

Fatalities at Football.

It is to be hoped that the visit of the Irish team of football players to Canada during the season just closed will result in the abandonment of the game as played at present in Montreal.

Given a good field, a bright sky, with just a suspicion of coming winter in the air to keep the contestants fresh and vigorous, and there is more than enough in a game of Rugby football to keep spectators interested. But it must be the game as played in the British Isles, and the sooner Canadians adopt it the better for their physical well-being and the popularity of a splendid and exciting pastime.

Statistics of the sport, as played in the neighbouring States (and the game as played in Montreal is not much of an improvement thereon), will serve to emphasize our plea for the clean and harmless "Rugby," of which our Irish friends gave such a pretty exhibition.

The "Philadelphia Ledger" has taken the trouble to ascertain the number of persons killed in football games since the season began, and the results of its work shows that prize fighting is a gentle and lovable sport in comparison to the brutal and bloody play on the "gridiron." Eleven players have died since September as the result of injuries received in the game and thirty seriously hurt. Three died from concussion of the brain, three from injuries to the spine and four from internal injuries. One of the most peculiar accidents was that which caused the death of George Shoup, a 14 year-old boy, who, after having had a knee injured, suffered nervous prostration on account of the pain, and died from this cause.

Those injured suffered from broken limbs and collar bones, twisted knees, sprained ankles, dislocated shoulders, wrenched wrists and bruised bodies, and in many cases the victims will be permanently crippled. The greatest number of injuries was received during the Thanksgiving Day games.

South African War—Risk Cost.

When General Lord Methuen, who has been literally cutting his way at a fearful but perhaps unavoidable loss of life to the relief of Kimberley, wrote his much discussed letter to the London "Times," calling attention to the extra premium of five guineas per cent. on his life assurance during the campaign in South Africa, he had many supporters and sympathizers. But the practical business men who control the life insurance companies prove to have been fully justified in changing the extra premium. The mortality statements of the campaign show that the assumption of war-risks is actually costing the companies far in excess of their early calculations. In commenting on the battle of Belmont, the "Review," one of the London insurance journals which inclined to the belief that the "five guinea" rate was rather high, says:—

"At the battle of Belmont about 2 per cent. of the officers engaged were killed, while killed and wounded

were 12 1-2 per cent. among the officers. This as against about 7 per cent. killed and 20 per cent. hit at Dundee, Glencoe and Ladysmith up to the investment. But this Belmont percentage is on a single battle. When Lord Methuen has fought two or three more battles, and put himself even with the number of Natal engagements, we will again work it out. Meanwhile, for 12 1-2 per cent. of the officers to be hit in a single battle is sufficient to show that the officers' war-risk is much above 5 per cent., and there is still the strongly marked difference between the officers' risk and that of the non-commissioned officers and men. The percentage of the latter killed was under 1 per cent., and of the total hit under 3 per cent., or one fourth of the officers' risk."

If Lord Methuen, who is said to be as courteous as he is brave, does not fall a victim to some Boer rifle man, he will doubtless, on his return to England, readily admit that the action of the life insurance companies was justifiable.

A Veritable Chinese Puzzle.

That the Workmen's Compensation Act is one of the most puzzling pieces of British legislation yet framed has been admitted ever since its passage in 1897. The judges have wrestled with its faulty construction and curious convolutions in an apparently vain effort to interpret its phraseology and to determine the legal meaning thereof. The latest important point to arise in connection with the Act seems to shut out from any claim to compensation for injuries all pieceworkers and casual labourers. In several recent actions the judges have decided that casual labourers do not come within the scope and meaning of the Statute.

The following interesting correspondence between the National Union of Dock Labourers in Great Britain and Ireland, and Mr. Chamberlain, whose legislative intentions in regard to the Act he earnestly advocated are so curiously unintelligible, explains the latest complication:—

"Liverpool, November 20th, 1899.

"To the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P.

"Dear Sir,—As you were the most prominent advocate of the Workmen's Compensation Act, now become law, and I understand had much to do in the framing of the Act, I would feel extremely obliged if you would explain whether it was the intention of the framers of the Act in question that casual labourers, who include pieceworkers, and whose occupations were admittedly within the scope of the Factories Act, are to be excluded from all benefits? I am prompted to ask you this because of the point which is now being raised with respect to members of our trade (which is covered by the Factories' Act), and which, if accepted, will exclude at least 60 per cent. of the work people for whose benefit the Act was intended. The Judges of the High Court in the case of 'Williams v. Poulson,' though they have not definitely decided the point, have already given an *obiter dictum* to the effect that men casually employed and not in the receipt of weekly wages are not within the meaning. A reply at your earliest convenience will oblige,—

"Yours respectfully,

"JAMES SEXTON, General Secretary."

"Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham, November 27th, 1899.

"Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of November 20th, and to say that of course he is not able to give a legal opinion, but that when the Act was passed he certainly had no idea that piece workers or casual labourers, if engaged in *bona fide* employment, could or would be excluded from the benefits of the measure,—I am, Sir, yours obediently.

"James Sexton, Esq.

"J. WILSON,"