

## DEGREES FOR ALL.

“Lord Bateman was a noble lord.  
A noble lord he was of high degree.”

THREE centuries ago, Sir John Ferne lamented the degeneration of the title of Esquire through the indiscriminate manner in which it was then applied. “The title,” he says, “has been very much abused and profaned, whereunto I wish that the Lord Earle Marshall with the advice and consultation of a learned heraldee, would add some sharpe correction and punishment.” If the “Lord Earle Marshall” could be resurrected and materialized for a while, he would have a chance to earn the salary and perquisites which attached to his sinecure in 1554, in giving us “some sharpe correction and punishment” on the subject of titles. He would have to call in all the honorable sinecures in his office to assist in the obsequies, for we are all Esquires! Every free-born American citizen is an Esquire. It descends to us through the male line as a part of our common heritage, and no one is so base that he can not show letters patent bestowing the title. “Abused and profaned,” forsooth! The writer became an Esquire at about the age of eighteen, and has been one ever since.

And now arises the President of Yale College, in the grave-clothes of Sir John Ferne, to say that honorary degrees are growing cheap in public esteem by reason of the indiscriminate manner in which they are annually distributed by the various agricultural colleges and seminaries throughout the land. Sir John and President Woolsey differ not in kind, but in degree. They are both pleading for an exclusiveness that would satisfy feudal England of the 16th century, but will not be tolerated in democratic America of this enlightened age. The common people have stricken down the Sir Johns of the past three centuries, until all men are free and equal Esquires, and the battle for human rights will go on in spite of college presidents, until every American citizen, irrespective of race, color or previous condition of servitude, shall be a D.D., a LL.D., or a D.C.L.