

make sure that he was unobserved; but the owner of the bald spot was completely taken up with his shaving, and noticed nothing higher than his own chin. The rope lengthened, the spider-doctor dropped lower and lower, and finally reached the goal of his ambition. He stood on a little pink oasis in a desert of sandy hair, and was conscious of a ridiculous aspiration for feathers. He wanted to clap his wings and crow, he was so delighted.

Then he made a gentle movement with his various legs, the head jerked, the razor made a gash, the man cried out, brought his hand to bear on the bald spot with much violence; and—again oblivion.

A little later he was sitting on a shelf in a store-room that he had certainly seen before. This time he had only four legs—with a tail thrown in—and he was eating the end of a tallow candle.

"Horrible!" he thought. "Langley was right, though I always thought him such an ass. I am a rat. And I enjoy tallow."

He made a good meal, and modestly retired when he heard the key turn in the lock. It was his sister's voice that broke on the silence of that capacious store-room, and he knew that he had heard words very like these from her once before.

"The servants' candles are all gnawed and spoilt again," she cried. "That rat's keep costs me three shillings a week at the very least. Do help me to hunt him out, John!"

"Not I," answered Mr. Langley's voice from without. "Better call your brother. I dare say he does not mind that sort of thing."

"What meanness!" reflected the hidden listener.

"Langley does not want to be a rat himself, but he does not mind letting another fellow in for it."

He travelled sadly through a thick wall, perforated by a narrow passage which finally conducted him to a cellar, into the darkness of which he peered, with his head thrust out of a small hole in the corner.

Again the grating of a key!

There was plenty of time for retreat, but he remained obstinately still, scorning to fly from his fate. He knew it was coming, for he had acted in this scene before, only performing a different part.

The door was thrown open; he scurried across the floor of the cellar as a flood of light burst into it; there was a loud report, and—

"If you please, sir, would you be *good* enough to wake? That's Mrs. Goldsmith's coachman a-knocking down the door. The old lady must be took bad again, and you not so much as dressed."

"Sleep well last night?" inquired Mr. Langley at the breakfast table.

"Eight solid hours. Only dreamt a little towards morning," answered the doctor. "But I saw a patient before you were out of bed. Nothing the matter with the old lady except nerves; and I shall be suffering from the same complaint myself if I don't take a holiday; so I shall just leave the patients to Finch, and run down to Eleanor for a week."

And Mr. Langley told his wife privately that it was indeed time her poor brother took a rest, for there could be little doubt that his mind was suffering.

"Suppose you both take a rest," said Eleanor. "I am sure you need it too, my dear."

M. PENROSE.

FOOTBALL—PAST AND PRESENT.

BY AN ENTHUSIAST.



THE RUGBY GAME—A GOOD "PASS."

(From an instantaneous photograph by E. Airey, Bradford.)

I THINK it is a fact that can hardly be disputed that at the present day football is very nearly, if not actually, the most popular of our national games. Unfortunately there still exists a certain amount of prejudice against it in many quarters, on account of its being considered a somewhat dangerous pastime. That it is at the present day largely suffering from the misdeeds of its past, I believe; and I will make bold to say that, played as it is at present, in an increasingly scientific fashion, the proportion of serious accidents to the enormous number of players taking part in it is very small. Many of the so-called fatal accidents that are sensationally reported might and would have taken place had the victim unduly exerted himself in any other form of amusement, a weak heart often being the cause. I remember well seeing a heading in a paper in large letters, "Shocking Accident to Football Players," and finding that, having strayed on their way home on to a railway cutting, several men had been run over. I simply mention this as an example of how easily the public may be misled.

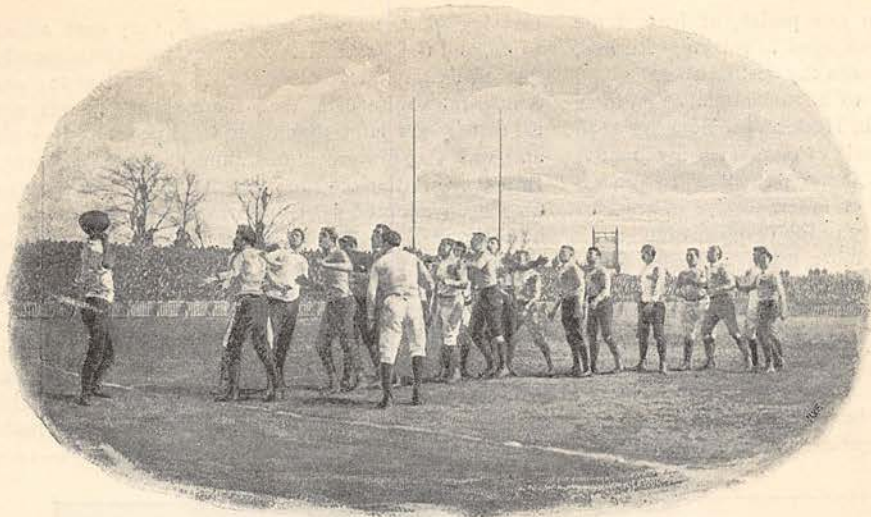
The fact is, that in every form of sport accidents will

without, however, apparently having the desired effect. James III. of Scotland decreed that "footballe and golfe be utterly put down," and in the reign of "Good Queen Bess" proclamation was made that "no foteballe play be used or suffered within the City of London and the liberties thereof, upon pain of imprisonment."

In those days the game seems to have been entirely confined to the apprentices and the labour-

ing classes, it being in great disfavour among the "aristocracy, nobility and gentry." What the peculiar delights were of the exceedingly rough-and-tumble sport which then prevailed, it is hard to say. It was veritably a free fight, the goals being often miles apart and whole villages joining in the sport, which consisted simply of carrying a big, roughly-made ball and depositing it by main force in their opponents' goal, sometimes a hole on a moor or sometimes even a spot in a river!

This was a rough form of the modern Rugby game, which has now been reduced to a highly scientific exercise. Before we leave this branch of the subject we ought just to allude to the famous Shrove Tuesday game that was played at Chester, Corfe, Scone, Derby, Kingston-on-Thames, and many other places. The ball would be thrown up in the market-place and from



THE RUGBY GAME—THROWING THE BALL IN FROM "TOUCH."
(From an instantaneous photograph by E. Airey, Bradford.)

happen, and the very element of risk is with many an incentive to the sport. Bathing accidents are frequent, yet who would say give up bathing? and hunting, skating, shooting, and even cricket—all give their proportion of mishaps.

Take the corresponding advantages of fine, manly exercise, improving to a wonderful extent the pluck, nerve and physique of many a naturally timid boy, and I feel sure that the good far overbalances the necessary evil of risk of injury to limbs, in the way of sprains, strains, or even an occasional breakage.

But to turn to the ancient history of the game. It will be news to many to hear that it dates as far back as the reign of Edward III., who actually forbade the game by law as taking up time which should have been given to exercising the youth of the day in archery. In other succeeding reigns the sport was also forbidden,



THE RUGBY GAME—FORMING A SCRUMMAGE.
(From an instantaneous photograph by E. Airey, Bradford.)

two o'clock till sunset in one parish, at least, large bodies of men would be engaged in carrying the ball, by hook or by crook, towards the desired spot.

The women, too, seem to have had games on their own account, as we read in Hone's Year Book for 1838 that there was an annual Shrove Tuesday match between the married and single women of Inverness, which, for some reason or other, always seemed to have resulted in the victory of the married women.

But we must come to more modern times and describe the rise of the present two great governing classes of football as now played, viz., the Rugby Union game and the Association. The former in its present style owes its origin, as the name implies, to Rugby School, and the famous description in "Tom Brown's School-days" of the game will be familiar to most of our readers. Here the old fighting game was reduced to

carrying game as, with reservations, they were asked to do, and the Football Association was consequently formed as an independent body. Several of the old Rugby rules were even then retained, and it was not till three years later that these were done away with and, with very few exceptions, a universal code adopted. Into the variations in the rules that have from time to time been adopted we cannot here go, and we must now try and describe as far as is possible how the modern Association game is played.

Eleven men a side take part in the game, which is played with a round ball, its composition being a bladder enclosed in a leather case of twenty-seven or twenty-eight inches in circumference, and weighing thirteen to fifteen ounces. The disposition in the field of the players is one goal-keeper—who is the only man allowed to use his hands to defend his charge—two



G. ROWLAND HILL (RUGBY UNION).

(From a photograph by Messrs. Morgan & Kidd, Greenwich.)



C. W. ALCOCK (FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION).

(From a photograph by Lombardi & Co., Pall Mall East, S.W.)

a sensible sport, although a good deal of perhaps unnecessary roughness in the way of hacking and tripping existed even then. Rugby, however, seems to have been the only school where this form of the game was played, and the other great schools—notably Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Westminster and Charterhouse—adopted a modified game which only, as a rule, allowed the ball to be kicked and forbade handling. Eton, Harrow, and Winchester still have different forms of rules, which seem to owe their origin in the first place to some special peculiarity in their playing grounds or fields. From these schools came the birth of the famous Association game, which has since spread with such marvellous rapidity.

Before 1863, however, there were no defined rules in force among the clubs and schools playing, with the exception of those mentioned above.

In that year, however, an effort was made to bring all the games then played under one code, but without success. The Rugby players would not give up their

full backs, three half-backs and five forwards, one centre, two left wing and two right wing. The goals are two upright posts eight yards apart and with a bar across them eight feet from the ground, the object of the game being to kick the ball between these posts and *under* the bar.

A simple game to describe it may be thought by the uninitiated; but unless seen it is impossible to imagine the extraordinary amount of science that may be imported into it. In the old days individual dribbling, *i.e.*, keeping the ball at your feet by short kicks while running, was one of the chief things to be practised, but nowadays this is largely sacrificed to combination, and a very pretty sight it is to see a first-class amateur or professional team play.

The ball is kicked off from the middle of the ground, the players being scattered about to receive it. One of the opposing side perhaps gets it, and endeavours, by passing it with the foot from one to another, to centre it. It is not allowable to touch the ball with the



ASSOCIATION GAME—PASSING.

(From an instantaneous photograph by H. J. Whitlock, Jun., Birmingham.)

of being lost sight of. The system of importation, too, is an undoubted evil, though it is difficult to see how it is to be avoided under the present laws. The club which has the longest purse buys the best players, and we consequently often find an English town eleven with a very large mixture of imported Scotch professionals, who cannot be said in any real sense to represent such town except in name. In Scotland at present

hand, and should the ball come high *heading*—that is, butting the ball with the head—is largely indulged in. This may appear to the onlooker to be somewhat ludicrous, but it is a very effective way of dealing with the ball, and it is curious how far it may be propelled in this manner. Should the ball go out of the portion of the field marked out, it is thrown in again by a player, who must hold the ball with both hands over his head. Should it go behind the goal lines, it is kicked out again by the goal-keeper; but should the ball go behind off one of the defending side a *corner kick* is granted to the attacking side. At a distance of one yard from the corner post, a player kicks the ball as nearly as possible into the mouth of the goal, the rest of the sides being clustered round for attack and defence. The match is won by the majority of the goals gained.

Every effort has been made of late years to prevent rough and foul play of any description, and the referee who rules the game has power to at once order off the field any player who intentionally plays in a dangerous or unfair manner.

The great feature of the Association as opposed to the Rugby game, is that in the former professionalism has been made legal, while in the latter it is at present strictly prohibited. The consequence of this is that in all the principal Northern teams very considerable weekly wages are earned by the players, and the sporting element of playing entirely for the love of the game is in some danger

professionalism is barred, consequently it is no wonder that men of the working and mechanic classes find the temptation of high wages for playing the game in England a serious barrier against their representing their native place simply for honour and patriotism.

The enthusiasm of the crowds is incredible, as many as twenty thousand people often witnessing a match for the ties for the championship of the Professional League, and for the National Cup.

A tale is told in a contemporary magazine of an enthusiastic blind man being led to the matches and being able to follow the game by the cries. This is beautiful to think upon, but we fancy "we know that blind man; he comes from Sheffield."

One consequence of the professional element having been introduced is that it has virtually extinguished the chances of the amateur players to head the winning lists as they used to do when the Association game was started by the great public schools of England. We find that from 1871 till 1881 the National Cup was invariably won by amateur teams, but since that date the chances of the amateurs have practically been nil.



ASSOCIATION GAME—CENTRING FROM THE WING.

(From an instantaneous photograph by H. J. Whitlock, Jun., Birmingham.)

In turning to the Rugby game, we find that after the final rupture with the Association players, which we have described, no definite and fixed code of rules was drawn up till 1871; before that time players of the clubs under the carrying code virtually did that which was right in their own eyes.

In January of that year, however, a meeting of London and Suburban clubs was held in London, at which the now famous Rugby Union was definitely started, and a code of rules drawn up and officers appointed.

These rules are very much more complicated than those of the sister game, as the number of possibilities are so much greater in a game where picking a ball up, running with it, kicking it in various ways and scrummaging it are allowed. The number of players was originally fixed at twenty a side, but this number has since been reduced to fifteen, divided as follows:—

Nine forwards, two half-backs, three three-

ball down, when the two sets of forwards gather round, and what is called a *scrummage* is formed.

In the old days these used to be long and uninteresting trials of mere strength, but nowadays they are very different, as the ball is manipulated cleverly by one side or the other, and is passed out to the half-backs, who are waiting to pounce on it the moment it comes out, and pass it away to their three-quarter backs, who are waiting for it. These are generally the most speedy men on the side. Now comes in the special character of the game, as the ball frequently passes back from hand to hand, till a player, eluding all opposition, plants the ball behind the goal line of his opponents. This is called a try, and counts two points. The ball is then brought out and placed on the ground for a kick at goal. The placer of the ball lies down with the ball in his hands and the kicker makes a niche with his foot for it to lie in. As soon as he gives the



ASSOCIATION GAME—AN ANXIOUS MOMENT.

(From an instantaneous photograph by H. J. Whitlock, Jun., Birmingham.)

quarter backs and one full back. This of late years has been—especially in Wales—altered to four three-quarters and eight forwards, and at the present moment, the football world is largely exercised in discussing the comparative merits of the two styles. The field of play is 110 yards long and seventy-five yards broad. At each end are placed two posts, eighteen feet six inches apart, joined by a cross-bar ten feet from the ground, the object of each side being to send the ball *over* the goal of their opponents. The game is started by the ball being kicked off from the middle of the ground, the players of one side being ranged behind the kicker, while those of the other are spread about in front of him to receive the kick.

We will suppose the ball caught by a player of the opposite side. He may then either run with it in the direction of his opponents' goal, or take a kick to the side lines, called the touch lines, beyond which if it falls it has to be thrown out at right angles, both sets of forwards lining up in parallel lines to endeavour to catch it. The man who does so tries to get away with it, but, unless he has time to pass it back to another of his side, he is *tackled* and has to put the

word, the placer puts the ball down and an attempt is made to kick it over the bar in the face of an instantaneous charge by the defenders. If it succeeds a goal is scored, which counts five points (including the try). If, however, it is unsuccessful, the ball is kicked off again, and so the game goes on.

A very pretty way of scoring is what is called a *dropped* goal, which is made when a man, seeing an opportunity, instead of trying to run behind with the ball lets it drop from his hands on the ground, and, kicking it the very instant it rises from the ground, takes an accurate aim and sends it over the cross-bar. This counts four points.

Should the rules be broken in any way, and an appeal be made, the referee who has charge of the game blows a whistle and grants the successfully claiming side a free kick. Should the ball go over the bar from such kick it is called a penalty goal—it being a punishment to the side breaking the rules—and counts three points against them. The match is, of course, won by a majority of points.

This can, necessarily, be only a very rough sketch of the game, which must be seen to be understood.

We cannot here go into any disquisition as to the comparative merits of the two branches of the game. Each has its most enthusiastic followers and both are year by year throwing off their more dangerous elements and becoming more scientific in their manner of playing. It is a sport that neither time nor ridicule has ever been able to stamp out and it must have a very large influence on the national character.

Foreign visitors must look upon the game with feelings of amazement, and regard its players as mad barbarians. The game, however, is rapidly spreading to our colonies. Already English teams have visited New Zealand and the Cape, and we have received a visit from a team of Maoris, who were very successful.

Of organisers who have, in their respective branches, brought the games to their present state, the name of C. W. Alcock, who has been the Association secretary for over twenty years, must be most

honourably mentioned, as also that of Lord Kinnaird and many others.

In the Rugby game, one of the best known and most popular men in England is that of G. Rowland Hill, the Rugby honorary secretary, who has probably done as much, if not more, for his favourite sport than any man living.

The names of famous players are legion, and it would be invidious to particularise.

I can only repeat in drawing this imperfect sketch to a conclusion that football is a manly sport, which, in spite of its dangers, real and pretended, must always have a great and increasing place in the affections of the British people, and I would earnestly exhort those who are more or less opposed to it, to pause before going to the length of throwing any unnecessary impediments in the way of its exercise by the hale and strong of the coming generation. But I am speaking for myself, and I am "an enthusiast."

HOW A WILDERNESS BECAME A GARDEN.

SECOND SERIES.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH.



BEGONIA FROEBELII.

JOHN AND ALICE SMITH were only now entering the ninth month of their residence at Highland Villas, and it was on an early day in March that they might have been seen strolling slowly down the centre path of their garden in animated converse with their neighbours the Robinsons, who had just looked in.

"You know, John," said Charles Robinson, "I consider that, as yet, we two gardeners have not had a fair chance or opportunity given us of showing our friends what we can do. This is our first spring month, and therefore our first sowing month."

"Certainly," replied John ; "in so far as open-air

gardening goes, you are right, but we have both of us been pretty busy under our glass for some little time. What, by the way, were those things you were re-potting the other day in your greenhouse? For the life of me, although their name is familiar enough, I cannot just now think of them."

"Oh, you mean those few begonias I am so fond of?"

"Ah, yes," said John. "Well, how were you serving

them? Come now, tell us all about them, for I know your begonias to be one of your hobbies."

"Suppose, then," said Charles, "we all adjourn to my little greenhouse, and let me give the lecture there."

Ten minutes later, then, and a second garden inspection had begun, this time on the premises of Charles Robinson, and after the general survey made



"A CRIMSON VELVET FLOWER."

(Fairfax Muckler 32)