

VARSITY'S LACROSSE TOUR, 1902.

WITHIN the last few years Canada's national game has grown very considerably in popularity. Not at home alone has it taken precedence as the best of strenuous amusements in its time, but in England, Australia and the United States it is fast gaining in public favor. We must attribute this rapid growth largely to the energy of Canadian residents in these several places, but some credit must be given touring teams. Thus, Varsity has a share in advancing the game to its present good standing in the United States.

The game needs no introduction to Undergraduates. As a sport in which fleetness of foot, accuracy of judgment and physical endurance are required, it is unsurpassed. Though played at Varsity in the most unfavorable time for athletics, the examination season, yet the delights of Spring weather and the merits of the exercise itself easily account for the number who engage in it. Last year nearly 50 different players turned out at various times, attracted in some degree, no doubt, by the annual tour through the United States.

While several veterans, including Greig, captain-elect, and ex-captains Hanley and Graham, were unable to play, prospects were bright. The tour promised well, and there was excellent material from which to choose the team.

Besides the usual list of games, a challenge had been received from Johns Hopkins for the undergraduate championship of America. Later, however, Cornell, Lehigh and Hoboken were compelled to cancel their dates, thus necessitating a shortening of the tour and two trips, one to Geneva and Brooklyn, the other to Baltimore.

Preparatory to leaving for the other side, and during the examinations, several practice games were played, in which Varsity was not very successful, as, in every instance, a weakened team had to be placed in the field. Especially was this the case in the game in Brantford, where Varsity received the worst defeat in years. However, when the team for the tour was selected, it was as strong as usual on the defence and considerably better on the home.

The tour was very successful from Varsity's standpoint. For the first time in five years the wearers of the blue and white defeated the Crescents of Brooklyn, and in the competition with Johns Hopkins, which was the first contest for the undergraduate championship of America, carried off the glories of victory.

Catching the seven o'clock boat for Niagara, electing a captain on the way over, and defeating Hobart College the same afternoon was the programme for the first day, Wednesday, May 27. The team passed the night billeted with, and royally entertained by, the fraternities in this college. Next day we entrained for New York on the Black Diamond Express.

The game for which all waited in suspense was the annual contest with the Crescent Athletic Club of Brooklyn. Each year Decoration Day is set aside by this club for a game with Varsity, and, it is needless to say, it is fought out with the keenest determination on both sides. Add to this the hospitality and geniality of the club members at Bay Ridge, with its fine location and beautiful surroundings, and we cannot wonder that this visit is looked forward to with joyful anticipation.

Friday, May 30, broke fine, and, as a preliminary to the afternoon match, a game was played between Columbia and the Crescent II's, which the former won. In the afternoon, before a large audience of club members and their friends, Varsity won in a grand struggle, after the game apparently was lost. Though the score at one time was 3 to 0 against them, Varsity turned in and won by the close score of 7 goals to 6. The game was pronounced by old club members as the best seen at Bay Ridge for many a year.

Next day, a second game was played, which the Crescents won by 4 to 1. Varsity's defeat is excusable, for McKinnon

and Lacey had been slightly incapacitated, and there were no spare men, while the Crescents replaced the tired and worn by fresh players. Varsity, however, turned the tide of defeat on Decoration Day, and it is hoped that this can be repeated. As these games constituted the first trip, the team returned home, after spending two days sightseeing in New York.

Practice commenced at once for the game with Johns Hopkins. Considerable difficulty was experienced in satisfactorily filling vacancies in the team, but by Monday, June 9, Manager MacFarland had collected the required number. That night we left for the Southern University.

The championship game excited keen interest in Baltimore, for a Canadian team was to make its first appearance there. The prevalent opinion was that their college twelve would be too much for the Canadians. The newspapers teemed with articles on lacrosse, historical and explanatory.

That our fame had preceded us may be seen from a few clippings: "Fourteen lean, hard and hungry young men, the lacrosse squad of Toronto University, stepped from the train at Camden Station this afternoon, and looked around for Hopkins hosts. The leanness of this squad was of the sort that one sees in a greyhound or a well-trained horse. Captain Schmeisser and Ronald Abercrombie, who met the Canadians, were agreeably surprised to find, not the giants they expected, but men much their own size. These men, however, have that lean look and a desperate purpose."

"The Toronto team is composed of sturdy, tall, sharp-looking fellows, who appear to be able to outrun a scared soldier. They are the best lacrosse team in the whole Dominion, and come to Baltimore very sure of winning. They have been playing the game since childhood, and are up to every trick and method anybody ever dreamed of—they think they are, at least. But if Hopkins does not upset their calculations, the Baltimoreans will be very much surprised, and Toronto will more than deserve the high honors that will go to the victors."

Immediately upon arrival, Toronto was beset with invitations, for it was Commencement Week. These had to remain unaccepted, however, till after the game. Varsity was to come off well, from the standpoint of cheering. Several old Graduates and many ex-Canadians were on hand, so that what the rooting of our supporters lacked in concerted effort was made up for by its enthusiasm. Then, too, the Kilties' band, touring on the other side at that time, happened along, and gave the Varsity yell in lusty style.

The game was opened with quite an elaborate ceremony, the Kilties leading the teams to the field with their respective national airs, the city mayor's tossing off the ball from the stand and the brief opening band concert.

The attendance was a record-breaker, including among its numbers several Senators, Governors, and other persons of note.

The time arranged for was two halves of 30 minutes each, and this proved quite enough when the shade heat rose as high as 93

Varsity scored twice, then Hopkins evened up, and this ended the scoring for the first half. In the second period, the United States collegians seemed to weaken, while Varsity played together in better style, winning out by 6 goals to 2. The game was clean and fast throughout, and was won on its merits. The referee, Mr. Lewis J. Doyle, of the Crescent Club, Brooklyn, was highly satisfactory, and received the thanks of both teams.

After attending the Commencement reception and enjoying the Kilties' concert, with a banquet after in the Johns Hopkins Club, where we were regaled with oratory and song, we snatched a little sleep and took an early train for Washington. Here the hospitality of the Crescent Club followed us, and Mr. T. R. Greer, one of their members resident in Washington, met us,