JOSEPH WELLS

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Содержание

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PREFACE

The object of this little book is to attempt to set forth the meaning of our forms and ceremonies, and to show how much of University history is involved in them. It naturally makes no pretensions to independent research; I have simply tried to make popular the results arrived at in Dr. Rashdall's great book on the *Universities of the Middle Ages*, and in the Rev. Andrew Clark's invaluable *Register of the University of Oxford* (published by the Oxford Historical Society). My obligations to these two books will be patent to all who know them; it has not, however, seemed necessary to give definite references either to these or to Anstey's *Munimenta Academica* (Rolls Series), which also has been constantly used.

I have tried as far as possible to introduce the language of the statutes, whether past or present; the forms actually used in the degree ceremony itself are given in Latin and translated; in other cases a rendering has usually been given, but sometimes the original has been retained, when the words were either technical or such as would be easily understood by all.

The illustrations, with which the Clarendon Press has

furnished the book, are its most valuable part. Every Oxford man, who cares for the history of his University, will be glad to have the reproduction of the portrait of the fourteenth-century Chancellor and of the University seal.

I have to thank Dr. Rashdall and the Rev. Andrew Clark for most kindly reading through my chapters, and for several suggestions, and Professor Oman for special help in the Appendix on 'The University Staves'.

J.W.

CHAPTER I
THE DEGREE CEREMONY

The streets of Oxford are seldom dull in term time, but a stranger who chances to pass through them between the hours of nine and ten on the morning of a degree day, will be struck and perhaps perplexed by their unwonted animation. He will find the quads of the great block of University buildings, which lie between the 'Broad' and the Radcliffe Square, alive with all sorts and conditions of Oxford men, arrayed in every variety of academic dress. Groups of undergraduates stand waiting, some in the short commoner's gown, others in the more dignified gown of the scholar, all wearing the dark coats and white ties usually associated with the 'Schools' and examinations, but with their faces free from the look of anxiety incident to those occasions. Here and there are knots of Bachelors of Arts, in their ampler gowns with fur-lined hoods, some only removed by a brief three years from their undergraduate days, others who have evidently allowed a much longer period to pass before returning to bring their academic career to its full and complete end. From every college comes the Dean in his Master's gown and hood, or if he be a Doctor, in the scarlet and grey of one of the new Doctorates, in the dignified scarlet and black of Divinity, or in the bold blending of scarlet and crimson which marks Medicine and Law.

College servants, with their arms full of gowns and hoods, will be seen in the background, waiting to assist in the academic robing of their former masters, and to pocket the 'tips' which time-honoured custom prescribes.

Presently, when the hour of ten has struck, the procession of academic dignity may be seen approaching across the Quad, the Vice-Chancellor preceded by his staves as the symbol of authority, the Proctors in their velvet sleeves and miniver hoods, and the Registrar (or Secretary) of the University.

Already most of those concerned are waiting in the room where degrees are to be given: others still lingering outside follow the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctors, and the ceremony of conferring degrees begins.

Should our imaginary spectator wish to see the ceremony, he will have no difficulty in gaining admittance to the Sheldonian, even if he have delayed outside till the proceedings have commenced; but if the degrees are conferred in one of the smaller buildings, it is well to secure a seat beforehand, which can be done through any Master of Arts. The ceremony will well repay a visit, for it is picturesque, it should be dignified, it is sometimes amusing. But it is more than this; in the conferment of University Degrees are preserved formulae as old as the University itself, and a ritual which, if understood, is full of meaning as to the oldest University history. The formulae, it is true, are veiled in the obscurity of a learned language, and the ritual is often a mere survival, which at first sight may seem

trivial and useless; but those who care for Oxford will wish that every syllable and every form that has come down to us from our ancient past should be retained and understood. It is to explain what is said and what is done on these occasions that this little book is written.

Notice of Degree Ceremony.

Degrees at Oxford are conferred on days appointed by the Vice-Chancellor, of which notice is now given at the beginning of every term, in the *University Gazette*; the old form of giving notice, however, is still retained, in the tolling of the bell of St. Mary's for the hour preceding the ceremony (9 to 10 a.m.)[1]. The assembly at which degrees are conferred is the Ancient House of Congregation (p. 93). The old arrangement of the Laudian Statutes is still maintained, by which the proceedings commence with the entrance of the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors, while one of the Bedels 'proclaims in a quiet tone', 'Intretis in Congregationem, magistri, intretis.' The Vice-Chancellor, when he has formally taken his seat, declares the 'cause of this Congregation'. It will be noticed that both the Vice-Chancellor and the two Proctors, as representing the elements of authority in the University (as will be explained later), wear their caps all through the ceremony.

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[1] In 1619 a B.A. candidate from Gloucester Hall (now Worcester College), who failed to present himself for his 'grace', was excused 'because he had not been able to hear the bell owing to the remoteness of the region and the wind being against him'.

Other business beside Degree giving.

Degree giving, however, is sometimes preceded and delayed by the confirmation of the lists of examiners who have been 'duly nominated' by the committees appointed for this purpose; it is of course natural that the same body which gives the degree should appoint the examiners, on whose verdicts the degree now mainly depends. A less reasonable cause of delay is the fact that the 'Congregation' is sometimes preceded by a 'Convocation' for the dispatch of general business, as a rule (but not always) of a formal character; the two bodies, Convocation and Congregation, are usually made up of the same persons, and are the same in all but name; the change from one to the other is marked by the Vice-Chancellor's descending from his higher seat, with the words 'Dissolvimus hanc Convocationem; fiat Congregatio'.

The Registrar's Declaration.

The degree ceremony itself begins with the declaration on the part of the Registrar that the candidates for the degrees have duly received permissions (*gratiae*) from their Colleges to present themselves, and that their names have been approved by him[2]; he has already certified himself from the University Register that all necessary examinations have been passed, and has been informed officially that all fees have been paid. The names have

[2] Till recently the whole list of candidates for all degrees was read by the Registrar, as well as by the Proctors afterwards when 'supplicating' for the graces of the various sets of candidates. Time is now economized by having the names read once only.

been already posted outside the door of the House; it is said that this is done to enable a tradesman to find out when any of his young debtors is about to leave Oxford, so that he may protest, if he wish, against the degree. The posting, however, is natural for many reasons, and no such tradesman's protest has been known for years; nor is it easy to see how it could be made by any one not himself a member of the University.

The College Grace.

The form of the college 'grace' states that the candidate has performed all the University requirements; that for the B.A. may be given as a specimen:—

> 'I, *A.B.*, Dean of the College *C.D.*, bear witness that *E.F.* of the College *C.D.*, whom I know to have kept bed and board continuously within the University for the whole period required by the statutes for the degree of B.A., according as the statutes require, since he has undergone a public examination and performed all the other requirements of the statutes, except so far as he has been dispensed, has received from his college the grace for the degree of B.A. Under my pledged word to this University.
>
> *A.B.*, Dean of the College *C.D.*'

The words as to residence, that 'bed and board have been kept continuously' are derived immediately from the Laudian statute, but are in fact much older: the other clauses have of course been changed.

Order of Degrees.

The various degrees are then taken in the following order:—

Doctor of Divinity.
Doctor of Civil Law or of Medicine.
Bachelor of Divinity.
Master of Surgery.
Bachelor of Civil Law or of Medicine (and of Surgery).
Doctor of Letters or of Science.[3]
Master of Arts.
Bachelor of Letters or of Science.
Bachelor of Arts.
Musical degrees.

It sometimes happens, however, that a candidate is taking two degrees at once (i.e. B.A. and M.A.); this 'unusual distinction', as local newspapers admiringly call it, is generally due to the unkindness of examiners who have prolonged the ordinary B.A. course by repeated 'ploughs'. In these cases the lower degree is conferred out of order before the higher.

The same forms are observed in granting all degrees; they are fourfold, and are repeated for each separate degree or set of degrees. Here they are only described once, while minor peculiarities in the granting of each degree are noticed in their place; but it is important to remember that the essentials recur in each admission; this explains the apparently meaningless

[3] If the Doctor be not an M.A., then his admission to the Doctorate follows the admission of the M.A.s.

repetition of the same ceremonies. This repetition was once a much more prominent feature; within living memory it was necessary for each 'grace' to be taken separately, and the Proctors 'walked' for each candidate. Degree ceremonies in those days went on to an interminable length, although the number graduating was only half what it is now.

(1) The *Supplicat.*

The first form is the appeal to the House for the degree. One of the Proctors reads out the *supplicat*, i.e. the petition of the candidate or candidates to be allowed to graduate; this is the duty of the Senior Proctor in the case of the M.A.s, of the Junior Proctor in the case of the B.A.s; for the higher degrees, e.g. the Doctorate, either Proctor may 'supplicate'.

The form of the *supplicat* is the same, with necessary variations, in all cases; that for the M.A. may be given as a specimen:—

> 'Supplicat venerabili Congregationi Doctorum et Magistrorum regentium *E.F.* Baccalaureus facultatis Artium e collegio *C.* qui complevit omnia quae per statuta requiruntur, (nisi quatenus cum eo dispensatum fuerit) ut haec sufficiant quo admittatur ad incipiendum in eadem facultate.'
>
> ('*E.F.* of *C.* College, Bachelor of Arts, who has completed all the requirements of the statutes (except so far as he has been excused), asks of the venerable Congregation of Doctors and Regent Masters that these things may suffice

for his admission to incept in the same faculty.')

This form is at least as old as the sixteenth century, and probably much older; but in its original form it set forth more precisely what the candidate had done for his degree (cf. cap. ii). After each *supplicat* has been read by the Proctor, he with his colleague walks half-way down the House; this is in theory a formal taking of the votes of the M.A.s present. When the Proctors have returned to their seats, the one of them who has read the *supplicat*, lifting his cap (his colleague imitating him in this), declares 'the graces (or grace) to have been granted' ('Hae gratiae concessae sunt et sic pronuntiamus concessas'). The Proctors' walk is the most curious feature of the degree ceremony; it always excites surprise and sometimes laughter. It should, however, be maintained with the utmost respect; for it is the clear and visible assertion of the democratic character of the University; it implies that every qualified M.A. has a right to be consulted as to the admission of others to the position which he himself has attained.

But popular imagination has invented a meaning for it, which certainly was not contemplated in its institution; it is currently believed that the Proctors walk in order to give any Oxford tradesman the opportunity of 'plucking' their gown and protesting against the degree of a defaulting candidate. 'Verdant Green'[4] was told that this was the origin of the ominous 'pluck',

[4] *Verdant Green* was published in 1853, and this is the oldest literary evidence for the connexion of 'plucking' and the Proctorial walk. The earliest mention of 'plucking'

which for centuries was a word of terror in Oxford; in the last half-century, it has been superseded by the more familiar 'plough'. There is a tradition that such a protest has actually been made within living memory and certainly it was threatened quite recently; a well-known Oxford coach (now dead) informed the Proctors that he intended in this way to prevent the degree of a pupil who had passed his examinations, but had not paid his coach's fee. The defaulter, in this case, failed to present himself for the degree, and so the 'plucking' did not take place.

(2) The Presentation.

The second part of the ceremony is the presentation of the candidates to the Vice-Chancellor and Proctors; this is done in the case of the higher degrees, Divinity, Medicine, &c., by the Professor at the head of the faculty[5], in the case of the M.A.s and B.A.s by the representative of the college.

The candidates are placed on the right hand of the presenter, who with 'a proper bow' ('debita reverentia') to the Vice-

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at Oxford is Hearne's bitter entry (May, 1713) about his enemy, the then Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Lancaster of Queen's—'Dr. Lancaster, when Bachelor of Arts, was plucked for his declamation.' But it is most unlikely that so good a Tory as Hearne would have used a slang phrase, unless it had become well established by long usage. 'Pluck', in the sense of causing to fail, is not unfrequently found in English eighteenth century literature, without any relation to a university; the metaphor from 'plucking' a bird is an obvious one, and may be compared to the German use of 'rupfen'.

[5] The old principle is that no one should be presented except by a member of the University who has a degree as high or higher than that sought; this is unfortunately neglected in our own days, when an ordinary M.A., merely because he is a professor, is appointed by statute to present for the degree of D.Litt. or D.Sc.

Chancellor and the Proctors, presents them with the form appropriate to the degree they are seeking; that for the M.A. is as follows:—

> 'Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie, vosque egregii Procuratores, praesento vobis hunc Baccalaureum in facultate Artium, ut admittatur ad incipiendum in eadem facultate.'
>
> ('Most eminent Vice-Chancellor, and excellent Proctors, I present this B.A. to you for admission to incept in the faculty of Arts.')

The old custom was that the presenter should grasp the hand of each candidate and present him separately; some senior members of the University still hold the hand of one of their candidates, though the custom of separate presentation has been abolished; there was an intermediate stage fifty years ago, when the number of those who could be presented at once was limited to five; each of them held a finger or a thumb of the presenter's right hand.

(3) The Proctorial Charge.

The third part of the ceremony is the charge which is delivered, usually by the Junior Proctor, to the candidates for the degree. Each receives a copy of the New Testament from the Bedel, on which to take his oath. The charge to all candidates for a doctorate or for the M.A. is:—

> 'Vos dabitis fidem ad observandum statuta, privilegia, consuetudines et libertates istius Universitatis. Item quod quum admissi fueritis in domum Congregationis et in

domum Convocationis, in iisdem bene et fideliter, ad honorem et profectum Universitatis, vos geretis. Et specialiter quod in negotiis quae ad gratias et gradus spectant non impedietis dignos, nec indignos promovebitis. Item quod in electionibus habendis unum tantum semel et non amplius in singulis scrutiniis scribetis et nominabitis; et quod neminem nominabitis nisi quem habilem et idoneum certo sciveritis vel firmiter credideritis.'

('You will swear to observe the statutes, privileges, customs and liberties of your University. Also when you have been admitted to Congregation and to Convocation, you will behave in them loyally and faithfully to the honour and profit of the University. And especially in matters concerning graces and degrees, you will not oppose those who are fit or support the unfit. Also in elections you will write down and nominate one only and no more at each vote; and you will nominate no one but a man whom you know for certain or surely believe to be fit and proper.')

To this the candidates answer 'Do fidem'.

The charge to candidates for the B.A. or other lower degrees is much simpler:—

'Vos tenemini ad observandum omnia statuta, privilegia, consuetudines, et libertates istius Universitatis, quatenus ad vos spectent' (as far as they concern you).

This charge, which is of course the first part of the charge to M.A.s, goes back to the very beginnings of University ceremonial; the latter part of the charge to M.A.s is modern, and

takes the place of the more elaborate oaths of the Laudian and of still earlier statutes. By these a candidate bound himself not to recognize any other place in England except Cambridge as a 'university', and especially that he 'would not give or listen to lectures in Stamford as in a university'.[6][Pg 14] There was also a special direction that each candidate should within a fortnight obtain the dress proper for his degree, in order that 'he might be able by it to do honour to our mother the University, in processions and in all other University business'. It is a great pity that this latter part of the old statutes was ever omitted.

The candidates for a degree in Divinity, whether Bachelors or Doctors, are charged by the Senior Proctor; the senior of them makes the following declaration, taken from the thirty-sixth canon of the Church of England (as revised and confirmed in 1865):

> 'I, *A.B.*, do solemnly make the following declaration. I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion and to the Book of Common Prayer and of the ordering of bishops, priests, and deacons, and I believe the doctrine of the United Church of England and Ireland, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God.'

The Senior Proctor then says to the other candidates:—

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[6] This delightful piece of English conservatism was only removed from the statutes in 1827. It refers to the foundation of a university at Stamford in 1334 by the northern scholars who conceived themselves to have been ill-treated at Oxford; the attempt was crushed at once, but only by the exercise of royal authority.

'Eandem declarationem quam praestitit *A.B.* in persona sua, vos praestabitis in personis vestris, et quilibet vestrum in persona sua.'

('The declaration which *A.B.* has made on his part, you will make on your part, together and severally.')

(4) The Admission by the Vice-Chancellor.

When the candidates have duly taken the oath, the last and most important part of the ceremony is performed.

The candidates for any Doctorate, except the new 'Research' ones, or for the M.A., kneel before the Vice-Chancellor; the Doctors are taken separately according to their faculties, then the M.A.s in successive groups of four each; the Vice-Chancellor, as he admits them, touches them each on the head with the New Testament, while he repeats the following form:—

'Ad honorem Domini nostri Jesu Christi, et ad profectum sacrosanctae matris ecclesiae et studii, ego auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis do tibi (*vel* vobis) licentiam incipiendi in facultate Artium (*vel* facultate Chirurgiae, Medicinae, Juris, S. Theologiae) legendi, disputandi, et caetera omnia faciendi quae ad statum Doctoris (*vel* Magistri) in eadem facultate pertinent, cum ea completa sint quae per statuta requiruntur; in nomine Domini, Patris, Filii, et Spiritus Sancti.'

('For the honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the profit of our holy mother, the Church, and of learning, I, in virtue of my own authority and that of the whole University, give you permission to incept in the Faculty of Arts (or

of Surgery, &c.), of reading, disputing, and performing all the other duties which belong to the position of a Doctor (or Master) in that same faculty, when the requirements of the statutes have been complied with, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.')

This venerable form goes back (p. 26) to the beginning of the fifteenth century, and is probably much older; the only change in it is the omission at the beginning of 'et Beatae Mariae Virginis'. Modern toleration has provided a modified form for use in cases of candidates for whom the full form is theologically inappropriate, but this is rarely used.

Change of Gowns.

The ceremony of the licence is now complete; but before the B.A.s are admitted, the Doctors first, and then the Masters in their turn, retire outside, and don 'their appropriate gowns and hoods'. They receive these from those who were once their college servants, and the right of thus bringing gown and hood is strictly claimed; nor is this surprising, as unwritten custom prescribes that the gratuity must be of gold. The newly created Doctors or Masters then come back, with the Bedel leading the procession, and 'make a bow' to the Vice-Chancellor, who usually shakes hands with the new Doctors; they are then conducted to a place in the raised seats behind and around his chair, from which they can watch the rest of the proceedings. The M.A.s either leave the house or join their friends among the spectators.

The ceremony of admitting B.A.s is much simpler. As in the case of the Masters, they are presented by their college Dean; the form of presentation is:

> 'Insignissime Vice-Cancellarie, vosque egregii Procuratores, praesento vobis hunc meum scholarem (*vel* hos meos scholares) in facultate Artium, ut admittatur (*vel* admittantur) ad gradum Baccalaurei in Artibus.'

The charge is then given by the Junior Proctor (see pp. 12 and 13). After this the candidates are, without kneeling, admitted by the Vice-Chancellor, in the following words:

> 'Domine (*vel* Domini), ego admitto te (*vel* vos) ad gradum Baccalaurei in Artibus; insuper auctoritate mea et totius Universitatis, do tibi (*vel* vobis) potestatem legendi, et reliqua omnia faciendi quae ad eundem gradum spectant.'

This form also is old, but has been cut down from its former fullness; e.g. in the Laudian Statutes the candidate was admitted, among other things, to 'read a certain book of the Logic of Aristotle'. The B.A.s, when admitted, are allowed to disperse as they please, and the ceremony is over. It is unfortunate that the form of admission to the degree which is most frequently taken, and which (speaking generally) is the most real degree given, should be such an unsatisfactory and bare fragment of the old ceremonial.

Degrees in Absence and Incorporations.

It may be noticed that degrees 'in absence' are announced by

the Vice-Chancellor after each set of degrees has been conferred, e.g. an 'absent' M.A. is announced after the M.A.s have made their bow. The University only allows this privilege to those who are actually out of the country, and to them only on stringent conditions; an extra payment of £5 is required.

The proceedings terminate sometimes with the admission to 'ad eundem' rank at Oxford, of graduates of Cambridge or of Dublin; this privilege is now rarely granted, though it was once freely given. When all is over, the Vice-Chancellor rises, announces 'Dissolvimus hanc Congregationem', and solemnly leaves the building in the same pomp and state with which he entered.

CHAPTER II
THE MEANING OF THE DEGREE CEREMONY

The Oath of the M.A.

For the last 500 years certainly, for nearly 200 longer probably, the candidate presented for 'inception' in the Faculty of Arts (i.e. for the M.A. degree) has sworn that he will observe the 'statutes, privileges, customs and liberties' of his university.[7] It is difficult to know what the average man now means when he hurriedly says 'Do fidem' after the Junior Proctor's charge; but there is no doubt that when the form of words was first used, it meant much. The candidate was being admitted into a society which was maintaining a constant struggle against encroachments, religious or secular, from without, and against unruly tendencies within. And this struggle gave to the University a vivid consciousness of its unity, which in these days of peace and quiet can hardly be conceived.

What is a University?

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[7] The form is found in the two 'Proctors' books', of which the oldest, that of the Junior Proctor, was drawn up (in 1407) by Richard Fleming, afterwards Bishop of Lincoln and founder of Lincoln College; but it was then already an established form, and probably goes back to the thirteenth century, i.e. to the reign of Henry III.

The essential idea of a university is a distinctly mediaeval one; the Middle Ages were above all things gifted with a genius for organization, and men were regarded, and regarded themselves, rather as members of a community than as individuals. The student in classical times had been free to hear what lectures he pleased, where he pleased, and on what subjects he pleased, and he had no fixed and definite relations with his fellow students. There is little or no trace of regular courses of study, still less of self-governing bodies of students, in the 'universities' of Alexandria or Athens.

But with the revival of interest in learning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the real formation of universities begins. The students formed themselves into organized bodies, with definite laws and courses of study, both because they needed each other's help and protection, and because they could not conceive themselves as existing in any other way.

These organized bodies were called 'universitates'[8], i.e. guilds or associations; the name at first had no special application to bodies of students, but is applied e.g. to a community of citizens; it was only gradually that it acquired its later and narrower meaning; it finally became specialized for a learned corporation, just as 'convent' has been set apart for a religious body, and

[8] It is perhaps still necessary to emphasize the fact that the name 'University' had nothing to do with the range of subjects taught, or with the fact that instruction was offered to all students; the latter point is expressed in the earlier name 'studium generale' borne by universities, which is not completely superseded by 'universitas' till the fifteenth century.

'corps' for a military one.

The origin of Oxford University.

When these organized bodies were first formed is a question which it is impossible to discuss at length here, nor could a definite answer be given. The University of Oxford is, in this respect, as in so many others, characteristically English; it grew rather than was made, like most of our institutions, and it can point to no definite year of foundation, and to no individual as founder. Here it must suffice to say that references to students and teachers at Oxford are found with growing frequency all through the twelfth century; but it is only in the last quarter of that century that either of those features which differentiate a university from a mere chance body of students can be clearly traced. These two features are organized study and the right of self-government.

The first mention of organized study is about 1184, when Giraldus Cambrensis, having written his *Topographia Hibernica* and 'desiring not to hide his candle under a bushel,' came to Oxford to read it to the students there; for three days he 'entertained' his audience as well as read to them, and the poor scholars were feasted on a separate day from the 'Doctors of the different faculties'. Here we have definite evidence of organized study. Much more important is the record of 1214 (the year before Magna Carta[9]), when the famous award was given by

[9] The coincidence is not accidental. Magna Carta was wrested from a king humiliated by his submission to the Pope, and the University Charter was given to redress an act

the Papal Legate, which is the oldest charter of the University of Oxford. In this the 'Chancellor' is mentioned, and we have in this office the beginnings of that self-government which, coupled with organized study, may justify us in saying that the real university was now in existence. It is quite probable that the first Doctor of Divinity whom we find 'incepting' in Oxford, is the learned and saintly Edmund Rich, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; he seems to have taken this degree in the reign of John, but he had been already teaching secular subjects in the preceding reign (Richard I's). It is significant of mediaeval Oxford's position as a pillar of the Church and a champion of liberty, that her first traceable graduate should be the last Archbishop of Canterbury who was canonized, and one of the defenders of English liberties against the misgovernment of Henry III.

The University a Guild of M.A.s.

The 'University' of Oxford, like the great sister (or might we say mother?) school of Paris, was an association of Masters of Arts, and they alone were its proper members. In our own days, when not more than half of those who enter the University proceed to the M.A. Degree, and when only about ten per cent. of them reside for any time after the B.A. course is ended, this state of things seems inconceivable; but it has left its trace, even in popular knowledge, in the well-known fact that M.A.s are

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of violence on the part of the Oxford citizens, who had been stimulated in their attack on the 'clerks' of Oxford by John's quarrel with the Pope.

exempt from Proctorial jurisdiction; and our degree terminology is still based upon it. It is the M.A. who is admitted by the Vice-Chancellor to 'begin', i.e. to teach (*ad incipiendum*), when he is presented to him, and at Cambridge and in American Universities the ceremonies at the end of the academic year are called 'Commencement'. What seems an Irish bull is really a survival of the oldest university arrangements.

The meaning of the 'Degree'.

As then the University is a guild of Masters, the degree is the 'step' by which the distinction of becoming a full member of it is attained. Gibbon wrote a century ago that 'the use of academical degrees is visibly borrowed from the mechanic corporations, in which an apprentice, after serving his time, obtains a testimonial of his skill, and his licence to practise his trade or mystery'. This statement, though accurate in the main, is misleading; the truth is that the learned body has not so much borrowed from the 'mechanic' one, as that both have based their arrangements independently on the same idea.

A Bachelor of Arts.

This connexion may be illustrated from the other degree title, 'Bachelor.' If the etymology at present best supported may be accepted, that honourable term was originally used for a man who worked on a 'cow-strip' of land, i.e. who was assistant of a small cultivator; whether this be true or not, it at any rate soon came to denote the apprentice as opposed to the master-

workman; in fact the 'Bachelor' in the university corresponded to the 'pupil-teacher' of more humble associations in our own days. In this sense of the word, as Dr. Murray quaintly says, a woman student can become a 'Bachelor' of Arts.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.