

**DOCTORS DISSECTED; OR,  
UNIVERSITY DEGREES  
FAIRLY REPRESENTED**

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Doctors Dissected; Or, University Degrees Fairly Represented by Various

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**VARIOUS**

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DOCTORS DISSECTED:

OR

UNIVERSITY DEGREES

FAIRLY REPRESENTED.

BY

A BRITISH AND FOREIGN GRADUATE.

*ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.*

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1872.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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THE end sought to be attained by the author of the following pages is the diffusion of correct information in reference to the real value of English and German University Degrees, and notwithstanding what interested persons may and probably will affirm to the contrary, the intelligent reader will exercise his own judgment and be perfectly justified in placing the most implicit confidence in the statements which are to be found in the work brought under his notice.

In preparing and publishing a book for the express purpose of removing ignorance, overcoming prejudice, destroying conceit, combating misrepresentations, and annihilating even falsehood itself, the author is certain to bring himself within the pale of the displeasure of those who pay more regard to error and fabrication than to truth and justice. As it is, however, the wish of the writer that the essay in question may be characterised by candour, impartiality, and truth, he will be totally indifferent to any adverse criticisms that may be passed upon it.

No man, unbiassed by prejudice, will or can deny that the most profound ignorance prevails on the subject of University Degrees, and there is no exaggeration in affirming that the evil inflicted upon society is in exact proportion to the extent of this prevalent ignorance. These assertions are capable of the most convincing proofs, since the want of knowledge to which we have referred leads those in power to commit the gravest errors, by their sanctioning the promotion of men who are not the most deserving of promotion, and the passing over and leaving in comparative obscurity those who would adorn elevated positions. This line of conduct will in the end bring along with it the retribution to which it is justly entitled.

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## UNIVERSITIES AND THE DEGREES THEY CONFER.

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WE shall commence our Treatise on University Degrees by informing the reader that it is not our intention to enter into any specific inquiry as to the nature and value of American and Scotch Degrees, inasmuch as we are not sufficiently acquainted with the conditions and intellectual standard upon which those *Almae Matres* confer their Academical distinctions, neither do we exactly know the nature and extent of the qualifications required from the candidates to enable them to obtain the University Certificates. We may, however, in this place not omit to mention that, if we were to give credence to common reports, we should very naturally look upon American and Scotch Degrees with the gravest suspicion, but since personal experience has taught us the injustice and folly of listening to mere rumour, and since truth and fair play constitute our sole aim, we are bound by every honourable consideration, and in the absence of the most irrefragable proofs to the contrary, to regard all such reports as baseless, and therefore utterly unworthy of credit. The Universities to which our attention will be mainly directed are the following:—Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, London, Jena, Giessen, Göttingen, and Erlangen. We have chosen to speak more particularly on the German Universities specified because they have at various times been brought more prominently before the English public. We might with perfect convenience have included others, but we do not see that any advantage would thereby be gained either to the reader or the writer of the present pamphlet.

## DEGREES.

The principal Degrees conferred by the preceding Universities may be thus classified :—B.A., LL.B., M.A., LL.D., B.D., D.D., D.C.L., PH.D., M.D., &c., concerning which it will be our imperative duty to speak more particularly when we come to the proper place. This list of Academical distinctions will appear to the eye of a novice somewhat formidable, and as a necessary consequence arouse his curiosity to ascertain what constitutes their radical distinction, and the amount of estimation in which the holder of each ought to be held. The degrees are a delusion unless each possesses and at the same time represents its own specific value. For instance as the B.A. degree is one of the lowest of Academical honours, it certainly ought not to carry along with it the extent of learning required for an M.A., and the M.A. degree should under no consideration be equal in intellectual worth to either a B.D. or a D.D. The same remarks will hold good with respect to all the University degrees which will form the subject of our work, but whether this distinction has been uniformly maintained remains to be seen. If these remarks are not reasonable and based upon a solid foundation, why have so many different degrees? If they do not represent, or are designed to represent, different shades of intellectual status, why not have *one and only one degree*? For the information of the reader of these pages we may here remark that the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, as such, is not conferred by any of the English Universities, being almost, if not altogether, exclusively confined to Germany. Hence the Ph.D. degree is generally recognised as being an emanation from a German source. The other degrees cannot be so easily distinguished.

## OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE B.A. DEGREE.

In order to take the B.A. Degree at Oxford or Cambridge, it is absolutely necessary that the Student should reside

during each term at the seat of learning whose honours he is desirous of obtaining. Residence at both these *Almae Matres* is a *sine qua non*, and consequently nobody, except under the most peculiar circumstances, we will suppose, can have the Degree unless he shall have previously complied with this indispensable condition. The length of time during which the work of graduating is supposed to go on extends over a period of three or four years, including of course the long and short vacations. During this time the Undergraduate is expected to pass a prescribed number of examinations until the day arrives when he is permitted to offer himself as a candidate for the B.A. Degree. If he succeed in filling the minds of his examiners with satisfaction, he of course obtains his Degree and thus passes from a "Candidate Bachelor" to a real Bachelor, from an Undergraduate to a Graduate. This great business, this mighty achievement once over, is over for ever, and the successful competitor very naturally feels that whatever opinions, adverse or favourable, were previously entertained about him, he is now somebody, and is beautified with a dignity that must not under the most severe pains and penalties be lightly or wantonly spoken of. Though he happen to have emanated from the most remote corner of the earth, he is now become an Oxford or Cambridge man, as the case may be, and throughout the whole course of his life he will not allow that fact to remain a secret. He and his relatives also will take every constitutional means to proclaim the solemn reality to the world. Quite right too. Who can be so unreasonable and absurd as to expect that an honour which has been properly earned by a severe course of study would be purposely buried to screen it from the ken of mortals?

We commend the graduate for having got through his arduous task, and we praise him for endeavouring to give it publicity. Did he act otherwise would he not be hiding his light under a bushel? We should do the very same thing ourselves had we accomplished a like or similar undertaking.