

The Rockwood Review.

FOOTBALL.

Canada has ever been a nation of athletes, and the Canadian boy who does not love outdoor sports is scarcely worth the name of Canadian. Up to the present time we have taken our games far less seriously than our southern neighbors, and have I think had a better conception of the true aim of all sport, viz., the love of sport for the healthy exercise and pleasure it gives, rather than the mere love of victory. While it is true that we like to win, still it is also true that we do not want victory at any price. The Americans are waking up to the fact that the "victory at any price" theory has eaten the heart out of their games, and their best men are wisely calling a halt. Football has for many years been dear to the Canadian heart, and it may be truly said that no other game is as popular with the masses. There are many who condemn it on account of its roughness and brutality, but as a matter of fact, you will find the grey headed paterfamilias and his staid partner reading football notes with eagerness in the daily papers. Football is neither rough nor brutal if the rules are lived up to, and if some rough games have been played at times, the referees and umpires have been to blame for not exacting penalties provided for by the rules. Boys and men who will not live up to the rules should be rigidly excluded from the game, and my experience has been, that the roughest players are the biggest duffers at heart, and will soon submit to stringent refereeing. There are a few players who are brutal by instinct. These should not be allowed to play under any circumstances. Then again there are some bad accidents at football. This is true, and as a general rule it is the poorest players receive the most severe injuries, although it does not always happen so. Play-

ers who have passed the age of thirty are specially prone to injury, and a wise man of thirty will recognize the fact that his bones, muscles and arteries have not the elasticity of youth, and he should be content to accept the inevitable, and leave the game of Rugby to his children. As I once heard a player remark to an opponent who was complaining of the hardness of a tackle: "This is no china doll's game, and if you don't like it, don't play, but if you do play, take your medicine like a man." So much for the bad points of the game, now for the good ones. A boy who can play Rugby successfully, must cultivate endurance, self restraint, and exercise the greatest forbearance. He must necessarily learn to take hard knocks without murmur, and his temper must be under perfect control. To show how the game teaches this. Take a man of thirty-five who has never played Rugby, and let one undertake to play inside wing. In five minutes he is almost beyond control, and in ten minutes has in all probability been ruled off the field. The boy who understands the game does not lose his temper, but is the possessor of an amount of forbearance that must be of value to him in the more bitter struggle of life. Boys and young men cannot play Rugby with success without living good clean lives; on the goal line the cigarette fiend has no place, the youthful "nipper" soon finds the end of his tether, and the irregular liver occupies a place only on the bleaching boards. To the charge that young men who play football cannot follow their studies, the reply can be made that some of the most successful University teams have included many of the earnest students, and there is no reason why mental and physical training should not go hand in hand. There is danger of course that young men will devote