BOWDOIN AND THE COMMON GOOD

By

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Originally part of a 1952 publication, this booklet has been reprinted in limited quantity as a gift from the College to those donors to the 1978-79 Alumni Fund who, through their exceptional generosity, became members of the 1794 Associates, the James Bowdoin Associates, the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Associates, or the Nathaniel Hawthorne Associates.
FOREWORD

It is a privilege to introduce this special edition of Herber Ross Brown’s essay Bowdoin and the Common Good, originally published in 1952 as part of a volume marking the sesquicentennial of the College’s opening.

In his foreword to that volume, President Sills wrote that its publication was “in accord with the policy of Bowdoin to keep the alumni informed as fully as possible....”

This booklet is a result of the wisdom of that policy. Produced in limited quantity, it is a gift from Bowdoin to the 1978-79 members of the Alumni Fund’s 1794 Associates, James Bowdoin Associates, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow Associates, and Nathaniel Hawthorne Associates. The generosity of those informed alumni and friends was the chief reason for the Fund’s record year. In expressing the College’s gratitude now, I represent the faculty, the students, and all the other members of the Bowdoin community.

In light of its reference to President McKeen’s call to service in the “Common Good,” its illustration of the College’s response to that call, and its accounts of local and regional history, Professor Brown’s essay is an appropriate way for us to thank you. Certainly it — and its author — represent the values we seek to maintain.

I hope Bowdoin and the Common Good will convey adequately the College’s appreciation to all Alumni Fund Associates, both for your generosity in the past year and for your commitment to Bowdoin.

WILLARD F. ENTEMAN
President of Bowdoin College
Bowdoin and the Common Good

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PRESIDENTSILLS,FRIENDSANDMEMBERSOFTHECOLLEGE:

The gracious words of the President, together with your kind welcome, have almost made me forget, momentarily, the preciosity of my plight. It is a novel experience for a teacher, long accustomed in this hall to wait patiently for the arrival of captive classes, summoned by a bell, to find an audience sitting for him—and even occupying the front seats. Then, too, for years I have envied speakers at earlier Institutes, trailing clouds of glory from the world outside, presumably husbanding all their choicest thoughts for their single hour in Brunswick, and—blessed with the invincible advantage of being able to take the next train out of town—departing, as it were, in a golden blaze of epigrammatic wisdom, leaving saddened undergraduates to wonder why the regular Faculty needs labor to be so consistently dull every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday morning at eight. Chastened by such reflections, I bespeak your commiseration for one who gave his first lecture here more than a quarter of a century ago, and has done nothing but repeat himself ever since.

Nor is my task made easier by the presence of wiser colleagues, far better fitted than I, to do justice to the subject assigned to me. There are, to name only a few, the illustrious poet whose singing lines have bravely linked Bowdoin with blueberries and white pines, and with the Atlantic, the eagle, and the sun; or, the distinguished American historian whose books illuminate the national life from which Bowdoin has drawn her strength since the earliest days of the Republic; or, that benign senior professor emeritus who, with the exception of Parker Cleaveland and Alpheus Spring Packard, has taught more Bowdoin classes than any other man, and whose life is itself a history where Bowdoin’s hope-haunted centuries meet; and, finally, our great President, whose beneficent career as teacher, Dean, and kindly captain of us all, spanning a full third of the college’s life of one hundred
and fifty years, has made the Bowdoin of our time the lengthened shadow of a modest, wise, and tolerant man.

The subject before us is the contribution of Bowdoin College to the life and thought of New England during the last century and a half. Bolder men than I ought to quail at so paralyzing an assignment. In 1852, at the semi-centennial exercises, the speaking began at 10:30 o'clock in the morning, and—to quote a newspaper account of the festival—"the flow of soul continued until the dusky shades of evening obscured the distinguishing features of the happy company, when, with 'Auld Lang Syne' and three cheers for old Bowdoin, the assembly dispersed."

If it was an old Bowdoin in 1852, when nine hours of oratory failed to do her complete justice, it was an even more venerable Bowdoin in 1875 at the fiftieth anniversary of the graduation of Hawthorne and Longfellow; an older Bowdoin still in 1902 on the occasion of the centennial; and a Bowdoin even more ancient of days and more heavily laden with honors at the one hundred and fiftieth commemoration of the granting of the Charter in 1944. My task should give pause to the most devoted son of the College, but what can be said in one hour, to an informed Bowdoin audience, by an alien who has never chanted "Phi Chi" as a sophomore, or smoked the pipe of peace under the Thornrike Oak on Class Day, or stood up trembling as a freshman to declaim in orotund tones Elijah Kellogg's "Spartacus to the Gladiators" before Professor Wilmot Brookings Mitchell? What salt or savor is there in one nurtured, not under your ever-speaking pines, but instead, brought up in outer darkness on the other side of the Connecticut line? What authority resides in one who was neither New England born, nor Bowdoin-bred—alas, not even Boston-bred? Now I know the way Mark Twain felt in 1870 on the eve of his first speech in New England. "Tomorrow I face an audience in Boston," Mark wrote apprehensively, "and all of them critics."

Overwhelming as these handicaps are, I am encouraged to speak, not only because Bowdoin has wrought into her living fabric more than one stranger, but for the reason that we are faced at the outset with problems far more serious than those arising from personal inadequacy. Bowdoin is nothing if she is not a college of liberal arts in New England. Yet we are compelled almost daily to listen to funeral obsequies sung over such colleges, and to hear dirges mourning the loss of New England's political power, her industries, her shipping, and her intellect. "The college of liberal arts," asserted a former president of the University of Chicago, "is partly high school, partly university, partly general, partly special. Frequently it looks like a teachers' college. Frequently it looks like nothing at all. The degree it offers seems to certify that the student has passed an uneventful period without violating any local, state, or federal law, and that he has a fair, if temporary recollection of what his teachers have said to him. . . . Little pretense is made that many of the things said to him are of much importance." Other prophets of doom point to the spectacle of the college of liberal arts being jostled from below by junior colleges, harassed on all sides by powerful state universities and teacher-training institutions, and pressed down from above by graduate and professional schools. There is little left of us, we are asked to believe, but a mind as confused as a Spanish omelet.

If the small college of liberal arts is thus destined to be pulverized between the upper millstone of the university and the nether millstone of the junior college, what, we may ask, is the fate in store for New England herself where our colleges of liberal arts first took root? What of the northeast corner of the United States, once the promised land of the Pilgrims, the seed-bed of the nation?

New England, as every school-boy knows, has been so long in dying, and the date of the funeral has been set so often, that the writing of her obituary notices has become a profitable national industry, and the reading of them a favorite pastime. The chroniclers of our decline began early. Seventeenth-century Puritan historians lamented the cooling ardor which once burned so brightly in the first settlers at Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. Cotton Mather, bewailing the vanished glory of Harvard College, abandoned his Alma Mater as lost to the insidels as early as 1701. Enterprising youths like Benjamin Franklin have been praised for their shrewdness in getting out before rigor mortis began setting in. Nathaniel Hawthorne's pages often glow with a phosphorescent light playing gently over old mosses and decaying wharves. Bowdoin's President William Allen, making his farewell address to the inhabitants of Brunswick in 1889, declared solemnly that the college over which he had presided for nineteen years "was a seething tub of iniquity" to which he could "not in conscience advise any parent to send a child." If
things seemed to be in a bad way in the hинтерland, on the banks of the Androscoggin, conditions were not much better in the "hub of the universe" on the banks of the Charles. To be sure, Boston still stood up proudly as "the American Athens," but no less a divine than Theodore Parker suggested a more appropriate name for it would be the "American Dublin." And Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes found himself shivering on the sunny side of Beacon Street as he watched his fellow Bostonians gradually succumb to what he described as the new gospel according to Saint Petroleum. The quiet stories of Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman contain many smouldering human volcanoes foreshadowing the lost souls in Edwin Arlington Robinson's Tilbury Town. New England, according to her currently fashionable necrologists, has been reduced to the status of a mere "Vacationland," the autumn and winter playground of major league base-ball players, and the summer resort of alien intellectuals avidly collecting fresh symptoms of deterioration to buttress the foot-notes of Mr. Toynbee. In the popular mythology, New England has become an old curiosity shop for the preservation and sale of antiques. Its inhabitants, so the legend runs, are majoring in genealogy and minoring in grave-stone readings. New England libraries, Mr. Marquand intimates, are filled with calf-bound volumes hardly to be distinguished from the hide-bound men who read them. With so many authorities eager to bury us, it is fair to ask whether the speakers at this Institute have been invited to take part in a celebration, or to perform an autopsy?

At the risk of sacrificing whatever element of suspense there may be in the answer to this question, I shall boldly say that as Bowdoin pauses at an important turning point in her history, she does so not in decrepitude or dismay, but with the resourcefulness of her Yankee nature, full of the wisdom of a century and a half, eager to recall the pledges of her youth, and ready to assess the values of her past as she reconsiders herself to the common good for her best years which lie ahead.

It was an abiding concern for the common good which, in 1788, induced the association of ministers and justices of the peace in Cumberland County to petition the General Court of Massachusetts for the foundation of a college in the District of Maine. The petitioners themselves—Congregational clergymen, substantial merchants, and influential squires—representing a cross-section of the ruling classes of eighteenth-century New Eng-
intellectual independence, and that the maintenance of republican institutions depends upon an enlightened and virtuous people.

Our charter bears the names of Samuel Deane, who was forced to flee when the British burned Falmouth in 1776, and of Dumser Sewall, who commanded a regiment in 1775 at Cambridge. Another trustee, John Chandler, aided in the capture of General Burgoyne; and Elijah Kellogg, the Trustee who nominated Bowdoin’s first president, was a drummer boy at Bunker Hill, and suffered with the bleeding and ragged remnant of General Washington’s army at Valley Forge. To men such as these, the injunction in the Bowdoin charter effectually to promote “Virtue and Piety” and to foster a knowledge of “the Useful and Liberal Arts and Sciences” was not an empty verbalization, but a clear recognition of the needs of the young nation. The justices of the peace and Congregational ministers who had taken the initiative in 1788 for the right to establish a seminary of learning acted primarily, not as clergymen or merchants or lawyers, but first of all as citizens of the Republic. Ministers and laymen alike, they were eager to keep clear the stream of educated and eloquent men needed for the pulpit, but they also wanted a college to prepare men for the grave duties of citizens and neighbors. Their prayer was that Bowdoin might not only train men to be ministers, but that it might train ministers and others to be men.

And that prayer was echoed by President Joseph McKeen as he spoke at the opening of the College one hundred and fifty years ago. “While bob cats and shy deer still paddled the forest” darkening the small cleared space in the pines, our first President enlisted our Alma Mater in its eternal service to the common good. “It ought always to be remembered,” he declared, “that literary institutions are founded and endowed for the common good, and not for the private advantage of those who resort to them. It is not that they may be able to pass through life in an easy and reputable manner, but that their mental powers may be cultivated and improved for the benefit of society.”

The College which thus began its historic mission “for the benefit of society,” with eight students and one professor, was started on a risky chance. All maxims of Yankee caution “to make haste slowly,” and all considerations of New England prudence to play a waiting game, dictated delay in the sale of the public lands bestowed by the government until they increased in market value. Practicality and idealism contended for mastery as the Governing Boards debated the fateful question: to build or not to build, to wait or not to wait. In this local instance of the age-old struggle between two sides of the New England character, between mercantile sagacity and public spirit, between wary calculation and romantic impulse, between the principles of the counting-house and the ideals of the meeting-house, Bowdoin’s founding fathers stood up to be counted for the common good.

And having done so, they published their decision in the public prints on June 11, 1802, boldly calling upon all classes of society for “an institution on a liberal plan,” open to “students of all denominations,” and intended as “a nursery of piety and virtue.”

Admitting that the cost of the first building left an income barely large enough to support a president and one professor, the Governing Boards sought to justify their daring venture by pointing out that “the District of Maine, for purposes of communication,” was detached from all other parts of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and at a vast distance “from any university college.” Indeed, the Province of Maine seemed so remote to President Timothy Dwight of Yale that he declared the entire territory, cursed with a lean, cold, and barren soil, was commonly considered to be “an immense waste unfit for the habitation of man.” Later, in 1807, when Doctor Dwight left his snug nest of orthodoxy in New Haven to visit Brunswick and inspect the young college, he was good enough to say our winters were somewhat less severe than those “in the north of Poland” or in “the middle of Russia,” and was pleased to notice that “no other country in the world sees a greater proportion of children reach the age of twenty, or of its inhabitants that of seventy years.”

These hardy inhabitants, young and old, wanted their sons to enjoy the same advantages as those living in more settled sections of the country. Frontier democracy held colleges to be republican institutions, diffusing among the people that monopoly of knowledge and mental power which despotic governments accumulated for the purpose of arbitrary rule. Fearing the concentration of colleges in a distant university, they believed it to be a glory of democratic society that it scattered its colleges far and wide among the people, within reach of the humblest families. To send a boy from the Maine frontier to Harvard was an expensive
undertaking. If a boy could not go to the College, then the College must come to him. Some measure of the need for a neighborhood college may be seen in the fact that in the first twenty-five years of Bowdoin's history, only two of its students were born outside of New England, and at the time of the graduation of the fiftieth class in 1856, the college register contained the names of 1826 matriculants of whom only thirty-three were born beyond the New England borders. And of these sixteen hundred, 1107 were natives of the District in which the College was founded. So conspicuous a service to its own constituency appealed to the imaginations of men in other sections of the country. When the destruction of Maine Hall by fire in 1822 threatened the future of the College, the doors were kept open by generous gifts from such widely scattered benefactors as Stephen Van Rensselaer, the princely patron of New York; John C. Calhoun of South Carolina; and President James Monroe and two members of his Cabinet.

From the beginning, Bowdoin reflected the Maine Yankee's inveterate distrust of ostentation and luxury, and thus appealed to what President William DeWitt Hyde was later to describe as "the most sturdy and valuable element in the college community—the poor boy from a humble home who works his own way." Our first scholarships—granted in 1814 by an annuity of three thousand dollars from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and renewed by the Maine legislature when the province became an independent state in 1829—expressly provided for the remission of tuition for worthy students for whom the annual tuition costs of twenty-four dollars would have been a discouraging bar to a college education. Such an atmosphere of plain living, bred on hundreds of rocky farms where the daily question was "what to make of a diminished thing," gave Bowdoin a distinctive tone. At our first commencement in 1806, a Boston guest was impressed by what he described as a refreshing "freedom from frippery" which compared favorably with the more brilliant but worldly "exercises at Cambridge." A generation later, a correspondent to the Boston Christian Register had the same observation to make. "One cannot fail to notice," he wrote, "a maturity of thought not observable at Cambridge, whether due to the poverty of the students here, all of whom come to study, I know not, but the fact is patent."

More tangible than a plain oratorical style was the attraction of economy. How else account for the presence of Nathaniel Hawthorne in the Class of 1825 at Bowdoin, rather than at Harvard, the choice of the Crownshields, the Frothinghams, and other boys of Hawthorne's native Salem? To be sure, Hawthorne's uncle, Robert Manning, lived in Raymond, Maine, and was a believer in "neighborhood colleges." But since the cost of the greater part of his nephew's education was to fall upon him, it is significant that he named "the low cost" of tuition and board at Brunswick as a compelling advantage. While Hawthorne's college contemporaries at Harvard were paying six hundred dollars for a year in Cambridge, the future novelist's bill for his first term was only thirty-two dollars and twelve cents. Hawthorne must have cheered his uncle's heart when he wrote early in his freshman year: "The five dollars you gave me have been of great use. . . . I shall have no occasion to call upon you for any more this term." The redoubtable Professor Parker Cleaveland, eager to keep college costs down and the standards up, reported to the Faculty in 1828 that the students, by purchasing a dozen cows and managing their own dining room, had succeeded in providing satisfactory board for one dollar and fifteen cents a week. Exulting that "poor students are the salvation of the college," young Elijah Kellogg, of the Class of 1840, boasted somewhat indiscreetly, "I worked my-way through with a narrow axe, and when I was hard up for money, I used to set the college fence on fire and burn it up, and the treasurer would hire me to build another one." In 1856, Thomas Brackett Reed, who was able to enter Bowdoin only because his father's faith in education moved him to mortgage his Portland home, noted that his fellow students were almost wholly from poor families in Maine, and that his own total expenses for the academic year of 1856-1857 were only one hundred and eighty-five dollars. Despite rigid economies, Reed was enabled to graduate with his class in 1859 only by the aid of a friendly loan from William Pitt Fessenden, a kindness which Reed recalled tenderly eight years later when he risked his political future by defending Senator Fessenden's refusal to vote for the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson. Forty years after he received his Bowdoin degree, Reed—then Speaker of the House of Representatives—asserted, "I believe that a large part of what New England has done . . . has risen from her small colleges, where her students went to become educated men . . . . The young man then used up all he earned on his educa-
tion, and when he returned to college after a vacation spent in hard work, he was determined to get the worth of his money." Such a young man was Fred Albee, later to become one of the world's greatest orthopedic surgeons, who entered Bowdoin from the small village of Alna, drawn—as he remarks in his autobiography—because "Bowdoin was not a rich man's college, but rather typified the struggles of her Maine pioneers who built her with indomitable persistence." Such instances might be multiplied endlessly, and extended to the present hour when a quarter of the student body are beneficiaries of scholarship aid, much of it given by those who remembered the hardships of their own college days.

Puritan virtues of austerity still live in Bowdoin bones. Two years ago, a luckless member of the present Faculty (doubtless brought up in a section of the country where the sun of privilege shines more brightly) made the mistake of telling an alumnus that the new classroom building was to contain a "Faculty Lounge." Ill-fated word! Enervating suggestion! Preposterous collocation! The rebuke came swiftly. "Lounge is a word not to be found in the Bowdoin vocabulary," he snorted. "Lounge is not a seamy word to designate a room to be frequented by the Bowdoin faculty!" My humiliated colleague was thus left to reflect that if any professorial lapses from the strenuous life are to take place, they must occur in the Peciniian Room, fittingly named in honor of the more austere of our two literary societies, whose members pledged themselves to lead lives of unflagging zeal "in all literary pursuits."

"Literary pursuits" was a comprehensive term in the early years of the nineteenth century, but President McKeen in his inaugural address envisaged even wider fields of usefulness. He knew that in a youthful democracy it would be neither natural nor possible for learning to seek a place aloof and remain apart from public affairs. "If it is true," he said, "that no man should live for himself alone, we may safely assert that every man who has been aided by a public institution to acquire an education and to qualify himself for usefulness is under peculiar obligations to exert himself for the common good." The center of his hopes for the young college were the students who would be the society of the future. A slender band, surely, on that second day of September in 1802. Of the eight members of the first class, seven were under sixteen years of age, and one was only thirteen years old. Yet if President McKeen, who died five years later, had been vouchsafed the privilege of surveying the careers of the four hundred and twenty-nine alumni who were graduated in the first twenty-five years of Bowdoin's history, he would have seen an enlistment for the common good beyond his fondest dreams.

It was no single stamp that Bowdoin gave its graduates. Hawthorne, Longfellow, and Franklin Pierce had come from it almost at a single birth; Seba Smith, earliest and perhaps most inimitable of all cracker-box philosophers and popular wise-aces; John A. Andrew, great Civil War Governor of Massachusetts; Cyrus Hamlin, founder of Robert College in Istanbul, and later President of Middlebury; John Brown Russworm, one of the first two Negroes to be graduated from American colleges, and later the Governor of Maryland, Liberia; William Pitt Fessenden, President Lincoln's Secretary of the Treasury; Jacob Abbott, the creator of the "Rollo" books whose exemplary hero was at once the despair and admiration of a million American boys; Nathan Lord, the president of Dartmouth for thirty-five years, the longest administration in that institution's history; and Horatio Bridge, first Paymaster General of the United States Navy. These men were types of the spirit of which the college was full, worthy sons of an institution hearing the name of a patrician-democrat, a Revolutionary statesman, and a founder of the Republic. Worthy, too, of the generous benefactions of Governor Bowdoin's son, who was himself minister plenipotentiary to Spain, and the cherished friend of Washington, Jefferson, and Franklin. Bowdoin men are never tired of recounting how many public men were graduated within the short space of twenty-five years from a college which often had less and seldom had more than a hundred students at a time: one president of the United States, seven United States Senators, fifteen members of the national House of Representatives, a Secretary of the United States Treasury, four Governors including one of the new state of Michigan, forty-eight members of the Maine Legislature, two of whom were Speakers of the House, twenty-six members of the State Senate of which number five were elected President of that body, twenty-three members of the legislatures of other states, eight judges of the Supreme and Superior Courts of New England, twenty-nine college professors, three presidents of sister colleges, a Dean of the Harvard Medical Faculty, a Commodore of the United States Navy, and—among the authors—the ro-
mancer whose imaginative interpretations of the Puritan conscience flowered in a world classic, and a poet destined to become the most universally loved and most widely read man of letters in the entire reach and sweep of the nineteenth century.

The son of Governor Bowdoin may have had some initial misgivings about the value of the honor intended for his distinguished father by the sponsors of a wilderness college which in 1788, without a habitation and a name, existed only in the light shining in the eyes of its projectors. Whatever those doubts may have been, none could have remained at the end of two and a half decades. Governor James Bowdoin, a patron of arts and letters, an honorary doctor of Edinburgh and of Harvard, could have wished for no more fitting memorial than the infant seminary whose sons helped to realize his dreams for the future of American letters, science, and public service.

Impressive as are the shining names in our Bowdoin litany, they constitute only one justification for the existence of our college. The common good was also served by Bowdoin men in shady paths and on quiet streets, far from the broad highway and glare of public acclaim. Two-thirds of the graduates in our first twenty-five classes found careers in the pulpits of our churches, behind the desks of our schools, and in the practice of medicine, often in rural communities. More than any others, these sons of Bowdoin realized the social function of the scholar urged by President McKeen in 1802, reaffirmed by all of his successors, and set forth clearly by President Hyde in his first address to the student body. “Don’t forget,” he said in 1885, “that you are more than your intellect, that character is more than learning, conduct more than science, righteousness more than information.” With this injunction, the College has been sending generations of its graduates into the communities of the State and Nation, imbuing them with the conviction that thought and life must be found together, that insight must be converted into social action for the common good. Whatever his vocation, the essential function of the liberally trained man is the same, “to make the particular place he occupies, the precise thing he does, the exact words he says, the outcome and expression of the world’s best thought and labor in so far as it is applicable to the case in hand,” and so to become—in President Hyde’s eloquent words—“the mouthpiece of reason, the minister of letters in some corner of the earth into which but for him these influences, inspirations, and enjoyments would not have come.”

Almost every Maine village had its family physician like Dr. Elijah Daggett, of the Class of 1835, of Waldoboro; or Dr. Theodore Jewett, of the Class of 1834, of South Berwick; or Dr. John Dunlap Lincoln, of the Class of 1843, of Brunswick; or Dr. Albert Card, of the Class of 1875, of Alna, whose example started youthful Fred Albee on the first steps of his great career as a surgeon. Country doctors all, who drove their old mares out of breath.

Between a baby and a death.

—A small fragment of the gallant company of the 3600 doctors of medicine who received all or a large part of their training at the Bowdoin Medical School and who made their Alma Mater synonymous with skill and mercy throughout northern New England.

Few parishes were without sainted ministers like Elijah Kellogg, the seamen’s beloved pastor in Harpswell; or John Fisk, of the Class of 1837, of Bath; or John Bulfinch, of the Class of 1850, of Freeport. Godly men, pastors rather than ecclesiastics, hardly less concerned with their young parishioners’ intellectual promise than with their moral worth, and as eagle-eyed to search out a lad of parts, and to speed him on his way to academy and college as was the village school-master.

The College welcomes this evening with peculiar regard and affection the Bowdoin men teaching in Maine, worthy inheritors of the renown won by their predecessors in the profession, beginning with two members of the first Class of 1806. It is impossible to touch the history of this college, no matter how cursorily, without encountering at every turn some evidence of the incalculable debt owed those of its sons who, like Chaucer’s clerk, gladly learn and gladly teach. To them, Bowdoin owes the perpetual stream of its students. To them, uncounted hundreds of students turned for direction and encouragement at the most impressionable time of their lives.

From the first twenty-five classes went one hundred and thirteen teachers into the schools of New England, a great majority of them in Maine; twenty-eight principals of schools and academies, and nine school superintendents. To this number, in the second period of twenty-five years, must be added three hundred more, including one hundred and forty-three
headmasters, and nineteen superintendents. By the time Bowdoin commemorated the centennial of the opening of the College, her roster of graduates contained the names of thirteen hundred teachers. Dry statistics these, yet numerical summaries heavily freighted with drama when one translates them into the human terms of a teacher's influence on his students.

In Newcastle, to pause for an example, a discouraged lad who was later to become the first recipient of the Bowdoin Prize and of the highest scientific honors within the gift of sixteen countries, a "slow boy" about to give up his studies and go back to his father's farm, was inspired to remain at his books by Henry Kirke White, of the Class of 1874, then headmaster of Lincoln Academy. "An imposing figure," his grateful pupil recalled fifty years later, and one whose sympathy "combined with his scholarship" made every day an adventure of exciting glimpses into worlds "whose very existence one had not suspected." The same magic casements were opened for generations of Maine youths by William Sargent, of the Class of 1878, for thirty-six years the beloved headmaster of Hebron Academy; and, to stay within the same general period, by Albert Richardson, of the Class of 1873, for sixteen years principal at Bridgton and Fryeburg, and for thirty-two years the head of Castine Normal School; or, of a somewhat later time, Lucien Percy Libby, of the Class of 1899, for fifty years the interpreter of literature to the vocational classes of Portland High School. To name men like these (and the glorious band they represent) in many a New England town is like running up the national flag. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the impression that there was a Bowdoin teacher in every hamlet

where one white steeple
Has half a dozen houses near
And life runs quiet year to year.

Thus the first memorable teacher to be encountered by eleven-year-old Billy Hyde when he entered the grammar school at Southbridge, Massachusetts, in 1869, was Edwin Emery, of the Class of 1861. It was Emery who prepared the future president of Bowdoin for Exeter, where another Bowdoin teacher, Dr. Gideon Soule, of the Class of 1818, had taught for fifty years and had been Principal for thirty-four. The influence of Bowdoin teachers on Hyde's career did not end with secondary school. As a divinity student at Andover, he came under the liberal sway of Dr. Egbert Coffin Smyth, of the Class of 1848, Professor of

Ecclesiastical History at the Seminary for forty-one years, and the far-seeing man who, as a Bowdoin Trustee, proposed William DeWitt Hyde for the presidency to which he was to devote his life. President Hyde never forgot his old grammar school teacher at Southbridge. In 1904 he recalled tenderly Emery's firmness which won for him the name of "Rules Maker," and the kindness which made all his former pupils rise up to bless him.

In summoning up the names of these teachers of yesteryear there is no suggestion that the college's contribution stopped with the nineteenth century. In the presence this evening of representative Bowdoin teachers, I would be derelict in my duty if I did not indicate some measure, however inadequate, of our gratitude in their own achievement. The profession has always been an arduous one, but never more arduous than it is at the present moment when teachers and students alike are at the mercy of the immediate, the practical, and the material. Whether we teach in school or college makes little difference. "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." The same enemies glower at us from the front row of every classroom: the tyrant of contemporaneity and the ogre of the immediately useful.

Secondary school teachers face from the front lines a generation brought up to play with stream-lined toys and to prattle of supersonic speeds in the nursery, a generation all too likely to believe that mechanical techniques offer the only way of apprehending experience, and constitute the sole and final tests of action. The triumphs of analytical reason have pushed us to the point where, as George Eliot predicted, we are able to see the grass grow and hear the squirrel's heart beat, but are dying of that "roar which lies on the other side of silence." If that roar has not deafened us to the language of the imagination, it is because teachers who themselves are the beneficiaries of a liberal education continue to lead their students toward self-realization as human beings. To believe in the validity of being at home in all lands and all ages is not a task for sunshine patriots and summer soldiers. More often than not it entails taking a position opposed to that held by the majority in the community. It demands holding out against the blandishments of the expedient and the urgency of the immediately useful. It calls for a willingness to take the social and economic consequences of abiding by one's faith. Any college of age and standing can compile a catalogue of eminent graduates and assemble a roster of their gallant exploits. But it is not the least of Bowdoin's glories that, boasting of such a
catalogue and proud of such a record with few peers in the land, she reserves a cherished place in her heart of hearts for those who remain faithful to her historic mission. Wherever a teacher insists that social disorders do not lie outside of man’s organism but within it, wherever he persuades his students that all men are united in a deep bond of humanity, he justifies the existence of his college and serves the common good.

Such an ideal and social commitment have always been central at Bowdoin. For this college as for John Milton, there has been no praise for “a fugitive and cloistered virtue, a virtue which never sallies forth and seeks an adversary, but shrinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat.” From the earliest days, Bowdoin’s faculty members refused to limit their teaching to classroom and laboratory. They sensed that the cultural heritage which in the eighteenth century had remained almost the sole possession of a mercantile and professional aristocracy must be made available to the people. Just as Bowdoin’s founders had brought a college to the inhabitants of a frontier community, so Bowdoin’s first teachers carried their learning to towns and villages, and by their texts and lectures made it relevant to the people’s needs. Brunswick had no more familiar sight than that of Professor Parker Cleaveland loading his chemical apparatus and mineralogical specimens on his sleigh, before setting out for his public lectures. He spent the six-weeks winter vacation in 1818 giving a course of chemical lectures in Hallowell. During the three successive winters, he gave scientific lectures in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, followed by two series of similar lectures in Portland. Such courses, one Portlander noted, made fashionable supper and dancing parties seem trivial. A vacationing Harvard senior, one Grenville Mellen, found prose inadequate to express his enthusiasm for the results of this early venture in adult education in his native town:

Say, what exalts the soul so high—
What calls the glance of eager eye
In matron and younger fry—
’Tis Chemistry!

Another auditor recalled the fresh wonder and unfeigned delight with which the Bowdoin professor concluded each experiment, even though he had performed it hundreds of times before, and described the devoted teacher, “clad in plain garments, standing in an unpainted lecture room, like a magician of old armed with the hidden but powerful forces of nature.” Although Cleaveland had extended the walls of his small Bowdoin classroom to encompass every section of the State, he reached his widest audience by means of his Treatise on Mineralogy in 1816, the first American work on that subject, adopted by many other colleges, and hailed in Europe with grateful admiration by Goethe. At home, Bowdoin boys fell at once under Cleaveland’s spell. One of them, John Johnston, of the Class of 1832, later to become the head of the Scientific Department of Wesleyan University for forty-four years, dedicated his own important Manual of Chemistry in 1840 to the Bowdoin teacher who inspired it. And, a full century afterwards, in 1940, Johnston’s great grandson (not an alumnus of Bowdoin), remembering the debt to Cleaveland, established the John Johnston Scholarships for boys, preferably from rural Maine, thus commemorating the vital relationship between the College and the constituency which Cleaveland labored to serve. The pioneer study of mineralogy was the precursor of text-books on other subjects, notably Professor Samuel Newman’s treatise on rhetoric which ran through sixty editions in the United States and several re-printings in England; and the same influential teacher’s Elements of Political Economy, illuminating a subject which Newman had taught at Bowdoin as early as 1824, where he was the first to offer a course bearing the label of political economy in a college in New England.

Other lecturers from the College also sought to make their erudition available to the people. John Doane Wells, first teacher of anatomy at Bowdoin, did much by his public addresses to establish the high esteem enjoyed by the Medical School. James Furbush, instructor in French in 1829, lectured widely on education as a science, awakening the new State to its responsibility for public instruction. His work was furthered in the next generation by Professor William Smyth, of the Class of 1822, the “Old Ferox” of the Department of Mathematics, for whom interest in public education grew to be such a passion that he was rebuked by the Governing Boards for neglecting his classes. Replying to such criticism in 1853, he asserted bluntly, “I have felt it of great importance to the College that its interests should be identified with those of the common schools of the State. I hope to see connected with the College some special means for the better education of teachers, extending them its aid and support, and receiving in turn the well-instructed pupils to become its joy and crown. I trust,” he continued, “that the labors I have
been or may be able to perform in this direction, will not be regarded as inappropriate to my position or as a departure from my first duty." It was the same Professor Smyth who persuaded a doubting Brunswick to establish a system of graded schools, later to organize a high school, and to appear, year after year, before legislative committees to advocate the passage of laws encouraging other towns to take similar action. It is hardly an occasion for surprise to learn that Maine's first Superintendent of Public Instruction was a Bowdoin man.

Nor is it strange, in light of such examples, that members of the Bowdoin Faculty should have continued to enlist in the public service in every succeeding generation. "They were not merely residents of the community," declared Elihah Kellogg, "but useful citizens and a public blessing." The Harpswell pastor might have been thinking of President Chamberlain's services in the Civil War and as Governor of Maine; or of Professor Charles White's work in marine biology; or of Professor Leslie Alexander Lee's contribution as special consultant in the government's Albatross Expedition around Cape Horn in 1888, or the same biologist's exploration of Central Labrador; or of Professor Franklin Clement Robinson's interest in public health, beginning with his help in the installation of a modern water system for Brunswick, and culminating in his presidency of the National Public Health Association; or of Professor Frank Edward Woodruff's career in the State Legislature; or of Professor Charles Clifford Hutchins' pioneer experiments with the X-ray, and his exciting summers in Washington where he worked with Langley in devising an automatic steering device for aircraft.

As a new age brought new responsibilities in the public service, the twentieth-century successors of these earlier champions of the common good continue to keep faith with Bowdoin's oldest tradition. Whatever the challenge, the response was the same, whether it happened to be the readiness of a Dean and Professor of Latin to answer President Woodrow Wilson's plea to run for the United States Senate in support of the League of Nations, and later to find time during an incredibly busy college presidency to represent New England on the War Labor Board; or the zeal of a Professor of Government who put theories of municipal administration to work so compellingly in a conservative state that tonight more than one-half of its inhabitants reside in communities having the council-manager form of government, enabling Maine to lead the nation in the number of towns and cities which have adopted this efficient form of democracy; or the public-spirit which induced a teacher of economics to head the Maine Works Projects Administration, even to the satisfaction of a political party not commonly associated with such a measure; or the promptness with which two scientists from the same small department heeded their country's call to command a important naval Radar School, and to direct the instruction in electronics at West Point.

Such instances—representative of many others which deserve to be mentioned—are an index of a concern for the public weal envisaged by President McKeen, and an affirmation of President Hyde's credo that for institutions as well as for men, the way of eternal life is in a persistent devotion to the common good.

In the dark days of 1943, when that ideal was threatened by the armed might of governments blind to the aspiration that a good society made up of diverse nationalities is worth striving to attain, the voice of a Bowdoin poet evoked a flood tide of hope in the hearts of free men everywhere:

Thou, too, sail on, O ship of State!
Sail on, O Union, strong and great!
Humanity with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging breathless on thy fate!

Longfellow's "The Building of the Ship," from which President Franklin Roosevelt quoted in a communication to the Prime Minister of Great Britain, had been familiar to hundreds of thousands of Britons from their youth. And, by a curiosity of literary history, the lines from Arthur Hugh Clough, which Mr. Churchill quoted in reply were themselves taken from a poem inspired directly by Clough's reading of Evangeline. The poet loved at a million hearth-sides owed much of his universal appeal to his own conception of the common good. American scholarship, Longfellow believed, had confined itself too narrowly to theology and philology; poetry, he felt, had come to be regarded as an elegant pastime of the cultivated classes, idle songs for an idle hour. As a true humanist, he blended his learning and melody to persuade with golden sweetness that literature has no national boundaries, thus gently dissolving our cultural isolation. When young Longfellow received his Bowdoin degree in 1825, the country was without a cosmopolitan interpreter of
European literature, and New England was still stumbling over the proper pronunciation of Goethe's name. Longfellow's first memorable trip abroad, undertaken to prepare himself for his Bowdoin professorship, was a passionate pilgrimage, relaxing his Puritanism, widening his horizons, and leading him to see how he might make imaginative letters a counteragent to the raw provincialism and acquisitive industrialism of nineteenth-century America. Prophetically sensing that his native land was destined to become an asylum of hope where the blood of all nations would mingle with our own, he sought in his sensitive translations to show that "all that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal." Seeing clearly what sort of poetry his countrymen most needed, he poured forth in lyric, ballad, and sonnet the notes of cheerful hope which kept heart with the heart of the nation as it conquered a continent, endured the Gethsemane of a Civil War, achieved faith in itself, and earned the decent respect of mankind.

The professional Longfellow-baiters who often mistake obscurity for depth, and simplicity for shallowness, and who enjoy making invidious comparisons of Longfellow with Poe and Whitman need to be reminded that the lines most people are unwilling to forget are usually those which are most worth remembering. It was Edgar Allan Poe who found in Longfellow "the loftiest qualities of the poetic soul," and it was Walt Whitman who saluted our bard as "the poet of melody, courtesy, reverence, the poet of all sympathetic gentleness." "I should have to think long," Whitman said in 1882, "if I were asked to name the man who has done more, and in more valuable directions for America" than has Longfellow, "for whom America and the world may be reverently thankful." "I rejoice to concur with the common reader," concluded Dr. Samuel Johnson, "for by the common sense of readers uncorrupted with literary prejudices, after all the refinements of subtlety and the dogmatism of learning, must be finally decided all claim to poetical honors." The College dedicated to the belief that the way to eternal life lies in devotion to the common good need offer no apology for the most widely read poet in the nineteenth century, whose poems—whatever may be their individual strengths and weaknesses—reflect the ideals which in their most earnest moments his countrymen strove mightily to achieve.

The Bowdoin curriculum was designed to present these aspirations as the dramatic climax of the college course. The rigidly prescribed diet of Greek, Latin, and mathematics made way in senior year for a course in Moral Philosophy. Bristling with controversial questions in ethics and metaphysics, and concerned, not only with the direction of man's will to that line of conduct most likely to promote his own well-being, but also with the guiding principles of communities and nations, this vital course was reserved for the President himself. Students and alumni, often critical of the values of mathematics and of gerund-grinding in their Bowdoin educations, invariably made an exception of their senior course in Moral Philosophy. Here Bowdoin's president of the nineteenth century, teaching with the added authority of their office, were in their glory. The able McKeen, the gentle Appleton, the fearless Allen, the sweetly reasonable Wood, the scholarly Harris, the impressive Chamberlain, and the eloquent and liberal Hyde, with varying emphases through the years, spoke with one voice as they strove to bring philosophy into the arena of practical affairs to grapple with the concrete facts and stubborn forces of contemporary experience.

Counterparts of such courses, multiplied in scores of colleges, made the American graduate the alumnus of a common memory and the heir of a common obligation, profoundly influencing the leaders of thought in the nation. It moves her sons deeply to find Bowdoin's heirs to this common intellectual experience making a contribution to our national life with no superiors and few peers in college history.

No one who contemplates their achievements can believe that academic life breeds a lack of sympathy with the work-a-day world or alienates the heart from human needs. No softening of the hands caused by a devotion to the liberal arts is apparent in Cyrus Hamlin, expertly superintending the construction of the first buildings of the college he founded in Istamboul, and later baking bread for divisions of the Crimean army, and washing clothes in the army hospitals. There is no aridity of the spirit to be detected in the power to fire the imaginations of generations of American boys, lads who never suspected as they romped through the exciting pages of Kellogg, Abbott, Stephens, Chapman, and Hawes, that they were also being taught the virtues of their ancestors and the qualities of courage and manliness at the time they needed them most. Such youngsters would have thrilled to Admiral Peary's vow "to find a way or to make one." There is no lack of hardihood in Robert Peary's epic struggle against pressure ridges of grinding ice and blinding blizzards on his dash
to the Pole, where finally, in a trackless, colorless desert of ice, he stood

on the grey roof of the world
Knelt to his flag; victor beneath him whirled
Earth's axis; and within him was man's mirth.

No lack of courage prevented Senator Fessenden from voting against the impeachment of President Johnson; no haggling for votes stopped Thomas Brackett Reed from speaking out against jingoism and the popular cry for a war with Spain; no time-serving expediency dictated Governor Andrews' opposition to prohibition; no selfish ambition swayed Edwin Upton Curtis as he stood firm amid mealy-mouthed and weasel-hearted politicians during the Boston Police Strike in 1919; no intellectual aloofness influenced the editorial policies of the New York Sun under Edward Page Mitchell to whom nothing human was alien, and who taught his reporters that the right thing may also be the bright thing; none of the scholar's tendency to sit back while professional politicians take over our cities kept Austin MacCormick from becoming the good right arm of Mayor LaGuardia's administration as the ablest and most fearless Commissioner of Correction in New York's municipal history; no regard for personal safety or private profit made Hudding Carter hesitate to make his small weekly newspaper in Mississippi the uncompromising foe of Huey Long and his sinister machine; no trace of the complacent, cloistered scholar can be found in Paul Douglas, a fighting Quaker, who left the secure eminence of his professorial chair in the University to plunge into the steaming jungle of Chicago's aldermanic politics, and later, in his fiftieth year, to enlist as a private in the Marine Corps and—after gallant service—to bring to the Senate of the United States the same brand of moral courage he showed under fire at Okinawa. It is a source of pride that this stout champion of the common good has acknowledged his indebtedness to the scholarly and modest professor of economics who retired two months ago after forty years of distinguished teaching.

A college whose sons at one point in our history presided simultaneously over the United States Senate, the House of Representatives, and the Supreme Court may not fairly be accused of holding at arm's length the common good. And if such distinction be ascribed to a happy coincidence, what may be said of the small college whose roster of graduates, within the space of a few years, included the senators from Ohio and Illinois, as well as those from Maine, a Justice of the present Supreme Court, and still more recently, the chairman (pro temp) of the Atomic Energy Commission. The institution which President McKeen dedicated to the common good one hundred and fifty years ago remains what her sons have always known her to have been in their own time—an incomparable school of public duty.

No man defined more persuasively the function of such a college or foresaw more clearly the crush and competition to which it would be subjected in American life than did William DeWitt Hyde. Conceding that the work of freshman year must be somewhat elementary to provide the tools and disciplines for advanced study, and to equalize the sharp differences existing in secondary school preparation, he doubted whether these purposes could be better realized in junior colleges. To this end, he asked his ablest teachers to undertake freshman courses, not as drill for its own sake, but "to invite students to bring their wills into subjection to their minds, instead of simply compelling them to subject their minds to their wills."

While he thus recognized that the college must retain at the outset some features of the academy, he sought to introduce "a good deal of the university spirit and method" in the upperclass years, without permitting either his faculty or students to fall into the trap of undue specialization. Bowdoin must be spared, he insisted, "the sorry sight of immature youths affecting to be scholars before they have learned to be students." In countless addresses and essays, President Hyde set forth the distinctive principles of the college of liberal arts where "small groups of students, who, according to the original meaning of the word college, live together in mutual good will, in friendly helpfulness, and in earnest study." His ideal was an institution where great subjects are studied under broad teachers "in a liberty which is not license, and a leisure which is not idleness." As a means of achieving it, he modified the lecture system by introducing conferences to supplement the more formal presentation of the subjects. Professor Phillips Mason, a member of the Princeton faculty when Woodrow Wilson inaugurated the preceptorial plan there in 1905, found when he joined the Bowdoin faculty that the Princeton program had been anticipated by President Hyde. "Bowdoin," Professor Mason remarked, "may truly be said to be a pioneer" in this important advance.
The task of moulding Bowdoin to his principles was so challenging that Hyde became a national symbol of his ideal. He was, George Herbert Palmer of Harvard reminds us, “one of the very few presidents who were as truly presidents of all other colleges as of their own, because they entered into the lives of all other colleges in the same way and at the same time as they entered their own, and their stamp remains.”

So confident was President Hyde that the college of liberal arts constituted an essential stage of intellectual development, and so abiding was his faith in Bowdoin’s historic mission as the pattern of such a college that he withstood all pressures to go elsewhere. There is nothing more moving in Charles Burnett’s scholarly and sympathetic biography of President Hyde than the account of this steadfast refusal to abandon his ideal. To those who urged, as did President Eliot of Harvard, the greater influence inherent in the presidency of powerful state universities in the mid-West and on the Pacific Coast, Hyde answered that he was not a worshipper of bigness; to those who pointed to the superior rewards of administrative work, Hyde countered with the joys of teaching; to those who said the small colleges had become the grave-yards of once promising scholars, Bowdoin’s president replied that “the man who is dead at fifty is simply the man who was not intellectually alive at twenty-five.” To others who believed that the college of liberal arts, however useful it may have been in the past, had outlived its function, President Hyde set forth his eloquent “Offer of the College” in words so interwoven with our heart-strings that it would be an impertinence to quote them in this Bowdoin company.

It is not the least of Bowdoin’s many blessings that a scholar who accepted that “Offer” was destined to become the peerless leader of the College in our time. Faced with the grave responsibility of guiding our fortunes through two World Wars, through the social and economic dislocations of a great Depression, and now through the critical stages of the present Armed Truce, he has conserved our goody heritage when such a conservatism is itself a triumph of high moral courage. Only one who has himself deeply felt the transforming emotional, intellectual, and spiritual experience of a liberal education would have been able to keep the faith. It is a truism that recent times have dealt roughly with the prestige of many institutions concerned with the development of free human beings and with the realization of their humanity. In the contemporary obsession with man’s physical environment and with the present emphasis upon the concept of society, it is a brave educator who continues to insist upon the importance of personality, and the concept of the individual. With the present stress on mass action and group relationships, here there is a reminder that man is also alone — alone with himself and with his God. At the beginning of his administration, President Sills reaffirmed his belief that Bowdoin’s greatest contribution could be made by keeping it a small college of liberal arts. And now, thirty-four years later, he remains firm in his belief that “Stripped of all non-essentials, a college is an institution where men teach and where youth is taught, and that the only way to improve a college is to improve the teaching and the quality of the student body.”

In his striving to achieve these ends, we have been privileged to witness on our quiet campus a stirring drama in American education, a drama whose significance will come into sharper focus with the perspective of time. It is nothing less than the example of a college brave enough to serve the common good without allowing itself to become common in that service. In a society which makes a fetish of size and numbers, President Sills prefers that Bowdoin should weigh men rather than count them. In an era which has seen the teacher become a forgotten man, Bowdoin’s scholar-president continues gladly to learn and gladly to teach. At a time when many educators are busily running down rabbit paths leading to all kinds of excesses and superficiality, our leader prizes wisdom above efficiency, and personal values more than social mechanisms. In an age characterized by a perfection of means and a confusion of ends, Bowdoin continues to put first things first. When those who paid lip-service to the humanities often abjectly surrendered their institutions to the immediate and the utilitarian, our President refused to abandon his conviction that wars require spirit as well as techniques, and that the men best prepared to defend the free institutions of a civilized tradition are those who have learned how slowly and how painfully they were evolved through the centuries. Thus, in the hectic days after the war, we were blessed with that rarest of academic anomalies, a college administrator who dared to appear at dinner parties without the blue-print of a post-war curriculum in his waistcoat pocket. Amid the undue emphasis now being placed upon “training for citizenship,” Bowdoin has not been allowed to forget that good citizens are simply good men accepting their responsibilities. Thus, by refusing to spell
democracy with a capital "D", our President served on the Town School Committee, attends town meetings, ignores the iron curtain popularly believed to cut off town from gown and, by his precept and by his example, proves daily that democracy's most critical sector is the one at home. In a world threatened by de-humanized social and educational processes, he has preserved an environment friendly to humane and spiritual values, a place where "men may hold sweet counsel together, and walk as friends." It may very well be that the perpetuation in our society of such an institution is Bowdoin's supreme contribution, for only by such devotion to the humanistic view of life will we be saved from a wasteland where "the barbaric nomads of the future will encamp with their mechanized caravans."

In 1944, when the shadow of those caravans fell across Bowdoin's sesquicentennial, President Kenneth Sills closed that commemoration with words of hope and faith: "Clearly the best days of the college are the days ahead." That this utterance is the trumpet of a prophecy, who can doubt? And where is there one to deny that its fulfillment seems the more certain by reason of his own great contribution to Bowdoin's historic mission — her eternal devotion to the common good.