

and by whom it was worn, they were absolutely dumb on the points for which I was searching.

I must admit I was now at a loss. Vainly I stood before shelves weighed down with books which seemed to deal with every other imaginable subject. Books concerning caps and gowns I could get in profusion, but then they were not the right kind of caps, nor were they the kind of gowns I wanted, however desirable might be the ownership of their owners. Do not, however, think I was in despair. If I was one of those in whose encyclopædias there was no such word as cap or gown, was I not also one of those in whose lexicon there was no such word as "fale?" Besides in spite of the very ingenious and reasonable arguments adduced by our mutual and popular friend Mr. Locke, it did seem opposed to the natural order of things that one who had passed his Freshman year, and the gown on whose shoulders had long since lost the comeliness and entirety in which once it had delighted, should not intuitively and innately know something of that costume which his intellectual countenance and thoughtful gait proclaimed him born to wear. When this idea struck me, it seemed from its brilliancy to be the correct one, and the more I pondered on it, the more the conviction of its truthfulness took possession of my mind. Still I must confess to some perplexity until another brilliant idea struck me that perhaps the most satisfactory mode of proceeding would be to adopt the scientific method of experiment. No sooner thought of than done, and in the next few hours I succeeded in evolving a revelation of its origin, an outline of which I give below. I only give an outline because, in the first place, the age in which we live is one satisfied only with superficial knowledge, and if deeper is announced it is unread (though if any of my readers wish to hear any more on the subject, they can readily obtain it by writing to me, care of the Managing Editor of this JOURNAL) and secondly, when I thought it over in my mind I came to the conclusion that perhaps after all it would be better to let the public into the secret of how I obtained my knowledge. I do it of course at a sacrifice, and my conduct must ever appear as exceedingly disinterested especially in comparison with the seers and magicians of ancient Egypt, who were willing only to let the vulgar eye gaze on some of their smallest results, while the means by which these and greater results were arrived at, were kept a profound secret. But to proceed. Knowing as we all do the exceeding comfort and convenience of a skull cap, especially to the student, we do not wonder that all ancient scholars wore such a cap, in truth the fact is impressed on our minds from earliest youth by the numerous pictures of these ancient demigods of knowledge. This only need be said to convince every one of the naturalness of that department of the College cap. There are, however, two other important parts which are really the most conspicuous, viz.: the mortarboard and the tassell. Now to the uninitiated and thoughtless these seem entirely superfluous. How strange that such ignorance should prevail is the first thought that strikes one on

really commencing to consider their true origin and meaning. There was one thing about these ancient scholars that must be borne in mind by the modern student in order to fully appreciate what we are going to say, viz.:— These ancient scholars used very often to use their brains. Now I have not seen many examples of this kind, but we are told by masters in physiological science that excessive use of the brain is very prone to cause a rush of blood to aid that overtasked organ. When therefore our forefathers in knowledge used to leave the seclusion and coolness of their cloisters and venture out under the sun of Southern Europe (for we speak of a time when the northern nations were still barbarian) their already heated brains would be so tried by the warm temperature that they would become rather eccentric in some of their public actions, thereby giving rise to the fiction that learning might make a man mad. To shield them from both the heat and the imputation, some brilliant genius invented that picturesque species of parasol now known among the vulgar as the mortarboard, which of course had to shield the entire head, skull cap and all, and therefore was placed on top of the whole instead of forming a species of peak. I hope this explanation will entirely dissipate the absurd belief which I am sorry to say is so general, that the mortarboard is a relic of barbarism, for nothing but the refinement of civilization could ever have invented such a curious tool, as it must be remembered that, while it acted as a shade, it also effected a purpose, in pressing the skull cap firmly on the head when it would, if unaided, be liable to fly off on occasions when the absorption of knowledge was so great as to cause the brain to expand. Nothing more need be said on this subject, as I think I have said sufficient to prove the usefulness and propriety of this second department of the College Cap. And now we turn to the third which I think I can prove to be at present merely symbolic. If the reader will carefully examine a College Cap, he will find that in the centre of the above mentioned mortar-board is a hollow place now usually covered over with a film of cloth, and to this is attached that of which we are now about to speak, the tassell. No one who has ever worn a skull cap will deny that it must always be an exact fit, neither too large nor too small; and I may say that those who can speak with authority, say that those who devote their lives to the pursuit of knowledge oft-times find no opportunity to attend to many things which in these degenerate days are considered necessary. These two facts being stated; that those who could not find time to keep the hair of their head clipped should sometimes be troubled as to the exact fit of their skull caps, will be readily believed, and it will be understood, how the idea came, to open the tops of their caps and let the superabundant and ever increasing hair run through, and thus instead of allowing it to fill up the limited space in the interior of the cap, but running it through in the manner mentioned, it really made the cap sit more securely on their heads. And beyond all doubt this did greatly resemble the modern tassell, for ancient