

Athletics Among the American Blind.

By STANLEY JOHNSON.

The most remarkable football team in the United States does not approve of the forward pass. This fact, however, is hardly an argument against the reformed game, for the team in question wears the colours of the Kentucky Institution for the Education of the Blind, and is made up entirely of blind pupils of that school. Naturally, the forward pass, difficult enough of execution by sharp-eyed players, is impossible for them. Yet at straight football they can play with the best of their age and weight in the region around Louisville, and ask no indulgence except the elimination of goal kicking and a spoken signal when their opponents put the ball in play. Doubtless this football team is not the most astonishing achievement of blind education, but it is an achievement in a new direction, and it points out in a fresh and unexpected way the extraordinary results which have come from Dr. Howe's pioneer school for the blind, conceived in Boston in 1829.



CHIPPING SODBURY.

Chipping Sodbury, the next station to Radminton, is a quaint and pleasant old country town, well worth a visit by the leisured traveller. Near it is Sodbury Hall, now known as the Manor House, where at the beginning of the sixteenth century, William Tyndale, while tutor to the children of Sir John Walsh, translated the Bible into English. The chapel attached to the old building still remains. A Norman encampment is also among the attractions of the neighbourhood.



SODBURY HALL.

Where William Tyndale translated the Bible into English.

Many instructors of the blind have felt for some years that bodily exercise, spontaneous play, sheer physical self-reliance, were features of training sadly neglected. For this reason gymnasiums were built and outdoor playgrounds provided in several institutions. But it remained for the Kentucky school to go a step further. Three years ago a football team was started there. The experiment, when it became known, was viewed with amazement. But Mr Huntoon, the superintendent of the school, went persistently ahead. Hours were spent in daily drill, but even so the first season did not find the team in shape to meet other elevens. For one thing, the team had to be picked with quite as much if not more regard for mental agility than physical strength, and as some of the players were comparatively frail and very light, it required long training to put them in condition. The second season, however, found the team entering into active competition. They played nine games, won one, tied three, and lost the rest. Last autumn, their third season, the team made a still better showing. Averaging only 118 pounds they played both the Louisville High School and the Manual Training School to a standstill, and their second eleven defeated the second teams from these schools, and "did it brown." Meanwhile, two other blind football teams had been

formed, at Overbrook, Pennsylvania, and Columbus, Ohio. An attempt was made to arrange a game between the Columbus and Louisville elevens, but without success. Another season may, however, find annual contests begun, the first of their kind in the world, and the strangest.

How these blind boys play, on equal footing with seeing boys, a game which requires so much speed, agility, physical courage and, one may add, alertness of eye, must always, perhaps, pass the comprehension of the normal man. The centre, guards, and tackles of the Kentucky team last fall were totally blind. Three of the back field had what is known as "light perception," but on rainy or cloudy days it availed them little. It was a special rule in all their games that the goal kicking should be abolished, and that their opponents should cry "Pass" when the ball was put in play. Otherwise they played the game without fear or favour, and neither asked nor needed sympathy.

A dozen questions have probably occurred to the reader. How do they know



MISS EDNA MAY AT CROMER—A FAMILY GROUP.

Miss Jane May
(With dog.)

Mrs.
May.

Miss Edna
May.

Miss
May.