STUDENTS IN A GREEK PLAY.

Students at the University of Pennsylvania to Produce Euripides’ "Iphigenia Among the Taurians" Next April.

First Time in Seventeen Years Since the Production of an Ancient Greek Play Has Been Attempted in an Eastern University.

The vitality of the Greek drama and the human interest which it possesses for people of any age and any condition from those under which the ancient Greeks lived, was never more strikingly shown than in the various attempts made in recent years to present one of these ancient plays before a modern audience. More than twenty years ago—to be exact, in May, 1883—the Classical Department of Harvard University brought out with great success the "Oedipus Tyrannus" of Sophocles. This was the first time in America that a Greek drama was played in the original Greek. Everyone’s success was due to an endeavor to reproduce ancient conditions as far as possible, and the result was such that even men who knew no Greek were moved to tears by the terrible tragedy presented before their eyes. It was in the Assembly room for the crowds who wished to witness the performance of the "Oedipus," and this success has been shared by other Greek plays brought out since that time. Not the least conspicuous of these are the "Archaeans" of Aristophanes brought out by the students of the University of Pennsylvania at their dramatic festivals, and in many one-act mime performance at the Academy of Music. If the representation of the "Iphigenia" remains the most celebrated reproduction of an ancient tragedy, that of the "Iphigenia" is certainly not the least distinguished by the same honor for comedy.

Besides these two productions, several other plays, both Greek and Latin, have, from time to time, been brought out in various parts of the country. But none attempt to reproduce ancient conditions. This April the University of Pennsylvania again comes forward, this time to present the "Iphigenia Among the Taurians" of Euripides. There will be two performances, one on the 28th and one on the 29th, at the Academy of Music. Aristides, in his work on poetry, praises two tragedies above all others, the "Oedipus Tyrannus," and the "Iphigenia" of Euripides. And, in fact, the last two tragedies of Euripides have come down to modern times, these alone have what might be called a modern place.

The "Iphigenia" is not a tragedy in the sense in which the "Oedipus" is. The poet does not aim to excite our pity or fear, but our admiration. The plot of the play is, in brief: This is when the Greeks were on their way to Troy, the fleet was detained at Aulis, and Calchas, the soothsayer—the stories differ until finally the soothsayer Calchas declares that the only relics necessary, his daughter Iphigenia. Years before, he had vowed to sacrifice the first-born thing born in his domains that year. Iphigenia had been born at that time, and now she must be sacrificed. She is escorted away from home on the pretence that she is to be married to Achilles. But we learn that Achilles did not allow her to be slain, but at the very moment when the knife was about to be thrust into her, removed her and put a deer in her place. This deed Agamemnon swears he was saving her life. Iphigenia was then transported to the land of the Taurians where she was made priestess in the temple of Artemis. All this temple to bring a libation which opens the play. Iphigenia also tells us if a dream she has had, She about this, with and of the words she has sacrificed her brother Orestes. For the Taurians are a savage people with horrid rites, living in the Crimean, and Iphigenia has to struggle with holy water the captives brought to the temple for sacrifice. So, thinking that her dream means that Orestes is dead, she goes back into the temple to bring a libation which may pour to his departed spirit. The temple forms the back scene and round about it are a wild and desolate region along the shore. While Iphigenia is in the temple, Orestes and Pylades appear. Orestes ordered by the oracle, had slain his mother because she murdered his father, Agamemnon, on his return from Troy. But he is tormented by the Furies, who give him no rest. He, however, been told by Apollo that if he carres the statue of Artemis from the Taurians and places it in Athens, he will be freed from his weird tormentors. So, accompanied by his faithful friend, his cousin Pylades, he has to make an attempt to get possession of the statue. After a brief inspection of the temple, with its blood-stained altar and its skulls, they decide to withdraw to mature their plans. The Chorus, which consists of fifteen maidens, now enters with a blindfolded song. They are slaves, attendants of Iphigenia, who come, summoned by their mistress, to help for the libation. Iphigenia enters from the temple with an attendant bearing a bowl, and the solemn rite is performed. At this moment a herdsman rushes in with the news that no prisoners have been captured, and that the king is sending them to Iphigenia for sacrifice. He then proceeds to tell, in excited language, that for he has never before had a splendid price. He goes off to bring them, and the Chorus sings and dances in great excitement or standing song. As they finish, the prisoners are seen approaching with their hands bound behind them. The three now plan to escape. After some delay the country appears, and they shall tell the king that his prisoners are polythis, and have polluted the statue, and the University for these parts, and the sea. So Iphigenia and the two young men, followed by attendants bearing various objects, leave the temple for the shore. The king’s guards follow at a short distance. The rest of the story is told by a messenger, who enters hastily. When Iphigenia had got to a secluded place she spoke to the young men, told them the plan, but they refused. As they got into a boat, the king’s guards were seen behind, as effective a Greek ship ready for sea and Iphigenia and the two prisoners about to go on board. They refused and attempted to seize them, but were driven back, and, as they would not go, the ship and she was against the land and he must now return in safety. Athena also directs that the Chorus and the sacrifice, that is her wish. Those conspire, for who can oppose the will of the goddess? And so with the exit song of the Chorus the play comes to an end.

In bringing this ancient play, the difficulties encountered are great. In the first place, a Greek theater was open to the sky and had no stage. In addition there is a circular dancing place, which was in front of the stage. In addition, all the acting took place in this dancing place or orchestra, as the Greeks called it. There was no stage. Here is a great difficulty at the start. The only way in which this can be done is at the Academy of Music, by having this orchestra on the stage. Then again, a Greek play is almost entirely in verse, and in part spoken. Special music has been composed by Dr. A. Clarke, and the chorus, which will be selected in a few months, will begin its rehearsals under his direction. Since little is known of ancient Greek music, the plays in this respect must be essentially modern. Furthermore, dances have to be designed, for in the regular chorus scenes, the chorus, through certain set figures as it sings. This work is in charge of one of Philadelphia’s most prominent dancing masters, who is now busily engaged making this feature as interesting and as effective as possible. It is thus seen that an ancient Greek tragic poet had to be not only a great dramatist, but a master of music and of dancing as well.

Furthermore, the play is simple. In the background is a Doric temple with some of its architec- tural members painted beige, with red and blue. The courtyard round about is wide and hard, and the sea is visible. In front of the temple is a blood-stained altar. This is all the scenery and it does not change during the whole of the Greeks, of course, used no curtain. The scenery is being prepared by artists in New York.

As was the case at Cambridge with
"Oedipus," the Academy was overcrowded when the students of the University of Pennsylvania produced the "Acharnians," in 1885. An appreciative audience left the theatre from various motives attended both performances and representatives of the Greek Department of colleges and universities in the country. All departed charmed with the beauty of the scene, the graceful acting of the students under the direction of Prof. Easton, and the delightful music written for the occasion by Prof. Clarke.

The students of the classical department of the University, who have been chosen for the cast that will produce "Iphigenia" in April, have been working diligently for several months at their parts, one having learned a considerable portion of his part during the summer. Few realize the enormous amount of labor necessary to insure the success of such an undertaking. The preservation of the play for the stage, the rehearsals of the members of the cast and all other details are in charge of Professor William A. Lambert, and Professor W. N. Bates, both of the Greek Department of the University. They have already devoted several months to this task, yet it is necessary, however, but the progress thus far made has been most satisfactory and encouraging, and that they already promise to meet with as much success as the production of the "Acharnians" seventeen years ago.

National Needs Veterinary Schools.

State Veterinarian Leonard Pearson yesterday, before the meeting of veterinary surgeons being held in Odd Fellows' Hall, spoke of the necessity of State aid for veterinary schools. He said the United States is the only large country in the world which has not established free schools for the study of diseases of cattle and instructing its people in the prevention of epidemics among cattle.

Dr. Pearson referred to the bill now before the Legislature providing for an appropriation of $10,000 towards building for the veterinary school for the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Pearson said that knowledge was all-powerful in veterinary medicine, and that the teaching could only be obtained from adequately supported schools. He said that the recent outbreak of the hoof and mouth disease in the Eastern States illustrated the grave danger to the prosperity of the country from such epidemics. He estimated that the section affected lost $250,000 a day while the outbreak continued.

SACRIFICE OF IPHIGENIA.

(Peaceful Times Press Photographing.)

PECULIAR LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF COLONIAL DAYS.

Dr. Herman V. Ames repeated his interesting lecture on "Peculiar Laws and Customs of Colonial Days," last week, in the Cambria School, Thirteenth and Cambria streets.

The lecture aimed to show that the early laws of the English Colonies in America were in large measure what the laws and customs of the country had made them. The first portion of the lecture dealt with the relation of the State to the individual, as presenting some striking contrasts to the theory and practice of the present day. The paternalistic ideas of the government were shown by illustrations from the laws regulating dress and expenditure, the price of lodging, refreshments, and commodities in general, and the rate of wages; also those restricting the social pleasures and pastimes, regarding courtship and marriage, religion and Sunday observance. Examples were given of the means employed to get the conduct of professional men, and of the laws for compulsory voting and office holding.

In the latter part of the lecture showed how the peculiar penal laws and the measure's punishment were similarly patterned after the statutes and usage of the English law. Examples of several of the more inhuman punishments are still in use in common use, such as the stocks, pillory, whipping post and ducking stool, shown.

Citations were made from the laws of various colonies, but particular attention was paid to the laws and practices of Colonial Pennsylvania. The lecturer pointed out, with the advance of democracy, there came a natural reaction against those extreme paternalistic ideas, which led to the repeal of many of these laws, as also to the development of a more humane sentiment, which brought society to a realising sense of the barbarity of the prevailing criminal code and sweet away not only the old forms but also the old concept of punishment.

OBITUARY.

Dr. Charles B. Levitt, of Trenton, N. J., a lawyer and solicitor of 45 years. He was a graduate of the Medical Department of the University, and was one of the most prominent physicians in Trenton.

UNIVERSITY SERVICES.

Large Audiences Greet Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh.

One of the largest audiences of the season assembled, at 10 A. M., last Sunday, in the Houston Hall auditorium, to listen to the second lecture of the series on "Jesus the Teacher" by Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh of the Department of Pedagogy, and remained to the eleven o'clock service to hear his sermon. Dr. Brumbaugh conducted both of the morning services. Continuing the keynote of the first lecture, he said that the life of Christ was not to be taken alone as recorded, but also the lives of those with whom he was and is in contact from Apostolic days to the present time. He was a great teacher who left no written record. There was no secretary among the Apostles or pupils, whose duty it was to write in the record of his words. The Bible, so frequently misinterpreted and so vigorously attacked, contains but a sparse record, but its general groundwork is the record of the "life of life." The rest of the record consists of non-essential teachers, his work had a definite aim--"ideal perfection with no compromise." He had supreme confidence in man, believed in people and his confidence reached to the lowest in the group. As a teacher he was a master in the art of asking questions. Nicodemus could not pass the kindergarten test, and refused admission. Another qualification of a successful teacher is consistency. He was the living embodiment of the thing he taught, which was the Fatherhood of God which broke down national limits. He compelled every hand that touches a child, to teach it to save, changing the village of cripplers by the Greeks into the buildings of homes for them.

His sermon in the second service was on the mission of John the Baptist. In the course of his remarks he said, "The man who come out of the wilderness with faces set towards a goal, command a hearing. No man fights the battle of life alone if he fights it for God and Truth."

In the mission class, Dr. Thomas H. S. Sillier gave a "Historical Sketch of the Religions of India," at 12:15. Dr. Maxwell Somerville gave another of his interesting lectures on "Religious Science," at the Museum at 12:30 P. M., and Mr. Edward McClain, of Boston, Mass., continued his "Christocentric" course in Houston Hall at 4 P. M. Rev. A. C. Dixon, D.D., of Boston, Mass., will conduct the eleven o'clock services tomorrow.