

WELL MANAGED ATHLETICS.

How the Cadets at West Point Have Accomplished So Much.

[Harmon S. Graves in Collier's Weekly.]

The West Point football team has, by its splendid record for the past few seasons, made itself interesting to opposing teams in particular and the football public in general. One could hardly believe that but ten years ago athletics in any form were virtually unknown at the Military Academy. At that time the exercises at the gymnasium under the direction of the Academy sword-master, and perhaps an impromptu field day in the Spring, were all the athletics that the cadets took part in outside of their regular exercises and drills. Whatever was done was most informal and by the cadets themselves, as the officers at the post had nothing to do with any effort the cadets might make in this direction. It seemed impossible, with the very limited time at the disposal of the cadets, to ever hope to compete with any outside organization, and yet a glance at the athletic situation at West Point to-day shows how much has been well done in a wonderfully short time. All branches of athletics are now controlled by the Army Officers' Athletic Association, to which any officer in the army may be elected, and all those stationed at West Point are generally members. This Association, which was organized in 1892, elects a representative for football, baseball, tennis, and general athletics, and these representatives have complete charge of, and are in a measure accountable for, the department in their charge. The cadets have organizations of their own, which work in conjunction with the Officers' Association, and particularly with the representatives of that Association.

The expenses of all branches of athletics are met by personal subscription of the members of the Officers' Association and by the cadets. In no case is any charge made for admission to games, and these subscriptions are the sole source of revenue. About Christmas time each year the annual meeting of the Officers' Association is held and the reports of the different representatives read. These reports are carefully prepared, and are most interesting, always making suggestions for the better conduct of affairs the following year. The whole situation is handled with ability and a refreshing care for details, and would furnish a lesson indeed for other institutions whose experience has been three times as great. With such careful management and the sportsman-like spirit which prevails, there results the best type of amateur sport.

In baseball and football West Point meets the different college teams. In football the schedule is a thoroughly representative one, embracing all the best elevens. The baseball schedule, thus far, has not included the teams of the large universities, though the playing ability of the West Point nines is improving, and it is safe to predict that such games will be annual events in the near future. Tennis, as far as the cadets are concerned, is purely local and necessarily so, for the cadets cannot get away to enter college tournaments. Some of the officers, however, have attained a high degree of excellence and their names are seen among the entries of the best amateur tournaments, and several prizes have been brought back to West Point. The cadets play a little golf, and polo is now to be encouraged. The cadets have been playing quite a little during the past three years, but are handicapped by having no good saddles for the game. Now a dozen special saddles have been purchased, and the boys will be given the best and smallest horses to play with.

The general athletics are confined to competition among the cadets at their annual Gymnasium Exhibition and their Field Day. These contests are

most interesting and entered into by the cadets with a spirit which makes each event exciting. The Winter meeting in the gymnasium is quite up to the indoor meets of other institutions. The gymnasium is very well appointed and the sword-master a fine athlete. The outdoor meets in the Spring are even more interesting.

There is another branch of athletics which West Point has exceptional opportunities to improve, and that is rowing. With the proper handling for a few seasons, the cadets could put out a splendid crew, and other crews would be glad to row on the Hudson, near West Point. Perhaps when the Military Academy is made larger this can be done, as it is very hard to keep up a high standard of excellence in any branch of sport, to say nothing of too many, when the whole number of cadets is below three hundred and fifty. However, Annapolis has a crew, and the Annapolis crew would doubtless be well up in their trade, though history has it that West Point has won from her once on the water.

Football is, at present, the most important branch of athletics at West Point. Beginning less than ten years ago, with no knowledge of the game whatever, and with little time to learn under the then rather hostile circumstances, West Point has, in so short a time, made a splendid record, and her rank to-day is among the best football teams in the country.

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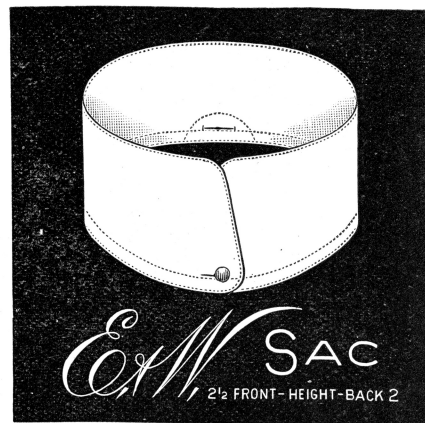
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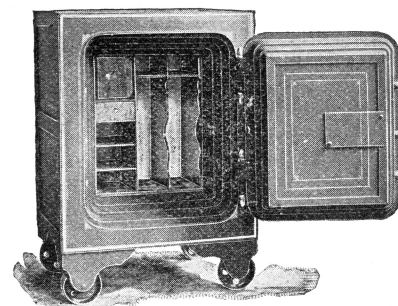
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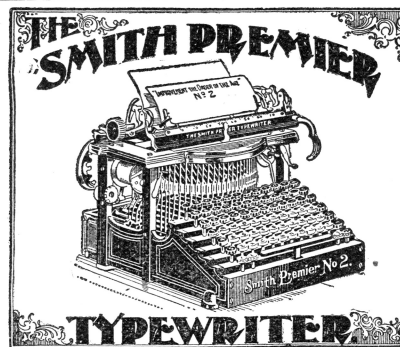
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