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CAP AND GOWN.

The University of Paris, which formally came into being somewhere between 1150 and 1170 observed the custom of placing upon the head of the Master of Arts a cap (biretta) in honor of his having successfully passed the period of his Bachelor of Arts or Science. The custom originated in the *pilleus* which the Romans placed on the head of an emancipated slave. Hence arose our liberty cap signifying political freedom. Since the University of Oxford was modeled largely after that of Paris it is not surprising that a university cap should be found there. But it was at first only worn by graduates, being bound, pointed at the top and of a dark color. Later a board was placed upon the point of the top in imitation of those worn by the chief justices of France. Since this is called *Mortier* in French, it soon became corrupted to "morter" and with the thought of the board inside makes up the "mortar-board" of to-day.

The gown has long been associated with learning; judicial, ecclesiastic and scholastic. It was early introduced into England and rapidly applied to undergraduates as well as graduates and

the clergy. It was used from the first as a means of distinguishing the status of the students in the different colleges of a University. Thus at Oxford the Doctor of Divinity graduate wears a scarlet gown; a Master of Arts, black with crimson lining; a Bachelor of Arts, black with white fur trimming. The undergraduate gowns are black with no trimming, depending for distinction upon the way in which they are made. They are mostly loose, with no sleeves and a falling collar.

Among the curiosities of Oxford is a bill of expenses of two boys sent there in 1560. In the list are these entries:

To 8 yards black Fryse—13 shillings.

To making two Gowns—16 pence.

De Quincy, who was at this University about 1800, says that the gowns of the Commoners was made of "prince's stuff" and cost with a black cloth cap about 3 shillings; but the gowns of the Gentlemen Commoners were made of silk highly ornamented, with a velvet cap whose tassel was made of gold fringe. He relates a humorous story of going to the dinner table without a waistcoat on and his failure to hide the deficiency with his gown as he had hoped.

The cap and gown so well established abroad has found little favor in America as a habit for daily wear. Many institutions have found different classes to adopt it but it is usually looked upon as a novelty and dropped by the succeeding class. It is said that the American college university lacks tradition; perhaps assuming the cap and gown for graduation would have some tendency toward establishing a veneration for customs. The safest plan to secure its permanency would lie in obtaining the pledge of at least three consecutive classes to conform at commencement. The precedent of three years is likely to become a law for the remainder.

Sixty-eight per cent. of the members of the Junior class who are distinguished in athletics at Yale, got on the appointment list for scholarship.