

DEGREES AT LONDON UNIVERSITY.



THE number of young men in this busy land of ours ambitious enough to desire a University degree is without doubt large; at the same time the proportion of these who attain the height of their ambition is as certainly small. And yet this need not be so in many instances, if the great and exceptional advantages for the acquisition of

degrees offered at London University were only a little better known. It is therefore proposed in the present article to lay before our readers a slight sketch of the regulations and *modus operandi* of that University.

The University was founded in the year 1836, its object being according to the charter "for the advancement of religion and morality and the promotion of useful knowledge, to hold forth to all classes and denominations of Her Majesty's subjects, without any distinction whatsoever, an encouragement for pursuing a regular and liberal course of education," and to confer on them "such distinctions and rewards as may incline them to persevere in their laudable pursuits." In fact the University was founded to meet an evident want. It had long been felt that there was in the country a continually increasing body of men of great knowledge and ability, and yet without that distinguishing mark which a University degree confers—men who had been unable to afford the expenditure of time and money appertaining to a regular collegiate course, and yet who had acquired by various means sufficient knowledge to fairly entitle them to collegiate honours. To meet such a want, London University was founded, and from the first its distinguishing features were that it should be an examining body alone, and that, except in the faculty of Medicine, the acquisition of a degree should depend solely on the success or non-success of the candidate in passing the appointed examinations, there being no regulations as to residence, course of study, attendance at lectures, &c. Here at one sweep the whole of the usual impediments to a degree were removed, and an opportunity was offered to young men of gaining distinction at a low cost, and without any of the ordinary restrictions. That the University was much needed, and that it has not existed so many years without very beneficial effects, may be perceived from the fact that since its foundation to the commencement of the present year, 25,575 candidates have entered at the various examinations, of whom 16,101 have passed satisfactorily, 3,683 obtaining degrees.

But to proceed to a more detailed account of these examinations. All candidates for a degree in either of the faculties, of which there are four—Arts, Science, Laws, and Medicine—must first pass a Matriculation, or Entrance Examination, the fee for which is £2. This Matriculation Examination appears perhaps a little formidable, not so much from the difficulty of the

appointed subjects, as from their number and diversity. The examination is in fact intended as a test of the candidate's knowledge in all those subjects which make up what is considered a sound general education—the wide range of subjects not only proving the student's possession of miscellaneous knowledge, but also his capacity for higher and more advanced work.

At each of these Matriculation Examinations (which are held twice every year), a large number of candidates compete who never intend to push on further for a degree, and for this reason: that this examination is accepted (1) by the Council of Military Education in lieu of the Entrance Examination, otherwise imposed on candidates for admission to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst; and (2) by the College of Surgeons in lieu of the Preliminary Examination, otherwise imposed on candidates for its fellowship. Furthermore, it is also among those examinations of which some one must be passed by every person commencing his legal or medical studies; while to any one entering upon Articles of Clerkship to an attorney it offers an additional advantage, in the fact that a pass in the first class entitles him to exemption from one year's service, thus reducing the period from five years to four.

At every Matriculation Examination, exhibitions of the annual value of thirty, twenty, and fifteen pounds respectively, each tenable for two years, and one prize of ten, and two of five pounds, are awarded to the six candidates in the Honours Division obtaining the highest aggregate number of marks.

And now suppose a student fairly through this Entrance Examination: the question arises, in what faculty does he wish to gain a degree? The only one at all fenced about is that of Medicine, where regular practice, &c., at hospitals and medical schools is required; the reason for this is obvious, and the existing regulations are absolutely necessary for the safety of the general public. As to degrees in Medicine, it will therefore be sufficient to say that the fees for the necessary examinations for the M.B. degree (including the Matriculation £2) amount to £17; for the M.D., £5 additional. Many valuable honours and scholarships are awarded, and the London Medical Degrees deservedly rank higher than those of any other University in the kingdom.

For the Bachelor's Degree in Arts, Science, or Laws, a pass at two examinations—in addition to Matriculation—is required, at a charge of £5 for each. Students may therefore obtain a degree in either of these faculties at the small cost of £12 over and above their expenditure for books and such tuition as they may need. Candidates for the degrees of M.A., D.Sc., and LL.D. are required to pass one further examination, the fee for which is £10. In all these cases no fees are returned if the candidate fail to pass the requisite examination, but he is allowed to compete on one, and sometimes on two, further occasions free of additional charge.

It is of course unnecessary and impossible to give full details of the various subjects at these examinations, but all particulars may be gathered from the published regulations obtainable on application to the Registrar at the University. It may however be remarked that the list of subjects in both Arts and Science is very comprehensive, and as a pass in every appointed subject is required, the examinations cannot be called easy; this fact, however, only renders the degrees far more valuable and desirable. It is to be hoped that before long musical degrees also may be conferred by the University, which can scarcely be said to be complete in its operations until this is the case.

It may here be noticed that Bachelors of Arts of the University of London, who enter upon Articles of Clerkship to an Attorney after graduation, are admissible as Attorneys after three (instead of five) years' service.

In addition to, and following each of, the various Pass Examinations for Bachelor's Degrees, there is a further Honours Examination in each branch of the pass. At these latter many valuable scholarships, exhibitions, and prizes (from £50 a year for three years downwards) are offered; while gold medals are given in the M.A., D.Sc., and LL.D. Examinations.

Such is a slight sketch of the system of examinations for degrees in force at London University. It will readily be seen what scope and freedom are left to the candidate for carrying on his studies in any manner most suited to the time and means at his disposal.

He may if he please go up for examination straight from school (a large proportion of the Matriculation candidates follow this course); he may, after leaving school, work up the subjects in leisure hours simply from books without any other assistance; he may, if he prefer, obtain the aid of a private tutor; he may, if engaged in business during the day, attend evening lectures; or finally he may go through a regular course of study intended for these examinations at one of the Colleges in union with the University, more especially at University College, London, which sends all its members up for examinations for degrees at the University.

When, in addition to this freedom of choice as to time and place of study, the remarkably low fees are taken into consideration, all young men desirous of obtaining degrees economically, must surely feel that here at the University of London every inducement is offered them to qualify themselves for the honour.

WARDROBE.

A CHARADE IN THREE ACTS.

BY GEO. MANVILLE FENN.

Scenery.—The ordinary furniture of any house.

Dresses.—Every-day costume with improvised additions.

Cost of production.—Nothing.

ACT I.—WARD.

SCENE.—A breakfast-room.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MRS. DEWENNER, an elderly lady.
UNCLE JABEZ, an elderly gentleman.
LORD SMALLCOIN, a dandy.
FRED. FORREST, somebody nice.
FLORA SMILES, a young lady of nineteen.

Scene opens with MRS. DEWENNER knitting on sofa; FLORA pretending to read at table; UNCLE JABEZ, with spectacles thrust up on forehead, hunting about, feeling in pockets, &c.

U. Jabez. I know I had 'em here just now. No, stay a moment—it was just there, and I laid them down on the—no, I didn't, I picked them up and—no, I didn't, I laid them down, when—ah! I have it, I was reading—tut—tut—tut, no! that was yesterday, and I'm sure I had them to-day, and, bless my heart alive, how tiresome it is!

[Goes on searching about.]

Mrs. Dew. Now, my dear child, when he comes to-day, I hope you will behave nicely, and not be so rude as you were at his last visit.

Flora (pouting). But, aunt, dear, I don't want to see him at all.

Mrs. Dew. Now, that's very wrong, Flora; Lord Smallcoin is a most gentlemanly, well-dressed man—

U. Jabez (coming up). Hephzibah, I can't find my—

Mrs. Dew. Jabez, how many more times am I to tell you that it is rude to interrupt? (UNCLE JABEZ shrinks away.) As I was saying, my dear, Lord Smallcoin is a most gentlemanly man, and if he proposes, you had better accept him.

[Voice singing heard below the window.]

Flora. Oh, how imprudent! (aside). But, aunt, dear, I'm sure if he knew that I was a ward in Chancery, and should not have any money till the case was settled, he would not care for me a bit.

Mrs. Dew. Nonsense, my dear.

Flora (pouting). He doesn't care for me a bit, aunt. And only the other day you said I wasn't to think about marriage.

U. Jabez. Have you seen them, Flora, my dear? I can't find them anywhere, and it is so awkward.

[Goes on feeling in pockets and pottering about.]

Flora (pettishly). No, uncle, dear, I haven't seen them.

Frank (singing outside). "Come into the garden, Maud."

Flora (aside). Oh! pray, pray, go away!

Mrs. Dew. There's that horrible cat again.

U. Jabez (going to window). Sh, sh! I can't see it, Hephzibah, but it's a great nuisance. What with cats, and organs, and German bands, there's not a bit of peace. Bless my heart! where can they be? (Goes on feeling about, fidgetting constantly all over the room.) Then there's the tradespeople ringing your bells from morning to—(Bell rings violently.)—There they go!

Mrs. Dew. (starting up). That's Lord Smallcoin, I'm sure. Flora, dear, get ready, I shall send for you in a few minutes, so make yourself look nice. Jabez, come along into the drawing-room.

U. Jabez. Yes, Hephzibah, I will; but bless my heart! wherever can they be? I'm sure I put them somewhere, or else they've been dusted away, and it's very, very, very tiresome.

[Goes out after MRS. DEWENNER.]

Flora (wiping her eyes). Oh, dear me! I'm a most unhappy girl. Who'd be a ward in Chancery, and be worried by people who only come after me because they think I'm rich? Oh, dear! whatever shall I do?

[Makes as if to run away.]

Frank (singing without). "Come into the garden, Maud;

If you don't I must come unto thee."

(Appears at window.) Here's pretty behaviour, isn't it—getting up to people's windows like a housebreaker come to steal—what? "One little heart, one little heart, I wish it was made for poor me." (Sings, then catches sight of FLORA, and leaps in.) At last!

[Catches her hand.]

Flora. Oh, Mr. Forrest! how could you be so imprudent? It is very wicked and unkind.