

SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL FROM
1881 TO THE PRESENT TIME.

In dealing with Scottish football in its relationship with England for the past ten years, we may not have as bright a tale to tell as we might have wished for, and we may find that we have been subjected to one or two rather unpleasant castigations; but at the same time the record for the period is quite presentable, and it contains at least two achievements which outshine any performances in the whole history of the game north of the Tweed. In March, 1882, our team at Manchester gained a victory which set the whole country into an ecstasy of delight. Ten years later our men went up to London to meet what was styled one of the finest teams England ever produced, and, to our huge satisfaction, Scotland won by the largest score she had ever compiled in one of these matches. These are the particular bright spots on the roll, but on the other side of the account we have to swallow an unpalatable defeat in 1883, when for the first time we were beaten on our own ground, followed in 1890 and 1892 by two more humiliating downfalls on our native heath. These defeats were more than rebuffs, and they were doubly unpleasant from the fact that we had been waiting since 1877 to see Scotland win at home—and we are waiting still. Old players have a way of marking off years on their fingers' ends, and they will tell you such and such a team was much better than England's, although it lost, while another fifteen which won ought never to have had the slightest chance with their opponents. Such a process is too intricate to follow, besides being apt to lead to people "begging to differ," and for the sake of lucidity we shall here treat of the teams as the balance of the account in goals and

tries stands favourably or unfavourably to them. To get at the condition of Scottish football in any given year we must examine the positions and performances of the leading clubs. In 1882 Edinburgh Institution football players were at their zenith. The Edinburgh Academicals were at low ebb, and Raeburn Place had lost its monopoly. In Glasgow the Academicals were still a strong team, but they were slowly giving way before the West of Scotland. Naturally, these influences affected our national selection, and it is not surprising to find a strong



R. T. AINSLIE.

*From a Photograph by George Shaw,
Edinburgh.*

“Stution” element in the fifteen. Among the forwards we had the brothers Ainslie and R. Maitland, and behind Sorley Brown partnered A. R. Don Wauchope at half-back, with A. Philp and W. E. Mac-lagan at three-quarter. Our full-back was the sturdy High School man, J. P. Veitch, and among the other forwards were C. Reid, not yet quite at his best, rough-and-ready W. A. Walls, J. B. Brown, and D. Y. Cassells as captain of the team. Our two tries’ victory gave unbounded satisfaction in Scotland, and

none who saw the game will forget how our forwards cut out the work that afternoon. The Scotsmen seemed to have stoned the worst of it on weight, but they had all the best of the pushing, and there was only one team in it in the loose. R. Ainslie added greatly to his reputation by his fine tackling and play in the open. To W. N. Bolton he was most attentive, and the big Blackheath man did not get much time to consider his movements. It is generally acknowledged that R. Ainslie stands out as one of the very best forwards ever we had. His weight was not great, but he used every ounce, and we have never had a forward who came through on to the opposing backs more quickly. One of his strongest points was his tackling, which was always safe and low, and his great speed often brought him within reach of a man who seemed clear of the forwards.

When at his best he left Edinburgh for the South of Scotland, and gave up football when he still seemed to have a long career before him. T. Ainslie had most of his brother's points, but not so well developed, and although he played for a much longer period, and was in more Internationals, he was not the same brilliant forward. Still he was a fine all-round player, and belonged to the true type of Scotch scrummagers.

That year we had not a single weak spot in our back team, which included two men who belong to a very limited class of players standing on a platform quite by themselves. No stronger defence than W. E. Maclagan's has ever been seen in Scotland, and we never had a man to make the same electrifying run as A. R. Don Wauchope. N. J. Finlay made great runs in his day, and probably scored as often as Wauchope did, but he was never so difficult to follow, and his movements did not produce the same fever of excitement on a crowd that Wauchope's raised. Although defence was undoubtedly Maclagan's strong point, if he got the ball within a dozen yards of the line he was a most dangerous man in more ways than one, and an ordinary player might well be excused if he took second thoughts about standing up before him when he was bent upon scoring. Roughness has often been imputed to him, and there is no doubt in his younger days he now and again gave exhibitions of his strength which were not good for the subject. More than once he has tossed a man, full pitch as the bowlers would say, on to the little paling at Raeburn Place and made the timber crack. He was one of the most powerful players we ever had, and no man on the football field could put his strength to more use than Maclagan when he cared to, or as Dr. Irvine says, "when he was roused."

From a splendid victory of 1882 we have to pass to a more than unusually unpleasant defeat. Our troubles in 1883 began with our team, which behind the maul was of a most patchy description, and it is safe to say we were never more poorly represented behind than we were that year. Our team before the match did not inspire confidence, and in the actual play some of the men cut up badly, and as a climax we were beaten for the first time at Raeburn Place. A comparison of the opposing rear divisions will almost tell the tale of our

disaster. England was represented by—Full-back, H. B. Tristram; three-quarters, W. N. Bolton, H. M. Evanson, and G. C. Wade; half-backs, J. H. Payne and A. Rotherham. Scotland.—Full back, W. D. Kidston; three-quarters W. E. Maclagan and M. F. Reid; half-backs, P. W. Smeaton and W. S. Brown. This we should certainly say was the finest back team England played during the decade under notice, and when we consider that Maclagan, far from well, had practically all the work behind our halves to do, and England had three three-quarters playing against our two, the marvel is that we escaped with a two tries to one try beating. But our forwards as usual did splendid work, and if they did not win the match they saved us from heavy defeat. This was decidedly Bolton's year, and he left an impression which was not soon forgotten. Evanson we had heard much about, but he did not sustain his reputation. Tristram did, however, and many present thought it a little rough on Scotland that she should have reared for England the best full-back she ever had.

Our half-backs in this match did quite their share of the work. P. W. Smeaton's selection had been taken exception to in some quarters, but he proved one of the most useful men on our side, and frequently his punt, which he got in from all sorts of awkward positions, gained us ground when we most wanted it. He had never much speed, but he was always a most tenacious tackler, and nobody ever saw him shirk his work. Probably to this day he is of opinion that he scored a try in this match which would at least have made it a draw. At the beginning of the game an incident happened which may have put into Wade's head a perverted idea of Scottish football, and perhaps influenced his play, for he did very little after it. Getting the ball in good position, the Anglo-Australian was making off, and had just got up a good turn of speed when T. Ainslie came in his way. The Institution representative finding he could not reach his man, deliberately shot out his foot and knocked the Oxonian's legs right from under him. Wade rose looking as if he had been hurt—inwardly, and no doubt he made mental comparisons of football as practised in England and Scotland.

During the season 1883-84 a great many changes took place at home. The two three-quarters system, which had received almost its deathblow at Raeburn Place, had not been entirely discarded by the clubs, but in all the Union teams three were chosen. A. R. Don Wauchope, who had been off for a year in consequence of an injury to his knee, returned to active participation in the game.

In club football the Institution had sunk from their high position, and their place was taken by the West of Scotland, who were now the champion team. The Wat-



A FREE KICK: TAKING A PUNT.

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

sonians under J. Tod had sprung into prominence. Edinburgh University were strong, and C. Reid, with M. C. McEwen and J. W. Irvine as young players, was building up for the Edinburgh Academicals a fine team which a couple of years later swept all before it. We had never been better off for players, and after defeating Wales and Ireland we had great hopes of the fifteen that went up to London. Everybody knows that the match gave rise to the "unfortunate dispute," and that Scotland, after holding out for a long time, gave up her claim, and allowed England the game rather than be without the match. England's back team on that occasion was exactly that

which represented her the year previous at Raeburn Place, while Scotland had—back, J. P. Veitch; three-quarters, D. J. Macfarlane, W. E. MacLagan, and E. Roland; half-backs, A. R. Don Wauchope and A. G. G. Asher; forward, J. B. Brown, W. A. Walls, and T. Ainslie



J. GORDON MITCHELL.
(From a Photograph by J. H. Millar,
Hamilton.)

remained of the old brigade. J. Jamieson, a West of Scotland man, over whose selection there had been newspaper debates, made his second appearance. J. Tod got his place for the first time, and another new player, C. W. Berry, was introduced. Jamieson may not have been all that his friends claimed for him, but he was a smart, clever player and an exceptionally fine dribbler. Berry was one of the best place kicks ever we had, though in English matches it was always a doubtful

qualification to urge on a man's behalf that he was "worth his place for his place-kicking alone." Berry, however, was a sterling forward of the heavy class, and was always of great service in the tight work. In this match Wauchope and Asher played together against England for the first time, and continuing to represent us several seasons, they without doubt constituted the best pair we have had in this decade. Asher was a very fine player, who seldom showed poor form, and if he did not shine with the same brilliancy as Wauchope, he was always of immense service to his side. His running was his weak point, and he was never counted a dangerous scorer. When a man does not shine as a runner, and is strong in other points, his friends at once put in a claim on his behalf as an "all-round" player. All-round in this sense is misapplied, and if a man be no runner and scorer he is not entitled to have the term bestowed upon him. Wauchope, in the strictest sense of the word, was an all-round player, as he could not only run, but his kicking, tackling, and general defence were very strong when he

saw occasion to exert them. Asher's running was poor, and he therefore cannot justly be considered an all-round man. At the same time he was one of our most successful half-backs. He and Wauchope did splendid service for us in this game.

In 1885 we were without our English fixture, but through a freak of the weather, which interrupted our game with Ireland at Belfast, we unexpectedly had the Irishmen at Raeburn Place on the English date. This match we won by a goal and two tries, and it is memorable for Wauchope's running and Green's play on behalf of Ireland. Among our clubs the Edinburgh Academicals broke the West of Scotland's record, beat the Glasgow Academicals in the return by the largest score made in an Inter-Academical match for ten years, and finally established their claim to be considered the best team in the country by defeating the Watsonians by three goals and a try.

After the lapse of two years we renewed hostilities, and at Raeburn Place had a great game with England, which resulted in a scoreless draw. This, in our opinion, was one of the best matches in the series, and we very narrowly missed winning it. Veitch reappeared for us at full-back, and our three-quarters were R. H. Morrison, G. Wilson, and W. F. Holms, while opposed to these were C. H. Sample, back, A. E. Stoddart, A. Robertshaw, E. B. Brutton, halves, with A. Rotherham and F. Bonsor, at quarter. In our forward team were J. B. Brown, W. A. Walls, T. W. Irvine, A. T. Clay, C. Reid, M. C. McEwen, and J. Tod.

England's forwards were strong, and we had heard a deal about C. Gurdon's "hooking" process, which was said to be most deadly on the line. No English team ever came with such a reputation as this one, and it was said the passing of the backs would bewilder us. In fact they were over advertised, and if we were not conversant



C. REID.

(From Photograph by Stilliard & Co., Oxford.)

with their strong points, it was not because the southern papers had failed to impress them upon us. As often happens in these cases, the strong points proved weak, and we were very little troubled by the English running and passing. Somehow or other we in Scotland could never come to look upon Stoddart as a great player, and while he was highly esteemed in England, we calculated that we had not much to fear from him—and we were not disappointed. Robertshaw we thought more of, and we never liked his wide accurate passing; but G. Wilson that day did his duty admirably as regards Robertshaw, and frequently the Bradford man, when he was looking for a pass from his half-backs, received Wilson and the ball at the same moment. Early in the game our centre three-quarter got behind, but there is no question about his having “knocked on” when he was gathering the ball. We missed a grand opportunity of winning the match in the second half, when C. Reid broke away and ran up to Sample, close on the line. Many people believe that had Reid gone on he would never have been held, but seeing Irvine following hard at his side, he no doubt thought to make more sure of it by passing. The throw was a bad one, hard and low, and pitched at Irvine’s feet. It was not taken and the chance was lost. Towards the close we were having rather an anxious time, but were much relieved when the hardy little John Tod emerged from the thick of it with the ball tucked under his arm, and resolutely pushed his way to the centre. Tod was always as hard as a bullet, a powerful, tightly knit little player, with no end of stamina, and playing with as much vigour at the end as the beginning of the game. Two men on the English side impressed us that year, C. H. Sample by his fine play at back, and C. Gurdon by his obnoxious “hook.” This latter feat hardly seemed to come under the category of fair football, and on one occasion when Gurdon was at work, a handling he received from C. Reid was keenly relished by a section on one of the stands, where by the way, one old International man exhausted more of his breath on behalf of Scotland than ever he did on the actual field of play. As with H. B. Tristram, we half grudged having given to England such a good man as Sample. At Edinburgh Academy he played in the same fifteen with Frank Wright, who on another occasion rendered great service

to England. Sample at school was a fine drop and a good tackler, but heavy and slow in his movements. When he appeared at Raeburn Place his Cambridge training appeared to have fined him down greatly, and while he still retained his drop, and had the real Scotch schoolboy tackle, he was much smarter in his general movements, and his judgment had greatly matured. It is doubtful if C. Reid ever played a better game than he did on this occasion; and if we consider him not as a great individual player, but as a power in any team, it can be realised what Reid at his best meant to Scotland. He was the forward of his time. There was no man to compare with him in England, Scotland, Ireland, or Wales. Neither was there before nor has there been since. Besides the physical qualities which rendered him a dangerous adversary, his football at all points was perfect, and we had no specialist in our team of whom it could be said that in his own particular game he was superior to Reid. His speed was much above that of the average forward, and in many matches he made as big runs as the backs. In fact, in the International under notice, his run in the second half was the best performance of its kind of the day. Roughness has been imputed to him, but the charge is almost groundless, and if on occasion he did use his strength, it must be remembered in extenuation that he had to put up with all manner of annoying attentions, often from aspiring individuals who would have preferred the distinction of having knocked down C. Reid to the honour of half a dozen International caps. We have seen a shaved-headed Yorkshireman in the line-out fix on to Reid like a limpet long before the ball was thrown out from touch, and hang on till he had to be forcibly shaken off. G. Wilson was one of the central figures in this match, and from his play all parties declared him to have a great career before him. As his subsequent performances testify, he failed to fulfil expectations, and it cannot be said that he did not get the opportunity, for no man ever lived longer on one game than Wilson did. He was always a dodgy runner, and often very difficult to hold, but his football was faulty, and he was addicted to mistakes, which were liable at any time to endanger the prospects of his side.

1887 was the year of the foggy International at



SCOTTISH TEAM V. ENGLAND: RICHMOND, MARCH 7TH, 1891

SCOTLAND, 3 GOALS; ENGLAND, 1 GOAL.

(From a Photograph by R. T. Watson, Hull.)

G. J. NEILSON.	J. D. BOSWELL.	J. E. ORR.	J. O. LEAGATT.	W. R. GIBSON.	J. G. MACMILLAN.
F. W. GOODHUE.	H. J. STEVENSON.	M. C. McEWEN (Capt.).	C. E. ORR.	IAN MACINTYRE.	
	GREGOR MACREGOR.	D. G. ANDERSON.	P. R. CLAUS.	W. NEILSON.	

Manchester, which, from the performances of our team against Ireland and Wales, and the large selection of good men at our command, we had hoped to win. The draw, therefore, was not at all satisfactory, and it was all the more tantalising from the fact that the old story of players, brilliant against other countries, curling up when they came to meet England, had to be repeated. It was this ever recurring failure that prejudiced the national mind against scoring men, and accounts for the estimation in which many of England's backs were held on this side of the Border. Had some of our players shown a semblance of their form we should have won the match. At one period we thought we had won it, but for once Maclagan's rush at the line was unsuccessful. We had abundance of first-rate men in the country that year, and our final choice fell on W. F. Holms, back; G. C. Lindsay, W. E. Maclagan, and A. N. Woodrow, three-quarter-backs; C. E. Orr and P. H. Don Wauchope, half-backs; with C. Reid (capt.), T. W. Irvine, M. C. McEwen, A. T. Clay Berry, H. Kerr, French, McMillan, and Morton among the forwards. We had beaten Ireland and given Wales a hiding by the tall score of 4 goals and 8 tries. The Welsh match was at Raeburn Place, and G. C. Lindsay spent the greater part of the time running behind. W. A. Cameron, the Watsonian full-back, gained his only International cap upon this occasion, and he certainly has not been overloaded with honours, for he was always a reliable back, who had the correct style in all his actions. H. J. Stevenson was at this time beginning to make for himself a reputation as a three-quarter, and J. Marsh was playing in the Institution. P. H. Don Wauchope, who succeeded his brother as one of our national halves, had much the same style, but was not so effective. He did not possess the same weight and strength, but he was probably as fast, and although not such an inimitable dodger as the elder member of the family, he was a very clever runner, and must have scored a great number of tries during his career. Kerr and French were two of a type of Glasgow forwards who seemed peculiarly calculated to raise the gall of the Edinburgh people. Oceans of ink were spilled over them, and it was needless waste, for French was well worth his place, and Kerr was, at the lowest estimate, the fourth best forward in the country.

During 1888 and 1889 the "unfortunate dispute" in another phase cropped up again, and robbed us of our great match. In 1888 our pride was much hurt by Wales beating us at Newport. On that occasion we played three centre three-quarters, H. J. Stevenson, M. M. Duncan and W. E. Maclagan with C. E. Orr and C. P. Fraser as our halves. The latter division were blamed for our defeat, but no section of the team played above itself.

In 1889 we had a great game with Ireland, which almost compensated for the loss of the English fixture. We won by a try, but as the *Scotsman* said at the time, it was "one of the most exciting and hotly contested games ever seen in connection with an International match." LeFanu and M'Laughlin left great impressions behind them. LeFanu, as one of the best forwards that has played against us, and M'Laughlin as a most extraordinary worker for a quarter.

The English International of 1890 was a very bad one for us. A great surprise was sprung upon the country in the selection of W. E. Maclagan, and in giving G. Wilson a place the Union made anything but a popular choice. Our half-backs were again blamed for losing the match by not feeding their halves, but it would have been very hard for them to feed without the ball. Where we really lost the game was in the scrummage, where the English took possession of the ball, and held our forwards while Fox and his companion nipped it back to their halves. The match taught us this species of attack most impressively, and when our team went to London in 1891 and scored our greatest victory, the English press complained that we had learned it too well. Our forwards undoubtedly won us this match, and our backs, as they very well might, were seen to great advantage. Our three-quarters, W. Neilson, G. Macgregor, and P. Clauss, were scoring men and behind winning forwards were all that was wanted. Had our Union fully realised in 1892 that we should require backs who were able to cut out the work for themselves, we should never have lost the game that year. G. T. Campbell, W. Neilson, and P. Clauss made a very poor show, and our half-backs were disappointing.

H. J. Stevenson, M. C. McEwen, C. E. Orr, and R. G. McMillan are the prominent men of the last three years. Orr, in the true sense of the word, is one of our best all-

round quarters, McEwen is one of our great forwards, a powerful player, strong in all points of the game. Of Stevenson it has to be said we never had a more versatile player. His defence at three-quarters in 1890 materially kept down the score, and when the Union saw fit to place him at full back in 1891 and 1892 he filled the position as adequately as any man ever we had. Centre three-quarters, however, is his true place, and in it he has never been known to play a poor game, a fitting testimony to the merit of one of the most remarkable players the country has produced, and a back who will be remembered along with N. J. Finlay, W. E. Maclagan, and A. R. Don Wauchope.