

centuries. In Portugal over six centuries. In England, France, and Italy, nearly eight centuries.

If credit is to be given to tradition the great institutions of learning may be carried back to much earlier dates, although it does not appear that the term university was applied to them. According to some authorities the venerable Bede obtained the doctor's degree at Cambridge in the 8th century, and he degree of Master of Arts was conferred on St. John of Beverley, at Oxford, in the 7th century. Other historians connect the University of Bologna in Italy with a school established there, after the complete downfall of Paganism and the general adoption of Christianity. This school, founded by Theodosius II. in the 5th century, was revived by Charlemagne in the 8th, and some centuries later was attended by many thousands of students from all parts of the civilized world. Bologna is famed as being the oldest university in Europe where, in all probability, regular academic degrees were first instituted.

The Emperors and Popes of the Middle Ages gave to the universities the right of conferring degrees in their name. The degrees so conferred became universal titles, giving to those to whom they were granted rights and privileges, and imposing upon them certain responsibilities. They constituted the connecting links between the scattered seats of learning in Europe; and graduates of universities enjoyed the advantage of being members of a great intellectual corporation with establishments in every civilized country.

We have to some extent the explanation why degrees were conferred in the name of the Pope as ruling authority. The Church was the mainspring of intellectual action, and, acting through the universities, penetrated the constitution of each community. There was thus throughout Christen-

dom, amidst all the national diversities and struggles for supremacy, a unity of learning diffused wherever the sway of the Church extended.

The form of admission to a full degree was from the commencement marked by great form and ceremony. In England the distinction has always been highly prized. At one time it was attended by scenes of feasting and rejoicing. Any one having attained the position of a graduate assumed a higher rank and status. In Germany the Doctor ranked before the untitled nobility, and next to the knights. The Doctor of Laws enjoyed the same privileges as knights and prelates. In Elizabeth's time the academic degree was given to a great number of distinguished men. By special statute its attainment was rendered as easy as possible to the favoured and the nobility, and thenceforth a university education became a mark of a gentleman, and it has ever since remained an ornament and recommendation to the best society.

Throughout all the changes which have taken place in the world since the days to which I refer—through all the revolutions, the rise and fall of dynasties, the differences in matters of faith and the increase of general education—the academic degree has lost nothing in individual value. The scholar stamped with a university distinction continues to be held high in popular respect.

The university has been transplanted from Europe to America. It has taken root in the generous virgin soil on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. A few years ago the spot where we are now assembled differed from no other place in the primeval forest which clothed the face of nature. First it was La Salle who built Fort Frontenac on the site of the Limestone City. From a collection of fur traders' huts around the Fort, it passed into a village, to a town, to