

## A PLEA FOR ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL.

BY S. J. WATTS.

**F**OOTBALL—Rugby football—is at once the oldest son and the wayward child in the family of British sports, always cherished by the rough-and-tumble Anglo-Saxons, and yet from the earliest times of doubtful reputation in the eyes of the law. It was forbidden by proclamation of the King of England five hundred and eighty years ago—"Forasmuch as there is great noise in the city caused by hustling over large balls, from which many evils might arise, which God forbid."

Later, from time to time, laws were passed both in England and Scotland against the game, as tending to breaches of the peace, and to neglect of the practice of archery, wherein lay the strength of the English armies in the days preceding the use of firearms. That these laws were habitually disregarded appears from the fact that the most frequent mention we have of the game during this time is in the records of the courts, and these show that prosecutions occurred only when a serious affray took place. Among the defendants we find "yomen, husbandmen, harms-makers and taylors." Harken to the voice of the good Puritan Stubbes in his *Anatomic of the Abuses of the Realme of England*—"For as concerning football playing, I protest unto you that it may rather be called a frendlie kinde of fyghte than a play or recreation—a bloody and murdering practice than a fellowly sport or pastime. For dooth not every one lye in waight for his adversarie, seeking to overthrow him and picke him on the nose, though it be on hard stones, on ditch or dale, on valley or hill, or whatever place soever it be he careth not, so he have him downe; and he that can serve the most of this fashion he is counted the only fellow, and who but he? So that by this means sometimes their necks are broken, sometimes their backs, sometimes their legs, sometimes then arms, sometimes their noses gush out with blood, sometimes their eyes start out, and sometimes hurt in one place, sometimes in another. But whosoever scapeth away the best goeth not scot free, but is either forewounded, craised, or

bruised, so he dyeth of it, or else scapeth very hardlie; and no mervaille, for they have the sleights to meet one betwixt two, to dash him against the hart with their elbowes, to butt him under the short ribs with their griped fists, and with their knees to catch him on the hip and picke him on the neck, with a hundred such murdering devices."

Would you not think that he was writing of the season of '93 rather than in the sixteenth century? King James I. of England, himself an athlete, said, in his oft-quoted advice to his son, "I debarre all rough and violent exercises, as the football, meeter for lameing than making able the users thereof." And to-day we read of bills pending before some of our State Legislatures for the suppression of the game. This is essentially the same game that, under the form and name of American Rugby, is to-day the subject of so much adverse criticism in the press of the United States.

Now, while suggestions are being made and steps are being taken to mitigate its brutality and to remedy its other defects, the writer wishes to call attention to Association Football, a game that has been played under one set of rules for more than a quarter of a century with increasing popularity among players and spectators alike, and without exciting a verse comment from any one. This game, I believe, retains all, or almost all, the desirable points of the Rugby game, and has many additional beauties.

In a general way the difference between the two games may be stated to be that in Rugby you may, and usually do, run with the ball in your hands or arms, while in Association you must not touch the ball with either hand or arm. From this leading difference other variations are outgrowths.

The special feature of American Rugby arises from the principle of interference to aid the man running with the ball. This has developed into mass plays. Of the thousands who attended the great college games during the season of '93 how many, think you, could perceive the various plays made by the

struggling mass of giants interlocked in one solid body in the center of the field? Very, very few. The momentum mass plays are almost as bad, and even round-the-end interference is difficult to follow. We see the men move so many yards toward one goal or the other, or form another pyramid of muscle in the same place as before, but not once in ten times can the play that produced the result either be seen or comprehended. Not so in Association. No mass play there. Nothing to conceal the beauties of the maneuver. Every movement of every player is in full view of the spectator.

In Rugby contests how many times is the *football* played by the foot? Perhaps a dozen times, and these plays were monopolized by one player on each side—the full-back. Not so in the Association game. The ball is kicked with wonderful rapidity from one part of the field to another, with skill and accuracy scarce excelled by billiard players. The effect this produces—extreme science combined with extreme rapidity and vivacity—is so dear to the American heart that, once understood, the Association game could not fail of universal popularity. No time is lost, moreover, as in the college game, by the continual necessity of lining up.

One of the chief virtues of the Association game is that light men can play it perfectly, whereas American Rugby is almost exclusively a game for heavy men. The forward line of the Windsor football team, present holders of the championship of the Western Football Association of Ontario, the most considerable league of Association teams in America, averages one hundred and thirty-five pounds per man, and the average weight of the entire team is less than one hundred and forty-four pounds. Thus the two games can be played side by side in the same club or college without injuring one another.

The boasted virtue of American Rugby, the absolute necessity of unselfish cooperation in team play, is no less prominent in the Association game, and the second characteristic, the scope afforded to strategy, is scarcely less. There is hardly an opportunity for the display of military precision or good generalship in Rugby that is not equally shared by the Association game, and while Association offers chances of sharp attack

and combined assault not exceeded by Rugby, in its feigned retreats it adds a strategic element unknown to its rival. In a word the Association game is neither dangerous to the player nor brutalizing to the spectator, and it offers the rapid, open, strategic contest that is the avowed aim of the reformers of American college Rugby.

For the benefit of those who, are not familiar with the Association game it may be well to give an untechnical description of a few of the leading features.

The ball is round, and twenty-seven inches in circumference. The field is seventy-five yards wide by one hundred and ten yards long. Each team consists of five forwards, the infantry, who form the line of attack; three half-backs, the cavalry, who assist the forwards in attack or the full-backs in defense as the occasion demands; two full-backs, the artillery, and a goal-keeper—the last three being the defense. Each set of players is supposed to play in lines parallel to the goal lines. In the disposition of the players and in general strategy the game has a considerable resemblance to lacrosse.

The game begins with the players in positions similar to those shown on the diagram, and while the men do not hold these places strictly, the position of each player as here shown, relative to those of his own side, is generally retained.

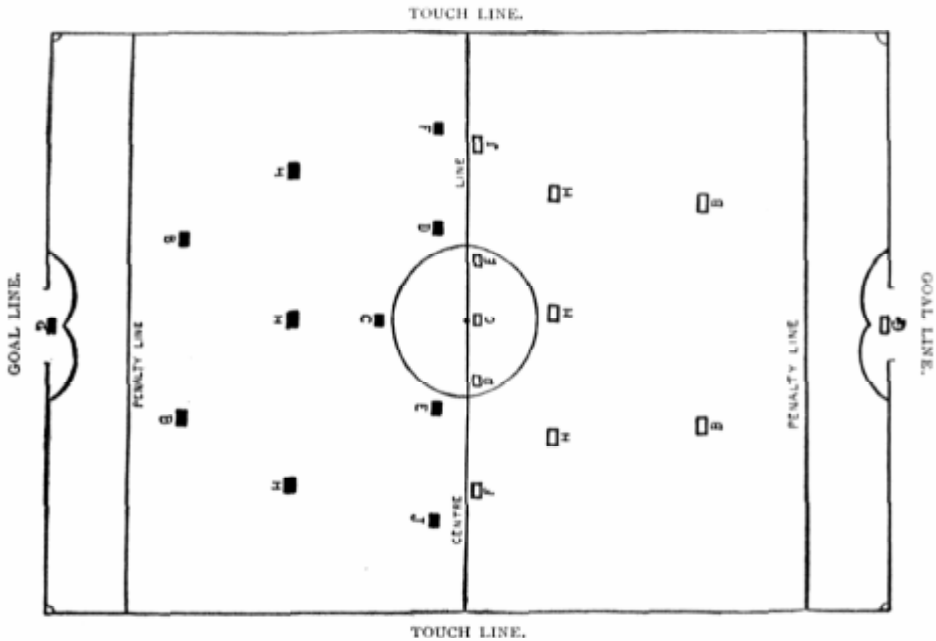
The referee places the ball in the center of the field. In the game here illustrated, the white men have the kick-off. None of the black men are allowed to enter the ten-yard circle around the center of the grounds, and neither side may cross the center line until the ball has been in play. The game is on when the center forward of the white men kicks the ball. This first kick must be in the direction of his opponent's goal, but this is the only case in which a player may not pass the ball back toward his own goal. The ball is usually kicked to one of the white forwards, who frequently at once returns it to the center. The center then gives a stronger kick so that the ball goes to a white forward, who has by this time gone some yards down the field. Meanwhile the black players have been, on the lookout to frustrate this passing back and forth by getting in on the white center forward

so quickly as to prevent the return of the ball to him, or soon enough to take it from him before he can give it the second kick.

In attacking, the Rugby player may collar an opponent who is running with the ball and "picke him on his nose." The Association player, except the goal-keeper, is not allowed to touch the ball with hand or arm, and is not permitted to use his hands to hold or push his adversary, but he may "charge" an opponent who is playing the ball, *i.e.*, he may run against him, taking care, however, not to use hand or arm in the contact, and not to charge him from behind.

supported by the half-backs, deftly pass the ball back and forth across the field, and avoiding the defense, form a crescent about the goal, putting shot after shot in on the goal-keeper until a hot one foils him, or until his defense breaks through or over the assaulting column.

Half-backs must be men of speed and stamina, tireless, sure but not necessarily heavy kickers. Indeed, a common fault in half-backs is to kick the ball so far that it goes past his own forwards and falls into control of the defense line of the enemy. Full-backs must be the heavy kickers of the team, able to use



G. Goal-keeper. B. Fall-backs. H. Half-backs. C. Center-forward. E. Right inside-forward. J. Right outside-forward. D. Left inside-forward. F. Left outside-forward.

Good play on the part of a forward consists in being able to "dribble," that is to run swiftly with the ball at his feet (not to kick the ball ahead a few yards and chase it), to pass the ball accurately to a fellow forward and quickly enough to avoid the charges of the opposing defense, and in ability to shoot well when within shooting distance of the goal. A shot on goal should be low and swift, for to score a point the ball must be fairly played from the field and pass between the goal posts, which are eight yards apart, and *below* the bar, which is eight feet from the ground. It is an inspiring sight to see the forwards,

either foot equally well, and to retain presence of mind at the most trying times. I think there is not in Rugby a position requiring the coolness and agility that are displayed by the best goal-keepers in the Association game.

The best teams depend almost entirely on team play, and successful combination is possible only when each player not only knows how to perform his own special duties but feels instinctively where each man of his own side may be. The keynote of all success in Association football is combination—the working together of the whole team as one machine—an elastic, delicate and

flexible machine, not a battering-ram as in Rugby.

In Great Britain, where the first set of Association rules was formulated about thirty years ago by Cambridge University players, much interest is manifested in the game, and it may fairly be called the national winter sport of the country. Enormous crowds attend the final cup ties and the international contests. The annual international games have resulted up to date as follows: England has won twelve straight games from Ireland, scoring seventy-nine goals to Ireland's seven. Wales has won seven games from Ireland, lost three and drawn two, scoring fifty-three goals to Ireland's twenty-three. Scotland has never lost a game to Ireland, and has won the twelve games played by an aggregate score of fifty-six goals to twelve. England has won twelve games from Wales, lost two and drawn one, scoring forty-nine goals to Wales's fifteen. Scotland has won seventeen times from Wales, and one game was drawn, Scotland scoring eighty-two goals to Wales's ten. Scotland has won eleven games from England, lost six and drawn five, scoring fifty seven goals to England's forty-six.

It is evident then, that the land of the heather is to-day the home of the best Association football. Wherever Scotland's sons are found in numbers there you will find the Association game. It is not surprising, therefore, that Canada is the leading center of the dribbling game in the New World. In the province of Quebec, the city of Montreal has a city league. In Ontario the Western Football Association, already mentioned, controls about twenty clubs, and holds semi-annual series of contests for the Western Football Association challenge cup, now held by the Windsor Club; the Intermediate cup, held by Ayr; the Junior cup, held by Galt; the Hough cup for high schools and collegiate institutes, held by the Seaforth Collegiate Institute, and the Fox challenge cup, held by Preston. The Caledonia cup is competed for by the W. F. A. and the Toronto League. In addition to the clubs above named may be mentioned the Berlin Rangers, eight times winners of the senior championship.

The Toronto League has nine clubs, the Scots holding the senior championship, the Willows holding the Interme-

diante championship and the Hurons the Junior championship. In the Toronto Wholesale Dry Goods League six teams compete for the handsome silver shield presented by the Toronto *Dry Goods Review*. The Gordon, McKay & Co. team are the present shield holders. But the most famous club in Toronto, and indeed in all Canada, is the Toronto 'Varsity. Its record for five years up to last fall, when it was twice defeated, was twenty-seven games won, five drawn and one lost.

Other leagues in Ontario are the Belleville League, with six clubs competing for the Corby challenge cup; the Quinté challenge cup, held by the Napanee High School, and the Maitland Association, of which the Listowel Club holds the championship.

From Ontario the interest in the game has spread to Alpena and to Detroit, Mich. In the latter city the Michigan Athletic Association has taken up the game, and their team is proud of a record of seventeen games won to five lost, in contests with the strongest clubs of Ontario and Chicago.

In Chicago the Swifts, Pullmans, Thistles and Chicagos are very strong teams, competing yearly with others for the Jackson challenge cup. St. Louis, Mo., in 1883, formed the Western Football Association of America, which was afterward succeeded by the St. Louis Football Association and the Mound City Football League. Braidwood, Ill., a city full of Scotch miners, has a remarkable club with an almost unbroken record of victories. In the Pennsylvania Association Football Union are the Eddystone, Philadelphia Association, Kensington Rovers, North End, Tacony, Frankford, Oxford, Norristown, Enterprise, Athletics, and Trenton Swifts, competing for a cup presented by the late Mr. G. W. Childs. The cup is now held by the Athletics of Philadelphia, whose second eleven also holds the championship in that class.

In the East the interest in the game centers in the manufacturing districts about Fall River, Mass., and Pawtucket, R. I. Last season this Association was divided into an Eastern and a Western district, the former containing the Pawtucket Free Wanderers, The East Ends, Olympics and Rovers of Fall River, and the Y. M. C. A. of Pawtucket; the latter, the Green Points, New York Thistles,

Bayonne Rovers, the Caledonians and the Wanderers of Kearney, the Americans of Hoboken, and the True Blues and Thistles of Paterson. The most famous of these teams is the Pawtucket Free Wanderers, who are champions of the New England League and holders of the Rhode Island cup and the American cup. One of their notable achievements was the defeat of the Toronto Varsity Club on May thirty, 1893, by a score of five to two, being the one defeat heretofore mentioned in the Varsity record. The game has been introduced in New York, where in 1890 a league of eight clubs was formed, which continues to flourish.

On the Pacific Coast the game has taken a strong hold. It is played in British Columbia and Oregon, and around Seattle, Washington, is a strong league. In San Francisco the Pacific Association Football League is one of the best managed and most progressive on the continent. With true Scottish shrewdness its officers are educating the boys to play the game, and the result is a vigorous junior league. In the season of 1892-3 the senior clubs were the Pacific Wanderers, Scotch Thistles, Rovers, Oakland Athletics, Richmonds, American Eagles, Rangers, Granites, and Fort Masons (United States Army). At the end of that season the championship, and with it the Azule and Hilbert trophies, was carried off by the Thistles with the Wanderers runners-up.

Zest is added to the sport by the peculiar make-up of the teams regarding nationality. The leading teams this season up to date are the Thistles, purely Scotch; Rangers, Scotch and English; Pacific Wanderers, Scotch, English, Canadians, Australians and Americans; the Pastimes, purely Irish, and the Fort Masons, United States Army soldiers from the Artillery Foot. There are three clubs in the United States Army in or near San Francisco, and one of them plays an annual match with the Citrus Club of an English colony at Penryn, Placer County, California. There is also a good team at Bakers-

field in Southern California. In Colorado and other mining States are thriving local leagues, and the one thing needed to develop this sport rapidly is an organization that will embrace, unite and extend the various associations above mentioned into one grand union, bent on upholding this manly and health-giving sport.

In the fall of 1888 the Western Football Association of Ontario sent a team to the old country that played four games in Ireland, winning three and drawing one; five games in Scotland, winning one, losing three and drawing one; fourteen games in England, winning five, losing six and drawing three. When it is taken into consideration that these twenty-three games were played inside of sixty days against the best clubs in Great Britain, and that the score of goals won by the Canadians was thirty-nine to forty-one lost, it can be seen that the New World can play good Association football.

Let lovers of good wholesome sport in America give more attention to this most excellent pastime. It is especially adapted, to such athletes as cannot afford the time or money required to train for the American Rugby game. In grammar schools, high schools and preparatory schools it is preferable in so much as it is less severe and brutal to the contestant. And when it is once established in schools it cannot fail of recognition in the colleges themselves. In England and Scotland it is played side by side with the Rugby game, and at least holds its own in popular esteem. It is a remarkable fact that there has seldom or never been a first-rate Association player who was a Rugby expert. Nor do the Rugby players succeed at Association. There is room for both games, each requiring as it does a different class of men. It will be a valuable addition to the list of our outdoor pastimes, for, in the words of an ancient Cornish man, "It puts a courage into their hearts to meet an enemy in the face, yet all is good play, and never attorney or coroner troubled for the matter."

