



SUITORS GAMING IN THE HOUSE OF ODYSSEUS

"THE RETURN OF ODYSSEUS."

The rehearsals for the Greek play are going on apace. Every day Miss Barrows is working with the actors, and the play promises to be a beautiful and touching production. When it was put on the boards in Chicago recently by native Greeks, amateurs trained by Miss Barrows, Lorenzo Taft, the sculptor, remarked that it afforded new thrills to the steadiest playgoers. A synopsis of the drama may prove interesting, though all who intend seeing it should read the full translation and explanations given in the little books that contain the text. This advice applies even to those thoroughly conversant with Homer, as the pronunciation to be used on the stage is that of the modern Greeks and sounds very different from that taught according to the conventional orthoepy of Canadian colleges.

The first scene is laid in the house of the long absent Odysseus, where the insolent suitors for Penelope's hand and fortune are engaged in drinking and gaming to the sound of the voice and lyre of Phemius, the bard. Athene appears in disguise to comfort the sad Telemachus with assurances of his father's ultimate return; she reveals her divine character to the young man by her mysterious disappearance, and he then turns to console his mother. Act II. consists of a tableau representing the much tried Odysseus in the palace of the enchantress Circe. Act III. shows a pasture by a river mouth in the island of Phæacia. The Princess Nausicaä and her maidens trample the household linen in the stream, and then engage in a game of ball while the clothes dry on the shore. In the next act Odysseus is at the court of the Phæacian king, Alcinoüs, whither Nausicaä has conducted him from the beach. It is evening, and the Phæacian councilors and the young men and children of the house are clustered before the hearth, while the women busy themselves with domestic duties. The wanderer enters with hesitation, though rendered invisible by Athene, till suddenly he throws himself, now plainly seen by all, at the

feet of Queen Arete, and asks aid to reach home. Then he sits down in the ashes on the hearth. The unexpected and mysterious appearance of the stranger creates consternation and doubt for a time, but in the end he receives a right royal welcome. In the next act Odysseus is entertained by the Phæacians with exhibitions of running, leaping, boxing, wrestling and discus throwing, in the last of which the guest himself takes part and surpasses all others. It may be remarked by the way that these contests as represented on the stage will be genuine, the winners being pre-arranged in very few events. After the games are over the best dancers astonish the old traveler by the swiftness of their twinkling feet. Then Odysseus is loaded with gifts and despatched to his beloved Ithaca. Here he has already arrived at the beginning of Act VI, and slain the haughty suitors. Penelope is summoned to meet him, but fails to recognize him, weather-worn as he is, and fears some imposture. Finally she is convinced of his identity, and happy words of husband and wife are mingled with tears of joy.

Most of the music is of ancient composition, and is very quaint. The hymn to Apollo which precedes the beginning of the play proper is especially fine and impressive. Miss Barrows brings the costumes with her, and except for the fact that silk has been substituted for wool in some cases in order to secure more accurate draping, they are archeologically correct in every particular. A. E. H., '02

We are informed that a number of copies of '00 Torontonensis are still for sale at Vannevar's and in the janitor's office. We would advise our readers to inspect the copy in the Library, and if it meets with their approval, to purchase one. It is certainly the best memento of college life yet issued at Varsity; in fact the committee went to a little too much expense in preparing it, and as a result are now somewhat in debt.