

The Origin of "Academy."

There are doubtless many persons who use the term "Academy" as applied to educational institutions who do not know the curious origin of its educational use.

We will give it in as few and lucid words as possible, in connection with a sketch of the divinely gifted teacher, Plato, the father of true Philosophy.

First, we must observe that about 400 years before the Christian era, the Greeks were the most enlightened people in the world. Among them the arts and sciences flourished to a high degree and Philosophy—"Daughter of Heaven" as Burke once termed her, fascinated all the youths of the world of which Greece was then mistress.

Among the apt pupils who listened to the wisdom of the sage Socrates, was Plato, son of Ariston and Pontone, born at Athens, B. C. 429, and descended from great Codrus and Solon. He had been brought up in the schools of the time, trained in grammar, music and gymnastics and at the death of Socrates was one of the most promising attendants, having given ear to his teachings for eight years. After his master had exchanged worlds, as he himself put it, Plato moved to Megara, whence he traveled into Egypt, Sicily and the Greek colony in Italy, enriching his mind with observation as well as study.

Upon his return to Athens, he resolved to open a school of Philosophy in which to instruct the youth of the country. He accordingly chose a singular spot, which soon became famous for his teachings and attracted crowds from all points. So great did his reputation become that even ladies, breaking the strict rules of Athenian propriety, disguised themselves and attended his lectures which sparkled with the truths of immortality, and God, the maker and governor of the world.

The other schools were deserted while he taught, and rulers, and lawyers and judges came to hear his words. The place at which he gave his lectures was a grove which belonged to one Academicus and from this slight circumstance it was called Academy and those who attended Academicians. It became the chief of all schools, of ancient times. Hence no higher title can be given to any institution of learning than Academy.

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