



# OPPOSITION TO FOOTBALL

**T**HE game of football is savagely criticized as regularly as the football season comes around. This fall open opposition to the college game has taken definite form in Georgia, since, in a recent game, one student at the State University was killed and another was seriously injured. As a result, the team disbanded, the chancellor of the university says the game must be abolished, the city council of Atlanta has passed an ordinance prohibiting the game, and a bill to prohibit the game throughout the State is before the legislature. Among the newspapers which have been taking account of the growth of opposition to football, we quote first the *New York Evening Post*:

"Those were very significant and striking actions regarding football which *The Evening Post* reported yesterday—the decision by the students of the Georgia State University to abolish the game in that institution, and the passage by the Atlanta city council of an ordinance to prevent its playing in future within the city limits. Students and officials alike responded to a public sentiment which for some time has been steadily gaining force in Georgia, as the killing of the popular young university player in last Saturday's game was not the only warning which the State has had of its dangers, one Atlanta boy having been almost killed in a game some time ago, and another more recently hurt so that he afterward died from his injuries, while a promising youth of La Grange is a physical wreck for life from his hurts. Scarcely less impressive than young Gammon's death was the spectacle presented at Atlanta last Saturday, when another player 'got two raps on the head' and was led off the field delirious. The press and pulpit of Georgia seem to be unanimous in demanding the abolition of the game, and the suggested law against it by the legislature will hardly be required to secure its prohibition by the authorities of all educational institutions.

"The high-school principal and president of the Board of Education in Milwaukee, who favor the abolition of football, will find abundant support of their position in the reports elsewhere printed of features in the recent games between Wisconsin and Minnesota universities at St. Paul and Iowa and Kansas at Lawrence. In the former four men out of eleven on one side were hurt, three of them so badly that they had to retire, while in the latter 'in nearly every scrimmage some man was hurt, and much time was consumed in reviving the fallen.' As happened at Atlanta, one of the players at Lawrence 'was struck on the back of the head near the base of the brain,' 'was led off the field crying like a child,' 'became delirious as he lay on the ground,' and, after being taken to his hotel, was found to have 'his right arm and the right side of his body paralyzed, temporarily at least.' The healthy reaction in Georgia and Wisconsin against a so-called 'sport' which is attended with such brutality and danger as modern football can not fail to spread all over the country."

**In Grammar and High Schools.**—"The agitation of the grammar-school football question some time ago has resulted in making it very improbable that there will be any grammar-school league next year. The boys will, of course, play football, but some of them, at least, will not be allowed to belong to any league where the rivalry for a trophy makes the game more dangerous for them than it would be under ordinary conditions. Of the five schools that are in the league this year, all the principals are opposed to allowing the game to go on under present conditions for another year. One principal, Miss Harriet C. Emerson of the Burrows School, has said definitely that her schoolboys will not be allowed to remain in the league. She has decided that the game is not suitable for grammar-school boys, not only for the physical danger, but because of the mental distraction to the pupils in the match games and in the ill-feeling that grows out of it. Miss Emerson's determination will probably result in concerted action by the principals of the different schools. No other principal has taken so decided a stand as has she, but all are opposed either to the game or to the present method of conducting it among the boys."—*The Republican, Springfield, Mass.*



"The problem sums itself up in this: The boys must be taught the scientific game by old and capable players; otherwise, match contests must not be allowed in our high schools. The American spirit demands that the boys be given the benefit of the pluck and determination that football develops, and the contention of many experienced players is that the high-school game can be reformed and in the manner here suggested."—*The Journal, Milwaukee.*

**Football as an Antidote.**—"Eminent educators have pointed to the possible weakening of energy and decision by the cultivation of reason and the love of truth and exact knowledge as one of the unfavorable phases of the higher intellectual training of young men. They have suggested that perhaps the habit of investigating and weighing all sides of any subject studied or taken notice of seriously which is taught by precept and example in college may sometimes lead to the defeat of college-bred men in the swift and eager struggles of business life.

"There is danger, they admit, that if a man trained in the hard school of life outside the universities and another carefully taught and made broad and catholic in all his mental characteristics and thorough in his investigations arrive together at the brink of a river, so to speak, which both desire to cross, the college man may make patient tests of the current, the depth of water, the probable discharge of the stream and all of its forces while the more natural man is simply plunging in and swimming across to the other bank, where fortune serves one, but can not wait for the other. It is unlikely that the effects of this phase of college training are very serious, and it is quite certain that they are far outweighed, at the worst, by advantages which can not be gainsaid. But the danger is real enough in some cases. Energy and decision are two of the most useful forces in human life, and the man who has them in large measure is very fortunate. In so far as university training may tend to weaken either by the development of antagonistic traits there is need of an antidote. Perhaps that is why football has gained such immense vogue in the higher institutions of learning in the United States. Possibly the students unconsciously realize their need of a form of training which means dash, daring, instant choice of methods, and absolutely unchecked energy in executing all plans adopted.

"If the game is not calculated to save those who play it from the overdevelopment of caution and deliberation it would be interesting to know what could do the work."—*The Leader, Cleveland.*

**"The Game of Manslaughter."**—"The football season is only fairly begun, and yet at least three deaths have already occurred as the direct results of this brutally played game. It is to be expected that before the close of the season other young men will have sacrificed their lives on the gridiron, in a foolish following of a 'sport' that is based upon principles of pugilism rather than of athletics. Meanwhile arms are being broken daily, legs are wrenched, faces are disfigured, scalps are torn, and a thousand and one other accidents of a more or less distressing nature are occurring in the mad rushes of eleven against eleven. The latest death was typical of most others that are to be charged against the game. The victim had the ball, was tackled and thrown, and was instantly buried beneath a mound of human forms. His brain suffered a fatal concussion, and he died within a few hours, practically without having regained consciousness. A season or two ago, when the death-roll of the game was unusually long, promises were made by some of those prominent in the management of the great contests of the year that steps would be taken to render the game less brutal and dangerous. More 'open' play was to be encouraged, and rules were to be adopted to prevent the mass plays that have crushed out so many lives. The spirit of reform seemed to have reached those responsible for the character of the prevailing rules, but it was apparent when the succeeding season opened that the matter had gone beyond the reach of rules, and that as long as football was played on the existing theories it would remain a deadly sport, rules or no rules. The moving impulse of the game is to crush the opposition by sheer force and weight. The mass play, the piling up of body on body following a tackle and fall, is still the predominating feature of the game. Kicking is only an incident. It is no longer 'football,' but battle."—*The Star, Washington.*

