many a married man ashore in Cuckold's Haven, I can tell you. I wish yours more prosperous, though.

—*The Witch of Edmonton, Act 2, Scene 2.*

Somerton compares two sisters to two arrows drawn out of one quiver, and he says they should fly at an even length, because, although shafts varied in length as they did in weight and strength, each archer put in his quiver, or sheath, arrows suited to the length of his draw.

Ascham says:—

Now howe big, how small, how heuye, how lyght, how longe, how short, a shafte should be particularylve for euery man (seynge we must taulke of the generall nature of shootyng) can not be toulde no more than you Rhethoricians can appoynt any one kynde of wordes, of sentences, of figures fyt for euery matter, but euen as the man and the matter requyreth so the fytest to be vsed.

If the arrows an archer uses are not all of the same length, although he does all that he ought to do, and draws home, looses equally, and holds his hand ever of one height, he cannot, however skilful he may be, keep a sure compass, or the even length necessary for accurate shooting.

Shakespeare knew that the archer required for accurate shooting arrows of equal length. He makes *Bassanio* say:—

*Bass.* In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,  
I shot his fellow of the *self-same flight*  
The self-same way with more advised watch,

To find the other forth, and by adventuring both  
 I oft found both : I urge this childhood proof,  
 Because what follows is pure innocence.  
 I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,  
 That which I owe is lost ; but if you please  
*To shoot another arrow that self way*  
*Which you did shoot the first*, I do not doubt,  
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both  
 Or bring your latter hazard back again  
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

—*Merchant of Venice*, Act 1, Scene 1.

Arrows of the same length <sup>and weight</sup> when drawn to the head have  
 the same flight, the elevation and loose being the same.

The fellow shaft of the self same flight is a shaft of the  
 same length.

Ascham says—"you must have divers shafts of *one flight*  
 feathered with divers wings for divers winds."

The shafts Shakespeare used to loose in his schooldays,  
 were snaked or grass'd, so Webster says.

*Cornelia.* I pray thee, peace.  
 One arrow's graz'd already : it were vain  
 To lose this for that will ne'er be found again.

This method of finding a lost arrow by shooting another  
 the self same way and watching where it falls, is not  
 mentioned by Ascham, but it was known to archers long  
 before his time.

*Memnon.* He has out done all,  
 Outstripped 'em sheerly ; all, all ; thou hast, Polydore !  
 To die for me ? Why, as I hope for happiness,  
 'Twas one o' the rarest-thought-on things, the bravest  
 And carried beyond the *compass* of our actions.  
 I wonder how he *hit it*.—*The Mad Lover*, Act 5, Scene 4.

*Memnon* speaks figuratively. He compares their actions to  
 arrows, and "one of the rarest-thought-on things," to a mark  
 placed beyond the compass or distance he and others could  
 shoot, and he wonders how his brother could hit a mark so far

removed. So, the grief of *Juliet* strains *Friar Lawrence* past the compass of his wits; *Gloucester* asks *Eleanor* if she has not worldly pleasure at command, above the reach or compass of her thought; and *Norfolk* says, the noble spirits, when challenged to arms, did perform beyond thought's compass.

*Countesse.* Kings are like archers, and their subjects shafts:

For as when archers let their arrowes flye,  
They call to them, and bid them flye or fall,  
As if 'twere in the free power of the shaft  
To flye or fall, when only 'tis the strength,  
Straight shooting, *compasse* given it by the archer,  
That make it hit or misse; and doing eyther,  
Hee's to be prais'd or blam'd, and not the shaft:  
So kings to subjects crying, doe, doe not this;  
Must to them by their owne example's strength,  
The straightnesse of their acts, and equall *compasse*,  
Give subjects power t' obey them in the like;  
Not shoote them forth with faultie ayme and strength,  
And lay the fault in them for flying amisse.

—*The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, Act 4, Scene 1.*

Chapman refers in this passage to compass shooting, and also to the fault of "crying after the shaft," thus described by Ascham:—

Nowe afterwarde when the shafte is gone, men haue manye faultes, whyche euell Custome hath broughte them to, specially in *cryinge after the shafte*, and speakynge woordes scarce honest for suche an honest pastyme.

*King Richard.* Draw archers, draw your arrows to the head.

—*Richard III., Act 5, Scene 3.*

*Titus.* Sir boy, now let us see your archery  
Look you draw home enough, and 'tis there straight.

—*Titus Andronicus, Act 4, Scene 3.*

It has been said that the words draw home enough are worth a whole chapter of Ascham. There is a proverb that



"many talk of Robin Hood, who never shot in his bow," and I know that some talk of Roger Ascham who never knew his books.

Ascham considers no part of shooting is of more importance than drawing well, for he says "drawing well is the best part of shooting," and "to draw easily and uniformly, that is for to say, not wagging your hand, now upward, now downward, but always after one fashion, until you come to the rig or shoulder of the head, is best both for profit and for seemliness." He speaks also of the man used to shoot drawing his shaft up to the point every time, and also advises "the gentlemen and yeomen of England" to draw equally, loose equally, with holding your hand ever of one "height to keep true compass."

In fact, Ascham's instruction in drawing is most comprehensive; he not only insists upon the importance of drawing the arrow to the head, but of drawing equally, so that, if the bow be too strong for the archer to draw home, he should be careful to draw the arrow the same distance, that is equally, for each shot. "Some shooters," says Ascham, "take in hand stronger bows, than they be able to maintain." I knew a very good shot who used a bow stronger than he was able to maintain. He did not draw his arrows to the head, but he drew them equally, the same length every shot, and this equality he preserved by drawing his arrows every time as far as a conspicuous mark which he had placed upon them, at an equal distance from the ~~X~~knock.

It is possible that Ascham may have seen such a method adopted by archers, who happened to be using bows which were too strong for them to draw home; and, although I do not suppose that he would have approved of such a method, yet it is a fact that the drawing of arrows, all of the same weight, to marks made upon them at equal distances from the ~~X~~knock, ensures equality of force from the bow, whereas, if the arrows happen to vary in length, the drawing home will give

different degrees of motive power, on account of the varying length of the draw. The importance of drawing the arrow to the head is very old knowledge. It was known to Shakespeare's contemporaries and older authors, and even the great Homer mentions it.

“Ἐλκε δ' ὁμοῦ γλῦφίδας τε λαβὼν καὶ νεῦρα βόεια·  
 Νευρὴν μὲν μαζῶι πέλασεν, τόξῳ δὲ σίδηρον.

---

*King.* The extreme parts of time extremely forms  
 All causes to the purpose of his speed,  
 And often at his *very loose* decides  
 That which long process could not arbitrate :  
 And though the mourning brow of progeny  
 Forbid the smiling courtesy of love  
 The holy suit which fain it would convince,  
 Yet, since love's argument was first on foot,  
 Let not the crowd of sorrow justle it  
 From what it purposed ; since, to wail friends lost  
 Is not by much so wholesome-profitable  
 As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

*Prin.* I understand you not : my griefs are *double*.

*Love's Labour Lost, Act 5, Scene 2.*

If my interpretation of this passage is correct, it will be necessary to read form for forms. Shakespeare uses a metaphor. He compares time to an archer with his bow and arrow. The speed of the arrow represents the speed of time. The extreme formation consists in the ends or extreme parts of the bow, to which the string is attached, being drawn until the bow has its full or extreme bent ; in the arrow being drawn to its head or extreme part ; and in the fingers being extended until the string quits their extreme ends at the very loose. These are all causes which the archer Time forms for the purpose of his speed, and they are all extreme. What does the archer Time at his very loose decide ? Not

that which by long process he had thought of doing, but something quite different. This decision at the very loose Ascham speaks of :—

Stronge men, without use, can do nothyng in shoting to any purpose, neither in warre nor peace, but if they happen to shoote, yet they have done within a shoote or two when a weak man that is used to shoote, shal serue for all tymes and purposes, and shall shoote. x. shaftes, agaynst the others. iiii. and drawe them vp to the poynte, euerye tyme, and shoote them to the moosto aduantage, *drawyng and withdrawing* his shafte when he list, *markynge at one man, yet let driuyng at an other man* : whyche thynges in a set battayle, although a man, shall not alwayes vse, yet in bickerynges, and at ouerthwarte meatinges, when fewe archers be togyther, they do mooste good of all.

Describing a somewhat similar process where the archer draws and withdraws his shaft when he lists, marking at one man and yet “at his very loose let driving at another man.”

So, in Beaumont and Fletcher’s “Maid of the Mill,” Julio says—

Lover’s have policies as well as statesmen :  
They look not always at the mark they aim at.

—Act 4, Scene 2.

Servia, in their “Custom of the Country,” expresses a similar practice :—

Where have your eyes been wand’ring my Arnaldo ?  
What constancy, what faith do you call this ?  
Aim at one wanton mark, and wound another ?

—Act 4, Scene 3.

And Ben Jonson, in “Cynthia’s Revels,” seems to refer to this power.

*Crites.* And I do count it a most rare revenge,  
That I can thus, with such a sweet neglect,  
Pluck from them all the pleasure of their malice,  
For *that’s the mark of all the enginuous drifts,*  
To wound my patience, *howso’er they seem*  
*To aim at other objects* ; which if miss’d,  
Their envoy’s like an arrow shot upright,  
That in the fall, endangers their own heads.

—Act 3, Scene 2.

This power of "marking at one man and let driving at another man," belongs to men used to shoot, for, as Ascham continues to say—

*Toxophilus.* He that is not used to shoote, shall evermore with vntowardnesse of houldyng his bowe, and nockying his shafte, not lookyng to his stryng betyme, put his bowe alwayes in ieoperdy of breakyng, and than he were better to be at home, moreouer he shal shoote very fewe shaftes, and those full vnbandsumlye, some not halfe drawen, some to hygh, and some to lowe, nor he *can not driue a shoote at a tyme, nor stoppe a shoote at a neede, but oute muste it*, and very ofte to euell profe.

*Philogus.* And that is best I trow in war, to let it go, and not to stoppe it.

*Toxophilus.* No not so, but somtyme to houlde a shafte at the heade, whyche if they be but few archers, doth more good with the feare of it, than it shoulde do if it were shot, with the stroke of it.

The archery phrase "very loose" is not often used by old authors. It occurs once in Ascham's "Toxophilus" and Lyly uses the phrase in one of his plays—

*Venus.* This arrow, sweet child, and with as great aim as thou canst, must Phao be stricken withal, and cry softly to thyself in the *very loose*, Venus!

—*Sopho and Phao, Act 4, Scene 1.*

Shakespeare uses the phrase "very loose" once only, unless he refers to it in "Antony and Cleopatra":—

*Antony.* Betray'd I am :  
O this false soul of Egypt! This grave charm,—  
Whose eye becked forth my wars, and called them home,  
Like a right gipsy, hath at fast and loose,  
Whose bosom was my crownet my *chief end*,  
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.

—*Act 4, Scene 10.*

If Shakespeare in using the words "very heart of loss" refers to the very loose in shooting, he must play upon the

word loss and imply that Antony had not only lost Cleopatra, but that she had beguiled him to the last moment, to the very end of his aim and the very loose of his arrow.

The *chief end* in shooting is to hit the mark, and that end is attained by shooting straight and keeping a length, and Cleopatra's bosom was Antony's crownet and chief end.

*Prince.* Let the end try the man.

—2 *Henry IV.*, Act 2, Scene 2.

I know that the end often tries the archer. The end is the place where the Marks, the Butts or Clouts are fixed. Shakespeare often uses the word in this sense.

*Othello.* Here is my journey's *end*, here is my butt, and very sea mark of my utmost sail.—Act 5, Scene 2.

*Wolsey.*

Be just and fear not !

Let all the *ends* thou aim'st at be thy country's—  
'Thy God's, and truth's.—

*Henry VIII.*, Act 3, Scene 2.

*Affidius.*

I raised him, and I pawn'd

Mine honour for his truth : who being so heighten'd.

He water'd his new plants with dews of flattery,

Seducing so my friends ; and to this *end*,

He *bow'd* his nature, never known before

But to be rough, ungovernable, and free.—

*Coriolanus*, Act 5, Scene 6.

Shakespeare may play upon the word bow in this passage.

“Shootyng,” says Ascham, “standeth by those things which maye both be thorowlye perceved and perfittly knowen, and suche that never failes, but be ever certayne, belongynge to one most perfect ende, as shooting streight, and keping of a length bring a man to the marke, *ye chefe end* in shootyng : which two thynges a man may attaine unto, by diligent using, and well handling those instrumentes which belong to them.”

Various emendations of this passage have been suggested by the commentators, but I now only refer to one of them—the substitution of dart for parts. Dart is considered by some



editors a correct emendation—Delius, I think, not excepted—because in the next line but one it is followed by the archery term loose. But this word loose, instead of supporting the proposed emendation, shows that was not the word Shakespeare wrote, because the dart cannot loose itself; it can only be loosed by the archer. The loose is the action of the archer, and Shakespeare speaks of *his* loose, not *its* loose. The most plausible of all emendations are those made in passages where the context seems to suit the substituted word or words. Unfortunately when an alteration is made or inserted by one editor, it is often adopted by another, and unless the reader is familiar with the old copies, he may suppose that Shakespeare wrote the substituted word, and also attribute to him the want of knowledge which has often caused the commentators to make the alteration. I will mention one alteration made in the last century, to which I called attention many years ago in *Notes and Queries* :—

*Blanch.* O well did he become that Lyons robe,  
That did disrobe the Lion of that robe.

*Bastard.* It lies as sightly on the backe of him  
As great Alcides' *shooes* upon an asse :

But asse, I'll take that *burthen* from your *backe*,  
Or lay on that shall make your *shoulders* cracke.

*King John, Act 2, Scene 1.*

Some editors read Alcides' shows, following the emendation of one of the commentators.\* But Shakespeare, no doubt, wrote shooes, for he evidently refers to the following passage in "Euphues," where Lyly speaks of Hercules' shoe :—

My sonnes (mine age giveth me the privilege of that terme, and your honesties cannot refuse it), you are too young to understand matters of State, and were you elder to knowe them it were not for your estates. And, therefore, me thinketh, the time were but lost in pulling Hercules' *shoe* upon an Infant's foot, or in setting Atlas' *burthen* on a childe's *shoulder*, or to bruse your *backes* with the *burthen* of a whole kingdome."

---

\* Theobald.

In these passages Shakespeare and Lyly, in speaking of Hercules' shoe, use the same words, *burthen*, *back*, and *shoulder*.

Students of Shakespeare may often appreciate the truth of the words of Macrobius, quoted by Coke, "*Multa ignoramus quae nobis non laterent si veterum lectio nobis fuit familiaris.*"

Plausible conjectural emendations can be easily made. I will give a few examples.

*Timon.* This yellow slave  
Will knit and break religions, bless the accursed,  
Make the hoar leprosy adored, place thieves  
And give them title, knee and approbation  
With senators on the bench : this is it  
That makes the *wappen'd* widow wed again ;  
She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores  
Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices.

—*Timon of Athens, Act 4, Scene 2.*

This word "*wappen'd*" has caused much discussion, and the commentators, who have not yet shown that it is used by any other author, have explained it to mean worn out, over worn, old, stale, etc. But why should the spital-house or ulcerous sores cast the gorge at the widow merely because she was worn out and old? It seems to me that if it was the physical condition of the widow which made her repulsive, Shakespeare might as well have written *wappen'd* woman. What occasion was there to make a widow of her? She would, if her physical condition made her repulsive, be repulsive whether she were married or single; and Shakespeare might have exemplified the debasing power of gold as well by saying that it even caused the *wappen'd* woman to wed again. But I think it was not the physical or even the moral condition of the woman that made her repulsive, but the mere fact that she had been the wife and was the widow of a very bad character, who had been found guilty of committing some serious crime and hanged at Wapping.

According to Stow “notable pirates and salt water thieves” were hung at Wapping. (See the “Annals of England,” 1600, *passim*, and pages 1143, 1159, 1175.) Criminals were hanged there in Shakespeare’s time, and some of his contemporaries associate the place with hanging.

*Clown.* We shall never reach London, I fear; my mind runs so much of *hanging*, landing at *Wapping*.

—*The Fair Maid of the Inn*, Act 5, Scene 3.  
*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

*Hornet.* Do you play the merchant, son Belch?

*Hans Van Belch.* Yan, vader. Ich heb de skip swim now upon de vater: if you endouty, go up in de little skip dat go so, and be pulled up to *Wapping*. Ick sall bear you on my back, and hang you about min neck into min groet skip.

*Hornet.* He says, Doll, he would have thee to *Wapping*, and hang thee.—*Northward Ho*, Act 2, Scene 1.

*John Webster.*

In describing a pirate Sir Thomas Overbury says:—“He is the merchant’s book, that serves onely to reckon up his losses; a perpetual plague to noble traffique, the hurican of the sea, and the earth-quake of the exchange. Yet for all this give him but his pardon, and forgive him restitution, he may live to know the inside of a church and die on this side *Wapping*.”

So we may read,

This is it  
That makes the wapping’d widow wed again.

*Canterbury.* She hath herself not only well defended  
But taken and impounded as a stray  
The King of Scots; whom she did send to France,  
To fill King Edward’s fame with prisoner kings  
And make her *chronicle* as rich with praise  
As is the ooze and bottom of the sea  
With sunken wreck and sumless treasuries.

*West.* But there's a saying very old and true,  
 ' If that you will France win,  
 Then with *Scotland* first begin : '

For once the eagle England being in prey,  
 To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot  
 Comes sneaking and so sucks her princely eggs,  
 Playing the mouse in absence of the cat,  
 To tear and havoc more than she can eat.

*Exeter.* It follows then the cat must stay at home :  
 Yet that is but a crush'd necessity,  
 Since we have locks to safeguard necessities,  
 And pretty traps to catch the petty thieves.  
 While that the armed hand doth fight abroad,  
 The advised head *defends* itself at home ;  
 For government, though high and low and lower,  
 Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,  
 Congreeing in a full and natural close,  
 Like music.

*Canterbury.* Therefore doth heaven divide  
 The state of man in divers functions,  
 Setting endeavour in continual motion ;  
 To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,  
 Obedience : for so work the honey-bees,  
 Creatures that by a rule in nature teach  
 The act of order to a peopled kingdom.  
 They have a *king* and *officers of sorts* ;  
 Where some, like magistrates, correct at home.

—*King Henry V., Act 1, Scene 2.*

*Leonato.* How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

*Messenger.* But few of any sort, and none of name.

—*Much Ado about Nothing, Act 1, Scene 1.*

The gentlemen of the army were officers of sorts. In this scene in *Henry V.*, Shakespeare speaks much of archery, and I think it probable that he alluded to the following passage in "*Toxophilus*" :—

*Toxophilus.* I graunte *Philologe*, that scholers and lay men haue diuerse offices and charges in the commune wealth, whiche requires diuerse bringing vp in their youth,

if they shal do them as they ought to do in their age. Yet as temporall men of *necessitie* are compelled to take somewhat of learning to do their office the better withal: So scholers maye the boldlyer borowe somewhat of laye mennes pastimes, to maynteyne their health in studie withall. And surelie of al other thinges shoting is *necessary* for both *sortes* to learne. Whiche thing, when it hath ben euermore vsed in Englande how moche good it hath done, both oulde men and *Chronicles* doo tell: and also our enemies can beare vs recorde. For *if it be true* (as I haue hearde *saye*) when the *kyng* of Englande hath ben in Fraunce, the *preestes at home* bicause they were archers, haue ben able to ouerthrowe all *Scotlande*.

After describing the work of the honey bees, Canterbury says—

Therefore to France, my liege.  
Divide your happy England into four;  
Whereof take you a quarter into France,  
And you with all shall make all Gallia shake.  
If we, with thrice such powers left *at home*,  
Cannot defend our own doors from the dog,  
Let us be worried, and our nation lose  
The name of hardiness and policy.

King Henry says—

Now we are resolved; and by God's help,  
And yours, the noble seniews of our power,  
France being ours, we'll *bend* it to our awe,  
Or break it all to pieces.

Shakespeare alludes to archery in this passage; he is thinking of the bow, which would certainly break all to pieces if it was over much bent.

Shakespeare and Ascham both allude to the invasion, and to the fear of the Scots invading England, when the English forces went to France; and the reader will notice that many of the words they use are the same; besides, Westmorland says—

But there is a *saying* very old and *true*  
If that you will France win,  
Then with Scotland first begin.



And Ascham says—

For if it be *true as I have heard say*, when the King of England hath been in *France*, the *priests at home* because they were archers, have been able to overthrow all Scotland."

Shakespeare says heaven *divides* the state of man into *divers* functions, and the bees have a king and *officers of sorts*, and Ascham says, "Scholars and laymen have *divers offices* and charges in the common-wealth, and shooting is necessary for both *sorts* to learn.

What is a crush'd necessity? A plausible emendator might suggest we should read a "cat's necessity," because if the weasel, playing the mouse in the absence of the cat, sucks the eagle England's eggs, it is the cat's necessity to stay at home and guard the eggs.

Again, a plausible emendator might suggest a "priest's necessity," because Shakespeare says—

While that the armed hand doth fight abroad  
The advised head defends itself at home,

and Ascham says—

When the King of England hath been in France *the priests at home*, because they were archers, have been able to overthrow all Scotland.

So the armed hand is to the advised head, what the King of England is to the priests at home, therefore we may read—

Yet that is but a priest's necessity,

a necessity which, it seems, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the head of the priests, was willing to undertake.

Now, although I have merely suggested these emendations to show how easy it is to make them, it is possible that some readers may think the context suits the substituted words.

---

Canterbury.

I this infer,

That many things, having full reference  
To one consent, may work contrariously :  
*As many arrows, loosed several ways,*  
*Come to one mark,* as many ways meet in one town ;  
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea ;  
As many lines close in the dial's centre ;  
So many thousand actions, once a foot,  
End in one purpose, and be all well borne  
Without defeat.—*King Henry V., Act 1, Scene 2.*

The diuersitie of mens standyng and drawing causeth diuerse men loke at theyr marke *diuerse wayes* : yet they al lede a mans hand to shoote streight yf nothyng els stoppe. So that cumlynesse is the only iudge of best lokyng at the marke.

In the reigns of Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, when almost every able-bodied man under sixty, and every man-child over seven years of age practised archery, the Butts were so much crowded that it was often not possible, without long waiting, for each archer to take his proper standing place directly opposite the mark ; therefore, to save time, several archers would take their stand at different distances from the direct or nearest line to the mark and shoot simultaneously. Thus they would loose from different standing places, and their arrows would fly several ways to the same mark, as many lines close in the dial's centre. To this method of shooting for the purpose of saving time, which Shakespeare may have often seen and adopted, he may here allude ; but, as double meanings abound in his works, I think it is possible that he may also refer to the several ways of drawing and loosing arrows, thus described by Ascham :—

Some shooteth, his head forwarde as though he woulde byte the marke : an other stareth wyth hys eyes, as though they shulde flye out : An other winketh with one eye, and loketh with the other : Some make a face with writhing theyr mouthe and countenaunce so, as though they were

doying you wotte what : An other blereth out his tonge : An other byteth his lyppes : An other holdeth his necke a wrye. In drawyng some fet suche a compasse, as though they woulde tourne about, and blysse all the feelde : Other heaue theyr hand nowe vp nowe downe, that a man can not decerne wherat they wolde shote, an other waggeth the vpper ende of his bow one way, the neyther ende an other waye. An other wil stand poyntinge his shafte at the marke a good whyle and by and by he wyll gyue hym a whip, and awaye or a man wite. An other maketh suche a wrestling with his gere, as though he were able to shoote no more as longe as he lyued. An other draweth softly to ye middes, and by and by it is gon, you can not knowe howe.

An other draweth his shafte lowe at the breaste, as though he woulde shoote at a rounge marke, and by and by he lifteth his arme vp pricke heyghte. An other maketh a wrynching with hys backe, as though a manne pynched hym behynde.

An other coureth downe, and layeth out his buttockes, as though he shoulde shoote at crowes.

An other setteth forwarde hys lefte legge, and draweth backe wyth head and showlders, as though he pouled at a rope, or els were afrayed of ye marke. An other draweth his shafte well, vntyll wythin. ii. fyngers of the head, and then he stayeth a lyttle, to looke at hys marke, and that done, pouleth it vp to the head, and *lowseth* : whych *waye* althoughe summe excellent shoters do use, yet surelye it is a faulte, and good mennes faultes are not to be folowed.

Summe men drawe to farre, summe to shorte, summe to slowlye, summe to quickly, summe holde ouer longe, summe let go ouer sone.

Summe sette theyr shafte on the grounde, and fetcheth him upwarde. An other poynteth up toward the skye, and so bryngeth hym downewardes.

Ones I sawe a manne whyche used a brasar on his cheke, or elles he had scratched all the skynne of the one syde of his face, with his drawynge hand. An other I sawe, which at euerye shoote, after the loose, lyfted up his righte legge so far, that he was ever in jeopardye of faulyng. Summe stampe forwarde, and summe leape

backward. All these faultes be eyther in the drawynge or at the *loose*: with many mo whiche you may easely perceyve, and so go about to avoid them.

Ascham, after describing the discommodities or bad styles of shooting which ill custom hath graffed in archers, says these faults be either in the drawing or the *loose*.

*Mrs. Page.* Is there not a double *excellencie* in this?

*Merry Wives, Act 3, Scene 3.*

*Falstaff.* I have speeded hither with the very extremest inch of *possibility*.—2 *Henry IV., Act 4, Scene 3.*

*Parolle.* I know not what the success will be, my lord; but the attempt I vow.

*Bertram.* I know thou 'rt valiant; and to the *possibility* of thy soldiership, will subscribe for thee. Farewell.—*All's Well that Ends Well, Act 3, Scene 6.*

*Toxophilus.* Aristotle saith that in all deeds there are two pointes to be marked, *possibilitie* and *excellencie*, but chiefly a wise man must follow and lay hand upon *possibilitie* for fear he lose both.

Shakespeare, in these passages, may refer to the two points to be marked in all deeds, *possibility* and *excellency*.

*Theseus.* What say you Hermia? be advised, fair maid;  
To you your father should be as a god;  
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one  
To whom you are but as a *form in wax*  
By him imprinted and within his power  
To leave the figure or disfigure it.

—*Midsummer Night's Dream, Act 1, Scene 1.*

*Theseus* tells *Hermia* that she is to her father but as a *form in wax*, by him imprinted and within his power, and Ascham says—

A chylde by thre thinges, is brought to excellencie.  
By Aptnesse, Desire, and Feare: Aptnesse maketh hym

pliable lyke *waxe to be formed* and fashioned, euen as a man woulde haue hym. Desyre to be as good or better, than his felowes : and Feare of them whome he is vnder, wyl cause him take great labour and payne with diligent hede, in learnynge any thinge, wherof proceedeth at the laste excellency and perfectnesse.

*Angus.* Now does he feel  
His secret murders sticking on his hands ;  
Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach ;  
Those he commands, move only in command.  
Nothing in *love* : now does he feel his title  
Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe  
Upon a dwarfish thief.

*Mentieth.* Who then shall blame  
His pester'd senses to recoil, and start,  
When all that is within him does condemn  
Itself, for being there ?

*Caithness.* Well, march we on,  
To give *obedience* where 'tis *truly* owed.

— *Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 2.*

*Obedience* is nourished by feare and *love*, Feare is kept in by true justice and equitie, Love is gotten by wisdom joyned with liberalitie.

According to *Angus, Macbeth* no longer nourished obedience by love, for those he commanded moved only in command.

Ascham continues—

For where a souldyer seeth ryghteousness so rule, thate a man can neyther do wronge nor yet take wronge, and that his capitayne for his wysedome, can mayntayne hym, and for his liberalitie will maintayne him, he must nedes both *loue* him and feare him, of the whiche procedeth *true* and vnfayned *obedience*.

It was not possible for *Angus, Mentieth, Lennox, Caithness*, and the soldiers to see righteousness in *Macbeth*, or to “love him and fear him of the which proceedeth true and unfained obedience ;” therefore *Caithness* proposes

To give obedience where 'tis truly owed.



*Caithness.* Meet we the *medicine* of the *sickly weal*,  
And with him pour we in our country's *purge*  
Each drop of us.—*Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 2.*

Although Aristotle sayeth that some *medicines* be no meate to lyue withall, whiche is true. Yet Hippocrates sayeth that our daylye meates be medicines, to withstande euyll withall, whiche is as true. For he maketh two kyndes of *medicines*, one our meate that we vse dailye, whiche purgeth softlye and slowlye, and in this similitude maye shoting be called a *medicine*, wherewith dayly a man maye *purge* and take away al vnlefull desyres to other vnlefull pastymes, as I proued before. The other is a quicke *purging medicine*, and seldomer to be occupied, excepte the matter be greater, and I coulde describe the nature of a quicke medicine, whiche shoulde within a whyle *purge* and pluck oute all the vnthriftie games in the Realme, through which the *commune wealth* oftentimes is sycke.

Shakespeare mentions the medicine of the *sickly weal* and our country's *purge*, and Ascham speaks of a purging medicine which should *purge* and pluck out all the unthriftie games in the realm through which the *commune wealth* is oftentimes *sick*.

*Salarino.* Believe me, sir, had I such a venture forth,  
The better part of my affections would  
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still  
Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind.

—*Merchant of Venice, Act 1, Scene 1.*

In a note on this passage Dr. Johnson says—

By holding up the grass, or any light body that will bend by a gentle blast, the direction of the wind is found, and he makes the following quotation from “*Toxophilus*” to explain the passage:—

And thys waye I used in shootynge at those markes. When I was in the mydde way betwixt the markes whyche was an open place, there I toke a fether or a lytle lyght grasse, and so as well as I coulde, learned how the wynd stoode.

This quotation has been adopted by subsequent editors. It has led Johnson, and, probably, many readers, to believe that the archer, when he adopts this method of finding where the wind sits, holds up in his hand the grass he has plucked and watches the direction in which it bends to the wind. But this is not so. When the archer adopts this method he does not retain his hold of the grass, but he flings it up in the air and watches the direction in which it is blown. This method, well known to archers, had probably been used by our forefathers centuries before Shakespeare lived. It is clearly explained by Ascham in passages which, I think, the commentators have not quoted.

The winde is sumtyme playne vp and downe, whiche is commonly moste certayne, and requireth least knowlege, wherein a meane shoter with meane geare, if he can shoote home, maye make best shifte. A syde wynde tryeth an archer and good gere verye muche. Sumtyme it bloweth a lofte, sumtyme hard by the grounde: Sumtyme it bloweth by blastes, and sumtyme it continueth al in one: Sumtyme ful side wynde, sumtyme quarter with hym and more, and lykewyse against hym, as a man with *castynge up lyght grasse*, or els if he take good hede, shall sensibly learne by experience."

*Philologue.* Moreouer you that be shoters, I pray you, what meane you, whan ye take so greate heade, to kepe youre standynge, to shoote compasse, to looke on your marke so diligently, to *cast vp grasse* diuerse tymes and other thinges more, you know better than I. What would you do than I pray you?

*Toxophilus.* Hit ye marke yf we could.

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*Chorus.* Behold the threaten sails,  
Borne with the *invisible* and creeping wind,  
Draw the huge bottoms through the furrow'd sea,  
Breasting the lofty surge.

—*Henry V., Act 3, Scene 2.*

*Mercutio.*

True, I talk of dreams

Which are the children of an idle brain,  
 Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,  
 Which is as thin of substance as the air  
 And more *inconstant* than the wind, who wooes  
 Even now the frozen bosom of the north  
 And, being angr'd, puffs away from thence,  
 Turning his face to the dew dropping south.

—*Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 4.*

To se the wynde, with a man his eyes, it is vnpossible, the nature of it is so fyne, and subtile, yet this experience of the wynde had I ones myselfe, and that was in the great snowe that fell. iiii. yeares agoo: I rode in the hye waye betwixt Topcliffe vpon Swale, and Borowe bridge, the waye beyng sumwhat trodden afore, by way fayryngemen. The feeldes on bothe sides were playne and laye almost yearde depe with snowe, the nyghtafore had ben a litle froste, so yat the snowe was hard and crusted aboue. That morning the sun shone bright and clere, the winde was whisteling a lofte, and sharpe accordynge to the tyme of the yeare. The snowe in the hye waye laye lowse and troden wyth horse feete: so as the wynde blewe, it toke the lowse snow with it, and made it so slide vpon the snowe in the felde whyche was harde and crusted by reason of the frost ouer nyght, that therby I myght se verye wel, the hole nature of wynde as it blewe yat daye. And I had a great delyte and pleasure to marke it, whyche maketh me now far better to remember it. Sometyme the wynd would be not past. ii. yeardes brode, and so it would carie the snowe as far as I could se. An other tyme the snowe would blowe ouer halfe the felde at ones. Sometyme the snowe woulde tomble softly, by and by it would flye wonderfull fast. And thys I perceyued also that ye wind goeth by streames and not hole togyther. For I should se one streame wyth in a Score on me, than the space of. ii. score no snow would stirre, but after so muche quantitie of grounde, an other streame of snow at the same very tyme should be caryed lykewyse, but not equally. For the one would stande styll when the other flew a pace, and so contynewe somtyme swiftlyer sometime slowlyer, sometime broder, sometime narrower, as far as I

coulde se. Nor it flewe not streight, but sometye it crooked thys waye sometye that waye, and somtye it ran round aboute in a compase. And somtye the snowe wold be lyft clene from the ground vp in to the ayre, and by and by it would be al clapt to the grounde as though there had be no winde at all, streightway it would rise and flye agayne.

And that whych was the moost meruayle of al, at one tyme. ii. driftes of snowe flewe, the one out of the West into ye East, the other out of the North in to ye East: And I saw. ii. windes by reason of ye snowe the one crosse ouer the other, as it had bene two hye wayes. And agayne I shoulde here the wynd blow in the ayre, when nothing was stirred at the ground. And when all was still where I rode, not verye far from me the snow should be lifted wonderfully. This experience made me more meruaille at ye nature of the wynde, than it made me conning in ye knowlege of ye wynd: but yet therby I learned perfittly that it is no meruayle at al though men in a wynde lease theyr length in shooting, seying so many wayes the wynde is so variable in blowynge.

These conditions do not often occur, but the reader may "see very well the whole nature of the wind as it blew that day," if he will watch from an eminence, near the sea or a lake, the course the ripples take on the surface of the water, when the wind blows as Ascham describes it to have blown, as he rode betwixt Topcliffe-upon-Swale and Boroughbridge.

I think every experienced archer will appreciate the accuracy of this description of the "invisible," "unconstant" wind, and as he rides or walks betwixt Topcliffe-upon-Swale and Boroughbridge, when the sun shines bright and clear upon the snowy ground, and the wind is whistling aloft, he may think gratefully of the humane, intelligent, and learned Roger Ascham, who has taught modern archers so much, and of his little treatise, "Toxophilus," which Shakespeare knew so well.

When the wind blows, as Ascham describes it to have blown betwixt Topcliffe-upon-Swale and Boroughbridge,



plucking of grass will not serve, because when the wind is unsteady and blows in gusts it does not always sit at the mark as it blows at the standing place; but when the wind blows steadily from one quarter, casting up grass will show the archer the direction of the wind, whether it be "with hym, against hym, syde wynd, ful syde wynd, syde wynd quarter with him, syde wynd quarter against hym, and so forthe."

You must take hede also yf ever you shote where one of the markes or both stondes a lytle short of a hye wall, for there you may be easily beguiled. If you take grasse and *cast it up* to see how the wynde standes, manye times you shal suppose to shoote downe the wind when you shote cleane against wynde. And a good reason why. For the wynde which cometh in dede against you, rodoundeth back agayne at the wal, and whyrleth backe to the prycke and a lytle farther and then turneth agayne, even as a vehement water doeth agaynste a rocke or an hye braye, whyche example of water as it is more sensible to a man's eyes, so it is never a whyt the trewer than this of the wynde. So that the *grasse cast up* shall flece that waye whyche in dede is the longer marke and deceyve quickly a shooter that is not ware of it.

"Not ware of it." That is, not aware of it. This word is used by very old authors, and we read in "Morte Arthure,"

Whene theise wordes was saide, the Walsche kynge hym  
selfene

Whas *warre* of this wyderwyne, that werrayed his  
knyghttez.

The word is sometimes used by Shakespeare in the sense of aware :

*Benvolio.* Towards him I made but he was *ware* of me.

—*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 1, Scene 1.

*Aeneas.* Come, come, you'll do him wrong ere you are  
*ware*.—*Troilus and Cressida*, Act 4, Scene 2.

*Juliet.* I should have been most strange I must confess,  
But that thou over heard'st, ere I was *ware*  
My true love's passion.—*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2.



And sometimes it seems to be an abbreviation of beware.

*Thersites.* The bull has the game : *ware* horns, ho !

—*Troilus and Cressida*, Act 5, Scene 7.

*Rosaline.* O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter !

*Prin.* Any thing like ?

*Ros.* Much in the letters ; nothing in the praise.

*Prin.* Beauteous as ink ; a good conclusion.

*Kath.* Fair as a text B in a copy-book.

*Ros.* 'Ware pencils, ho ! let me not die your debtor,

My red dominical, my golden letter.

—*Love's Labour's Lost*, Act 5, Scene 1.

And in this sense it is sometimes used by Shakespeare's contemporaries.

*Bellamont.* A gentleman ! Thou a gentleman ! Thou art  
a tailor.

*Featherstone.* 'Ware peaching.

—*Northward Ho*, Act 5, Scene 1.—*Webster*.

*Ma'evole.* He that strikes a great man, let him strike  
home or else 'ware, he'll prove no man.

—*The Malcontent*, Act 4, Scene 1.

In Shakespeare's time the butts were often very much crowded, and when the arrows were all shot, those which were short, or gone, or on either side wide, were frequently in danger of being broken by the archers walking from end to end, or by the lookers on passing behind or before the marks. To avoid the danger of the arrows being broken in this way, it was usual for the archers to give warning by crying out "Ware arrows," words of caution which may be heard in the present day at almost any large archery meeting.

*Ros.* Thou speakest wiser than thou art *ware* of.

*Touch.* Nay, I shall ne'er be *ware* of mine own wit  
till I break my shins against it.

—*As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 4.

I think Shakespeare plays upon the word "ware" in this passage, and that he refers to the breaking of the arrow, and

the injury to the skin which sometimes takes place when the archers, in walking from mark to mark, strike their shins against the arrows which have fallen short, and remain sticking up in the ground. *Touchstone* compares his wit to an arrow sticking up in the ground, of which he is not aware until his shin comes in contact with it. Although the skin may be injured, generally the arrow only suffers from the contact.

Shakespeare had, probably, often seen arrows broken in this way.

Oldcraft uses these words of caution :—

*Oldcraft.* This is the gentleman I promised, Niece,  
To present to your affection.

*Cunningham.* 'Ware that arrow.

—*Wit at Several Weapons, Act 1, Scene 1.*

If the word used in the caution “'ware arrows” is, as it seems to be, an abbreviation of the word beware, the contraction by archers is easily accounted for, because that word, deprived of its labial, can be more easily shouted out, and will be heard further off than when the initial syllable is uttered by the use of the lips.

*Boyet.* If my observation, which very seldom lies,  
By the heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes,  
Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected.

*Prin.* With what?

*Boyet.* With that with which we lovers entitle affected.

*Prin.* Your reason?

*Boyet.* Why, all his behaviours did make their retire  
To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire:  
His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,  
Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd:  
His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be;  
All senses to that sense did make their repair,  
To feel only looking on fairest of fair:

Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,  
 As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy;  
 Who, tendering their own worth from where they were  
     glass'd,

Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd:  
 His face's own margent did quote such amazes  
 That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.  
 I'll give you Aquitaine and all that is his,  
 An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

*Prin.* Come to our pavilion; Boyet is disposed.

*Boyet.* But to speak that in words which his eye hath  
     disclosed.

I only have made a mouth of his *eye*,  
 By adding a *tongue* which I know will not lie.

—*Love's Labour Lost, Act 2, Scene 1.*

*The eye is the very tonge wherewith wyt and reason doth speke to every parte of the body, and the wyt doth not so sone signifye a thyng by the eye, as euery parte is redye to folow, or rather preuent the byddyng of the eye. Thys is playne in many thinges, but most euident in fence and feyghtyng, as I haue heard men saye. There euery parte standyng in feare to haue a blowe, runnes to the eye for helpe, as yonge chyldren do to ye mother: the foote, the hand, and al wayteth vpon the eye. Yf the eye byd ye hand either beare of, or smite, or the foote ether go forward, or backward, it doth so: And that whyche is moost wonder of all the one man lookyng stedfastly at the other mans eye and not at his hand, wyl, euen as it were, rede in his eye where he purposeth to smyte nexte, for the *eye* is nothyng els but a certayne *wyndowe* for wit to shote oute hir head at.*

*Boyet* says, speaking of *Navarre*,—

Why all his behaviours did make their retire  
 To the court of his eye, peeping through desire.

His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
 Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be.

But to speak that in words which his eye hath disclosed  
 I only have made a mouth of his *eye*  
 By adding a *tongue* which I know will not lie.

And Ascham says, "The eye is the very *tongue* wherewith wit and reason doth speak to every part of the body, and the wit doth not so soon signify a thing by the eye, as every part is ready to follow, or rather prevent the bidding of the eye."

Again, Ascham says,—“The *eye* is nothing else but a certain *window* for the wit to shoot out her head at,” and *Biron*, in another part of “*Love’s Labour Lost*,” says,—

Behold the *window* of mine heart, mine *eye*,  
What humble suit attends, thy answer there  
Impose some service on me for thy love.

—*Act 5, Scene 2.*

Thys wonderfull worke of God in makyng all the members obedient to the eye, is a pleasante thyng to remember and loke upon : therefore an archer maye be sure in learyng to look at hys marke when he is yong, always to shoote streyghte.

*Boyet* says,—

Methought all his senses were locked in his eye.

Ascham says,—“The eye is the guide, the ruler and succourer of all the other parts.”

Again, *Boyet* says,—

All senses to that sense did make their repair.

And Ascham says, in fencing and fighting, that “every part standing in fear to have a blow, runs to the eye for help, as young children do to the mother : the foot, the hand, and all wayteth upon the eye.”

*Alexander.* This is awrie.

*Appeles.* Your eye goeth not with your hand.

—*Campaspe, Act 3, Scene 4.*

Here Lyly speaks of the eye not going with the hand. If the hand does not go with the eye the arrow goes awry.

Other and those very good archers in drawyng, loke at the marke vntill they come almost to ye head, than they looke at theyr shafte, but at ye *very lowse*, with a seconde sight

they fynde theyr marke agayne. This way and al other afore of me rehersed are but shiftes and not to be folowed in shotyng streyght. For *having a mans eye alwaye on his marke, is the only waye to shote streght*, yea and I suppose so redye and easy a way yf it be learned in youth and confirmed with vse, yat a man shall neuer misse therin. Men doubt yet in looking at ye mark what way is best whether betwixt the bowe and the stringe, aboue or beneth hys hand, and many wayes moo: yet it maketh no great matter which way a man looke at his marke yf it be ioyned with comly shotynge.

*Messenger.* My lord, Prince Pericles is fled.

*Antiochus.*

As then,

Wilt live, fly after: and like an arrow shot  
From a well-experienced archer hits the mark  
His eye doth level at, so then ne'er return  
Unless thou say "Prince Pericles is dead."

—*Pericles, Act 1, Scene 1.*

Ascham says, "having a man's eye always on his mark is the only way to shoot straight;" and *Antiochus* says, "a well-experienced archer hits the mark his eye doth level at."

*Some men wonder why in casting a mans eye at ye marke, the hand should go streyght.* Surely yf he consydered the nature of a mans eye, he wolde not wonder at it: For this I am certayne of, that no seruaunt to hys mayster, no chylde to hys father is so obedient, as euerye ioynte and pece of the body is to do what foeuer the eye biddes. The eye is the guide, the ruler and the succourer of al the other partes. The hande, the foote and other members dare do no thyng without the eye, as doth appere in the night and darke corners.

*Hamlet.* They fool me to the top of my bent.

—*Act 3, Scene 2.*

I think *Hamlet* here alludes to the bow. "These tedious old fools" had tried his patience to the utmost on more than one occasion, and quite as much as the bow is tried when it is drawn to the top of its bend; a further strain would cause the bow to break and *Hamlet* to lose his temper.

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*Duke.* Where thou now exact'st the penalty,  
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,  
Thou wilt not only *loose* the forfeiture,  
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,  
Forgive a moiety of the principal.

—*The Merchant of Venice, Act 4, Scene 1.*

Loose in this passage has, in some editions, been altered to lose. I think Shakespeare uses the archery term, signifying to let go, to part with.

*King Philip.* Peace, lady! pause, or be more temperate :  
It ill becomes this presence to *cry aim*  
To these ill-tuned repetitions.—*King John, Act 2, Scene 1.*

*Ford.* Well ; I will take him, then torture my wife,  
pluck the borrowed veil of modesty from the so seeming  
Mistress Page, divulge Page himself for a secure and wilful  
Actaeon ; and to these violent proceedings all my neighbours  
shall *cry aim*.—*The Merry Wives of Windsor, Act 3, Scene 3.*

*Jul.* Behold her that *gave aim* to all thy oaths  
And entertain'd 'em deeply in her heart.  
How oft hast thou with perjury cleft the root!

—*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act 5, Scene 4.*

*Luc.* Thanks, gentle Romans : may I govern so,  
To heal Rome's harms, and wipe away her woe!  
But, gentle people, *give me aim* awhile,  
For nature puts me to a heavy task :  
Stand all aloof ; but, uncle, draw you near,  
To shed obsequious tears upon this trunk.

—*Titus Andronicus.*

Shakespeare here refers to “aim giving” or “giving aim,” thus explained by Ascham :—

*Philologus.* I se well it is no marvell though a man misse many times in shootyng, seeing ye wether is so unconstant in blowing, but yet there is one thing whiche many archers use, yat shall cause a man haue lesse neede to marke the wether, and that is ame gyuing.

*Theophilus.* Of *gyuyng ame*, I can not tel wel, what I shuld say. For in a straunge place it *taketh away al*

*occasion of foule game*, which is ye only prayse of it, yet by my judgement, it hindreth ye knowlege of shotynge, and maketh men more negligente: ye which is a disprayse. Though ame be given, yet take hede, for at an other mans shote you can not wel take ame, nor at your owne neither, bycause the wether will alter, even in a minute; and at the one marke and not at the other, and trouble your shafte in the ayer, when you shal perceyue no wynde at the ground, as I my selfe haue sene shaftes tumble a lofte, in a very fayre daye.

The men who gave aim stood a short distance from the side of the mark. They had little to fear from the good archers, whose arrows often hit the mark, or, when they missed, fell in a straight line, short or gone. The dangerous shots came from the bad shooters, whose arrows constantly fell wide of the mark. Therefore the good shot was dangerous to the enemy in the field of battle, and the bad shots were dangerous to the marker at the butts or clouts. Shakespeare was well aware of this. So *Benedict* says,—

She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that *I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me.*

—*Much Ado About Nothing*, Act 2, Scene 1.

referring to the dangerous position of the marker.

*Queen Margaret.* A dream of what thou wert, a breath, a bubble,  
A sign of dignity, a garish flag,  
To be the aim of every dangerous shot.

—*Richard III.*, Act 4, Scene 4.

It may be that the commentator\* is correct in saying that *Queen Margaret* refers to the dangerous post of the standard bearers in the field of battle, but the archer's chief object was to kill or disable quickly, as many as he could, and if the small number of standard bearers were the aim of every

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\* Stevens ?

dangerous shot, they might receive superfluous death from arrows sticking in their bodies, "like quills upon the fretful porpentine," but few of the enemy would be destroyed. Our forefathers did not win Cressy and Agincourt by shooting at standard bearers, they had more important use to make of their 24 shafts.

I have read that the markers at twelve score, and other long distances, gave aim by signalling with a handstaff having a flag attached to it. The different movements of this staff, by the marker, informed the archer whether his arrow hit the mark or was short, or gone, or on either side wide.

If *Queen Margaret* refers to the position of the marker, it is the garish flag, and not a bubble or sign of dignity, which is the aim of every dangerous shot.

*Birdlime.* Very now the marks are set up, I'll get me twelue score off, and *give aim*.

—*Westward Ho, Act 2, Scene 2.*—*John Webster.*

*Lawyer.* Well, then, have at you!

*Vittoria Coumbona.* I am at the mark, sir: I'll *give aim* to you,

And tell you how near you shoot.

—*The White Devil.*—*John Webster.*

*Marellina.* Thou art i' th' right, wench:

For who would live, whom pleasure has forsaken

To stand at a mark and cry "a bow short, signior."

—*Valentinian, Act 2, Scene 2.*

*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

From this passage in Beaumont and Fletcher I think it is reasonable to conclude, that the men who stood at the marks and gave aim to the shooters, were old archers exempted from practice by the 33 Henry VIII., cap. 3. They would, from long experience, have all the knowledge necessary to act as efficient markers, although their age might render them incapable of shooting strong and well. I think it probable that the markers *cried aim* at the shorter distances, shou'ing out the words, mark, short, gone, wide, wide of the bow hand,

according to the position of the arrow when it fell ; and that they gave aim by signs or signals when they stood at the long distances, which were too far off for the voice to carry, without great and unnecessary exertion. This, however, is a mere conjecture of mine.

Although, in Ascham's judgment, giving aim hindered the knowledge of shooting, and made men more negligent, and he gives his reasons for this opinion, yet he thought it took away all occasion of foul game in a strange place, where probably the archer's friends were not present to detect and prevent foul game. Betting at archery meetings, and shooting for sums of money, was very common with our forefathers. Shakespeare refers to the custom when Justice Shallow says of old Double, " John of Gaunt loved him well, and betted much money on his head ;" and it is said that Henry VIII., who was an archer, shot against his courtiers for money. The practice was very common also with the lower orders, and Ascham frequently refers to it.

A man no shoter, (not longe agoo) wolde defende playing at cardes and dise, if it were honestly vsed, to be as honest a pastime as youre shotinge : For he layed for him, that a man might pleye for a litle at cardes and dyse, and also *a man might shote away all that euer he had.* He sayd a payre of cardes cost not past. ii.d. and that they neded not so moche reparation as bowe and shaftes, they wolde neuer hurte a man his hande, nor neuer weare his gere. A man shulde neuer *slee a man with shooting wyde* at the cardes. In wete and drye, hote and coulede, they woulde neuer forsake a man, he shewed what great varietie there is in them for euerye mans capacitie : if one game were harde, he myght easelye learne an other : if a man haue a good game, there is greate pleasure in it : if he haue an ill game, the payne is shorte, for he may soone gyue it ouer, and hope for a better : with many other mo reasons. But at the last he concluded, that betwixt playinge and shooting, well vsed or ill vsed, there was no difference : but that there was lesse coste and trouble, and a greate deale more pleasure in playing, then in shotynge.



In this passage I think Ascham alludes to the dangerous position of the marker, who was sometimes shot by those who shot wide.

Again,—

Some shooters take in hande stronger bowes, than they be able to mayntayne. This thyng maketh them summtyme, to outshoote the marke, summtyme to shote far wyde, and perchaunce hurte summe that looke on. Other that neuer learned to shote, nor yet knoweth good shafte nor bowe, wyll be as busie as the best, but suche one commonly plucketh doune a syde, and crafty archers which be agaynst him, will be bothe glad of hym, and also euer ready to laye and *bet* with him: it were better for suche one to sit doune than shote. Other there be, whiche haue verye good bowe and shaftes, and good knowledge in shootinge, but they haue beene brought vp in suche *euyll fauoured* shootyng, that they can neyther *shoote fayre*, nor yet *nere*. Yf any man wyll applye these thynges togyther, shal not se the one farre differ from the other.

And I also amonges all other, in writinge this lytle treatise, haue folowed summe yonge shooters, whiche bothe wyll begyn *to shoote, for a lytle moneye*, and also wyll vse to shote ones or twise about the marke for nought, afore they beginne *a good*. And therfore did I take this little matter in hande, to assaye my selfe, and hereafter by the grace of God, if the iudgement of wyse men, that looke on, thinke that I can do any good, I maye perchaunce caste my shafte amonge other, for better game.

*Julia.* And at that time I made her weep *a good*.

—*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act 4, Scene 4.*

Ascham, in this passage, makes a distinction between shooting fair and shooting near.

*Enter the Princess, and her train, a Forester, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE.*

*Prin.* Was that the king, that spurred his horse so hard  
Against the steep uprising of the hill?

*Boyet.* I know not; but I think it was not he.

*Prin.* Whoe'er a' was, a' show'd a mounting mind.



Well, lords, to-day we shall have our dispatch :  
 On Saturday we will return to France.  
 Then, forester, my friend, where is the bush  
 That we must stand and play the murderer in ?

*For.* Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice ;  
 A stand where you may make the *fairest shoot*.

*Prin.* I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,  
 And thereupon thou speak'st the *fairest shoot*.

*For.* Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.

*Prin.* What, what ? first *praise* me and again say no ?  
 O short-lived pride ! Not fair ? alack for woe !

*For.* Yes, madam, fair.

*Prin.* Nay, never paint me now :  
 Where fair is not, *praise* cannot *mend* the brow.  
 Here, good my *glass*, take this for telling true :  
 Fair payment for foul words is more than due.

*For.* Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.

*Prin.* See, see, my beauty will be saved by merit !  
 O heresy in fair, *fit* for these days !  
 A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.  
 But come, *the bow* ; now mercy goes to kill,  
 And shooting well is then accounted ill.  
 Thus will I save my credit in the shoot :  
 Not wounding, pity would not let me do't ;  
 If wounding, then it was to show my skill,  
 That more for praise than purpose meant to kill.  
 And out of question so it is sometimes,  
 Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,  
 When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,  
 We *bend* to that the working of the heart ;  
 As I for praise alone now seek to spill  
 The poor deer's blood, that my heart means no ill.

*Boyet.* Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty  
 Only for praise sake, when they strive to be  
 Lords o'er their lords ?

*Prin.* Only for praise : and praise we may afford  
 To any lady that subdues a lord.

*Boyet.* Here comes a member of the *commonwealth*.

—*Love's Labour Lost, Act 4, Scene 1.*

Fathers in olde time among ye noble Persians might not do with theyr children as they thought good, but as the iudgement of the common wealth al wayes thought best. This fault of fathers bringeth many a blot with it, to the great deformitie of the *common wealthe*: and here surely I can *praise* gentlewomen which have alwayes at hande theyr *glasses*, to se if any thinge be amisse, and so will *amende* it, yet the *common wealth* hauing ye *glasse* of knowlege in euery mans hand, doth se such vncumlines in it: and yet winketh at it. This faulte and many suche lyke, myght be sone wyped awaye, yf fathers woulde bestow their children on yat thing alwaye, whervnto nature hath ordeined them moste apte and *fit*. For if youth be grafted streyght, and not a wrye, the hole common welth wil flourish thereafter. When this is done, than muste euery man beginne to be more ready to *amende* hym selfe, than to checke an other, measuryng their matters with that wise prouerbe of Apollo, Knowe thy selfe: that is to saye, learne to knowe what thou arte able, *fitte*, and apt vnto, and folowe that.

This thinge shulde be bothe cumlie to the *common wealthe*, and moost profitable for euery one, as doth appere very well in all wise mennes deades, and specially to turne to our communication agayne in *shootyng*, where wise archers haue alwayes theyr instrumentes *fit* for their strength, and wayte euermore suche tyme and wether, as is most agreable to their gere. Therefore if the wether be to sore, and vnfit for your *shootyng*, leaue of for that daye, and wayte a better season. For he is a foole yat wyl not go, whome necessitie driueth.

The *Princess* says,—

Nay, never paint me now:

Where fair is not, *praise* cannot mend the brow.

Here good my *glass* take this for telling true:

Fair payment for foul words is more than due,

and Ascham says, "Surely I can *praise* gentlewomen which have always at hand their *glasses*, to see if anything be amiss, and so will *amend* it."

Some commentators think that the bow the *Princess* mentions in this passage was the crossbow, because in the

sixteenth century it was the custom for ladies to shoot at deer with that weapon, taking their stand in some covert place, where they could not be seen by their prey; but ladies in Queen Elizabeth's reign sometimes shot in the long bow. Neither the *Forester* nor any of the characters in this scene are said to carry any kind of bow, although the *Princess* mentions the bow as if it were at hand, when she says, "come, the bow."

I think that Shakespeare here refers to fair shooting, which Ascham thus describes:—

"Standing, ~~X~~noocking, drawing, holding, loosing, done as they ought to be done, maketh fair shooting."

Again Ascham says—

*Tox.* Standynge, noockyng, drawyng, holdyng, lowsing, wherby commeth fayre shotynge, whiche 'neyther belong to wynde nor wether, nor yet to the marke, for in a rayne and at no marke, a man may shote a fayre shoote.

Ascham often speaks of fair shooting:—

I beseche you imagyn that we had bothe bowe and shaftes here, and teache me howe I should handle them, and one thyng I desyre you make me as *fayre* an Archer as you can.

For thys I am sure in learnynge all other matters, nothyng is broughte to the moost profytable vse, which is not handled after the moost *cumlye fashion*.

. . . . .

I praye you as I sayde before teatch me to shoote as fayre and as wellfavouredly as you can imagine.

Here shooting fair is associated with shooting well favouredly.

*Toxophilus.* Trewlye Philologe as you proue verye well in other matters, *the best shootynge, is alwayes the moost cumlye shootynge* but thys you know as well as I that Crassus shewethe in Cicero that as cumlinesse is the chefo poynt, and most to be sought for in all thynges, for

cumlynesse onlye, can neure be taught by any Arte or craft. But maye be perceyued well when it is done, not described wel how it should be done.

. . . . .

In shotynge yf a man, woulde set before hys eyes. v. or vi. of the *fayrest Archers* that euer he saw shoote, and of one learne to stande, of a nother to drawe, of an other to lowse, and so take of euery man, what euery man coulde do best, I dare saye he shoulde come to suche a comlynesse as neuer man came to yet. As for an example, if the moost comely poynte in shootynge that Hewe Prophete the Kynges seruante hath and as my frendes Thomas and Rause Cantrell doth vse with the moost semelye facyons that. iii. or iiiii. excellent Archers haue beside, were al ioyned in one, I am sure all men woulde wonder at ye excellencie of it. And this is one waye to learne to *shoote fayre*.

. . . . .

You must remember howe that I toulde you when I descrybed generally the hole nature of shootyng that *fayre shotyng* came of these thynges, of *standynge*, *nockynge*, *drawynge*, *howldynge* and *lowsynge*, the whych I wyll go ouer as shortly as I can, describynge the discommodities that men commonly vse in all partes of theyr bodies, that you yf you faulte in any such maye knowe it and so go about to amend it.

Ascham says his master, Sir Humphrey Wingfield, encouraged many children brought up in his house to shoot fair :—

This communication of teaching youthe, maketh me to remembre the right worshipfull and my singuler good mayster, Sir Humfrey Wingfelde, to whom nexte God, I ought to refer for his manifolde benefites bestowed on me, the poore talent of learnyng, whiche god hath lent me: and for his sake do I owe my seruice to all other of the name and noble house of the Wyngfeldes, bothe in woord and dede. Thys worshypfull man hath euer loued and vsed, to haue many children brought vp in learnynge in his house amonges whome I my selfe was one. For whom at terme tymes he woulde bryng downe from London bothe bowe and shaftes. And when they shuld playe he woulde

go with them him selfe in to the fælde, and se them shoote, and he that *shot fayrest* shulde haue the best bowe and shaftes, and he that shot *illfavouredlye* shulde be mocked of his felowes, til he shot better.

Contrast is here made between the child who shot fair and the child who shot ill-favouredly.

*Celia.* Let us sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed equally.

*Rosalind.* I would we could do so, for her benefits are mightily misplaced, and the bountiful blind woman doth most mistake in her gifts to women.

*Celia.* 'Tis true; for those that she makes *fair* she scarce makes honest, and those that she makes honest she makes very *ill-favouredly*.—*As You Like It, Act 1, Scene 2.*

And Celia speaks of those Fortune makes *fair*, and of those she makes *ill-favouredly*. In one or two editions this word has been altered to "ill-favoured."

As a chylde is apte by naturall youth, so a man by vsing at the firste weake bowes, far vnderneath his strength, shal be as pliable and readye to be taught *fayre shotyng* as any chylde: and daylye vse of the same, shal both kepe hym in *fayer shotyng* and also at ye last bryng hym to *stronge shootyng*.

The old archers were taught to shoot fair when they were children, and were taught, when they became men, to shoot strong and hit the mark, by shooting straight and keeping the length.

*Toxophilus.* That euery bodye shoulde learne to shote when they be yonge, defence of the *commune wealth*, doth require when they be olde, which thing can not be done mightelye when they be men, excepte they learne it perfitelye when they be boyes.

*Philologus.* You shal nede wade no further in this matter Toxophile, but if you can proue that scholers and men gyuen to learning maye honestlie vse shooting, I wyll soone graunt you that all other sortes of men may not onelye lefullie, but ought of dutie to vse it. But I thinke



you can not proue but that *all these examples of shotinge* brought from so longe a tyme, vsed of so noble princes, confirmed by so wyse mennes lawes and iudgementes, are sette afore temporall men, onelye to followe them : whereby they may the better and stronglyer *defende the commune wealth* withall.

Ascham says,—

Woulde to god all Englande had vsed or wolde vse to lay the foundation of youth, after the example of this worshipful man in bringyng vp chyldren in the Booke and the Bowe : by whyche two thynges, the hole *common welth* both in peace and warre is chefelye ruled and *defended* wythall.

*Costard* and *Holofernes* are archers. *Boyet* says of *Costard*,

Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

Dr. Johnson has a note on this line. He says,—“ Here, I believe, is a kind of jest intended ; a member of the commonwealth is put for one of the common people, one of the meanest. Several editors have adopted this meaning of commonwealth as applied to *Costard*, who was a clown, and one of the common people. But *Nathaniel* says to *Holofernes*, Act 4, Scene 2,—

Sir, I praise the Lord for you : and so may my parishioners ; for their sons are well tutored by you, and their daughters profit very greatly under you : you are a good member of the *commonwealth*.

And *Holofernes* was a schoolmaster and therefore not one of the common people.

*Costard* and *Holofernes* are described as members of the commonwealth, and I think it probable that Shakespeare may here refer to these passages in “*Toxophilus*,” in which Ascham speaks of the importance of shooting to the commonwealth. It might be truly said that *Holofernes* and *Costard* were members of the commonwealth, because they were archers and able to defend it ; and if they had followed all

the examples of shooting enumerated by Ascham, they would, thereby, have been able "the better and stronglier to defend the commune wealth."

I think Ascham describes fair shooting at least three times, and it was this style of shooting which gave rise to the proverb, "He shoots like a gentleman fair and far off." But "all these things" done as they should be done, do not enable the archer to shoot either strong or well; something more is necessary, therefore *Philologus* says to *Toxophilus* :—

*Philologus.* But nowe seing you haue taught me to shote fayre, I praye you tel me somewhat, how I should shoote nere leste that prouerbe myght be sayd iustlye of me sometyme. *He shootes lyke a gentleman fayre and far of.*

*Toxophilus.* He that can shoote fayre, lacketh nothyng but shootyng streygth and kepyng of a length wherof commeth hyttyng of the marke, the ende both of shootyng and also of thys our communication. The handlyng of ye wether and the mark bicause they belong to shootyng streyghte, and kepyng of a lengthe, I wyll ioyn them togyther, shewing what thinges belonge to kepyng of a lengthe, and what to shootyng streygth.

*Philologus*, having been taught to shoot fair, wishes to be told how he is to shoot near, and *Toxophilus* answers, "He that can shoot fair, lacketh nothing but shooting straight and keeping of a length."

Of this proverb, "He shoots like a gentleman fair and far off," perhaps John Webster was thinking when he made *Mayberry* say—

I'll fetch my blow

*Fair and afar off*, and, as fencers use,

Though at the foot I strike, the head I'll bruise."

—*Northward Ho, Act 1, Scene 3.*

I will try to explain the origin of this proverb, and why gentlemen obtained the reputation of shooting fair and far off.

The child, in ancient times, was first taught to shoot fair; that is, to stand, ~~knock~~, draw, hold and loose correctly, using a bow which he could easily manage, so that he was able to

do these five things, as they should be done, long before he was able to shoot strong and well. But constant practice was necessary even to maintain this well-favoured or comely shooting. So Ascham says, "If a man be never so apte to shote, nor never so wel taught in his youth to shote, yet if he give it over, and not use to shote, truly when he shal be eyther compelled in tyme of war for his country sake, to faule to his bowe: he shall become of a fayre archer, a stark squirter and dribbler."

*Duke.* No, holy father; throw away that thought;  
Believe not that the *dribbling dart* of love  
Can pierce a *complete bosom*. Why I desire thee  
To give me secret harbour, hath a purpose  
More grave and wrinkled than the *aims* and *ends*  
Of burning youth.

—*Measure for Measure, Act 1, Scene 3.*

Therefore in shotynge, as in all other thinges, there can neyther be many in number, nor excellent indeede, excepte these iii. thynges, aptnesse, knowledge, and use go together.

So, however correctly the archer was taught to shoot, unless he preserved his power of shooting strong and well by constant practice, he would, as Ascham says, of a fair archer, become a "stark squirter and dribbler."

The complete bosom which the dribbling dart of love cannot pierce, is the bosom protected by the complete steel, in which the Ghost of Hamlet's father revisited the pale glimpses of the moon; or, the complete armour of Richard III. which the Duchess of York speaks of. A fore hand shaft, a bow "strong and mighty of cast," and that strong, pithy kind of shooting Ascham describes, would be necessary to pierce a bosom so protected.

Now, although archery was practised, as Giovanni Michele says, by all sorts of persons without distinction of grade, age, or profession, still the lower orders formed the great majority, and the gentlemen the minority of the population of England.

From that majority the archers of the English army would be selected and paid for their services in war ; and there is no doubt that before they were able to draw and loose their powerful bows with ease and to shoot strong and well, they had to undergo long continued practice, from an early age, to make their shooting what it was for many centuries, the terror of their enemies and "the chief stroke in war." But the gentlemen, the minority of the population of England, were differently situated. It was not so necessary for the defence of the commonwealth that they should shoot strong and well, for they seldom if ever carried the long bow into the field of battle. When they went to the wars they went as knights, esquires attendant upon knights, and officers of various sorts. Still, although the gentlemen of England would not be called upon to carry the long bow to the wars, they would, obeying the law and following the fashion of the time, and having the means to pay for the best instruction, be taught to shoot fair ; to do the standing, ~~K~~noocking, drawing, holding and loosing as they should be done, although they would often fail, from want of constant practice, "to shoot straight and keep a length, whereof cometh hitting the mark." This inability to shoot straight and to keep a length and to hit the mark gave rise to the proverb, "He shoots like a gentleman, fair and far off." The best shots would not only shoot strong and well, but they would also do the standing, ~~K~~noocking, drawing, holding, and loosing as they should be done, because, as Ascham says, "the best shooting is always the most comely shooting ;" but although the correct doing of these five things would be observed in their shooting, they were not therefore said to shoot fair ; an archer was said to shoot fair when he did the five things in a correct, well favoured manner and comely fashion, although he seldom, if ever, hit the mark, because he lacked shooting straight and keeping of a length.

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SCENE I. *A Forest in the North of England.**Enter two Keepers, with cross bows in their hands.**First Keep.* Under this thick-grown brake we'll shroud ourselves;

For through this laund anon the deer will come;

And in this covert will we make our *stand*,

Culling the principal of all the deer.

—*3 Henry VI., Act 3, Scene 1.*

The Keepers enter with crossbows in their hands, and the First Keeper says, "In this covert we will make our stand," and the Princess, in "Love's Labour Lost," takes her stand upon the edge of a coppice.

It was usual for archers when they hunted in the forest, whether they had licence or authority, or whether they were trespassers and malefactors, to take their stand in a covert place.

To this practice of stand taking, I think, Imogen refers:—

Why hast thou gone so far,

To be *unbent* when thou hast ta'en thy *stand*,The elected deer before thee?—*Cymbeline, Act 3, Scene 4.*

Also one of the Woodmen, in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Philaster":—

*1st Woodman.* What, have you lodged the deer?*2nd Woodman.* Yes, they are ready for the bow.*1st Wood.* Who shoots?*2nd Wood.* The Princess.*1st Wood.* No, she'll hunt.*2nd Wood.* She'll take a *stand*, I say.

This conversation takes place in the Forest, Act 4, Scene 2.

By the assizes of the forest of Lancaster, taken with the maner, is when one is found in the King's forest in any of these four degrees, viz.:—

Stable stand,

Dogge draw,

~~P~~ack bear, and

Bloudy hand.



Stable stand is, when a man is found in any forest at his standing, with a crossbow bent, ready to shoote at any deere, or, *with a long bow*, or else standing close by a tree *with greyhounds in his lease, readie to let slip*, this is called by the auncient Foresters stable stand.

and *Falstaff*, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor,"

*Fal.* I am glad, though you have ta'en a special *stand* to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced.

*Page.* Well, what remedy? Fenton, heaven give thee joy!

What cannot be eschew'd must be embraced.

*Fal.* When *night-dogs* run, all sorts of deer are chased.

*Act 5, Scene 5.*

may refer, not only to the covert stand for the use of the archer, but also for the use of the dogs "ready to let slip."

*Nathaniel.* I assure you it was a *buck of the first head*.

. . . . .

*Hol.* Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer? And, to humour the ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.

*Nath.* Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge; so it shall please you to abrogate scurrility.

*Hol.* I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.

The preyful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing *pricket*;

Some say a *sore*; but not a *sore*, till now made *sore with shooting*.

The dogs did yell: put *L* to sore, then *sorel* jumps from thicket;

Or *pricket sore*, or else *sorel*; the people fall a-hooting.

If *sore* be *sore*, then *L* to *sore* make fifty sores one *sorel*.

Of one *sore* I an hundred make by adding but one more *L*.

—*Love's Labour Lost, Act 4, Scene 2.*

Notwithstanding her fair shooting, it seems that the Princess killed the deer, or, as *Holofernes* calls it, to humour the ignorant, a pricket. *Nathaniel* says it was a buck of the

first head, that is, in its fifth year. An extract from an old author will illustrate and explain the different terms *Holofernes* uses.

Concerning beasts of chase, whereof the bucke, being the first, is called, as followeth :—

The first yeere, a Fawne.

The second yeere, a *Pricket*.

The third yeere, a *Sorell*.

The fourth yeere, a *Sore*.

The fifth yeere, a *Bucke of the first head*.

The sixth yeere, a Bucke, or, a great Bucke.

—*Sir Tristram*.

*Pandorus*. Love, love, nothing but love, still more !

For, O, love's bow

Shoots buck and doe :

The shaft confounds,

Not that it wounds,

But tickles still the *sore*.

—*Troilus and Cressida, Act 3, Scene 1*,

*Holofernes* and *Pandorus* play upon the word sore. The pricket was not a sore till made sore by shooting, and the shaft from Love's bow tickles still the sore.

I do not find Shakespeare's knowledge of "Toxophilus" displayed in the works of any of his contemporaries, although they often allude to the long bow, and use many archery terms and phrases, and what I have called archery metaphors and similes.

Michael Drayton, speaking of the perfect craft of Robin Hood and his merry men, says,—

Their arrows finely pair'd for timber and for feather,

With birch or *brazil* piec'd to fly in any weather.

alluding probably to the following passage in "Toxophilus :"—

Piecing of a shafte with *brassell* and holie, or other heavy woodes, is to make the end compass heavy with the fethers in flying, for the steadfaster shootyng.

Lyly, in "Sapho and Phao," seems to allude to a passage in "Toxophilus," where Ascham mentions the fletcher's knowledge of a good shaft in every point for the perfect making of it, and the shooter's knowledge of a good shaft in every point for the perfiter using of it, because the one knoweth like a fletcher how to make it, the other knoweth, like an archer, how to use it.

*Vulcan.* Here, Venus, I have finished these arrows by art, bestow them you by wit: for as great advise must he use that hath them, as he cunning that made them.

*Venus.* Here, Vulcan, now you have done with your forge let us alone with the fancie: you are as the fletcher, not the archer, to meddle with the arrows, not the aime.

—Act 4, Scene 4.

As an archer must be content that a fletcher know a good shaft in every point for the perfecter making of it, so an honest fletcher will also be content that a shooter know a good shaft in every point for the perfiter using of it: because the one knoweth like a fletcher how to make it, the other knoweth like an archer how to use it.

. . . . .

I do not teach how to make a shaft, which belongeth only to a good fletcher, but to know and handle a shaft, which belongeth to an archer.

and a line of one of Shakespeare's contemporaries,

Eschewing short and gone and on either side, wide,

is evidently constructed from the following passage in "Toxophilus":—

By shoting also is the mynde honestly exercised where a man alwaies *desireth* to be *best* (which is a worde of honestie) and that by the same waye, that vertue it selfe doeth, coueting to come nighest a moost perfite ende or *meane* standing betwixte. ii. *extremes*, *escheweing shorte*, or *gone*, or *eithersyde wide*, for the which causes Aristotle him selfe sayth that shoting and virtue is very like.

Shakespeare seems to allude to this passage in "Antony and Cleopatra," Act 3, Scene 6:—

*Octavia.*                                A more unhappy lady,  
If this division chance, ne'er stood between,  
Praying for both partis:  
The good gods will mock me presently,  
When I shall pray, " O bless my lord and husband ! "  
Undo that prayer, by crying out as loud,  
" O bless my brother ! " Husband win, win brother,  
Prays and destroys the prayer : no midway  
'Twixt these extremes at all.

Antony. Gentle Octavia,  
Let your *best* love draw to that point which seeks  
*Best* to preserve it: if I *loose* mine honour,  
I *loose* myself: better I were not yours  
Than yours so branchless. But, as you requested,  
Yourself shall go *between's*: the *mean* time, lady,  
I'll raise the preparation of a war  
Shall stain your brother: make your soonest haste,  
So your *desires* are ours.

The reader will notice that Shakespeare and Ascham, in these passages, use the same words, *desire*, *best*, and both speak of the *mean* or *midway between two extremes*. The archery term "loose" is spelt in the "First Folio" as it appears in the quotation I have made from "Antony and Cleopatra," and not with one "o," as in many modern editions of Shakespeare's works. Moreover, *Antony* says,—

Let your best love *draw to that point*, alluding to the archer's practice of drawing his arrows to the head. Ascham speaks of a man used to shoot *drawing* his shaft *to the point* every time, and *Antony* seems to make a comparison between the action of loosing the shaft and the act of losing his honour.

If Shakespeare uses the archery term "loose" in this passage, *Antony* compares his honour to a shaft which he looses or parts with, and so brings to an end. In Shakespeare's time to mark the loose of a thing was to mark

the end of it. Puttenham, speaking of the figure Omoioteleton, or the Like Loose, says,—“ We call this figure, following the original, the like loose, alluding to the archer’s term, who is said not to finish the feat of his shot before he gives the loose, and delivers his arrow from his bow, in which respect we use to say mark the loose of a thing for mark the end of it.”

Shakespeare must have passed many hours of the day at home, writing plays and studying, and at the theatre, rehearsing, acting, and discharging the various duties of a manager. A man subject daily to so much sedentary work and indoor occupation, would long for the exercise and recreation in the open, “ health-giving air,” necessary to refresh the mind and preserve the bodily health.

*Macbeth.* Methought I heard a voice cry “ Sleep no more !

Macbeth does murder sleep,” the innocent *sleep*,  
Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care,  
The death of each day’s life, *sore labour’s* bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course,  
Chief nourisher in life’s feast.—*Macbeth, Act 2, Scene 2.*

“ For,” says Ascham, “ a man’s witte sore occupied in earnest study, must be as wel recreated with some honest pastime, as the body *sore laboured* must be refreshed with *sleep* and quietness, or else it can not endure very longe, as the noble poete sayeth,—

What thing wants quiet and merry rest endures but a  
small while.

Shakespeare calls sleep “ *sore labour’s bath*,” and Ascham says the body “ *sore laboured* must be refreshed by sleep.”

This is a necessity which all men, “ *sore occupied* in earnest study,” must know as well as Ascham and Erasmus did. “ Surely,” says Ascham, “ the best wittes to learning



must needs have much recreation and ceasing from their book, or else they mar themselves." And again :—

Medicines stande by contraries, therefore the nature of studying considered, the fittest pastime shal soone appeare. In studie euery parte of the bodye is ydle, which thing causeth grosse and colde humours, to gather togyther and vexe scholers verye moche, the mynde is altogythar bent and set on worke. A pastyme then must be had where euery parte of the bodye must be laboured to separate and lessen such humours withal: the mind must be vn timer, to gather and fetch againe his quicknesse withall. Thus pastymes for the mynde onelye, be nothing fit for studentes, bycause the body which is moost hurte by studie, shuld take away no profyte thereat. This knewe Erasmus verye well, when he was here in Cambrige: which when he had ben sore at his boke (as Garret our bookebynder hath verye ofte told me) for lacke of better exercise, wolde take his horse, and ryde about the markette hill, and come agayne. If a scholer shoulde vse bowles or tennies, the labour is so vehement and vnequall, whiche is condemned of Galene: the example very ill for other men, when by so manye actes they be made vnlawfull.

*Ch. Just.* Sir John, I sent for you before your expedition to Shrewsbury.

*Fal.* An't please your lordship, I hear his majesty is returned with some discomfort from Wales.

*Ch. Just.* I talk not of his majesty: you would not come when I sent for you.

*Fal.* And I hear, moreover, that his highness is fallen into this same whoreson apoplexy.

*Ch. Just.* Well, God mend him! I pray you, let me speak with you.

*Fal.* This apoplexy is, as I take it, a kind of lethargy, an't please your lordship; a kind of sleeping in the blood, a whoreson tingling.

*Ch. Just.* What tell you me of it? be it as it is.

*Fal.* It hath its original from much grief, from study and perturbation of the brain: I have read the cause of his effects in Galen: it is a kind of deafness.

The "apoplexy," "lethargy," "sleeping in the blood," and "tingling" mentioned by *Falstaff*, and the "gross and cold humours" mentioned by Ascham, are all said to be caused by *study*, and Shakespeare and Ascham speak of Galen in these passages.

I think it is probable that archery was Shakespeare's favourite exercise, and that during his childhood and youth at Stratford-on-Avon, he—

Was wont to bere in his hand a bowe.

And that when he lived in London he often shot at the Butts, the Clout and at Rovers, with Ben Jonson, Drayton, Hemminge, Condell, Phillips, and other friends and fellow actors, in Finsbury Fields and on various shooting grounds which were near at hand: and it is possible that during the last few years of his life, passed in his native town, he often made use of the long bow.

If it is true, as stated, that Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton visited Stratford-on-Avon, in the early part of the year 1616, they may have been guests at New Place; and it is possible that Shakespeare caught a severe cold when shooting with them at the Clout or Butts, and that he afterwards died of congestion of the lungs, *the Vicar's Diary notwithstanding*.

Shakespeare, like Ascham, may have been brought up in the Book and the Bow.

According to Ascham, there was good reason why English schoolboys should prefer the bow to the book and creep like snails unwillingly to school. "The Schoolmaster," a book which Shakespeare had read, was first published when he was about seven years old. It seems, from Ascham's account, that boys were brutally treated by their masters in those days, and that some scholars ran away from Eaton for fear of beating. The severity of one of the masters of this school, in the sixteenth century, is described by one of his pupils named Tuffer.

"From *St.* Paul's I went, to Eaton sent  
To learn straightways the Latin phrase;  
Where fifty-three stripes given to me  
At once I had:

For fault but small, or none at all,  
 It came to pass, thus beat I was ;  
 See Udal, see the mercy of thee  
 To me poor lad."

The stripes were given to Tuffer for a small fault or none at all, and Ascham says—

When the schoolmaster is angry with some other matter, then will he soonest fall to beat his scholar ; and though he himself should be punished for his folly, yet must he beat some scholar for his pleasure, though there be no cause for him to do so, nor yet fault in the scholar to deserve so.

After quoting, in "The Schoolmaster," the opinion of Socrates that children ought not to be brought up in learning by compulsion and fear, but by playing and pleasure, Ascham says—

Fond Schoolmasters neither can understand, nor will follow this good counsel of Socrates ; but wise Riders in their office can, and will do both ; which is the only cause, that commonly the young gentlemen of England go so *unwillingly to school* and run so fast to the stable.

*Jaques.* At first the infant  
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms,  
 And then the whining school-boy, with his satchel,  
 And shining morning face, creeping like a snail  
*Unwillingly to school.—As You Like It, Act 2, Scene 7.*

*Tranio.* Signior Grenico, come you from the Church ?

*Grenico.* As willingly as e'er I came from school.

—*The Taming of the Shrew, Act 3, Scene 2.*

*Romeo.* Love goes toward love, as school boys from their books,  
 But love from love, toward school with heavy looks.—*Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2.*

"For in very deed," continues Ascham, "fond schoolmasters by *fear* do beat into them the hatred for learning ; and wise riders, by gentle allurements, do breed up in them

the love of riding. They find fear and bondage in schools, they feel liberty and freedom in stables; which causes them utterly to abhor the one, and most gladly to haunt the other."

There is a way of winning more *by love*  
And urging of the modesty *than fear*;  
Force works on servile natures, not the free.

—*Every Man in His Humour, Act 1, Scene 1.*

Ben Jonson may in this passage refer to the harsh treatment of schoolboys mentioned by Ascham, who says—

Love is better than fear, gentleness better than beating,  
to bring up a child rightly in learning.

And he also says—

I could be over long, both in showing good cause and  
in reciting true examples, why learning should be taught  
rather *by love than fear*.

. . . . .

Yet some will say that children of nature love pastime, and dislike learning; because in their kind, the one is easy and pleasant, the other hard and wearisome. Which is an opinion not so true, as some men ween. For the matter lieth not so much in the disposition of them that be young, as in the order and manner of their bringing up by them that be old; nor yet in the difference of learning and pastime. For beat a child if he dance not well, cherish him though he learn not well, ye shall have him *unwilling* to go to dance, and glad to go to his book; knock him always when he draweth his shaft ill, and favour him again though he fault his book, ye shall have him very loth to be in the field, and very *willing* to go to school.

—*The Schoolmaster.*

Now, I think I must have satisfied the reader beyond all reasonable doubt, that Shakespeare was very familiar with Roger Ascham's great "little treatise," and that he had acquired a practical knowledge of the art of shooting in the long bow.

I think of all outdoor exercises and recreations of his time, archery, of which he speaks so much, would be, to him, the



most available, attractive, and interesting: available because long bows and arrows, as required by law, were to be found, "ready continually," in almost every house, and the shooting grounds, with Butts, Clouts and Rovers, were in all parts of the country near at hand; attractive on account of the fashion of the time, and the great charm and fascination of this invigorating exercise, and interesting, on account of the extreme difficulty in attaining excellence in the art of shooting in the long bow.

It may amuse the reader to imagine that the drawing (*see* frontispiece) represents old Double and Shakespeare shooting at the Clout. In the distance a marker is seen with a flag in his hand, and over the trees appears the spire of the church at Stratford-on-Avon. Old Double, the first figure, is shooting with a forehand shaft, right afore him, as it was usual to drive that big breasted arrow. Shakespeare, the second figure, is shooting under hand, as it was usual to shoot with the little breasted shaft, and his shaft is elevated so as to secure a round compass in flying to the mark. The old archer bore a sword at his side, and a maul at his back in the field of battle, but the maul as shown in the drawing is placed on the ground, so that the reader may see what that formidable weapon was like.

When the arrow we now use is drawn home, the end of the knock comes under the right eye and as low as the chin, but many of the old arrows were longer, and when they were drawn home the end of the knock came under, or nearly under the lobe of the right ear. The reader will see, in the drawing, the position of what our Saxon ancestors called the shooting finger, when the shaft was drawn home. *Now,*

~~Now~~ I have performed my task.

As nearly every able-bodied man in Shakespeare's time was an archer, it may seem like setting

Gloss on the rose, and smell to the violet,



to give evidence of his practical knowledge of the art of shooting in the long bow. My "chief end," however, has been to illustrate and explain what is obscure, and, for that purpose, I have not thought it necessary to quote all the allusions he makes to the bow, nor all the archery terms and phrases he uses, but merely those which, I think, cannot be thoroughly understood without explanation, unless the reader has a practical knowledge of the art of shooting in the long bow.

I may say more than this. Owing, partly, to the difference between ancient and modern English archery, terms and phrases which were well known to every man and boy in the sixteenth century are now obscure, and are not understood even by many experienced archers of the present day.

In speaking of the strength of modern English bows, I intended to mention that they do not average more than fifty-two pounds in weight. The greatest archer of modern times, Horace A. Ford, recommends the use of bows under that weight for the comparatively short distances now shot.

In "Archiv f. n. Sprachen," in "Notes and Queries," in the books I have published from time to time, and in this small volume, I have shown that Shakespeare, when he refers to passages in old authors, frequently uses, not only their thoughts, ideas, sentiments, and figures, but also the exact words in which they are expressed and by which they are, sometimes preceded and followed. Is this the result of a most retentive memory, or did Shakespeare, when referring to those passages in old authors, open their books and make use of their thoughts and words? It is not possible to answer this question with certainty, but some may think it was the result of a memory so tenacious and absorbing that when he had read a book which interested him, he remembered the thoughts and words of the author. However this may be, two truths may be told:—

1. Shakespeare knew the books he had read better than the commentators who have used them to illustrate his works.

2. Shakespeare was familiar with authors the commentators have not yet quoted.

A few lines from Ascham's "Toxophilus" may make an appropriate conclusion to this small book,—

wherein if I haue not satisfyed any man, I trust he wyll the rather be content with my doying, bycause I am (I suppose) the firste, whiche hath sayde any thyng in this matter, (and few begynnynge be perfect, sayth wyse men); and also bycause yf I haue sayed a misse, I am content that any man amende it; or yf I haue sayd to lytle, any man that wyl to adde what hym pleaseth to it.

And far now wel, my tale is at an ende.—*Chaucer.*







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