

were considered qualified to act as public instructors, and those who accepted the distinction were at one time bound when called upon to perform the duties of tuition, the practice became general in course of time to select a certain number of Masters and Doctors remarkable by their powers and attainments to act as authorized teachers. Such as these have been designated Professors.

Academical degrees, originating as described for the purpose mainly of securing competent teachers, afterwards became distinctions which were highly prized, and men competed for the dignity who had no wish or intention to teach.

The universities of the Middle Ages comprised four distinct Faculties—Arts, Law, Medicine, and Theology. The Faculty of Arts was held to be fundamental, and the Master's degree was insisted upon as a necessary preliminary condition for all who designed to take a place in any one of the other Faculties. Thus the Faculty of Arts formed the basis of academic instructions, and it was, indeed, the type and mould in which all professional and technical education was set. The rule may not be rigidly enforced under the altered circumstances of to-day. The necessities of life, the pressure of competition, the claims of individual effort, all intervene to give a practical form to technical education; but in the early history of high education the preliminary study of Arts was held to be indispensable; and it may be said that no one who has followed the same course in modern times has ever found that his labour has been given in vain. The typical university, with the four Faculties, has been compared to a stately edifice of which the ground floor—the very foundation and basis of all—was Arts. The walls being represented by Law and Medicine, while Divinity formed the roof

or superstructure which crowned the whole. . . .

Such was the University in past centuries—such the system of degrees, their antiquity, their origin, their value, their uses and some of the customs in conferring them. But before the typical seat of learning became known and recognized as a university, and as such was established throughout Europe, in every land where civilization and religion penetrated, we have a record of schools of an analogous character. Schools at which thousands of scholars met and studied under teachers renowned for their learning and the doctrines they taught. Throughout the world's history there have ever been nations who had felt that life had higher aims and possibilities than mere material success. In the 9th century our own Alfred revived letters and gave a stimulus to the schools of England, which the Danish invasion had almost extinguished. In the 8th century Charlemagne established schools in which the course of instruction embraced all the learning of the age. In the 7th and 6th centuries the Irish monasteries surpassed all others in maintaining the traditions of learning, and in the 5th century schools were founded in Italy, which have been continued up to the present day.

Chronologically as well as geographically we are thus drawn nearer to associations connected with the golden days of Greece and Rome, and to the famous schools presided over by the old philosophers; those sages whose recorded wisdom enriches the literature of every age. The schools referred to foreshadow the university, and in some of them may at least be traced the germ of the academic degree.

The Athenæum of the Capitol, together with other establishments of learning throughout the Empire, were recognized as important elements in