



The Elizabethan.

No. 15.

WESTMINSTER, DECEMBER, 1875.

PRICE 6D.

BACK PLAY.

IN our last two articles we have attempted to give some advice to forwards with regard to playing together. We wish now to make a few suggestions concerning the combined play of backs.

With regard to the number of backs, we would remind our readers, that not many years ago it was found sufficient to have only two backs, both of whom played in the position of half-back, one on each side of the ground: this was soon changed, and one of these half-backs was placed behind the other, taking the place of what is now called "back." It was before long felt that the original two half-backs were necessary to make the strength of the backs equal to that of the forwards, but we believe that the first occasion, on which three backs were played at Vincent Square was when the School played the Engineers in 1871, and owing to the great strength of the visitors forward, the School Captain (whose judgment on that occasion was only surpassed by his brilliant play) played a fast forward as half-back in addition to the usual half-back and back, thereby enabling the School to draw a game against a

most powerful team of forwards. Since that time forward play has changed considerably, and the "passing game" has induced, nay, compelled some teams (notably Scotchmen) to play even four backs in addition to goal-keeper.

This we venture to say would at present be premature at Westminster, both because the ground, which is somewhat smaller than most others, enables forwards to get back more easily, and so support the backs; and also, thanks to plentiful "punt-about" in green, Westminster backs are more accurate in their kicks than other backs usually are, and a half-back can be depended upon for a volley or half-volley in a case when a Scotchman would leave it to his supporting back.

We therefore prefer that there should be two half-backs (each taking half of the ground) and one back; the former should be so close to the scrimmage, that he can stop a man before he has gone far enough to give him a command of the ball, and the latter should always be within twelve yards of that half-back who is at the moment engaged either in backing up the scrimmage or tackling a man. Meanwhile the disengaged half-back ought to be in the middle ready for "middling," or a long kick across the

ground, which he will nearly always reach, before an opposing forward can get at it. This latter point we consider the most important of all, for in addition to giving each half-back a rest now and then, it brings the backs into a line when a rush is made near goal, and so compels the opposing forwards to pass all three in succession, and it also enables the back to support a half-back without misgivings that the middle is undefended; so that we have often seen a probable "middle" frustrated by the back, when the half-back alone would have been powerless to prevent it; therefore back may always support half-back, even right into the corner, thereby often averting danger. Half-backs then should remember that they are always supported by a back, and consequently when pressed they cannot do better than go at the man while the back gets the ball, and even sometimes they may kick the ball back gently so that back may get an easier kick; this stroke, however, should seldom be resorted to.

We prefer that half-backs should have had considerable practice in playing up, for as they are generally engaged at close quarters their "dribbling" experience will often enable them to elude a man, though they should remember to kick directly they can do so with safety.

Let half-backs and backs both practise dribbling in order to obtain greater command over the ball, and especially let them, as well as forwards, practise the turn with the outside of either foot, so as to be able to use it as easily as the more common inside turn; the former is a most difficult stroke to parry, and often gives a half-back an easy kick.

It is almost unnecessary to say that volleys and half-volleys should be as easy to backs as place kicks, but a back should feel that he can be sure of his direction when kicking a volley, for which constant and careful practice is necessary, so that he may feel perfectly certain, as in many cases uncertainty leads to dreadful failure.

Half-backs should always endeavour to lift the ball gently over the scrimmage so as to drop short of the opposing half-backs, and immediately in front of the feet of their own forwards; back should try to put it to any forward whom he may see likely to get away with it, remembering that it is generally necessary to lift the ball so that it may not go over his head too fast, but drop in front of him, thus not compelling him to turn back. We consider that this is often lost sight of, and backs kick too hard and not high enough, giving their own forwards very little time to get the ball before the opposing backs.

It is most necessary also that backs generally should economize their strength during the early

part of the game as far as they can do so without shirking, for the strain on them, though short, is very severe at times, and it requires all their power to stand it, in addition to which many a match has been won by the steady and plucky play of a back in the last ten minutes who has "go" enough left both to "dish" his adversaries and keep his kicks as straight as they were at the beginning of the game.

It is, moreover, a remarkable fact, that there always have been one or more backs in the Westminster Eleven who could be relied on in danger, and that the best half-back of the present day is an Old Westminster.

School Notes.

THE Under Elections are no longer compelled to touch the rod-drawer as they pass it in school. The practice was discontinued a few days ago. We are not sorry to see it abolished, as it was rather absurd and decidedly obsolete. The reason why it was ever instituted was that the monitors used to sit at that table, and the Under Elections used to come to ask their leave for various things, but now that the monitors have been provided with another table, there can be no possible reason for the Under Elections being compelled to pay their respects to such a tumble-down piece of furniture. Some one will say, "What a pity to do away with an old custom!" We are sick of old customs. They are all very well in their way, but when they get into our way, there is not the smallest reason why we should be compelled to adhere to them. Everything tends to improvement. And obsolete customs, even though they may be venerable through their age, must be abandoned if they clash with that which is to the advantage of the majority.

WE have lately been enjoying, what so many people delight in calling "seasonable weather," that is, three or four inches of partially frozen snow, thick fogs, and cold winds, which all combine to make the fireside and bed the most comfortable places to be had. So some think; others, however, who do not mind cold, after carefully wrapping a huge comforter round their throats, and putting on warm gloves and mittens, prefer to slide (and fall) on the racquet courts, or snowball each other and the scis in and around Dean's Yard. This state of things is now, however, changing fast, and snow and frost have given way to mud and slush, which are much worse. We are glad to see that several fellows have employed themselves in freeing the racquet court from the above-named nuisances, which must be very inconvenient to persons who have to cross it. Football of course is at an end for this term, except the Old Westminsters' match, as the condition of fields and green makes them too bad to be played in, and besides, preparation must be made for the examinations.

THE Gumbleton English Verse Prize has been awarded to L. S. Bristowe; E. H. Alington was second. Both the poems are printed in this number. The subject was Arminius, the German hero.

ON Tuesday last, there was an early play in honour of the Right Hon. Cavendish Bentinck, who has lately been made a member of the Privy Council; it is a pity that the holiday could not have been given at another time of the year, when the weather would have been more settled and enjoyable.

A change has been made this year in the days on which the Play is to be performed, as it is to be on Wednesday, Monday and Wednesday, instead of Thursday, Tuesday and Thursday, as on previous occasions. This is not really so much of an innovation as it appears to be, because in former years these days of the week were chosen for the Play, and thus instead of abolishing we are reviving an old custom.

The Fields.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL v. CRYSTAL PALACE.

PLAYED ON NOV. 17th, and a more wretched day could not well have been chosen; not only did it rain all the previous night and day, but continued till almost the beginning of the match, so that by the time play was finished the ground was terribly cut to pieces. At first, matters seemed likely to go hard with us, Gamble's services being often required; but towards the end of the game, we had it all our own way, and made several good, but, owing to the excellent play shown by Savage, ineffectual shots at their goal. Till half time, our backs were considerably bothered by C. E. Smith, who kept getting well away and passing them, and at length, after a very fine piece of dribbling, he scored the first goal for the Palace, the ball glancing through off the goal posts. The Westminsters now took the ball gradually down to the Palace goal, and after a short scrimmage, Aston managed to put it through. The play then was confined to the middle of the ground till after half time, when Neame raised their score to two off a throw in by White. After this we were never pressed, but still could not score, till at last Davson got well away down the side, and succeeded in passing their backs, and raising the score to two all; a violation of the off side rule was brought against this, but on discussion afterwards the objection was dropped. The darkness, which then set in, enabled us to completely pen them, and Fox all but scored again for us, but unfortunately the ball passed just outside the post. For the Palace, besides their Captain, White and Barlow were most conspicuous; for us, Aston, Crowdy, Waddington, and Alington did good service. T. B. Jones also played extremely well, and received his colours after the match, so that now the Eleven is filled up, Rawson, however, being unable to play. Sides:—

Westminster School.—E. H. Alington (Capt.),

E. Waddington (back), F. D. Crowdy, C. J. Fox (half-back), W. C. Aston, J. H. Williams (half-back), C. S. Davson, A. F. Gamble (goals), G. A. Hicks, T. B. Jones, and E. R. Frere.

Crystal Palace.—C. E. Smith (Capt), L. H. Neame, J. H. Vigne (back), W. Ford, D. R. Smith, W. B. Cloete (half-back), F. Barlow, A. H. Savage (goals), D. Allport, W. H. White, and V. Williams.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL v. CLAPHAM ROVERS.

After an exciting match, we were left victors by one goal to nothing; throughout the match a strong wind was blowing, which was a great hindrance to any good individual play. We won the toss, and preferred to play against the wind for the first half, during the whole of which the game was most closely contested; neither side, however, succeeded in scoring. At half-time, Alington kicked the ball right down to the Rovers' goal, and Birkett, in trying to stop it, put on so much screw, that the goal-keeper could not even get within arm's length of it. This goal was disputed, but we proved to the satisfaction of all, that it was all right. No further success was obtained on either side, both playing up hard till the end. However, we had plenty of shots towards the close of the day, none of which came off, owing to the excellent play of their backs. The remarkable feature in this match was the unselfish play exhibited among our forwards, and the good kicking of our backs. For the Rovers', Buchanan, Bailey and Beaufoy were most prominent. New goal posts of the orthodox height were first used in this match. Rawson was still unable to play. Sides:—

Westminster School.—E. H. Alington (Capt.), E. Waddington (half-back), F. D. Crowdy, C. J. Fox (half-back), W. C. Aston, J. H. Williams (back), C. S. Davson, A. F. Gamble (goals), G. A. Hicks, T. B. Jones, A. N. Jackson.

Clapham Rovers.—R. H. Birkett (Capt.), E. R. Dawn, E. G. Smith, R. A. Ogilvie (half-back), M. Beaufoy, E. Field (half-back), W. S. Buchanan, C. E. Leeds (goals), N. C. Bailey, W. F. Richmond, and A. T. Stanley.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL v. GITANOS.

This match resulted in another victory for us by two goals to none. During the first half of the time, the struggle was very even; but soon a good run down by Crowdy resulted in a goal off the foot of Hicks, who was backing up well; hardly once did the Gitanos endanger our goal, owing to the excellent play of our backs. After half-time our second goal was scored; it was the result of a run down by Alington well backed up by Davson and Jackson, the latter of whom put it through. Though we had many tries after this, none came off, being all frustrated by Giffard's length of limb; some of Jones' throws in, however, nearly brought about the downfall of the Gitano citadel. For us Williams was useful behind, and Alington, Crowdy, and Jackson forward, the latter showing great improvement in dribbling. For the Gitanos, Lindsay was most conspicuous, Bonsor, however, and Codrington also did good service. Rawson was also unable to play, owing to

lameness. This is the last foreign match before the Play. Sides :—

Westminster School.—E. H. Alington (Capt.), E. Waddington (half-back), F. D. Crowdy, C. J. Fox (half-back), W. C. Aston, J. H. Williams (back), C. S. Davson, A. F. Gamble (goals), G. A. Hicks, T. B. Jones, and A. N. Jackson.

Gitanos.—W. T. Langford (Capt.), H. Bonsor, W. Lindsay (back), C. Crutchley, J. H. Giffard (goals), M. G. Farrer, A. P. Barlow, R. Norman (half-back), A. E. Codrington, H. Griffiths, C. A. Leggatt (subst.).

SENIORS v. SCHOOL.

A very close match, resulting in a victory for the Seniors by two goals to one. At first the Seniors seemed to be getting the best of it, and Davson kicked the first goal for them, the ball being middled to him by Crowdy. Just before half time Hicks equalized matters, as hands were called close to goals. Crowdy, however, decided the match by another goal after some brilliant dribbling; no one was able to score afterwards, though shots were numerous. For the School, Aston and Hicks were the most prominent, playing up hard throughout; Jones' back-play frequently stood the Seniors in good stead, all the rest of the side worked well together during the whole game. Sides :—

Seniors.—E. H. Alington (Capt.), E. Waddington (half-back), F. D. Crowdy, J. H. Williams, C. S. Davson, G. A. Bolton, R. D. Brinton, J. H. Watson, C. A. Jones (back), R. F. McMillan, and C. C. Macnamara (goals).

For the School.—C. J. Fox (Capt. and half-back), W. C. Aston, A. F. Gamble, H. C. Frere, G. A. Hicks, T. B. Jones, A. E. Black, A. N. Jackson, J. Fox (back), E. Frere and R. H. Godfrey (goals).

FIRST SEVEN v. NEXT ELEVEN.

Played on Nov. 10th at Vincent Square. It was a very unexciting and one-sided match, the Seven eventually winning by nine goals to none, besides two that were disallowed on a charge of outsidings; none, however, of the tries on the part of the Eleven came off, owing to the vigilance of the goal-keeper, besides which the state of the ground prevented any fast play. For the Seven, Crowdy played splendidly, scoring five of the goals, in addition to the two disputed ones; Fox also kicked two, and Alington and Aston one each. For the Eleven, Hicks, Black, and Tayloe worked hard. The Seven were deprived of the services both of Williams and Rawson. Sides :

For the Seven.—E. H. Alington (Capt.), E. Waddington (back), F. D. Crowdy, C. J. Fox, W. C. Aston, C. S. Davson, and A. F. Gamble (goals).

For the Eleven.—G. A. Hicks (Capt.), T. B. Jones, G. A. Bolton, A. E. Black, W. A. Cuppage (goals), W. E. Parker, H. P. Robinson, E. R. Frere (half-back), J. Fox (back), W. Tayloe and H. Reece.

SIXTH v. SCHOOL.

After a long interval, victory has been again restored to the Sixth, and a very decided victory it was, though

had the School played up harder they could have made a much better fight of it. Eventually the Sixth won by seven goals to none. The ground was hard and slippery, and snow falling throughout put all fast play out of the question. Directly the ball was kicked off it went down straight to the School goal, where it remained most of the time. The first goal was kicked by Alington, and Hicks shortly added a second; nothing more was scored before half time, owing to Tayloe's good play in goals. However, afterwards five more goals were kicked for the Sixth by Alington (2), Crowdy, Watson, and Waddington, the latter being the result of a clever kick from back; Vyvyan also did good service for the Sixth; for the School, Jones (back), and Davson, T. B. Jones, and Reece among the forwards, proved useful to their side. Sides :—

For the Sixth.—E. H. Alington (Capt.), E. Waddington (back), F. D. Crowdy, W. C. Aston, J. H. Williams (half-back), G. A. Hicks, G. A. Bolton, R. D. Brinton (goals), J. H. Watson, J. A. Turner, and C. B. Vyvyan.

For the School.—C. J. Fox (Capt. and half-back), C. S. Davson, T. B. Jones, C. A. Jones (back), E. R. Frere, W. Tayloe (goals), W. E. Parker, W. A. Cuppage, H. Reece, A. I. Relby, and H. P. Robinson.

As far as the season has gone at present, we have been fairly successful. Out of nine matches five have been won, two drawn, and two lost; our first beating 4—1 by a scratch team chiefly composed of Wanderers, who were engaged to play against Glasgow, was no disgrace, as our opponents numbered some of the finest players in England; our only other licking came from the same club, and was a lucky win for them, as it was decided by a free kick from some distance. The following is a list of the matches as played :—

		Goals kicked by
Oct. 6	v. C. W. Alcock's XI., lost	1—4 Hicks.
16	v. Upton Park, won	1—0 Crowdy.
23	v. South Norwood, won	2—0 Jones & Crowdy.
27	v. XXII., drawn	0—0
30	v. Upton Park, won	5—0 Crowdy 2, Rawson, Alington, Davson.
Nov. 3	v. Wanderers, lost	2—3 Rawson & Crowdy.
17	v. Crystal Palace, drawn	2—2 Aston & Davson.
20	v. Clapham Rovers, won	1—0 Alington.
24	v. Gitanos, won	2—0 Hicks & Jackson.

Goals kicked for us, 16, against us, 9.

Crowdy, who has kicked 5 goals already, has been playing by far the best among the forwards, showing more pace and greater dribbling powers than last year, both Hicks and T. B. Jones, the new choices in the Eleven, show great promise, while the backs have been steady throughout. May the rest of the season prove as successful.

RIGAUDS v. HOME BOARDERS.

This match was played on Thursday, November 17, and ended, as was expected, in an easy victory for Rigauds, who won by ten goals to two. Fox won the toss for Rigauds and elected to play against the wind. Leggatt kicked off for Home Boarders, and for the first five minutes the ball was taken near the Rigauds' goal. C. Fox at length got away with the ball, and after a good run down scored a goal. After this the Home Boarders played up hard, but their efforts were not successful.

Fox got away with the ball and again scored for Rigauds. Soon after this, Secretan having brought the ball well down the middle, a goal was kicked by Troutbeck out of a "greeze" in front of goals. Fox made several more good runs, and being well backed up, especially by H. Abernethy, two more goals were scored by him before half time. Rigauds now had the wind and turned it to good account, Fox having several shots. Secretan by a good run again got the ball down to the Rigauds' goal, and being well backed up by Hollis and Mr. Gibson, a goal was scored by the latter. Rigauds had it now their own way, two more goals being scored by Needham and Rogers. C. Fox's play for Rigauds was very good, he kicking eight out of ten goals, his crossing also being very good; he was very well backed up by his side. For Home Boarders Secretan and Mr. Gibson played very well and were well backed up by Hollis. The sides were:—

For Rigauds.—C. Fox (Capt.), A. F. M. Gamble (back), J. Fox (half-back), W. Tayloe, H. Reece, B. M. Rogers, H. Abernethy, H. W. Macnamara, L. W. Needham, Stevenson and C. Crawley (goals).

For Home Boarders.—T. Secretan (Capt.), C. A. S. Leggatt (back), Mr. J. Gibson, C. Simson (back), C. Muir, J. Troutbeck, F. A. Shadwell, H. Hollis, F. Caiger (half-back), Ritchie, J. Frere.

FROM OUR OXFORD CORRESPONDENT.

At the Ch. Ch. Athletics W. Sayer won the two-mile race, and H. S. Otter was third for the mile. For three years the hammer had been won by the head Westminster freshman student, but this year the spell has been broken. W. Brinton rowed in the winning trial eight. W. S. Rawson and H. S. Otter have distinguished themselves at football.—It has been decided by the Vice Chancellor's court that an undergraduate must take out a licence to use the arms of his college; this may serve as a consolation to those who never get school prizes, if a book stamped with arms means a payment of 1*l.* 1*s.* every year.

Poetry.

ARMINIUS.

(GUMBLETON ENGLISH VERSE PRIZE.)

STILL through its endless course our earth rolls on
 Around the splendid circle of its sun;
 Still year succeeds to year and day to day,
 Still seasons come and seasons pass away
 In the same changeless order; still time flies,
 Nature lives on—'tis life alone that dies.
 Poor feeble man! e'en in one little day
 Thousands are born and thousands pass away;
 Like moths around the lantern of the world
 We flit a moment, then our wings are furl'd,
 And in the dust we sink, our place to give
 To others in their turn, and thus we live.
 Yet from the crowds that throng the paths of life,
 Who to a tomb ignoble crawl through strife,
 Who move among their fathers' graves, and toil
 And hope and fear unnoticed till the soil

Receives once more its own, some few sublime
 Glimmer like beacons through the mists of time,
 Light up the world that gave them life, and give
 Their fellow-men some goal for which to live;
 Their death is no death, for their works on high
 Upraise a monument which cannot die,
 Whose influence Time himself cannot disarm,
 And storm and flood are impotent to harm—
 No statue huge, no monument of stone,
 Which cannot long outlive the life that's gone,
 Which, but a few years past, must meet their fate
 To die away like those they celebrate—
 No! no! such things as these can only be
 An evidence of man's mortality,
 Never can they a hero's fame enthrone,
 Safe from the waters of oblivion—
 A nobler monument they leave behind,
 A living love graved on the human mind.
 And, Hermann, thou wert one of these, whose name
 E'en now in human hearts kindles the flame
 Of honour and of courage, who alone,
 When nations, princes thought all hope was gone,
 Didst dare withstand th' o'erwhelming might of Rome
 And shed the light of freedom o'er thy home.
 E'en as I speak thy name, beyond control
 Swift thoughts and strange course through my musing soul,
 Before my eyes dim figures seem to stand,
 And shadowy thoughts to vig'rous life expand.
 Methinks I see thee now as on the eve
 Of the great fight, the fight that was to give
 Freedom to Germans, after thou hadst led
 The Roman gen'ral far from home, then fled
 To join thy longing friends, e'en now I see
 Thy form, as 'neath a huge outspreading tree
 Thou stoodest in the dim and waning light,
 And nervedst thy comrades to th' approaching fight—
 "Germans! the hour has come at last, when we
 With one bold stroke shall make our country free.
 Then Roman legions here! this dismal wood,
 Ere break to-morrow's morn, must run with blood.
 Soldiers! this is your task—full well I know
 Where'er I lead ye will not fear to go;
 Ye are not women of the south, but men
 Rear'd in the wilds of mountain, vale and glen.
 What! shall the pamper'd Roman dare to hope
 With the brave children of the North to cope?
 Then he shall learn that Germans cannot yield,
 Nor, where their friends have died, desert the field.
 For, comrades, there is glory in the grave,
 If but you perish as becomes the brave.
 Then fear not! fight, and if fate wills it, die!
 On! Germans, on! to death or victory!"
 He spake, no hesitation did they show,
 Through the thick wood dash'd onward to the foe,
 And shouted out their war song, far around
 It peal'd, and thousands trembled at the sound.
 Then came the din of battle—through the wood
 Fierce grew the carnage, freely flow'd the blood,
 The keen swords flash'd, the javelins flew, around
 Heaps of the dead and dying strewed the ground,
 The very forest shiver'd at the fight,
 And clouds of dust made darker the dark night—
 Still death and blood, still fiercer grew the strife,
 Germans for freedom, Romans fought for life—
 Still each press'd on, till broke the early dawn,
 Then Varus saw his every hope was gone;
 The legions trembl'd, turn'd away, and fled
 They knew not where, or wounded sank down dead—
 Himself despairing, yet too brave to yield,
 Fell, by his own sword dying on the field—
 Arminius saw him fall, his soldiers flee,
 And cried aloud, "Our fatherland is free;"
 The hosts around him caught the welcome cry,
 And flung it joyful to th' admiring sky,
 The hills, the valleys, and each forest tree
 Echoed again, "Our fatherland is free."
 The scene is changed—how quickly pass away
 Glory and honour! Who can tell to-day

The fortune of to-morrow ! Ah ! thy fate,
 Hermann, but ill requited one so great ;
 Thou hopedst to be king, 'twas said of thee,
 "Should not his country's saviour sov'reign be?"
 Thanklessness stings who knows how cruelly,
 The good and noble never fear to die,
 Full well they know how fleeting is their breath,
 But death by those we've saved is double death.
 It was the dead of night, a surly cloud
 Hung o'er the gloomy forest like a shroud,
 The tempest came, far crash'd the bellowing thunder,
 The short-lived lightning clove the clouds asunder,
 The hailstones rattled loud as Hermann stood
 Pale and courageous in his native wood—
 His native wood, where he had come to die—
 Die, at the hands of countrymen, and nigh
 Stood his accusers gather'd then to take
 His life who gave them theirs, and thus he spake :—
 "Thou glorious Heaven, ye mountains, and thou earth,
 Farewell, farewell ! Now, now in the last dearth
 Of friends and pleasure, when I most do know
 The fickleness of fortune, feel the blow
 Of man's ingratitude, I come to you
 For sympathy and comfort, oh ! adieu !
 To succour Germans I have borne the sword,
 And saved my country—this is my reward.
 Silence ! thou beating heart ! I will not fear ;
 Death comes to all at last—Germans, draw near !
 If my poor life will save a fatal strife,
 I do not shrink from off'ring you my life."
 E'en as he spoke the fatal arrow sped ;
 They left him there, no tomb enwrapt his head ;
 Nobly and bravely did he meet his doom,
 Nature approved, and Nature form'd his tomb ;
 Heaven dropt its tears for him as't saw him fall,
 The thunders were his dirge, the clouds his pall.
 Oh ! cruel fate, and yet too oft the fate
 Of those who well deserve—oh ! to be great,
 Noble, and good, a state, a world, to save,
 Leads but too often to the martyr's grave—
 Too oft this false and faithless world doth give
 Death to those men from whom she learns to live.
 Yet this ingratitude so cold, so base,
 But guides its victim to the foremost place,
 Blots out each mark that else might stain his name,
 And, though by death, lends pinions to his fame,
 Which far outrun the mem'ry of all crime,
 And bear him spotless through the depths of time.

L. S. BRISTOWE.

PRESENT STATE OF ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL.

DEAR SIR,—I read with great delight in your last article the words "Learn to dribble before you learn to pass." The Association game as now played in London is, in my humble opinion, not "in the same street" with the game, which was but a few years ago modelled on the rules used by the Westminster boys. It has become the fashion to play with three backs, and many of the leading clubs intend this year to play four, but the rule of offside is unchanged. What is the result? The aspect of the game is entirely changed. From an exhibition of real skill, pluck and hard work, it has degenerated into a miserable scramble, in which that forward gets most *κέρδος*, who most judiciously shirks his work. One used to see a man make a good run down, pass opposing forwards and backs, and kick a goal at the end of it. Such a thing is now not only unknown, but tacitly forbidden. It is far too selfish. A forward, if he meets one of the opposite side, mustn't

try and pass him. He must pass the ball on to a companion who is strutting about as near the other goal as is allowed, and trust to him. The idea of running the risk of having the ball given into the enemy's hands by trying to dribble is now-a-days too preposterous. I was umpiring last month in a match between two of the most powerful clubs in England, Oxford University and the Wanderers. Throughout the game there was not a single run made of even average merit, hardly a piece of decent dribbling, and yet there were playing on one side or the other three or four men known to be the best dribblers out. They were no good at all. It was a howling "scramble." "Here you are;" "Pass her on;" "Middle her;" "Don't keep it all to yourself;" "Do kick;" "Don't kick;" and so on, till one thought Bedlam was let loose. Now, Sir, I think it is high time that some one should come forward and try to reform this state of things, and Westminster might well take the task upon herself. I venture to suggest two alterations which might be made in the present rules; 1st, in the rule as to offside; 2nd, in that about "hands."

1. At present, if *three* men are between a forward and his opponents' goal, he is on side. Let three be altered to four, and if that be found insufficient to prevent the shirking one sees now in every match, let the Eton, or still better, the Harrow rule of offside be enforced. It is urged that the play is much faster now than it used to be. Doubtless—If a man walks about for five minutes, and then runs for five, he will probably run faster than if he were to keep steadily following up the whole ten minutes. Get rid of "Sneaking," and it will not be necessary to extend the game from one hour to one and a half.

2. Let the umpire decide whether it is a case of "Hands" which justifies a free kick, and let him call it, as an umpire calls a short run at cricket. Free kicks are abominations. They stop the game, waste time, and cause endless quarrels, while half the cases of Hands, which give rise to free kicks, are pure accidents, and give no advantages whatever to the man who has unwittingly offended. I have seen a free kick claimed and given when the ball was kicked by a back against the arm of one of his own side, whose back was turned to him. This is surely neither the spirit nor the letter of the law. I must apologize for the length of my letter, but hope the importance of the matter I have raised may justify it.

Believe me, Sir,

Yours very truly,

R. W. S. V.

Poetry.

ARMINIUS.

(GUMBLETON PRIZE.)

WHAT worthy monument of well-earn'd praise,
 What tribute can a wond'ring people raise
 To him, who ever prompt at duty's call
 Gain'd love, respect, esteem and fame from all?
 Whose breast, inspired with patriotic fire,
 Swell'd with just rage and fierce heroic ire;
 Can poet's pen a nobler theme desire?

The face of heav'n displays no brighter star,
 With glorious beams resplendent from afar,
 Than the brave patriot's soul, with glory crown'd,
 Spreading a lustrous ring of light around.
 'Mid such pre-eminent Arminius see
 Bold, hardy, daring, as none else could be,
 Pre-eminent in youthful manliness,
 His very look portending sure success,
 Pre-eminent in strength, in active life,
 In counsel sage, a lion in the strife !
 Could such a one his fatherland behold
 Groaning in durance vile, and yet withhold
 His hand from war, his spirit from the fight,
 Consent to tyranny, desert the right,
 Nor stem the opposing stream of hostile might ?
 Though honour'd once in Rome's fair citadel,
 Short time he deign'd within those walls to dwell ;
 In arms once more he seeks his native land,
 A soldier in the famous Roman band ;
 His noble mind to stratagem he lends,
 Stooping to conquer, and to craft descends,
 In secret leaves the camp, and to the air
 Pours forth these tokens of a brave despair :
 " My fatherland, have I return'd to see
 Thy children vanquish'd and no longer free,
 Groaning beneath the iron rule of Rome ?
 Yet will I save thee soon, my land, my home !
 Or freed at length from earthly care and toil,
 Pour forth my life-blood on thy sacred soil ;
 In battle-field full soon proud Rome shall feel,
 What 'tis to face the desperate patriot's steel !"
 He ceased, and on his way the hero sped,
 Eager the path of victory to tread.
 Varus meanwhile, in false security,
 Unconscious of th' impending treachery,
 Kept open camp, where with luxurious sway
 Debauch and wassail crown'd the closing day ;
 Careless with songs and shouts of revelry,
 Wine-cups were drain'd in wild, tempestuous glee,
 Uncheck'd their jovial mirth and jollity.
 No death's-head care disturbs that feasting crew ;
 None fear'd that loose intemperance to rue.
 But fast rebellion's gath'ring thunder-cloud
 Grew ominously greater, while the crowd,
 Who round the master mind Arminius press,
 Rending the air with acclamations loud,
 Invoke the gods their enterprise to bless.
 " Arminius," they cry, " Arminius comes,"
 " The Saviour of our lives, our friends, our homes,
 Ye gods, watch o'er him, shield him in the fight,
 Restore to us in him each ancient right,
 Protect us by the bold Arminius' hand,
 And sweep the fell invader from the land."
 Such prayers wore out the night, and with the day
 The patriot band, in brave but rude array,
 Clamour for leaders to the battle-field,
 To fight, perchance to die, but not to yield.
 Roused by the shouts, each sentinel alarms
 His sleeping comrades. " Haste," they cry, " to arms,
 With hideous cries unseen approach the foe,
 Up, men of Rome, your native valour show !"
 So burst the storm at last, and usher'd in
 Relentless strife, unceasing battle din.
 One side well disciplined, well arm'd, well led,
 'Gainst nature's obstacles contending bled.
 The other knew and held the vantage ground,
 With bristling spears the topmost mountains crown'd,
 While missiles carnage spread and death around.
 The combat deepens ; still with voice and hand
 Varus exhorts his brave devoted band,
 In vain, alas ! those fastnesses to storm,
 Which with barbarian hordes so thickly swarm.
 But the dread Fates, unsated yet with blood,
 Demand new victims for their loathsome food ;
 Where ponderous rocks and hurtling arrows fly,
 Destroy'd in heaps the lessening legions die.
 Black night at last brought respite to the fray,
 Next morn, alas ! renew'd, and all that day,

And all the next th' uncertain conflict raged
 With reckless onslaught, desperate courage waged,
 Till Rome's fierce eagle yields to Germany.
 Germans, rejoice, once more your land is free,
 All honour to your great deliv'rer pay,
 His triumphs celebrate with grateful lay !
 His sword is drunk with noble blood,
 His arm in battle hath withstood
 The choicest troops of Rome !
 His mighty soul submission spurns,
 Love in his heart undying burns,
 For freedom, right, and home !
 With joy, ye gods, this man behold,
 The brave, the resolute, the bold,
 In strength and beauty clad ;
 Who eminent in council stood,
 Upholding justice, adding good,
 Despising all that's bad.
 With myrtle, and the laurel bough,
 Adorn the conqueror's lofty brow ;
 Pledge him in ruby wine ;
 Fill to your champion, fill, I say,
 To him, whose virtues bright as day
 In Godlike beauty shine !
 What more can man desire than that his name
 Should live for ever on the lips of fame,
 His deeds by all posterity be known ?
 Such honours now doth great Arminius own :
 Though dead and gone, his body lifeless clay,
 His spirit lives, his work shall ne'er decay,
 His meed of glory never pass away !

E. H. ALINGTON.

Correspondence.

TO CORRESPONDENTS, &c.

THE yearly subscription for *The Elizabethan* is fixed at 3s. 6d. (including postage).

All Subscribers at Oxford who have not paid their subscriptions must send them immediately to F. B. Lott, Christ Church, or by P.O.O. to H. R. Rogers, St. Peter's College, Westminster; and at Cambridge, to E. H. Holthouse, Trinity College.

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Contributions for our next Number to be sent in before January 31st, but correspondence only will be received by the Editor up to February 3rd, at St. Peter's College, Westminster.

All other communications to be addressed to L. S. Bristowe (Secretary), St. Peter's College, Westminster, and on no account either to the Editor or Printers.

Copies of any of the back numbers of *The Elizabethan* can be obtained on application to the Secretary.

We beg to acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of *The Carthusian*, *The Etonian*, *The Wykehamist*, *The Meteor*, *The Blue*, *The Cholmeleian*, and *The Ulula*.

P. A. GEANT and E. M. R.—Declined with thanks.
 OXONIENSIS.—We quite agree with you.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ELIZABETHAN.

DEAR SIR,—As one of the members of the Lawn Tennis Club, I feel it my duty to say a few words in defence of this much maligned game. As Cantab. in your last number seems to have exhausted most of the popular sarcasms upon it, I think it best to answer his arguments in default of better. First he asks, "what object its promoters have in view." This question he sufficiently answers in the second part of his letter, where he says it may be a source of satisfaction to a certain number of 3rd Elections and Home Boarders. But let me inform him that this satisfaction does not arise from their having a horror of violent exercise, but from the fact that for some of them such violent exercise is absolutely forbidden, and these prefer playing Lawn Tennis to loafing about or sitting over the fire, while others who are by

nature unfitted for football, like to go in for a game in which they may gain some proficiency. Besides, Cantab. allows that it demands a certain amount of activity and quickness of eye; then, surely a game of such a nature must improve the quality of the matches for the wire, or at least make them better contested than they have hitherto been.

Secondly he says, "we have plenty of out-door amusements already." May I ask to what he alludes? Football for the greater part of the year is the only one I wot of. He goes on to say, it cannot fail to divert the attention of others from nobler games. To use a culinary proverb, "the proof of the pudding is in the eating." It is quite certain that the *diverting* process which Cantab. so much dreads has not taken place, since, the club being confined to members of the Sixth and Shell, those who in these forms do play football are not likely to leave it, while those who do not and are not obliged to go to station have something to do instead of spending their time in complete idleness, which is commonly reported to be the maternal relative of mischief. After the remarks he has made upon Lawn Tennis, the best thing Cantab. can do, is to go and play a game himself, and he will, I am sure, find that to play it skilfully is not such chicken's play as he seems to imagine. To conclude, since we have such precedents as Charterhouse and some of the colleges at Cambridge, that the scheme may never be knocked on the head is the fervent desire of your humble servant.

BO!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ELIZABETHAN.

DEAR SIR,—I noticed in your last *Elizabethan* a letter from an Old Westminster, who appears very desirous that the present Library should be turned into a reading-room for the School. Now it seems to me that this room would rarely be entered by the members of the Sixth or Shell, who are alone capable of enjoying and appreciating its advantages, inasmuch as they already possess all the books of reference they require.

I should rather prefer to see the present Westminsters trying to preserve what few volumes they have, before any suggestion for increasing their stock should be considered.

Yours,

CONSISTENCY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ELIZABETHAN.

DEAR SIR,—The great event of the year is approaching—the Westminster Play. I have so often regretted, when thoroughly enjoying the Play myself, to see so many young fellows round me who evidently did not understand the plot. I have a sug-

gestion to make. Do you not think that the masterpieces of Terence might from time to time be considered an object well worthy of explanation to the lower forms? A few hours would suffice to enlighten them on the chief points of our plays; they would then join more readily in the clapping, and a much more beneficial and instructive evening would be spent.

Trusting you will pardon my intrusion, influenced by the love I bear my old School,

I am yours,
M.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ELIZABETHAN.

DEAR SIR,—In your last issue there may be seen a decidedly curious concoction from the pen of a correspondent calling himself by the illustrious name of Cantab. He is grieved at the introduction of Lawn Tennis up fields, and I am very sorry it has had so serious a result. Yet we all have our grievances—I have mine; I am grieved that the white-washed lines which mark out the boundaries of the courts for the game in question are buried under two or three inches of snow.

"May I ask what object the promoters have in view?" Of course he may, and as one of the promoters I shall be most happy to supply him with all the information he desires. We wish to provide some means of recreation for those boys who are not up to their eyes in love with Cricket, Football, or Racquets:—nothing more. Your correspondent then proceeds to enumerate certain objects which he says we cannot have in view in introducing Lawn Tennis—an enumeration which is simply waste of words, because nobody for an instant supposed they were the objects. And now, omitting a sarcastic little touch on the subject of Bowls and Croquet, I will proceed to *the hit*, the "very palpable hit," the keenest cut in a very cutting letter, "the introduction of Lawn Tennis may be a source of satisfaction to a certain number of Third Elections and Home Boarders who have a horror of violent exercise." Sir, as a Home Boarder, I protest I feel this deeply. But I should like to be allowed to suggest one thing which has apparently escaped the notice of Cantab. viz., that Third Elections and Home Boarders are not fixtures, and if he blames the Third Elections of one year, he blames the Seniors of the next year, and the Second Elections of the year before, and if Home Boarders, a large number of those who will soon figure in the ranks of the Q.S.S. But of course this is of no importance.

In conclusion, I have only to thank the Representative of Cambridge for the cordial wish with which he winds up his letter, that Lawn Tennis "may be at once and for ever knocked on the head," and to express a conviction that he will never condescend to become a member of one of the Lawn Tennis clubs established at his University.

HOME BOARDER.

Floreat.