

"AMERICAN COLLEGES AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC": HIGHER LEARNING & THE REFORM OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

Eliot's election to the presidency of Harvard came to be a struggle which arrayed those who favored institutional autonomy -- the churchmen, classicists, and scientific Lazzaroni -- against those who favored institutional accountability, particularly accountability to the business community. It was clear to all that Eliot's election would mean not only acceptance of his general conception of the place of the university in the process of national economic, social, and political development, and of a curriculum which would enable the university to actively participate in that development, but also that, the enterprise of knowledge would be placed firmly in the hands of the "men of affairs."

Eliot's ideas, if alien to the clerically-dominated world of the colleges, did not sound quite so strangely to the ears of many businessmen, who were already contemplating the technical and managerial challenges of exploiting the continent's untapped resources and creating a genuinely national economy. And Boston's businessmen in particular were in an advantaged position to appreciate his analysis of the prospects for the higher learning in America. As entrepreneurs, they knew the nature of the challenges that had to be met: the need for specialized information, for informed and flexible administrators, and for means of ordering diverse and geographically extensive range of economic activities. As individuals who had shared the peculiar Ante-Bellum Brahmin experience of being expected to pursue specialized careers restrained, and sometimes paralyzed, by a perfectionist morality, they could appreciate the truth in Eliot's assertions about the psychology of learning and achievement, which seemed to promise a compatibility between happiness and usefulness.

Eliot's transformation of Harvard into a university was to be an event of more than local significance. For Harvard was the oldest, largest, and richest American institution of higher learning, and as such set an example for other institutions to follow. Because of a set of historical accidents, moreover, it would prove to be the most amenable to business influence, both as a recipient of business largesse and as an implementor of programs useful to business in the course of its search for order. Groups of business alumni at other institutions such as Yale and Columbia would attempt to reform their almae matri in the late 60s and early 70s -- but would be frustrated in their efforts until later in the century, when Harvard had by its example demonstrated the efficacy of its version of the "new education."

There had been stirrings of change within America's colleges since the 1820s. But the real transformation of higher education only began in the 1860s, when alumni businessmen at both Harvard and Yale moved to take the institutions out of the hands of the clerics and academics and to transform their structures and curricula to serve the new economic order. Although these struggles took place at elite institutions, they commanded national attention: the effort by "Young Yale," led by prominent New York businessmen and lawyers, produced dozens articles in the leading New York newspapers, many of which were reprinted elsewhere; letters for and against the proposed reforms dominated the letters columns in such national periodicals as *The Nation* for months; and "serious" journals like the *New Englander* and the *North American Review* carried essays which argued for one view or the other.

The extraordinary amount of national attention given the issues of governance at Yale between 1868 and 1871 suggests that the public -- or at least the journalists who presumed to serve the public -- perceived that the struggle was far more than a parochial matter of institutional control. On one level, it was acknowledged to be a

show-down between the clergy and the laity for control of the central institutions of American culture. On another, it took the measure of the emergent business class as a national leadership group. At the same time, both the contenders and journalistic bystanders seemed to be aware of the extent to which the struggle involved an attempt to articulate a new rationale for the privatization of important domains of American life.

The uprising of Yale's lay alumni began innocently enough. It was sparked by a review in the *New Englander* written by Yale's president, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, of an address on the reform of Harvard's charter delivered to a meeting of alumni in July of 1866, the text of which had appeared in *The Atlantic* in September of that year. In the address, Harvard Professor Frederic H. Hedge had reviewed the history of Harvard's relationship to the State, presenting Josiah Quincy's highly partisan (and largely self-serving) account of the government's failure to support the college. Hedge also discussed changes in the college's charter which substituted elected alumni representatives on the Board of Overseers for *ex officio* government officials, and sketched out the implications of this change for the college's role in the nation's public life.

Frederic H. Hedge, "University Reform: An Address to the Alumni of Harvard, at Their Triennial Festival, July 19, 1866," *Atlantic* (September 1866), 296-307.

We meet to-day under auspices how different from those which attended our last triennial assembling! We were then in the midst of a civil war, without sight of the end, though not without hope of final success to the cause of national integrity. The three days' agony at Gettysburg had issued in the triumph of the loyal arms, repelling the threatened invasion of the North. The surrender of Vicksburg had just reopened the trade of the Mississippi. The capture of Port Hudson was yet fresh in our ears, when suddenly tidings of armed resistance to conscription in the city of New York gave ominous note of danger lurking, at the very heart of the Union. In the shadow of that omen, we celebrated our academic festival of 1863.

The shadow passed. With varying fortunes, but unvarying purpose, the loyal States pursued the contest. And when, in the autumn of 1864, by a solemn act of self-interrogation, they had certified their will, and their power to maintain that contest to the end of disunion, and when a popular election expressing that intent had overcome the land like a summer-cloud without a bolt in its bosom, the victory was sown with the ballot which Grant and Sherman reaped with the sword.

Secession collapsed. Its last and most illustrious victim, borne to his rest through territories draped in mourning, through sobbing commonwealths, through populations of uncovered heads, revealed to all time the spirit that was in it and the spirit that subdued it. And to-day, as we meet our Reverend Mother in this scene of old affections, the stupendous struggle has already receded into the shadowland of History. The war is a thing of the past. If hatred still rankles, open hostilities have ceased. If rumblings of the recent tempest still mutter along the track of its former desolation, the storm is over. The conflict is ended. No more conscription of husbands, sons, and brothers for the weary work of destruction; no more the forced march by day, the bivouac at night, and to-morrow the delirium of carnage. No more anxious waiting in distant homes for tidings from the front, and breathless conning of the death-list to know if the loved ones are among the slain. No more the fresh grief-agony over the unreturning brave. All that is past, --

For the terrible work is done,
And the good fight is won
For God and for Fatherland."

The sword has returned to its sheath. The symbol-flags that shed their starry pomp on the field of death hang idly drooping in the halls of state. And before new armies in hostile encounter on American soil shall unfurl new banners to the breeze, may every thread and thrum of their texture ravel and rot and resolve itself into dust!

Another and nearer interest distinguishes this occasion and suggests its appropriate theme, -- our Alma Mater.

The General Court of Massachusetts, which has hitherto elected the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, after so many years of fitful and experimental legislation, has finally enacted, that "the places of the successive classes in the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, and the vacancies in such classes, shall hereafter be annually supplied by ballot of such persons as have received from the College a degree of Bachelor of Arts, or Master of Arts, or any honorary degree, voting on Commencement-day in the city of [297] Cambridge; such election to be first held in the year 1866."

This act initiates a radical change in the organization of this University. It establishes for one of its legislative Houses a new electorate. The State hereby discharges itself of all active participation in the conduct of the College, and devolves on the body of the Alumni responsibilities assumed in former enactments extending through a period of more than two hundred years. The wisdom or justice of this measure I am not inclined to discuss. Certainly there is nothing in the history of past relations between the Commonwealth and the University that should make us regret the change. That history has not been one of mere benefactions on one side, and pure indebtedness on the other. Whatever the University may owe to the State, the balance of obligation falls heavily on the other side. In the days of Provincial rule the Colony of Massachusetts Bay appears to have exhausted its zeal for collegiate education in the much-lauded promissory act by which the General Court, in 1636, "agree to give four hundred pounds towards a school or college, whereof two hundred pounds shall be paid next year." The promise was not fulfilled, and the record of those years leaves it doubtful whether legislative action alone would during that or the next generation have accomplished the work, had not a graduate of Emanuel College in English Cambridge, who seems providentially enough to have dropped on these shores, where he lived but a year, for that express purpose, supplied the requisite funds.

The College once started and got under way, the fathers of the Province assumed a vigilant oversight of its orthodoxy, but discharged with a lax and grudging service the

responsibility of its maintenance. They ejected the first President, the protomartyr of American learning, the man who sacrificed more to the College than any one individual in the whole course of its history, on account of certain scruples about infant baptism, of which, in the language of the time, "it was not hard to discover that they came from the Evil One," and for which poor Dunster was indicted by the grand-jury, sentenced to a public admonition, and laid under bonds for good behavior.

They starved the second President for eighteen years on a salary payable in Indian corn; and in answer to his earnest prayer for relief, alleging instant necessity, the sacrifice of personal property, and the custom of English universities, a committee of the General Court reported that "they conceive the country to have done honorably toward the petitioner, and that his parity with English colleges is not pertinent."

The third President, by their connivance and cooperation, was sacrificed to the machinations of the students, egged on, it is thought, by members of the Corporation, and died, "as was said, with a broken heart."

Meanwhile, through neglect of the Province to provide for its support, the material fortunes of the College, in the course of thirty years, had fallen into such decay that extinction was inevitable, had not the people of another Colony come to the rescue. The town of Portsmouth, in New Hampshire, hearing, says their address, "the loud groans of the sinking College, . . . and hoping that their example might provoke . . . the General Court vigorously to act for the diverting of the omen of calamity which its destruction would be to New England," pledged themselves to an annual contribution of sixty pounds for seven years. This act of chivalrous generosity fairly shamed our lagging Commonwealth into measures for the resuscitation of an institution especially committed to its care.

The most remarkable feature of this business is that the Province all this while was drawing, not only moral support, but pecuniary aid, from the College. "It is manifest," says Quincy, [298] "that the treasury of the Colony, having been the recipient of many of the early donations to the College, was not a little aided by the convenience which these available funds afforded to its pecuniary necessities. Some of these funds, although received in 1647, were not paid over to the treasury of the College until 1713; then, indeed, the College received an allowance of simple interest for the delay. With regard, therefore, to the annual allowance of L100, whereby," during the first seventy years, "they enabled the President of the College simply to exist, it is proper to observe, that there was not probably one year in the whole seventy in

which, by moneys collected from friends of the institution in foreign countries, by donations of its friends in this country, by moneys brought by students from other Colonies, and above all by furnishing the means of education at home, and thus preventing the outgoing of domestic wealth for education abroad, the College did not remunerate the Colony for that poor annual stipend five hundred fold."

The patronage extended to the College after the Revolution was not more cordial and not more adequate than the meagre succors of Colonial legislation. The first Governor of independent Massachusetts, from the height of his impregnable popularity, for more than twelve years defied the repeated attempts of the Corporation, backed by the Overseers, to obtain the balance of his account as former Treasurer of the College, and died its debtor in a sum exceeding a thousand pounds. The debt was finally paid by his heirs, but not without a loss of some hundreds of dollars to the College.

At the commencement of hostilities between the Colonies and the mother country, the Revolutionary authorities had taken possession of these grounds. Reversing the old order, "Cedant arma togae," they drove out the *togae*, and brought in the arms. The books went one way, the boys another, -- the books to Andover, the boys to Concord. The dawn of American liberty was not an "Aurora musis amica." The Muse of History alone remained with Brigadier Putnam and General Ward. The College was turned into a camp, -- a measure abundantly justified by public necessity, but causing much damage to the buildings occupied as barracks by the Continentals. This damage was nominally allowed by the General Court, but was reckoned in the currency of that day, whereby the College received but a quarter of the cost.

In 1786, the State saw fit to discontinue the small pittance which till then had been annually granted toward the support of the President; and from that time to this, with the exception of the proceeds of a bank-tax, granted for ten years in 1814, and the recent large appropriation from the School Fund for the use of the Museum of Natural History, the College has received no substantial aid from the State. The State has, during the last ten years, expended two millions of dollars in a vain attempt to bore a hole through one of her hills: in the whole two hundred and thirty years of our academic history she has not expended a quarter of that sum in filling up this hole in her educational system.

I intend no disrespect to the noble Commonwealth of which no native can be insensible to the glory of his birthright. No State has done more for popular education than the State of Massachusetts. But for reasons satisfactory, no doubt, to themselves, her successive legislators

have not seen fit to extend to her colleges the fostering care bestowed on her schools. And certainly, if one or the other must be neglected, we shall all agree in saying, Let the schools be cherished, and let the colleges take care of themselves. Let due provision be made for popular instruction in the rudiments of knowledge, which are also rudiments of good citizenship; let every citizen be taxed for that prime exigency, and let literature and science find patrons where they can. Literature and science will find patrons, and here in Massachusetts have always found them. If the [299] legislators of the State have been sparing of their benefactions, the wealthy sons of the State have been prodigal of theirs. In no country has the private patronage of science been more liberal and prompt than in Massachusetts. Seldom, in the history of science, has there been a nobler instance of that patronage than this University is now experiencing, in the mission of one of her professors on an enterprise of scientific exploration, started and maintained by a private citizen of Boston. When our Agassiz shall return to us reinforced with the lore of the Andes, and replenished with the spoils of the Amazon, -- *tot millia squamigeræ gentis*, -- the discoveries he shall add to science, and the treasures he shall add to his museum, whilst they splendidly illustrate his own qualifications for such a mission, will forever attest the liberality of a son of Massachusetts.

The rich men of the State have not been wanting to literature and science. They have not been wanting to this University. Let their names be held in everlasting remembrance. When the Memorial Hall, which your committee have in charge, shall stand complete, let its mural records present, together with the names of those who have deserved well of the country by their patriotism, the names of those who have deserved well of the College by their benefactions. Let these fautors of science, the heroes of peace, have their place side by side with the heroes of war.

Individuals have done their part, but slow is the growth of institutions which depend on individual charity for their support. As an illustration of what may be done by public patronage, when States are earnest with their universities, and as strangely contrasting the sluggish fortunes of our own *Alma*, look at the State University of Michigan. Here is an institution but twenty-five years old, already numbering thirty-two professors and over twelve hundred students, having public buildings equal in extent to those which two centuries have given to Cambridge, and all the apparatus of a well-constituted, thoroughly furnished university. All this within twenty-five years! The State itself which has generated this wonderful growth had no place in the Union until after Harvard had celebrated her two hundredth birthday. In twenty-five years, in a country five hundred miles from the seaboard, -- a country which fifty years ago was known only to the fur trade, a University has sprung up, to

which students flock from all parts of the land, and which offers to thousands, free of expense, the best education this continent affords. Such is the difference between public and private patronage, between individual effort and the action of a State.

A proof of the broad intent and oecumenical consciousness of this infant College appears in the fact that its Medical Department, which alone numbers ten professors and five hundred students, allows the option of one of four languages in the thesis required for the medical degree. It is the only seminary in the country whose liberal scope and cosmopolitan outlook satisfy the idea of a great university. Compared with this, our other colleges are all provincial; and unless the State of Massachusetts shall see fit to adopt us, and to foster our interest with something of the zeal and liberality which the State of Michigan bestows on her academic masterpiece, Harvard cannot hope to compete with this precocious child of the West.

Meanwhile, Alumni, the State has devolved upon us, as electors of the Board of Overseers, an important trust. This trust conveys no right of immediate jurisdiction, but it may become the channel of influence which shall make itself felt in the conduct of this University. It invites us to take counsel concerning her wants and her weal. I therefore pursue the theme which this crisis in our history suggests. . . .

One thing more I have to say while standing in this presence. The College has a duty beyond its literary and scientific functions, -- a duty to the nation, -- a patriotic, I do not scruple to say a political duty.

Time was when universities were joint estates of the realms they enlightened. The University of Paris was, in its best days, an association possessing authority second only to that of the Church. The faithful ally of the sovereigns of France against the ambition of the nobles and against the usurpations of Papal Rome, she bore the proud title of "The eldest Daughter of the King. . . ." She upheld the Oriflamme against the feudal gonfalons, and was largely instrumental in establishing the central power of the crown. In the terrible struggle of Philip the Fair with Boniface VIII., she furnished the legal weapons of the contest. She furnished, in her Chancellor Gerson, the leading spirit of the Council of Constance. In the Council of Bale she [306] obtained for France the "Pragmatic Sanction." Her voice was consulted on the question of the Salic Law; unhappily, also in the trial of Jeanne d'Arc; and when Louis XI. concluded a treaty of peace with Maximilian of Austria, the University of Paris was the guaranty on the part of France.

Universities are no longer political bodies, but they may be still political powers, -centres and sources of political influence. Our own College in the time of the Revolution was a manifest power on the side of liberty, the political as well as academic mother of Otis and the Adamses. In 1768, "when the patronage of American manufactures was the test of patriotism," the Senior Class voted unanimously to take their degrees apparelled in the coarse cloths of American manufacture. In 1776, the Overseers required of the professors a satisfactory account of their political faith. So much was then thought of the influence on young minds of the right or wrong views of political questions entertained by their instructors. The fathers were right. When the life of the nation is concerned, -- in the struggle with foreign or domestic foes, -- there is a right and a wrong in politics which casuistry may seek to confuse, but which sound moral sentiment cannot mistake, and which those who have schools of learning in charge should be held to respect. Better the College should be disbanded than be a nursery of treason. Better these halls even now should be levelled with the ground, than that any influence should prevail in them unfriendly to American nationality. No amount of intellectual acquirements can atone for defective patriotism. Intellectual supremacy alone will not avert the downfall of states. . . .

In my college days it was the fashion with some to think lightly of our American birthright, to talk disparagingly of republics, and to sigh for the dispositions and pomps of royalty. . . . The events of recent years have enkindled, let us hope, quite other sentiments in the youth of this generation. May those sentiments find ample nutriment within these precincts evermore.

Soon after the conquest of American independence, Governor Hancock, in his speech at the inauguration of President Willard, eulogized the College as having "been in some sense the parent and nurse of the late happy Revolution in this Commonwealth." Parent and nurse of American nationality, such was the praise accorded to Harvard by one of the foremost patriots of the Revolution! Never may she cease to deserve that praise! Never may the Mother refuse to acknowledge the seed herself has propagated! Never may her seed be repelled by the Mother's altered mind! . . .

When Protagoras came to Athens to teach in the university as self-appointed professor, or sophist, according to the fashion of that time, it was not to instruct Athenian youth in music or geometry or astronomy, but to teach them the art of being good citizens. . . . That was his profession. With which, as we read, Hippocrates was so well pleased, that he called up Socrates in the middle of the night to inform him of the happy arrival. We have no professorship at Cambridge founded for the express purpose of making good citizens. In the

absence of such, may all the professorships work together for that end. The youth intrusted to their tutelage [307] are soon to take part, if not as legislators, at least as freemen, in the government of our common land. May the dignity and duty and exceed in a privilege of an American citizen be impressed upon their minds by all the influences that rule this place! Trust me, Alumni, the country will thank the University more for the loyalty her influences shall foster, than for all the knowledge her schools may impart. Learning is the costly ornament of states, but patriotism is the life of a nation.

Theodore Dwight Woolsey's review of Hedge's address, while observing the important differences between Harvard's and Yale's governance structures (Harvard having two boards, the Fellows and the Overseers and Yale having one, the Corporation) and criticizing Hedge's advocacy of curricular and disciplinary innovations (Hedge favored a broadening of curricular offerings, an elective system, and a system of discipline which placed the burden on students' sense of honor), commented favorably on the substitution of alumni representatives for state officials and suggested that the Yale Corporation would do well to consider instituting such a change.

DR. HEDGE'S ADDRESS TO THE ALUMNI
OF HARVARD.

Address to the Alumni of Harvard at their Triennial Festival, July 19th, 1866. Printed in the Atlantic Monthly for September, 1866.

This address of Dr. Hedge has been so widely diffused, by being published in the Atlantic Monthly, that we may assume that it has been read by a considerable portion of our readers. We notice it, not on account of its intrinsic excellence, for it is hardly equal to the occasion and the principal theme, but for the purpose of briefly discussing one or two of the subjects brought forward in it, which are of especial interest.

The first of these is the new form given to the Board of Overseers of Harvard, by a recent change of the charter, in virtue of which the classes of Overseers annually elected by the General Court of the State, are hereafter to be elected by the ballot of Bachelors of five years' standing, of Masters of Arts, and of persons who have received any honorary degree. The ballots are to be cast on Commencement Day, in the city of Cambridge, commencing with the year 1866. From this privilege of voting, if we are to interpret the term "honorary degree" in its ordinary sense, all bachelors in law and in science, all doctors in medicine, and all graduates who may be admitted to any new degree obtained on examination, which the authorities of the University may hereafter establish, are excluded. This exclusion may have been the result of carelessness and of the habit in times past of regarding the College as the whole of the University; if intended, we should ascribe it to a narrow spirit desirous of keeping all power within the ranks of the graduates in arts. The effect of the change will be to introduce in six years an entirely new element into the government of the university, to separate it altogether from [696] the control of the State, and to make graduates of Harvard its overseers and highest board of guardians.

Harvard has been, in our view, quite unfortunate in its constitution, and more particularly in these two respects: that it is governed by two boards rather than by one, and that one of these boards has been a political body.

The Board of Overseers was created in the very infancy of Harvard College, and consisted of the Governor and Deputy Governor, together with all the magistrates of the Massachusetts Colony, and also of "the teaching elders of the six next adjoining towns, viz.: Cambridge, Watertown, Charlestown, Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester, together with the President of the College." All the law-making power and all management of the revenues were put into their hands. As yet, the College was not a corporation. In 1650, a corporation, was

created, consisting of seven persons -- a president, five fellows, and a treasurer or bursar, having power, with the consent of the overseers, to elect a new president, fellows, or treasurer, in case; of death or other removal from office, to hold property not exceeding five hundred pounds yearly rent, and, among other things, to choose such officers and make such orders as they should think fit, provided such orders were consented to by the overseers. These members of the corporation are not necessarily resident at the College according to the charter of 1650, or according to long usage; but inasmuch as the tutors were called Fellows of the House, and as several of the non-resident Fellows or members of the corporation were obnoxious to a party among the Overseers and in the Colony, an attempt was made, about the year 1721, to oust the nonresident members of that board, and to supply their places by the election of officers of the College. The quarrel which arose between the two boards, in which also the Legislature, taking the side of the Overseers, participated, is related fully, if not quite impartially, in the fourteenth chapter of President Quincy's History. The original intention at the very origin of Harvard was, we are inclined to believe, to have a corporation of resident fellows; and indeed as there was neither then, nor for a long time afterwards, any Faculty or subordinate governing body under that board, their entire non-residence [697] would have destroyed all discipline. But the principle being settled, and the growth of a Faculty having at length rendered the necessity of a resident corporation unnecessary, no serious attempts were afterwards made, if we are correctly informed, to interfere with the corporation's rights, and the constitution of that body has continued unchanged until the present time. In 1780, a new practice, not involving an alteration of the constitution, of electing a non-resident layman, was introduced to advantage, only non-resident clergymen having been adopted into the board before.

The Board of Overseers, however, has undergone several more or less important modifications. It was necessary in 1779, when a new constitution took the place of the royal charter, to decide who should be the successors of the former political functionaries in the board, and accordingly, with the consent of the corporation, they were made to consist of the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, Council, and Senate, the other members remaining the same as before. Far more important was the measure of the year 1810, by which the Senate of the State, except its President, was shut out of the board, the Speaker of the House became one of its members, and fifteen ministers of Congregational Churches, with fifteen laymen, were substituted for the ministers of the six towns. This act was accepted by both boards of the College, and yet, in 1812, it was repealed by the Legislature, and the provisions of the charter previously in force were restored. The boards refused to submit to this legislative usurpation, and for a time there were two boards of Overseers, until, in 1814, by a compromise between the contending parties, the Senate of the State was readmitted to its former place, the act of 1810 in

other respects continuing in force. In 1834, "any stated minister of the Church of Christ might be elected among the fifteen." When President Quincy published his history in 1840, this was the constitution of the Board of Overseers; but by an act of May, 1851, to which the legal assent of the boards was given, the Senate and Council disappear from the board, which is now made to consist of seven persons, taking their places *ex officio* -- the Governor, Lieutenant-Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Secretary of the Board of Education, and the President [698] and Treasurer of the University -- together with the thirty members who belonged to it before. These members were now divided into six classes, one of which gave place annually to a new set, five in number, elected by the General Court and holding their office for six years. Finally, by the alteration in the charter of 1866, all the State officers who had *ex officio* belonged to the board ceased to be members of it, and the thirty were to be elected by graduates of the College, as has been already mentioned.

The constitution of the governing boards at Harvard has contained, in our judgment, several pretty serious defects. In the first place, the corporation is too small. Being a compact body, the members of which naturally live in the neighborhood of the University and can be early assembled, it cannot fail, we should suppose, to exercise an undue control over the Faculties, to overrule their decisions and thwart their wishes, under the impression of being intimately and personally acquainted with the state of affairs at Cambridge. Moreover, as a body capable, on account of its size, of acting with vigor, secrecy and settled policy, it would naturally excite the jealousy of the more unwieldy Board of Overseers. Still greater fault may be found with the existence of two boards, and with the constitution of the larger one. Two boards besides a Faculty, which must, in order to do any good and act with any efficiency, have the power of making by-laws, form a very cumbrous machinery, nor can we see any sufficient reason for the existence of a Board of Overseers except in the fact that the corporation is too small. One board and a Faculty, responsible, yet having a somewhat independent action, are surely enough for healthy legislation, enough for vigorous discipline, enough for the election of the best officers, and enough to secure the confidence of the public. But apart from this, the Board of Overseers has heretofore been an unhappily constituted body. It contained the elements of strife with the corporation whenever the elections went against the political party to which they were supposed to belong; and its members, especially the clerical portion, might easily bring with them into their official position the jealousies or animosities of religious creeds and sects. Add to this that it is a public body, [699] whose acts and debates are often spread abroad through the land like those of legislative assemblies, and that when the Senate and Council of the State belonged to it, it was enormously large, incapable of regular orderly action, and likely to be composed in part of persons not at all qualified by previous knowledge for the

task devolved on them. We have seldom been more disgusted than when the debates of this body on the qualifications of a gentleman elected as President of the university by the corporation were spread through the world by the newspapers, when the opinion of men like Mr. Everett, given no doubt with the greatest unwillingness that they should be made public, became a sort of public condemnation of one who needed all support at his entrance upon a more responsible office.

Such are some of the objections we have against the board of Overseers, as it was formerly constituted, objections which are fully justified by the disputes between the two boards, of which instances can readily be found on the pages of President Quincy's history. The recent change will remove a part of the causes of disharmony. There will be no more political nor bitter religious animosity represented in the board of Overseers. The members will, as a body, be animated by a loyal spirit of affection towards their Alma Mater. Inasmuch as persons of high standing will be elected, the University will look to them with confidence for all assistance in those schemes of enlargement which shall command the approval of the great body of graduates. And yet what we regard as the radical vices of the Harvard charter, two boards, a small corporation, and a large board of Overseers, still remain. What is there, again, under the altered charter to prevent party tickets among the graduates, with the necessary excitements before and ill-feeling after the election? Nor is it certain that the jealousies of former times between the corporation and the overseers may not yet be renewed.

We are tempted at this place to turn to another College, with a very different set of governors, and inquire whether a similar plan of graduate election, can be engrafted on its charter with advantage. The charter of Yale College, until 1792, made the ten original founders, with their successors, in [700] perpetuity,-- including also, after a time, the Rector, or President, as the charter of 1745 called him -- the Corporation. They were in their corporate name the President and Fellows of Yale College in New Haven. This constitution was altered in 1792, so as to admit the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor, into the Board, the with six senior assistants in the council, causes of the change being a not unreasonable jealousy on the part of civilians of a board wholly composed of ministers, a feeling that the College would have more protection from the State if more plainly under its protection, and the prospect of a handsome endowment from the State. The change was a good one. The new board, consisting of nineteen, would not be unwieldy, even if all the members were in their place, and many questions of finance needed the counsel of the lay members. The change has worked well on the whole, and has continued, with minor alterations, until the present time. A change in the rules of doing business deserves mention, by which a quorum was made to consist of a majority both of the

whole board and of the original members of it, the rule before having been that a quorum of both parts of the board was necessary.

This rule discloses to us the principal defect of the amended charter. Why was the rule concerning a quorum necessary? Because the six members of the council or Senators, as they were called in the State Constitution of 1817 could not be relied upon to be present. The Governor and Lieutenant-Governor have been tolerably punctual in their attendance, but the Senators in general take little interest in the proceedings, are apt to withdraw before the close of the meetings, and seem to feel that they are in a strange place. We have looked over the records of thirty-five meetings, and find that their average attendance is $2\text{-}26/35$, or less than one half. Nor is it likely that it will ever be greater, while the clerical members are seldom absent -- on the average, scarcely one out of eleven.

In this state of things we cannot but feel that the connexion between the College and the State is, as far as the deputation from the Senate is concerned, a mere form -- a form which does no harm to the College that we know of, but which adds nothing to the efficiency and dignity of its corporation. Men are [701] wanted in that place who will feel it their duty to be present, but it is idle, we conceive, to expect punctuality from the Senators, as the Senate is at present constituted. They change every year, so that the same man rarely reappears in the council of the College. They have no time to learn what duties are expected from them, nor to become acquainted with the condition and wants of the institution. They are in some cases men who take very little interest in the higher seminaries of learning, or perhaps even question their utility altogether. Neither sympathy then, nor knowledge, nor power to uphold a permanent policy belongs to them to any great extent. In this state of things, if some Senator of Connecticut should incline to advocate a change of the system -- in favor of which we have already heard an opinion expressed by one member of that honorable body -- the reasonableness of the measure might gain a general assent, and we know not why the Corporation ought to refuse to give its vote for such an alteration of its charter. Let the voters be all masters of arts and graduates of a higher, or an equal rank, together with Bachelors of all the Faculties of five years standing; let that part of the Board now elected from the Senate of the State, and with them, if thought best, as at Harvard, the two highest magistrates of the Commonwealth give place to graduates, who shall hold their offices for at least six or eight years, and be reeligible, when their term expires; let the elections be held not every year, but every other year, or even less frequently; -- will not the result be greater interest, punctuality, knowledge, sense of responsibility, and devotion to the welfare of the institution on the part of the new members; will they not, if well elected, be a

new strength of their Alma Mater; will they not bring with them views at once enlightened and conservative. . . ?

Woolsey's comments galvanized Yale's alumni who, as they anticipated the president's retirement (he had served since 1846), began pushing both for a change in the college's charter and for reforms akin to those being talked about at Harvard. Yale conservatives -- led by Rev. Noah Porter, Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy -- began to mobilize against the laity. Porter defended the old order in a series of articles "American Colleges and the American Public," which appeared in *The New Englander* in 1869 and were published in book form the following year under the epigraph "it is not necessary that this should be a school of three hundred or one hundred and fifty boys, but it is necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen." At the same time, faculty moderate, Timothy Dwight, published a series of essays, "Yale College -- Some Thoughts Respecting Its Future," which welcomed the transformation of Yale into a university.

The battle was fully joined in January of 1869, with the first meeting of the Yale Alumni Association of New York at Delmonico's, one of the city's most luxurious restaurants. Chaired by U.S. Attorney General William Maxwell Evarts (a graduate of 1837) and attended by such notables as inventor S.F.B. Morse (Class of 1810) and President Theodore Dwight Woolsey, along with some 250 other wealthy and successful alumni, the meeting received national attention and was covered by reporters from the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Times*.

New York Tribune, January 30, 1869

YALE ALUMNI DINNER.
A Pleasant Gathering at Delmonico's --
Speeches of Hon. Wm. M. Evarts
and Others.

. . .Mr. Evarts. . . spoke in substance as follows:

. . .Our colleges have become universities, but not like English universities. The smallness of that island has permitted the colleges to be congregated in one or two spots into great universities; but our Harvard, Yale and Princeton have scattered their colleges throughout the country. We do not need to find models in England, where the circumstances are so different. Our Alumni Associations will keep alive the sympathy of the children of each *Alma Mater*. We have come here to-night to consider the prosperity and the prospects of the College. How much this College has done for us and how little we have done for it! How much this College has done for the country, and how much some of our countrymen, for whom personally the College has done nothing, have done for the College -- SHEFFIELD, of New-Haven, and PEABODY, of London. [Cheers.] Among the sons of Yale who have benefitted the country, I will mention WHITNEY, whose cotton gin has done so much for our comfort, by giving us cheap cloth, and MORSE, [cheers.] who has put it in the power of the poor man to send messages and receive information which kings and armies could not have collected before. . . . [Three cheers for Prof. Morse.] And we must not forget those who, without earning fame, have spread the influence of learning through the country -- the common soldiers of learning. [Cheers. . . .] To keep alive the interest of graduates different alumni associations must be represented in the college government, as the President has suggested. [Cheers.] Nothing is required but a statute of the State of Connecticut, and now we come to a tract -- no, a song -- no, a treat. . . . "Yale College" -- our college, of whom the President a hundred years ago said: "*Esto perpetua, Alma Mater Yalensia.*"

This was followed by three cheers and a song, and then President WOOLSEY made an excellent speech which was heartily applauded. . . .

New York Times, January 30, 1869.

DINNER OF THE YALE ALUMNI

The first dinner of the Yale Alumni Association of New-York took place last evening at Delmonico's and never was a public dinner more successful. About 250 persons had the pleasure of listening to the wit and eloquence which glowed and sparkled when Mr. Evarts first opened his lips, to the last word of Mr. Phelps's philosophical disquisition. The Hon. William

M. Evarts presided. At his right was seated the honored President of the College, Dr. Woolsey, and on his left, Mr. S.F.B. Morse, the distinguished electrician, and an alumnus of the College. . .

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT WOOLSEY

As a representative of Yale College, for the Alma Mater, I certainly accept with thankfulness and feel gratified for the enthusiasm in her behalf which is manifested here this evening. . . . I wish to speak as if we were a family; and I wish we were a family within four walls, with nobody else to hear except those interested. In the first place, as our honored Chairman has supplied me with a text, I will say a word upon the possible change in the corporation of Yale College. That change consists substantially in replacing the six Senators of the State of Connecticut, who are in the corporation, by graduates selected by the graduates themselves. First, I wish to say, and say it with emphasis, that this plan, which I believe I first brought before the world, did not originate in any want of confidence in the present Board. I can trace the action of the Board back for all time, and I may say that, so far as the management of the finances of the College is concerned and the proper exercise of their powers, perfect reliance is to be placed in the corporation of Yale College. They never have lost a single cent -- that is to say, every dollar ever given to that College is now in their treasury. Here is a body which has such confidence in the faculty that it never undertakes anything affecting the practical working of the College without its having been previously discussed by the faculty and by a committee of the corporation. It has been sometimes suspected that the President, who is at the head of the Faculty, and at the head of the Corporation, has omnipotent power. There is not a word of truth in that. The fact is that the corporation is not able to do anything which an intelligent public sentiment thoroughly matured and perfected does not call for, and it never has done so. Scarcely in a single instance has the corporation undertaken to appoint an officer who had not been previously debated about in the Faculty. It was not then want of confidence in the corporation that led me to recommend that measure. There were six men annually elected from the Senate of Connecticut. They took no interest in the College. They did no honor to it. How different it would be if we could have a representation from the graduates in the corporation, continuing in place three to six years, long enough to become acquainted with all the wants and workings of the institution. I have felt this to be a desirable change, and I believe in the future it will be accomplished. But how is it to be accomplished? Two parties, in 1792, formed a contract, the State and the College. By that contract the charter was altered and the eight new members admitted. All that it to be done is that by some petition from the graduates this change shall be effected by the Legislature. If the graduates are willing that it should remain as it is, well and good. We can get along with our six Senators as we have for the last 50 years. They will do no harm, they will do no good; they will merely be passive. There is another point

to which I will allude. There has been a great discussion about moving the College from its present place to another which possesses greater advantages. . . . The graduates have never done much for the college. Thirty-six graduates have even given it over \$5,000; and a gentleman here present, not a graduate, has given more than all put together. Is it likely, then, we asked ourselves, that we can move our College, and provide suitable buildings for it, and that endowments can be raised which are more important than brick or marble? We therefore reluctantly come to the conclusion that it was a thing impracticable. Now, in closing, I will say I wish for the future of Yale three things: first, that she may always be a Christian College, not in any denominational sense, but in a sense that rises above all denominations and comprehends them all in a common Christianity [applause]; second, that it may be a College where all classes of people may be educated; and thirdly, that there may be such an outpouring of liberality that the officers and professors may be better compensated. [Applause.]

Editorial, *New York Times*, February 1, 1869

YALE COLLEGE

The Dinner of the New-York Alumni of Yale College.

No single want is felt more in New-York society than "intellectual centres" or circles which are interested in something besides stocks, politics or fashion. There are plenty of the most cultivated men and accomplished scholars in the City, but they are scattered here and there, seldom meeting in social gatherings and exerting no influence on society.

Wealth and commercial success swallow up everything in New-York, and through the intellect of the City, through the Press, and through the organizations for business, charity and reform commencing here, controls the whole country, it has absolutely no social power in the metropolis itself. This is owing to several causes.

There is no aristocracy here, not even in the best sense of the word. There are no families with inherited wealth, culture and the habit of hospitality, and the peculiar social power which comes from training and custom, transmitted from generation to generation. Such families in London live solely for society; having the machinery of hospitality and entertainment as perfect and smooth as is the machinery of some of our private business organizations here. They

naturally gather in their houses and about their tables "the best" of all professions and ranks, and their *salons* become centres of an intellectual social life.

But more than this we feel the want of a Metropolitan University -- something which could keep alive in the midst of the hot pursuit of wealth the memory of letters, and arts and sciences, and the "unseen but eternal" objects which lead the scholar on in the eager pursuit for truth. Such an institution of learning would be a continual corrective to the fever of materialism in our City. It would become a nucleus of all the intellectual life of the City, and a social power of vast influence. The existing colleges of New-York have absolutely no intellectual influence on the City.

Many associations have been formed during the past two years by our citizens to meet these great wants. None of them certainly have presented such an array of intellectual and thoughtful men, as did the gathering of Yale Alumni at Delmonico's on Friday evening. The dinner company, numbering more than two hundred,, were presided over by MR. EVARTS, and addressed by President WOOLSEY, Dr. ADAMS and other eminent graduates.

MR. EVARTS' opening address evinced his usual facility in extracting fun from every possible occasion; but the important speech of the evening, and one to be carefully considered by the Alumni, was that of the venerable President of the University, Rev. Dr. WOOSLEY.

His plan, which he has undoubtedly been presenting to these gatherings of Alumni through the country, is to obtain a change of the existing constitution of the University, whereby the present representation of the Connecticut State Senators in the corporation could be put an end to, and in their place be substituted as many Alumni selected by the whole body of graduates, and representing, in all probability, distant communities. The plan certainly seems wise and practicable. The Connecticut farmers or lawyers in the State Senate have no interest in the College, unless they happen to be Alumni, and seldom even attend the meeting of the corporation. They add nothing to its weight, influence or wealth. They are certainly never likely to help the College on the path of modern improvement. If in their places were chosen, in some manner hereafter to be indicated, representatives from the great body of Alumni in other cities, prominent and influential men to be members of the corporate board, the influence, dignity and means of the Yale University would plainly be immensely increased. Yale would then be no longer an adjunct of a few Puritan divines and Connecticut farmers, but would belong to the whole country. The organic life of the University would be vastly diffused. New-Yorkers or Philadelphians would control her, as much as the Congregational ministers of Connecticut.

Their sons would naturally become students there; their ideas be represented in her management, and their wealth be poured out for her enrichment. She would assume at once a position of vastly more dignity and power. We trust that this most reasonable plan of President WOOLSEY will be adopted and carried out. . . .

The gathering forces of "Young Yale," as the effort by the alumni to control the college had come to call itself, elicited ever more vehement responses from faculty conservatives. An unsigned essay in the *New Englander* in April of 1869, reviewing the meeting of the New York alumni, detected more than a little anti-clericalism in the comments of those in attendance. Many alumni evidently wanted to go beyond merely replacing the eight elected officials who served *ex officio* on the Corporation -- and were pushing for opening the whole board to the laity.

The conservatives most coherent and concerted response to the alumni came in a series of articles by Noah Porter, "American Colleges and the American Public," which appeared in four successive issues of the *New Englander* in 1869. Porter's most vehement remarks were reserved for the proposal to admit alumni to the Yale Corporation. His arguments could not have been more inflammatory: he suggested that alumni lacked the necessary knowledge to govern a college and that allowing them to elect trustees would set loose the worse kinds of partisan excesses; he even denied that trustees should be elected from outside the state of Connecticut -- since the college was, preeminently, a Connecticut institution.

Porter stalwartly denied that the ministers who composed the board were financially incompetent: he claimed the board had never lost a cent -- conveniently forgetting the Eagle Bank debacle of forty years earlier, in which Yale lost nearly all of its endowed funds in an ill-advised bank speculation involving President Dwight and a coterie of relatives (including President Woolsey's father, bank speculator William Walton Woolsey). And he denied that the ministers' competence as financial managers had anything to do with the reluctance of alumni to contribute money to the school.

Institutional politics aside, Porter's defense of the old order deserves to be taken seriously, for it engages the most fundamental issues surrounding trustee governance: who owns an eleemosynary institution? Who has standing to demand a voice in its affairs. Porter's arguments against the alumni both drew on the trusteeship-as-stewardship doctrines developed in the 1840s by his colleague, Leonard Bacon, and pointed towards the special claims that professionals would be making in the future -- that expertise made them more qualified than laymen to make decisions in their special areas of competence. As a member of the faculty, Porter also seemed to be advancing -- through his repeated use of the term "we" -- special claims for the professoriate as a constituency with superior standing to the alumni.

Porter's narrow-minded, disingenuous, contentious disquisition bears a striking contrast to the open and cosmopolitan spirit of Eliot's "New Education." In a remarkably resonant way, it reveals the defensive state of mind of the clerically-dominated colleges as they faced the challenge of an educated national business elite, determined to remake the world in its own image.

Noah Porter, "American Colleges and the American Public," *New Englander* XXVIII: 2, 272-291.

I. PROPOSED CHANGE IN THE CORPORATION.

The first of these points has reference to a change in the Corporation of the College, suggested by President Woolsey. This change involves the removal from that body of the Six members of the Senate of the State of Connecticut, who now have a place in it by virtue of the office which they hold, and the appointment of an equal number of graduates of the college, who shall retain their position for at least six or eight years. It is said, that long experience shows that the State Senators do not attend the meetings of the board with any regularity, and as they seldom enter the Senate for more than a single year, owing to the firmly-established principle of rotation in office, and to other reasons which it is not important to mention, they are not able to become acquainted either with their own duties, as members of the Corporation, or with the condition or wants of the College. These gentlemen, thus, are of little benefit to the institution. They cannot serve its interests, in any considerable degree, if they would. They become, of necessity, scarcely more than nominal members, and the burdens and responsibilities devolving upon the board are left to their associates, who are permanently in it. If, on the other hand, their places were supplied by as many persons, selected from among the graduates, who should be chosen for a term of years, and should be reeligible after that term had expired, there would be a reasonable hope of advantage both from their deep interest in the College where their education had been received, and from their trained judgment on all questions of importance to its continued prosperity. They would be punctual and regular in their attendance. They would have views "at once enlightened and conservative." They would be earnest in devising and in carrying out all good measures, and would be in every way "a new strength to their Alma Mater." The plan, with its advantages, as thus set forth, was first presented to public notice in an Article in the *New Englander*, in Oct., 1866, and seems to have been suggested to the mind of its distinguished author by a somewhat similar change then lately introduced at Harvard University. Its renewed presentation, at the late meeting of which we now speak, shows that the reflection [273] which he has given to it since that time has not altered his view of its advisableness and practicability. Any suggestion on a subject connected with the interests of the College, which comes from such a source, will, of course, be received with most respectful consideration. Its author has been familiar, for more than twenty years, with its governing Board as President of the College, and, for a much longer period, he has known its interior life, and studied its wants. And, at the same time, he is known by all acquainted with the institution to be one who rarely, and only in the exercise of his most matured judgment, brings forward proposals of this character affecting its vital interests. It will

be interesting, therefore, to notice the reason, and, so far as he has ever given any intimation, the only reason, which has induced President Woolsey to think of this change; --and, in connection with this point, some general considerations which have a bearing upon the subject may be appropriately presented.

The sole reason, then, which has led to this suggestion of the change now proposed, is the one we have mentioned -- namely, the fact that graduates of the College, as members of its Board of Trustees, might be expected to be more interested in its welfare, and more qualified to do it good in an intelligent way, than those who, in the chances of political life, become, for a single year, members of the State Senate. We do not speak in his behalf, or with any knowledge of his views, beyond what is conveyed in his published remarks on the subject, but we think all judicious persons, whose attention is turned to this matter, will be impressed by this fact, and will find in it a conclusive answer to much that has been inconsiderately said by certain advocates of the new arrangement.

We propose to notice, briefly, a few points which some persons, who are dissatisfied with the present state of affairs, are disposed to urge. In the first place, it is said that the College is unfortunately *in the hands of a few Connecticut ministers*. Sometimes the word "Puritanical" is added, in order to give a rhetorical emphasis to the expression. Since the year 1792, this has not been the fact, so far as the constitution of the Board is concerned. There have been eight lay members and ten clerical members, and for years past -- to say nothing of the [274] six Senators -- the Governor and Lieutenant Governor of the State have been active, efficient, and valuable persons to the College. If the lay members attend the meetings, they have the same voice as their clerical associates, and if they do not attend, the clerical members, as reasonable men, are influenced, in proper measure, by the views and judgment of that body of persons who are most intimately connected with the College as its Faculty of Instruction. That they are Connecticut ministers is no more objectionable -- and, for an obvious reason, far less so -- than if they were Pennsylvania ministers. That they are Puritanical ministers is a mere charge appealing to the baser passions of men, and is unworthy of notice. That they are ministers is a fact. And why should they not be? The Colleges of our country -- certainly those of New England -- were originally designed to be both literary and religious institutions -- places where true learning could be gained, and where all who entered them might be pointed to Christianity and to God. That they have been kept so has been the glory of New England in the past, and, when they cease to have both these characters, they had better be sunk in the ocean than remain to curse the country. But what class of men is there in the community who have been in all the past, and, so far as we can judge, will be in all the future, more safe guardians of these two

interests together than Christian ministers? By the very necessities of their profession, they are compelled to be better educated men than the majority of those around them. They learn more thoroughly than most other persons to appreciate the value of scholarship and sound learning, and, in almost every place, they are, by the spontaneous choice of their fellow-citizens, placed among the number of those who care for the educational interests of the people. Who can doubt, that --on the grounds which are connected with learning only -- they ought to have a share in the direction of all such public institutions? And when we add to these interests those of the Christian religion, who can doubt that a College is safer for all time if at least one-half its governing Board are members of this honored profession? But just this is the constitution of that Board which controls the affairs of Yale College. The reformers of the day who would exclude these [275] ministers altogether, as some of them openly intimate that they would, are no wise well-wishers to the cause of learning consecrated by religion; and, we may add, they hardly understand the true interests of the former better than those of the latter. But it is said, that ministers are likely to be slow or behind the age. Some of them are so, no doubt, but so are some lawyers and a good many other laymen; --and that ministers, as a class, are behind the age, and are not as ready for every wise progressive step, in morals or education, as any class of men, is a charge which all the recent history of New England disproves, and which the discussions of the great questions of reform which have lately agitated the country ought forever to silence. It is said, however, that learning and religion are not all that a College needs; --it needs money also, and ministers know nothing about money. Wealthy and large-minded laymen are necessary for financial management. Our only answer to this question is, that the history of Yale College proves the opposite. The statement of President Woolsey, made at Boston and repeated in New York, speaks volumes on this point. He says the Corporation of Yale College have never lost a cent during all the history of the College, -- that they can find every dollar in the treasury which has ever been entrusted to their keeping. How many bodies of wealthy and intelligent laymen can say the same of the moneys belonging to institutions of which they have had charge for a long period of years? "By their fruits ye shall know them." When the facts are known, the Connecticut ministers begin to appear in a pretty favorable light. But nothing is easier than to speak depreciatingly of them, or, indeed, of anybody else, without knowing the facts. But, again, it is said, that though they may have taken reasonable care of the funds which they happened to receive, they have done nothing to increase them. We call for the facts here again. It is well known to every one who has investigated this matter at all, that the age of large gifts to literary institutions --except, indeed, in rare cases -- is one of comparatively recent beginning. Thirty or fifty years ago, large fortunes were not common, and the collecting of such sums as a College needs was a work of immense difficulty. And yet, more than [276] thirty years ago, one hundred thousand dollars were raised by a wide extended effort under the direction of the

College Corporation, --(and their agent, we may add, was a minister,)-- and as new departments of the College were established, from time to time, when they were needed, funds were gathered in for their support. And what has been the history of the past ten or twelve years? Hundreds of thousands of dollars have been raised -- so large a sum, indeed, that Yale College has become to many minds an institution rolling in wealth, with no farther needs. Certainly this history -- recent and more remote -- does not present the appearance of inactivity or incapacity on the part of those who govern the College. The clerical gentlemen, so much complained of, have, at least, had the wisdom to appoint College officers who have raised a large part of this money; and they have known how to take care of it and use it well, when it has been raised. Just at the close of a period of ten years, during which the College has received a million of dollars, largely gathered in by its own officers, is a time when it is not very becoming in any one to find fault with the governing board as a body of Connecticut ministers, who are unfit to get or to use any large amount of money. Well might President Woolsey say, as he did at New York, that it was from no want of confidence in the existing Board, that he offered his proposition for a special change in its constitution. And well might such a man as Governor Buckingham, whose knowledge of money and its noblest uses is surpassed by that of no man living, bear testimony to the efficiency of the body with which he had been so long connected; - a testimony which, we may add, in his case, was given not only in words, but in the more emphatic way of intrusting, before he left it, twenty-five thousand dollars to its keeping.

From what has been said in some quarters, of late, it would seem to be supposed that these ministers in the Corporation of Yale College are persons who have no connection at all with the Alumni, and no common sympathies with them. The graduates have been shut out, --so it appears to be claimed, --ever since the beginning, from any influence in the institution, and now, at last, they ought to find a place in its government. But the fact of the case is precisely the opposite of this representation. The fact is this, --that, as soon as the College had been in existence long enough to have any graduates of age or standing, the choice of members of the Board of Trustees began to be mainly limited to those who were graduates of the College, and, during the last hundred and thirty years, there have been only twelve persons in the clerical part of the Corporation, who had not received their education at Yale. The clerical gentlemen are members of the body of Alumni, all of them, and have never been anything else. The Faculty of Instruction have been, from the beginning, almost exclusively graduates of the College. The control of the College, in every department of its interests, has thus been entirely in the hands of those who represent the graduates in so far as they belong to their number and are wholly of them. And we are not aware that any evidence has ever been furnished, in the history of any institution in the country, that the graduates of other professions are, on the whole, wiser or

more disinterestedly devoted to its welfare, than those who have chosen the profession of the ministry. The true question to be considered should not be lost sight of, and the mistaken ideas which are being spread abroad should be cleared away. The question is not, whether the graduates should now, for the first time, find a place in the governing Board of the College, but whether, having substantially already in their possession the clerical portion of the Board -- to say nothing of the Faculty of Instruction --they should also take that place which has, for sixty or seventy years past, been held by the State Senators. Is it best for the College that this change should be made? Will the College be better governed and cared for, if, in addition to the clerical members who are already of the Alumni, it has the six other members of the Board chosen from among the graduates in different sections of the land, than if, as at present, these six members are officers of the State where the College is located?

In the second place, it is urged by many persons who favor changes of the kind under discussion, that Yale College needs *to become a national institution*, and that to this end its governing Board should be composed of representatives, not from [278] Connecticut only, but from all parts of the Union. We agree with all persons who think that Yale College should be, in the future, if possible, the first and best University in the Country; and that, as its doors should be open to students from every section, so students from the most distant parts of the land should gladly come to it. But in order to its having a national character, it does not need to be governed by representatives from Missouri or California. For the highest interests of all public institutions of learning, unconnected with the general government, it is undoubtedly desirable that they should be managed by small bodies of well qualified men, whose residence is in the vicinity of the institutions. A gentleman residing in Chicago or Cincinnati cannot -- however excellent his judgment and abilities may be -- as successfully perform the duties of overseeing a College in Maine, as one who is within a day's journey of the place where it is located. He needs to be near at hand, not only that he may come readily at its call, but that he may be surrounded constantly by the influences and sympathies of its neighborhood. Our fathers founded this College for the Colony of Connecticut, and very wisely they did not put its management into the hands of Massachusetts or South Carolina, but of Connecticut men. They knew that it would be fostered and cherished most by those nearest to it, and that those who were called to watch over its welfare should be where they could see it. It has grown, indeed, far beyond their highest thought of its future, and has extended its influence far and wide over the country and the world. But its home is in Connecticut still, and, until it ceases to have its home here, its official guardians should, most if not all of them, live here. The thing that is needed is, that, amid all the growth and demands of the future, it should be, --what, in considerable measure at least, it has been in the past, --a College so excellent in its discipline and teaching, that the whole people

shall know it as a bright light in the world. In this sense, it may be, and ought to be, a national university; that is, a university with a national reputation, and drawing its pupils from the north and the south, the east and the west alike. And in this sense only, is it a matter of high importance that it should be national in its character. It was founded [279] in Connecticut, and for Connecticut; --it has been, for more than a hundred and fifty years, one of the brightest ornaments which Connecticut has had to glory in, and we hope the day may never come when the control of its interests shall pass into other hands. But the point which we are noticing, at present, is not so much the giving over the entire control of the College into other hands, --for the fathers, in their wisdom provided that the clerical portion of the board should be Connecticut men, and made this a part of the permanent charter of the institution; --it is that, in order to give a national character to the College, it is in no wise necessary to change any part of the existing Board. It has had such a character, in a great measure, for many years, as is universally acknowledged, and is bids fair to have it always, if it goes onward as it has done. Its governors should be near it. They should not be swayed by the influences and sympathies of remote places, or, perchance, of other institutions, and thus be out of harmony with the historic growth of the College in the old place. We can scarcely question, that the Legislature of this State will hesitate somewhat to give up the State interest in the institution, even though, on some grounds, it may seem desirable. We are very glad that it cannot give up -- and that no one else but the successors of the first ten ministers who founded the College can give up -- that interest which this State must always retain in its government through the clerical body in its Corporation.

A third point, which is urged, is, that the College *belongs to the Alumni*, and that they, therefore, have the right to manage it. No more, certainly, than the parents of a family belong to the children, and ought to yield the right of government or of a share in the government of the family to the children who have left their home. The College is under obligations to its Alumni, to love them, to welcome them heartily as they return to their old home, and to care for and rejoice in their fair fame and success. It stands to them in the parental relation. It is their Alma Mater. They, on the other hand, belong, in a peculiar sense, to the College, and are under undying obligations to it. It has given them their education, and has done for them a very large part of that which prepares them for and secures for them [280] the various blessings and honors of after life. It has bestowed upon every one of them -- largely as a charitable gift -- everything which they have learned within its walls. It has opened the way, through what it has given them, to all learning. And no one of them, who knows the glory of being an educated rather than an uneducated man, can fail to feel in his inmost soul, that, in so far as it has made him an educated man, or given him the possibility of becoming one, it has bestowed upon him a

priceless gift. No graduate of Yale College (or of any other that is worthy of the name) who has faithfully used the advantages it offered him, can ever repay the debt he owes to it, any more than he can repay the debt he owes his mother's love and care. He may very properly, then, be glad to do anything he can for it. He may even desire a place in its Board of Trustees, that he may be the better able to repay its kindness in good services and helpfulness. But when he claims a right to manage its affairs and direct its government, as some of those who are pressing this matter are now doing in public places, because he is an alumnus, he is claiming that the College shall yield itself to his control, not because he has conferred a benefit upon it, but because it has conferred inestimable benefit upon him.

It should be remarked, also, that while Yale College is a public institution, it is so only in the sense that it is open to the public and was designed by its founders to do good to the world. It belongs to nobody, so far as the right of controlling it is concerned, except to those who founded it and to their successors. It is like every other College in the country, with here and there an exception, in this respect. It is a corporation designed by its originators to be, and having always been, self-perpetuating. It was founded for special purposes, and its founders, like most other wise men who have had a similar work to do, felt that it was more sure to accomplish these ends for all time, if they gave to its Trustees the power of selecting their own successors, than if they left it to the chances and dangers of the uncertain future. Their wisdom has been justified by its wonderful growth and prosperity for more than a century and a half. When it ceases to do good, let the public withdraw their approbation by withdrawing its students. [281] But while it keeps onward in its present course -- its numbers and opportunities, and means of usefulness, and reputation, and permanent funds increasing with a steady and uninterrupted progress -- we have no fears either that it will ever lose its honorable position, or that judicious and Christian men will feel that the fathers made a mistake in creating its Board of Trustees, in its essential part, a self-perpetuating board. It is a public institution, inasmuch as it is for the good of the world. It is a beneficent public institution, inasmuch as it gives the best education which the country affords to every student, who comes to it, at less than one-half of its actual cost. But in its management and government, it is not, and was never designed to be, a public institution. It is what every other institution for benevolence or for the enlightenment of the world -- which is not established by the State -- invariably is, --namely, a self-perpetuating corporation. And so long as it has the great interests of religion and education to care for and watch over, it should remain what it now is. The great body of the Alumni, as we believe, agree with us in this view; and we present it thus emphatically, not because we doubt their opinions, but because there is evidently, in the minds of a few, both among the Alumni and outside of their number, an idea that the successors of the

original founders of Yale College have, and that they ought to have, no more claim to control it than any other body of men. The only question in this matter -- and it cannot be too often repeated or too constantly borne in mind -- is not one of *rights* on the part of any one among the public or even among the Alumni, but well-being solely one which concerns the *highest well-being of the University*. If this can best be secured by the appointment (in addition to the present clerical members, who, as we have already seen, have, from the early times, been almost without exception of the number of its graduates,) of the six remaining members of its Board of Trustees from among its Alumni, then it becomes an act of wisdom on its part to appoint them; --and *this, and this alone*, is the question which ought now to be discussed. President Woolsey has expressed his opinion in answer to this question, and we have found it to be favorable to this new reception of graduates into the governing Board. [282] But, in his Article above alluded to, in which his view seems to be more fully expressed than in his remarks in New York, he has suggested one or two dangers, which have appeared to us so serious as to deserve most careful consideration before the plan in its details should be finally determined upon. He says, "Will not these graduates, *if well elected*, be a new strength to their Alma Mater?" and in speaking of the similar changes at Harvard, he says, "What is there to prevent party tickets among the graduates, with the necessary excitements before and ill-feeling after the election? If the graduate members are not "*well elected*," they had better not be elected at all.

There have been, as far as we are aware, only two methods of choosing these members suggested publicly up to the present time, and both of them seem to us open to serious objection. One of these methods is to have the elections held at the meetings of the graduates at the time of the annual Commencement of the College. These annual meetings are necessarily hurried meetings. They are attended by not more than a sixth part of the living Alumni. They are seasons when a thousand other things are filling the minds of those present, unless, indeed, they come for this purpose only. They could, therefore, be very easily "packed" -- to use the language politics -- in favor of particular candidates, or even by the candidates themselves. They would be liable to have their harmony and good feeling -- so large a part of the usefulness and enjoyment of such meetings -- broken up by the pressing of "party-tickets," and by the "excitements and ill-feeling," of which Dr. Woolsey speaks. Moreover, there is no opportunity at such meetings for that calmness and seriousness of consideration, which is essential in order to the selecting of suitable men for the office. It is the restless and dissatisfied men who are most active on all such occasions. Those who are content to "let well enough alone," and see no special change of management to be necessary, will either be absent or will generally be inactive. And the field is thus free for the operations of the former class. Who can doubt that they will, most likely, be successful wherever the conservative section is not roused, as it will not often be,

to an earnest opposition? President Woolsey [283] paid no mean compliment to the State Senators, and said no light word in favor of the present system, when he said that those gentlemen "had done no harm." If the method above suggested for choosing the graduate members were to be adopted, we question very much whether, after twenty years' experience, it could be said, with equal truth, that they had "done no harm." And this, not because the graduates are not the best class of men, but because they are like all other men, and therefore the innovators and hasty reformers and more selfish among them would, under such a system of election, be very often successful in pushing their way into the management of affairs. We do not say that this would always be the fact. Perhaps it might not be oftener than in one case out of every three or four. But the election of one noisy agitator, or of a single individual who was disposed to think, in accordance with the declared views of one of the prominent Trustees of a prominent College in New York, that the reading of the American Encyclopedia would be as good a way of educating the mind as the usual course of College studies, might be an incalculable injury to any institution devoted to the cultivation of sound learning. We have had some opportunities for personal observation in this matter, and we have had testimony founded on long acquaintance with the government of at least one other prominent College; and we believe that the greatest of all dangers to which such institutions are exposed is from the election into their Boards of Trustees of men who will "do harm." And in the addition of any new system of election, the wisest thought and the greatest care ought to be brought into exercise to prevent the possibility of the choice of such men.

The same objections apply, to an equal, if not even greater degree, to the other of the two plans referred to above -- namely, the election of one member of the Corporation by each of the Associations of the Alumni in the various larger cities of the country. These bodies, being much smaller than the one which assembles at the College at Commencement, would be even more likely to be hurried or engineered into the adoption of ill-judged measures, or the election of unsuitable men. But there are further weighty objections against this scheme. [284] These bodies, located in different cities, have, of necessity, the local prejudices, and may not unfrequently have views which are determined by the sympathies of the region in which they live. Moreover they, all together, include only a section, and even a small section of the whole Alumni. The power of election is thus thrown into the hands of a few, while those who are in the more remote and retired places are denied any voice in the matter; and these more retired men are often the ones whose judgment is of most value, and whose minds are least likely to be carried away by ill-considered views. We see no reason why Boston and Philadelphia graduates, for example, should take this matter into their own hands, while the alumnus, whose work in life calls him to live in Northern Vermont, or the interior of Georgia, is set entirely aside, simply

because of his residence. It might, possibly, be desirable, at some time, that a particular graduate from Boston or from Philadelphia should be in the Corporation of the College, but, even if it should be so, he should not, for very obvious reasons, be elected by his associates only whose home is in the same city. This plan, however, so far as we are aware, has never been suggested by any one except a single speaker, in a few extemporaneous remarks at a late public dinner, and doubtless it was, in his own mind, only the thought of the moment. It is so open to objections, and so utterly impracticable, that we can hardly believe it would ever be seriously entertained.

Such a change should not be made in a day. It should be carefully considered. And the consideration and decision of it should turn -- as we think all judicious persons will admit -- *solely* upon what is for *the highest good of the College*. We believe that neither of the plans suggested will best conduce to this end. A much better plan, as it seems to us, would be this. Let the present Corporation, who would be able to do it with much deliberation --with entire freedom from prejudices -- with a due regard to the interests of all sections --with a thorough knowledge of the needs of the College, and with the warm affection for it which has, undeniably, characterized all the permanent members in the past, select six new members from among the graduates, who shall hold their office either for life, or for such a considerable period of years as shall give the [285] opportunity for good service; and as these persons pass out of office by death or otherwise, let the Board as then existing, elect successors to fill the vacancies. By this means, the best men can be found -- the men who know most about educational interests, who have most sympathy with sound learning, and whose opinions and efforts will be most beneficial to the College. The conservative and progressive elements can thus be best united, and the serious dangers of every kind can be most successfully avoided. And we see no reason why, at least in rare cases, the choice might not go beyond the circle of the Alumni, and rest upon such men as Governor Buckingham, whose education has been outside of college walls, indeed, but whose interest in the cause of learning is as honorable as their judgment is wise.

The men who elect the Trustees should, in general, be the men who are best qualified to do so. No one will question this. We believe that these men are the ones who are most familiar with the College history and its interior life. The graduates of Yale are as intelligent a body of persons, no doubt, as the country contains. They are possessed of wisdom and knowledge and high character, as much as any men. Their opinions, on many subjects, are worthy of high regard. But comparatively few of them, after leaving the College at their graduation, are able to know anything of its interior life. They are widely removed from it in space. They are busily

engaged in pursuits which draw their thoughts away from it and which give them little opportunity for reflection on the great subjects of education. At the end of five, or ten, or twenty years, therefore, they have, by the very necessities of life, lost their powers of passing an intelligent judgment on questions which arise in regard to the progress or interests of the institution with which they were once familiar as students. They have become unqualified, for the same reason, to decide intelligently who are the best persons to be chosen for the management of its affairs. And it is no disparagement to them to say that they are thus disqualified. The same is true in regard to every department of life. If I have been connected with a college for twenty years as an instructor or a trustee, if I have daily watched its growth and known everything belonging to it, if I have had a large share in raising all its fund [286] which have been gathered in during all that period, if I have canvassed the field, over and over again, and have become acquainted, in this way, with all the probabilities and possibilities of enlarging its means of good, if I have made its work my life's work, and have filled my mind with those things which he within its field of study and of usefulness, I am, for this very reason, better qualified, --and vastly better qualified, --to judge what is for its good, or what person will be most useful as one of its governing Board, than my classmate who has passed those same twenty years in New York bank or lawyer's office. And it is as reasonable to place my views or questions belonging to his line of life on an equality with his, as it is to place his, in my line of life, on an equality with mine. He may be a much abler man than I am in many respects, but he is inferior to me in this respect, because he has, of necessity, been thinking mainly of other things. No one can reflect upon this subject, with any seriousness, without admitting the truth of what we say. It would be a disgrace to either party, if it were not so. It is no depreciation, therefore, of the merits of the graduates of any one of our Colleges to say that great numbers of them have not the essential qualifications to give judgment on its management, or the necessary knowledge of the subject, in all its relations, to make them wise voters for its offices of trust. In the case of the government of the country this is not so, for every intelligent man, by the very demands of his life and highest interests, is compelled to think constantly and intelligently on political subjects, but, in the case of colleges and all private institutions for the public good, what we have said is certainly true. A very large section of those who leave our colleges never give any study, and, from the pressure of their work in life, are never able to give any serious study, to the subject of College education; --and they surely ought not to vote on the subject. If they do vote, what shall prevent their voting wrong, --or what shall prevent their voting for the wrong man, being led by his prominence and reputation to believe him to be qualified for what he has really no fitness for at all? But if the election is put into the hands of the men who thoroughly know what they are doing -- that is, into the hands of the Board, which has justified

its claim to wisdom [287] and disinterestedness by a long course of service, then all these evils will be avoided, so far as they can be with any arrangement which can be devised.

The change in the Corporation which is now under discussion has not, as is erroneously believed by many, been called for, for some years past, by any general movement of the graduates, nor, so far as any evidence has yet been given, by any large body among the graduates. A few persons, no doubt, here and there had spoken of doing some such thing, and wished that some change might take place in the constitution of the Board. But when the first suggestion of it was made by President Woolsey, it was a new thought to almost everyone. Since its suggestion very few of the Alumni have earnestly advocated it, and we have reason to believe that numbers among them do not feel that it is very desirable. But, however this may be, one thing is clearly manifest -- that there has been neither any universal, nor any general, nor any specially noticeable complaint among the Alumni as to the general management of the College by its present Board. The almost universal feeling is that which President Woolsey has so decidedly and publicly expressed --namely, that of confidence in it. A small number of graduates and of other persons -- most of whom have no intimate knowledge whatever of the affairs of the College have spoken depreciatingly of the Corporation. Complaints in regard to certain things in its action or want of action, from time to time, have been heard from different quarters, and some of them may have been just ones. But as for any general dissatisfaction with the present government, or any feeling that a change ought to be made on this account, there is not only no evidence existing of any such thing, but there is every reason to believe that it is far otherwise. The graduates of Yale College are not, and never have been, dissatisfied with its management, or without confidence in its Corporation; --and the statement that they are so is one of those loose statements which we so often hear in these days, and which rest mainly, if not wholly, on the views of the few persons who make them. No man, or body of men, is perfect. Mistakes will inevitably occur in the course of years; --and, when they occur, they will be seen, and will, sometimes at least, be spoken of. [288] But we do not believe any Corporation ever existed in the country against whom less complaint was made, than has been made against the Corporation of Yale College by its great body of judicious graduates.

The idea, then, which has been thrown out in some quarters, that the graduates of Yale have not contributed more largely to its funds because they were unwilling to intrust their money to the keeping of Trustees who were so unqualified to take care of it, is an idea, as we believe, *totally without foundation*. It is a very remarkable fact, if it be a fact; --for during the last few years, within which these assertions of wide spread dissatisfaction have especially been made, nearly a million of dollars has been given into the hands of this Board from men who do not

throw away their money with no care as to what becomes of it, -- a sum not only larger by far than had ever been given before, but larger than has been contributed, during the same period, to any other College in the country, --not excepting Harvard itself, whose vicinity to the rich men of Boston has always given it special advantages in this regard, and whose preeminence in the amount of its donations has, until this recent period, been unquestioned. The gentlemen who are troubled in view of the incapacity of the present Corporation to manage the College funds are not among the generous and wealthy men of the country. Nor do they, as we believe, include the great body of such men among the graduates, for, within this same period, more has been given by graduates to the College than ever before. A single one among them has presented to the College the sum of nearly three hundred thousand dollars. And another, who resides in New Haven, and who has had opportunities of observing the management of the institution for many years, has been a most frequent and liberal donor -- so much so that, probably, no man in the country has ever proved himself to be a more wise, more constant, or more faithful friend to the cause of education in Literature or Art than has he in what he has done for Yale College. Surely, if evidence can be obtained anywhere, that the possessors of wealth have the same confidence, which Dr. Woolsey has, in this Board of Trustees, here is such evidence of a most unmistakable character -- in a most abundant degree. Why, then, have not the graduates generally [289] made larger contributions? There are several reasons why they have not. One is, that most of them have always been men of moderate means, and, until quite recently, almost none of them have been possessors of ample fortunes. Another is, that, in this imperfect world, very few persons give very largely to any object entirely of their own impulse, or except as they are impelled to it by the solicitations of others; and the graduates of Yale do not, like those of Harvard, live in its immediate neighborhood, but are scattered all over the country, where they have never been reached by persons soliciting in behalf of the College. Still another reason is, that, in this day, men who have only a small sum to give -- a few hundred dollars, perhaps -- feel that it is lost, and that it becomes almost useless among the gifts of tens of thousands from wealthy men around them. The feeling has come to be this, that a *large* gift must be given to a great institution, or *none at all*; and men who cannot give large sums feel themselves, therefore,, almost shut up to the other alternative. We have met hundreds of the graduates of Yale from every section of the country, during the past twenty years, and have conversed with them freely on the subject of the College. We have heard from them numberless expressions of warm affection and gratitude for what the College had bestowed upon them while members of it. We have found many who said they would gladly aid it by pecuniary gifts, if they could. But we have never seen a single one who expressed the slightest unwillingness to intrust anything which he had to give to its Board of Trustees. And even one of the most active and energetic advocates of the present proposed change, with whom we were personally connected for a considerable

period, was not only willing to subscribe according to his ability for the assistance of the College, but to press its claims far and wide upon others. We believe that nothing is more true than that the great body of the Alumni are satisfied, in the main, with the financial management of the College, so far as they are qualified, by knowledge of the facts, to judge of the matter; and that the reason of the small number of gifts which have been received from them, is to be sought elsewhere than in any feeling of discontent. We do not doubt that the number of gifts, and of large gifts, from [290] the graduates, as well as from others, will increase in the future. We believe it, because the graduates, as well as other men, are growing richer constantly, because the habit of giving is extending itself and becoming more settled everywhere in the country, and because there will doubtless be more systematic arrangements hereafter to solicit such gifts. But we do not believe the proposed change in t^he Corporation -- whatever other advantages may result from it -- will result any willingness, or increase materially the willingness, of the graduates to give to the College. Money for benevolent causes is gathered in only by hard work. It is very easy, in the enthusiasm of a public meeting or the good fellowship of a public dinner, to say, Undertake this or that gigantic enterprise and present the bill to the Alumni. But the man who should begin to carry out the enterprise on the ground of this encouragement, would show that he had had little experience in the matter of raising money by contributions. The gifts to Yale College, during the past ten, not to say the past forty, years, have been obtained, in very large measure, because the officers of the College have earnestly and patiently solicited them. The same thing will be true in all time to come, and it will mainly be in answer to their personal and patient solicitations that money will ever be obtained. And the mere fact, that the Alumni are represented in the Corporation by a few honorable gentlemen, will not change the great law of the world. Men will not be inspired by this fact to give largely. They will, in general, give largely, if at all, just as they have done, because the College Faculty -- the men who have given themselves to the College, and who live in it every day -- go out among them, with all the influence and earnestness which they possess, and tell, as no one else can tell, the story of its wants.

We have spoken, thus, at some length upon this subject, because we feel that certain erroneous, and, on the part of some persons, diligently disseminated views need to be corrected and shown to be unfounded. The reason for the proposed change is not to be found in any one of these things to which reference has been made; and as the discussion of the subject is entered upon seriously, it ought to be confined to the real [291] point in question. If the College will, on the whole, be benefitted by the presence in its Corporation of six of its graduates, in place of the present equal number of State Senators, then, doubtless, the change may well be made, but not otherwise. This is the reason given by President Woolsey for favoring the change, and is the *only*

reason which he has given or which is worthy of consideration. *The highest interests of the College as influenced by the character of the men composing its Board of Trustees -- this is the whole question to be discussed.* We do not think this question ought to be decided, except after deliberate consideration. But, if it is decided, and decided favorably for the proposed change, then there is another most important point, which demands careful thought -- namely, the manner in which these persons shall be chosen. We believe the plans suggested are fraught with possibilities of danger and evil, as we have already shown; and we have no doubt that the plan of election by the members of the Board itself from among the Alumni, is a plan which will be most free from all evil, and which will best secure the great ends of deliberation and wisdom in the choice as well as the possession of a thorough knowledge of all the essential qualifications for the office on the part of those who make the choice.

Porter's arrogant and insulting response to the alumni predictably provoked outrage. At Commencement at the end of June 1870, when hundreds of graduates assembled for their annual alumni dinner, this anger boiled over. One speaker, William Walter Phelps, a graduate of the Class of 1860, candidly expressed the feelings of the younger alumni. Phelps was no minor player: the only son of John Jay Phelps, co-founder of the Phelps-Dodge copper fortune, and son-in-law of Joseph Earl Sheffield, Yale's greatest single benefactor, Phelps was a successful corporate lawyer and Republican politician.

SPEECH OF W.W. PHELPS

I speak for the Class of 1860. We left here ten years ago, 100 strong, youths of twenty summers; we are here today 50 strong -- for time and the sword have thinned our ranks -- men of 30. We are gathered from country and city, north and south; we are lawyers and clergymen, physicians and capitalists, judges and editors, representing all the interests of the varied civilization, from whose fiercest current we step for the moment aside. We are here to testify to our love for each other, and our interest in Yale College. To-night is for our classmates -- this morning is for the College. In it we have a message. We shall give it earnestly -- for we are men of toil, and toil gives earnestness -- We shall give it boldly, for we believe it to be true. It is the message of young Yale to old Yale, it is what the graduates of the last fifteen years think and say to each other; what they have not yet had opportunity nor courage to say to you. Doubtless, with the becoming modesty of a youth, taught to believe that old men were for counsel, we have gathered, for many a year, on pilgrimage to this literary Mecca, and have held our peace. Now that we gather here, full-grown men, who outside in other spheres, are doing the heavy work and shouldering the highest responsibility, it would be a false modesty that should refuse to give utterance in public and at the college altar, to what is said abroad.

The younger alumni are not satisfied with the management of the college. They do not think that in any thing, except scholarship, does it keep progress with the age. They find no fault with the *men*; they find much fault with the *spirit* of the management. It is too conservative and narrow. Our youthful admiration and love for President and Professors burn with a greater warmth, now that we recognize their superiority to ordinary men. What the fiery Spaniard said of Lincoln -- "Humblest of the humble before his own soul, greatest of the great before the world," we claim for our President. What no pen records, except that which tells of the highest moral and intellectual gifts, unselfishly devoted to the cause of education, do we claim for Porter, Hadley, Thacher, and their noble associates. What men can do, they do. But they cannot do everything. The college wants a living connection with the world without -- an infusion of some of the new blood which throbs in every vein of this mighty Republic -- a knowledge of what is wanted in the scenes for which Yale educates her children -- this living connection with the outer world -- this knowledge of the people's wants, can be acquired only from those who are in the people, and of the people. This great want can be supplied only by the Alumni. Put them into your government. Get them from some other State than Connecticut -- from some other profession than the ministry. Call them, and they will gladly and eagerly come -- call them, and with the reform will pass away every appearance of alumni coldness and indifference. Men love that for which they scheme and toil. Selfishness -- an enlightened

selfishness, like Mayor Gunther's patriotism -- will make them push an institution whose success is their encomium. Let her own alumni, from Maine to California, be Yale College --the bounding blood of youth will throb in every one of its ancient members. Believe me, men who sit on the Supreme bench, who control the cabinet of the executive -- who in all moral and intellectual reforms are the leaders of their countrymen; Yale men, who got their training here, and are as able to manage its affairs as Rev. Mr. Pickering, of Squashville, who is exhausted with keeping a few sheep in the wilderness, or Hon. Mr. Domuch, of Oldport, who seeks to annul the charter on the only railway that benefits his constituency.

Young Yale asks more -- that worldliness, which is not inconsistent with Godliness; which is an absolute condition of earthly success -- that tact -- that recognition of human weakness and infirmity, to which all successful men cater, and which gives the Yalensian the largest and richest church in the metropolis, which makes another the first law officer of a late administration, shall not forever, by its utter absence, check Yale's growth. Don't let Harvard, our great rival, alone have the benefit of it -- let Yale condescend to be worldly wise. The son of a President is a young gentleman about to enter college. Yale says -- it is worldly to secure him. We will make no effort to secure him. Saintly Yale folds her arms in true dignity of saintliness, and young Vicksburg goes to Harvard. The press, in a telegram carries the fact to hamlet and prairie, and the fame of Harvard enters a thousand households, for the first time. It is commencement time; Yale says -- learning, not festivity, is the true object of a college. We will not cater to the weaknesses of alumni, by offering other attractions than the philosophical orations of its graduating class. Five hundred Yalensians, needing a very little impetus to gather them[selves] under the old trees, find nothing, and stay away. Five hundred Harvard men, needing the same impulse, pack their portmanteaus and go to Cambridge, because Lord Lacklaw, and the Hon. Mr. Blower, the distinguished Senator from Alaska, will be on the platform. Harvard takes great poets and historians to fill its vacant professorships -- Yale takes boys, who have proved their qualifications by getting their windows broken as tutors.

At this open challenge to the conservatives, all civility dropped away. The debate over Yale's governance became a national issue -- the subject of newspaper editorials and endless letters in national periodicals. The attention devoted to the issue is not surprising, the stakes involved nothing less than the question of who should control American culture -- the ministers who had reigned basically unchallenged ever since the establishment of the first colleges, or the emergent class of businessmen and professionals who, as alumni, felt closely tied to the colleges and, as the people being asked to support them, felt that they were owed a voice in them. Moreover, Yale held a particularly important place in the American institutional imagination because so many colleges throughout the South and West had been founded by Yale graduates and because the college's widely-dispersed alumni tended to be the leaders of benevolent ventures of every sort in the cities, towns, and villages outside of New England. The outcome of the struggle at Yale would both serve as a paradigm for the control of higher education in America and, more broadly, for a redefinition of the boundaries between the public and private domains.

For the most part, the debate followed predictable lines, with conservatives defending the prerogatives of the ministers and older notions of "Christian education," and liberals advancing the idea of broad-based secular university training. A few exceptional offerings, which broke new ground, did emerge from the controversy. One of the most interesting of these was written by William Graham Sumner, who went on to become one of the founders of American social science. A graduate of the class of 1863, Sumner had served as Tutor at Yale between 1866 and 1869, while studying theology. Ordained as an Episcopal priest, he took charge of a congregation for three years, before returning to the college in 1872.

The priesthood was no barrier to Sumner's interest in political economy and its applications. And the struggle for control of Yale provided him with an opportunity to critique traditional models of educational finance and governance in the pages of the *Nation*.

William Graham Sumner, "The Ways and Means of Our Colleges," *The Nation* 271, pp 151-4 (9/8/1870).

THE matter of university reform has been widely discussed in its various phases during the last few years. Those who are intimately acquainted with the affairs and workings of our colleges, and upon whom devolves the task of putting the suggestions in practical operation, know that the whole discussion hinges upon two questions: How much can we accomplish with the material which the schools supply? and, How much can we accomplish with the pecuniary means at our disposal? On the first of these questions it is not here proposed to say anything. We turn our attention to the second one. The colleges are now doing as much as they can do with the pecuniary means which they possess, and the question of doing more and better is a question of money. . . .

[153] If, then, the great practical question as to the reform, and increased efficiency, of our colleges is one of ways and means, the question arises: What can we do about it? There are three plans worth noticing.

The first plan is the plan of *state appropriations*. This is substantially the plan of the German universities. It avoids the dangers which are inherent in wealthy endowments, and it provides year by year for the current expenses. It assumes, however, that the state takes an enlightened pride and interest in its institutions of learning, that it appreciates their needs and provides for them liberally, and that it will continue to do so with regularity. The dangers of it, under our political system, are that the state will *not* take an interest in the higher education, but will suffer it to languish, its interest being limited to popular education: that it will not provide regular and consistent control for the university on account of the continual changes in the *personnel* of the government; that the jealousies of different sectarian institutions will wreck the plan; and that the influence of political parties will control the appointments of the professors and the working of the institution. These dangers are so serious and so probable that this plan finds few supporters. The second plan is that of *endowments*. This is the plan now in operation, and it is unquestionably necessary at least to provide buildings and apparatus -- the fixed capital of the institution. But endowments are essentially a medieval notion. The time has gone by when men believed that they would save their souls by diverting their property from their heirs to the foundation of a college. The English colleges owe their wealth to it. Since it lost its hold upon the minds of men, the fashion of endowing public charitable institutions has declined. It was already dead when the oldest American institutions were founded. The men who founded them did so from pure interest in the cause of education, but though they acted from another motive, they preserved the same *form* as the benefactors of the English colleges.

We are still at work on the same system. We go on begging the wealth of the country to act with equal liberality, and from the same motive, as the first founders of the colleges. In fact, however, it has not responded so as to keep pace with the growth of the country, the increased demands upon the institutions, and the increased expensiveness of the process of education. It is high time for us to look about us for another resource. We can find this resource only by observing the conditions of the case as enumerated above, and by adopting the forms which are familiar in existing society. We find that the wants of the college can be expressed in the crassest and most vulgar terms of the dialect of trade, and that they can be satisfied only by adopting business processes.

The third plan, therefore, is the *business* plan. This admits of two subdivisions. In the first place, when we get tired of waiting for the rich man's thousands, we can begin to take the poor man's dollars. We have examples enough before us of success in business which has been won by seeing that there was more money to be made out of the pennies of the million than out of the dollars of the upper ten thousand. No graduate of the college has ever paid in full what it cost the college to educate him. A part of the expense was borne by the funds given by former benefactors of the institution. A great many can never pay the debt. Very few can, in their turn, become munificent benefactors. There is a very large number, however, between these two, who can, and would cheerfully, give according to their ability, in order that the college might hold the same relative position to future generations which it held in their own. The sense of gratitude, the sense of responsibility [154], the enlightened interest in the cause of education, which are felt by these men, constitutes a resource which has never yet been tried, but which would yield richly. They stand by as idle spectators while the college is applying to a few wealthy individuals. Their share in its labor now consists in simply rejoicing in its good luck when it succeeds. A *popular* effort, which should seize upon the indebtedness of these men to the institution and their interest in it, and make it yield money, would be a step in the right direction. We are familiar with popular efforts of this kind for other causes. It is time that we apply it here. If every graduate who could afford it should give the college ten dollars, and others should give more in proportion, we should enter on a plan whose financial soundness is unquestionable. We should be paying a debt which we all owe. We should be applying principles which are thoroughly in sympathy with the ideas of this popular and democratic age, and we should reach results which we never can attain by waiting for the tardy generosity of a few men of extraordinary wealth.

In the second place, the business plan requires that the men who enjoy the benefits of the institution should pay for them in money all that they cost in money. At present, we are going

on the principle that education is a thing which ought to be given away, or, at least partially given. We proceed on the theory that it is desirable that everyone should have a college education, and so we *give* it to as many as possible as a free gift. Whether this plan encourages many to acquire the higher education upon whom it is not worth while to expend the labor and money, is a question we may pass over. Many men who could not pay for an education, if it were sold at its full money cost, make the best use of it as things now are. If the price of tuition were to be raised so far as fully to remunerate the college for its outlay on each student, especially the supposition that the college should secure the best talent for this work and pay for it, and should provide the most approved appliances, it would, no doubt, become a serious burden. Many are now compelled to secure remissions. This number would be increased. But why make the pride or the impecuniosity of some fix the rate of payment for all? Why should not those who can pay fully? The normal principle of the institution should be to ask those who enjoy its benefits to pay for them. When men come who want the benefits and cannot pay for them, express provision should be made for them by the beneficence of individuals. Why interfere with the business methods of the institution, for sentimental reasons, to accomplish sentimental ends? Business should be the rule, and sentiment the exception; not sentiment the rule, and the consequent financial and business weakness a constant source of complaint. In the financial statement of the college, the income from room-rents, tuition, etc., should stand over against the running expense, and present a balance on the right side. If, then, any persons step in and make the payments for those who are unable to pay themselves, so much the better. It is the best form which their benevolence can take, and it is earnestly to be hoped that there may be so much generosity of this kind that no proper and deserving person need ever lose the benefit of the institution. The discussion of theories of university education must, of course, go on, and the theories must be tested by practice. With those matters of pure theory we have not here been concerned. There is, however, a great deal of loose and aimless criticism of the present state of things which has no practical value. Our aim has been to see where the root of the difficulty is, and how to deal with it. Our prejudices may keep us for a long time from following the plan here sketched out, but it is the only sound solution of the question of ways and means.

An active sympathizer with the Young Yale movement -- and later one of its heroes, when he successfully resisted President Porter's attempt to prevent him from using the work of social Darwinist philosopher Herbert Spencer in his courses --, Sumner's plan attracted considerable attention. While never adopted as a model for university finance, it helped to provide a rationale for the establishment of the Yale Alumni Fund. The Fund, established in 1890, was a departure from the practice of "waiting for the rich man's thousands," and involved a shift towards systematically "taking the poor man's dollars." Recognizing that "there was more money to be made out of the pennies of the million than out of the dollars of the upper ten thousand," Sumner suggested "an annual drive directed at all Yale alumni" which would provide alumni, according to their means, to repay the subsidy their education had received from the endowment. Controlled by the alumni -- not the Yale Corporation --, the Fund became a powerful instrument for driving the college towards the modernity it so resisted.

The resolution of the struggle for control of Yale was a less than satisfactory compromise. The Corporation agreed to seek a charter revision from the legislature which, while retaining the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor as *ex officio* members, would replace the Senators with six trustees elected by the alumni and serving six year terms. The ten "successor trustees" -- the self-perpetuating part of the board -- was opened in theory to the laity. But laymen would not succeed in achieving a majority on the board until 1910. The price the alumni paid for this was the election of arch-conservative Noah Porter as president -- which meant, effectively, a rejection of the kinds of curricular changes that were already transforming Harvard from a sleepy college into a world-class university.

The laity had its revenge in 1871, when the Yale initiated a major fund drive. The college sought to raise \$500,000 -- and proceeded bravely ahead, reassured by Porter's confident claims that Young Yale represented only a handful of self-seeking troublemakers. The effort was an abysmal failure: only \$172,452 was subscribed. Quite clearly Young Yale, outraged by the conservatives' maneuverings, had closed its pocketbooks to the college. (During the same period, Harvard raised millions.

The conservatives' grip gradually loosened: Porter would finally step down in 1886, to be succeeded by the younger Timothy Dwight, a moderate. The alumni greeted his election by organizing the Yale Alumni University Fund. But only when Yale took on a business-oriented president, with the election in 1899 of railroad economist Arthur Twining Hadley, did the University gain the full confidence of its business constituency. And the alumni rewarded the Corporation's wisdom by raising a fund of \$1.1 million to celebrate Yale's 1901 bicentennial.

The frustration of Yale's business alumni was mirrored at Columbia. Columbia was handicapped from the outset by the heterogeneity of New York's business elite, which, from the mid- eighteenth century, had been fissured by political, denominational, and ethnic divisions. The old Dutch elements of the elite favored Rutgers and Harvard over Columbia, which was controlled by the Episcopal Church. The Connecticut Yankees, who had become a major elements in the city's commercial affairs after 1780, were Presbyterians and Congregationalists who sent their sons to Yale and Princeton. The sons and charitable dollars of the business community were scattered among a multitude of institutions and, because of this, no one college -- and certainly not Columbia -- was seen as a central institution of the business community. Indeed, the unwillingness of Columbia's trustees to play down its denominational allegiance in the early nineteenth century (as Harvard had) had not only encouraged

this scattering of resources, but had also encouraged an attitude indifference to higher education among the city's commercial leaders. As late as 1854, conservative Episcopalian trustees were sufficiently influential to deny Oliver Wolcott Gibbs the college's chemistry professorship because he was a Unitarian. Through the period 1800-1870, while the student bodies and financial resources of Harvard and Yale were growing steadily, Columbia's student body remained stable and its endowment stagnated. Between 1801 and 1870, Harvard received \$2.3 million in gifts and donations from individuals and Yale received \$978,719 -- but Columbia took in only \$25,150.

As at Yale and Harvard, business alumni at Columbia were discontented in late 1860s -- a discontent shared by Frederick A.P. Barnard, who had been elected president of the College in 1864. From the beginning of his presidency, Barnard had warned in his annual reports of the declining numbers of able young men entering American colleges and called particular attention to the problems facing Columbia. As late as 1880, when the movement for reform was largely complete at Harvard and beginning to move along at Yale, Barnard wrote

Since it is evident that the institutions of which we have just been speaking have greatly grown in the popular favor within the past ten or fifteen years, it is an enquiry not without interest how far this fact may have operated to our disadvantage, drawing from this city the young men who in the natural course of things might have sought their education here. From the catalogues of fifteen years ago, it appears that the number of young men from New York City (Manhattan Island alone) in attendance on Harvard University was 13; the number at Yale College was 32; and the number at Princeton was 14. During the past year the corresponding numbers have been, for Harvard, 48; for Yale, 44; and for Princeton, 30; making a total of 122, more than twice as great as the former. There is good reason to suppose that were the same attractions offered here which are found elsewhere, many of these young men would be retained. Besides the 120 abovementioned, about 70 or 80 more, also from New York, are dispersed through the other colleges in this and neighboring states, making 200 in all who seek their education elsewhere. If we strike from our own list all the names of students no residing on the island, there remain but about 150 graduates of this College who are residents of New York. This is less than a third part of the young men of our city who are at this moment under a course of collegiate instruction.

But his calls to action failed to arouse much enthusiasm. By the mid-1870s, however, as Harvard and, to a lesser extent, Yale, were beginning to diversify their curricula away from the traditional prescriptions and towards more worldly concerns, Barnard found some important allies. The most important of these was Columbia trustee Samuel B. Ruggles. Like Barnard, a Yale alumnus, Ruggles had led a conspicuously successful business career as a banker, a canal and railroad pioneer, and as an economist and statistician of international reputation. Other important business allies included Hamilton Fish, a wealthy New York real estate speculator and active Republican politician, and Stephen P. Nash, a leading New York attorney. Having failed in earlier attempts to reform the curriculum on the undergraduate level, they set out in the mid-1870s to reform the curriculum of the Law School, a movement which ultimately culminated in the creation of a graduate school of political science. Eventually these reforms on the post-graduate level influenced the undergraduate curriculum -- but not until the 1890s, when Seth Low, an enormously wealthy New York businessman, assumed the presidency of the University. But alumni election of Columbia's trustees would not take place until 1908. With stagnation at Columbia and stalemate at Yale, Harvard by default was left at the forefront of the movement of business-guided educational reform.

THE HIGHER LEARNING IN AMERICA

All this places Thorstein Veblen's 1916 critique of American higher education in perspective. It might well have been, as he argued, that the enterprise of knowledge, by the eve of World War I was controlled by the "men of affairs." But the emergence of business control was, Harvard excepted, a slow and painful process -- and one that was stoutly resisted by groups, like the clergy, which regarded themselves as the traditional guardians of American culture.

Veblen articulated explicitly the notions of professional authority implicit in Noah Porter's 1870 diatribe against lay governance. Like many members of the "new middle class" of university-trained managers and professionals which had come to prominence with the rise of public and private bureaucracies after the turn of the century, Veblen believed that expertise, not money or other forms of ascriptive authority, legitimated power.

Thorstein Veblen, "The Governing Boards," from *The Higher Learning in America* (New York: B.W. Huebsch, Inc., 1918), pp. 45-61.

The older American universities have grown out of underlying colleges, --undergraduate schools. Within the memory of men still living it was a nearly unbroken rule that the governing boards of these higher American schools were drawn largely from the clergy and were also guided mainly by ecclesiastical, or at least by devotional, notions of what was right and needful in matters of learning. This state of things reflected the ingrained devoutness of that portion of the American community to which the higher schools then were of much significance. At the same time it reflected the historical fact that the colleges of the early days had been established primarily as training schools for ministers of the church. In their later growth, in the recent past, while the chief purpose of these seminaries has no longer been [46] religious, yet ecclesiastical prepossessions long continued to mark the permissible limits of the learning which they cultivated, and continued also to guard the curriculum and discipline of the schools.

That phase of academic policy is past. Due regard at least is, of course, still had to the religious proprieties -- the American community, by and large, is still the most devout of civilized countries -- but such regard on the part of the academic authorities now proceeds on grounds of businesslike expediency rather than on religious conviction or on an ecclesiastical or priestly bias in the ruling bodies. It is a concessive precaution on the part of a worldly-wise directorate, in view of the devout prejudices of those who know no better.

The rule of the clergy belongs virtually to the prehistory of the American universities. While that rule held there were few if any schools that should properly be rated as of university grade. Even now, it is true, much of the secondary school system, including the greater part, through a diminishing number, of the smaller colleges, is under the tutelage of the clergy; and the academic heads of these schools are almost universally men of ecclesiastical standing and bias rather than of scholarly attainments. But that fact does not call for particular notice here, since these schools lie outside the university field, and so outside the scope of this inquiry.

For a generation past, while the American universities have been coming into line as seminaries of the higher learning, there has gone on a wide-reaching substitution of laymen in the place of clergymen on the governing boards. This progressive secularization is sufficiently notorious, even though there are some among the older establishments the terms of whose charters require a large proportion of clergymen on their boards. This secularization is entirely consonant with the prevailing drift of sentiment in the community at large, as is shown by the uniform and uncritical approval with which it is regarded. The substitution is a substitution of businessmen and politicians; which amounts to saying that it is a substitution of businessmen.

So that the discretionary control in matters of university policy now rests finally in the hands of businessmen.

The reason which men prefer to allege for this state of things is the sensible need of experienced men of affairs to take care of the fiscal concerns of these university corporations; for the typical modern university is a corporation possessed of large [47] property and disposing of large aggregate expenditures, so that it will necessarily have many and often delicate pecuniary interests to be looked after. It is at the same time held to be expedient in case of emergency to have several wealthy men identified with the governing board, and such men of wealth are also commonly businessmen. It is apparently believed, though on just what ground this sanguine belief rests does not appear, that in case of emergency the wealthy members of the boards may be counted on to spend their substance in behalf of the university. In point of fact, at any rate, poor men and men without large experience in business affairs are felt to have no place in these bodies. If by any chance such men, without the due pecuniary qualifications, should come to make up a majority, or even an appreciable minority of such a governing board, the situation would be viewed with some apprehension by all persons interested in the case and cognizant of the facts. The only exception might be cases where, by tradition, the board habitually includes a considerable proportion of clergymen:

*"Such great regard is always lent
By men to ancient precedent."*

The reasons alleged are no doubt convincing to those who are ready to be so convinced, but they are after all more plausible at first sight than on reflection. In point of fact these business-like governing boards commonly exercise little if any current surveillance of the corporate affairs of the university, beyond a directive oversight of the distribution of expenditures among the several academic purposes for which the corporate income is to be used; that is to say, they control the budget of expenditures; which comes to saying that they exercise a pecuniary discretion in the case mainly in the way of deciding what the body of academic men that constitutes the university may or may not do with the means in hand; that is to say, their pecuniary surveillance comes in the main to an interference with the academic work, the merits of which these men of affairs on the governing board are in no special degree qualified to judge. Beyond this, as touches the actual running administration of the corporation's investments, income and expenditures,-all that is taken care of by permanent officials who have, as they necessarily must, sole and responsible charge of those matters. Even the auditing of the corporation's accounts is commonly [48] vested in such officers of the corporation, who have none but a formal, if any, direct connection with the governing board.

The governing board, or more commonly a committee of the board, on the other hand, will then formally review the balance sheets and bundles of vouchers duly submitted by the corporation's fiscal officers and their clerical force, --with such effect of complaisant oversight as will best be appreciated by any person who has had the fortune to look into the accounts of a large corporation.

So far as regards its pecuniary affairs and their due administration, the typical modern university is in a position, without loss or detriment, to dispense with the services of any board of trustees, regents, curators, or what not. Except for the insuperable difficulty of getting a hearing for such an extraordinary proposal, it should be no difficult matter to show that these governing boards of businessmen commonly are quite useless to the university for any businesslike purpose. Indeed, except for a stubborn prejudice to the contrary, the fact should readily be seen that the boards are of no material use in any connection; their sole effectual function being to interfere with the academic management in matters that are not of the nature of business, and that lie outside their competence and outside the range of their habitual interest.

The governing boards -- trustees, regents, curators, fellows, whatever their style and title -- are an aimless survival from the days of clerical rule, when they were presumably of some effect in enforcing conformity to orthodox opinions and observances, among the academic staff. At that time, when means for maintenance of the denominational colleges commonly had to be procured by an appeal to impecunious congregations, it fell to these bodies of churchmen to do service as sturdy beggars for funds with which to meet current expenses. So that as long as the boards were made up chiefly of clergymen they served a pecuniary purpose; whereas, since their complexion has been changed by the substitution of businessmen in the place of ecclesiastics, they have ceased to exercise any function other than a bootless meddling with academic matters which they do not understand. The sole ground of their retention appears to be an unreflecting deferential concession to the usages of corporate organization and control, such as have been found advantageous for the pursuit of private gain by businessmen [49] banded together in the exploitation of joint-stock companies with limited liability.¹ [50]

¹ An instance showing something of the measure and incidence of fiscal service rendered by such a businesslike board may be suggestive, even though it is scarcely to be taken as faithfully illustrating current practice, in that the particular board in question has exercised an uncommon measure of surveillance over its university's pecuniary concerns.

A university corporation endowed with a large estate (appraised at something over \$30,000,000) has been governed by a board of the usual form, with plenary discretion, established on a basis of co-optation. In point of practical effect, the board, or rather that

The fact remains, the modern civilized community is reluctant to trust its serious interests to others than men of pecuniary substance, who have proved their fitness for the direction of academic affairs by acquiring, or by otherwise being possessed of, considerable wealth. It is not simply that experienced businessmen are, on mature reflection, judged to be the

fraction of the board which takes an active interest in the university's affairs, has been made up of a group of local businessmen engaged in divers enterprises of the kind familiar to men of relatively large means, with somewhat extensive interests of the nature of banking and underwriting, where large extensions of credit and the temporary use of large funds are of substantial consequence. By terms of the corporate charter the board was required to render to the governor of the state a yearly report of all the pecuniary affairs of the university; but no penalty was attached to their eventual failure to render such report, though some legal remedy could doubtless have been had on due application by the parties in interest, as e.g., by the academic head of the university. No such report has been rendered, however, and no steps appear to have been taken to procure such a report, or any equivalent accounting. But on persistent urging from the side of his faculty, and after some courteous delay, the academic head pushed an inquiry into the corporation's finances so far as to bring out facts somewhat to the following effect:--

The board, or the group of local businessmen who constituted the habitual working majority of the board, appear to have kept a fairly close and active oversight of the corporate funds entrusted to them, and to have seen to their investment and disposal somewhat in detail -- and, it has been suggested, somewhat to their own pecuniary advantage. With the result that the investments were found to yield a current income of some three per cent. (rather under than over), --in a state where investment on good security in the open market commonly yielded from six per cent. to eight per cent. Of this income approximately one-half (apparently some forty-five per cent.) practically accrued to the possible current use of the university establishment. Just what disposal was made of the remainder is not altogether clear; though it is loosely presumed to have been kept in hand with an eventual view to the erection and repair of buildings. Something like one-half of what so made up the currently disposable income was further set aside in the character of a sinking fund, to accumulate for future use and to meet contingencies; so that what effectually accrued to the university establishment for current use to meet necessary academic expenditures would amount to something like one per cent. (or less) on the total investment. But of this finally disposable fraction of the income, again, an appreciable sum was set aside as a special sinking fund to accumulate for the eventual use of the university library, -- which, it may be remarked, was in the meantime seriously handicapped for want of funds with which to provide for current needs. So also the academic establishment at large was perforce managed on a basis of penurious economy, to -the present inefficiency and the lasting damage of the university.

The figures and percentages given above are not claimed to be exact; it is known that a more accurate specification of details would result in a less favourable showing.

At the time when these matters were disclosed (to a small number of the uneasy persons interested) there was an ugly suggestion afloat touching the pecuniary integrity of the board's management, but this is doubtless to be dismissed as being merely a loose expression of ill-will; and the like is also doubtless to be said as regards the suggestion that there may have been an interested collusion between the academic head and the active members of the board. These were "all honourable men," of great repute in the community and well known as sagacious and successful men in their private business ventures.

safest and most competent trustees of the university's fiscal interests. The preference appears to be almost wholly impulsive, and a matter of habitual bias. It is due for the greater part to the high esteem currently accorded to men of wealth at large, and especially to wealthy men who have succeeded in business, quite apart from any special capacity shown by such success for the guardianship of any institution of learning. Business success is by common consent, and quite uncritically, taken to be conclusive evidence of wisdom even in matters that have no relation to business affairs. So that it stands as a matter of course that businessmen must be preferred for the guardianship and control of that intellectual enterprise for the pursuit of which the university is established, as well as to take care of the pecuniary welfare of the university corporation. And, full of the same naive faith that business success "answereth all things," these businessmen into whose hands this trust falls are content to accept the responsibility and confident to exercise full discretion in these matters with which they have no special familiarity. Such is the outcome, to the present date, of the recent and current secularization of the governing boards. The final discretion in the affairs of the seats of learning is entrusted to men who have [51] proved their capacity for work that has nothing in common with the higher learning.²

As bearing on the case of the American universities, it should be called to mind that the businessmen of this country, as a class, are of a notably conservative habit of mind. In a degree scarcely equalled in any community that can lay claim to a modicum of intelligence and enterprise, the spirit of American business is a spirit of quietism, caution, compromise, collusion, and chicane. It is not that the spirit of enterprise or of unrest is wanting in this community, but only that, by selective effect of the conditioning circumstances, persons affected with that spirit are excluded from the management of business, and so do not come into the class of successful businessmen from which the governing boards are drawn. American inventors are bold and resourceful, perhaps beyond the common run of their class elsewhere, but it has become a commonplace that American inventors habitually die poor; and one does

² A subsidiary reason of some weight should not be overlooked in seeking the cause of this secularization of the boards, and of the peculiar colour which the secularization has given them. In any community where wealth and business enterprise are held in such high esteem, men of wealth and of affairs are not only deferred to, but their countenance is sought from one motive and another. At the same time election to one of these boards has come to have a high value as an honourable distinction. Such election or appointment therefore is often sought from motives of vanity, and it is at the same time a convenient means of conciliating the good will of the wealthy incumbent.

It may be added that now and again the discretionary control of large funds which so falls to the members of the board may come to be pecuniarily profitable to them, so that the office may come to be attractive as a business proposition as well as in point of prestige. Instances of the kind are not wholly unknown, though presumably exceptional.

not find them represented on the boards in question. American engineers and technologists are as good and efficient as their kind in other countries; but they do not as a class accumulate wealth enough to entitle them to sit on the directive board of any self-respecting university, nor can they claim even a moderate rank as "safe and sane" men of business. American explorers, prospectors and pioneers can not be said to fall short of the common measure in hardihood, insight, temerity or tenacity; but wealth does not accumulate in their hands, and it is a common saying, of them as of the inventors, that they are not fit to conduct their own (pecuniary) affairs; and the reminder is scarcely needed [52]

that neither they nor their qualities are drawn into the counsels of these governing boards. The wealth and the serviceable results that come of the endeavours of these enterprising and temerarious Americans habitually inure to the benefit of such of their compatriots as are endowed with a "safe and sane" spirit of "watchful waiting," -- of caution, collusion and chicane. There is a homely but well-accepted American colloquialism which says that "The silent hog eats the swill."

As elsewhere, but in a higher degree and a more cogent sense than elsewhere, success in business affairs, in such measure as to command the requisite deference, comes only by getting something for nothing. And, barring accidents and within the law, it is only the waiting game and the defensive tactics that will bring gains of that kind, unless it be strategy of the nature of finesse and chicane. Now it happens that American conditions during the past one hundred years have been peculiarly favourable to the patient and circumspect man who will rather wait than work; and it is also during these hundred years that the current traditions and standards of business conduct and of businesslike talent have taken shape and been incorporated in the community's common sense. America has been a land of free and abounding resources; which is to say, when converted into terms of economic theory, that it is the land of the unearned increment. In all directions, wherever enterprise and industry have gone, the opportunity was wide and large for such as had the patience or astuteness to place themselves in the way of this multifarious flow of the unearned increment, and were endowed with the retentive grasp. Putting aside the illusions of public spirit and diligent serviceability, sedulously cultivated by the apologists of business, it will readily be seen that the great mass of reputedly large fortunes in this country are of such an origin; nor will it cost anything beyond a similar lesion to the affections to confirm the view that such is the origin and line of derivation of the American propertied business community and its canons of right and honest living.

It is a common saying that the modern taste has been unduly commercialized by the unremitting attention necessarily given to matters of price and of profit and loss in an industrial

community organized on business principles; that pecuniary standards of excellence are habitually accepted and applied with undue freedom and finality. But what is scarcely appreciated [53] at its full value is the fact that these pecuniary standards of merit and efficiency are habitually applied to men as well as to things, and with little less freedom and finality. The man who applies himself undeviatingly to pecuniary affairs with a view to his own gain, and who is habitually and cautiously alert to the main chance, is not only esteemed for and in respect of his pecuniary success, but he is also habitually rated high at large, as a particularly wise and sane person. He is deferred to as being wise and sane not only in pecuniary matters but also in any other matters on which he may express an opinion.

A very few generations ago, before the present pecuniary era of civilization had made such headway, and before the common man in these civilized communities had lost the fear of God, the like wide-sweeping and obsequious veneration and deference was given to the clergy and their opinions; for the churchmen were then, in the popular apprehension, proficient in all those matters that were of most substantial interest to the common man of that time. Indeed, the salvation of men's souls was then a matter of as grave and untiring solicitude as their commercial solvency has now become. And the trained efficiency of the successful clergyman of that time for the conduct of spiritual and ecclesiastical affairs lent him a prestige with his fellow men such as to give his opinions, decisions and preconceptions great and unquestioned weight in temporal matters as well; he was then accepted as the type of wise, sane and benevolent humanity, in his own esteem as well as in the esteem of his fellows. In like manner also, in other times and under other cultural conditions the fighting-man has held the first place in men's esteem and has been deferred to in matters that concerned his trade and in matters that did not.

Now, in that hard and fast body of aphoristic wisdom that commands the faith of the business community there is comprised the conviction that learning is of no use in business. This conviction is, further, backed up and coloured with the tenet, held somewhat doubtfully, but also, and therefore, somewhat doggedly, by the common run of businessmen, that what is of no use in business is not worth while. More than one of the greater businessmen have spoken, advisedly and with emphasis, to the effect that the higher learning is rather a hindrance than a help to any aspirant for business success; more particularly [54] to any man whose lot is cast in the field of business enterprise of a middling scale and commonplace circumstances. And notoriously, the like view of the matter prevails throughout the business community at large. What these men are likely to have in mind in passing this verdict, as shown by various expressions on this head, is not so much the higher learning in the

proper sense, but rather that slight preliminary modicum that is to be found embodied in the curriculum of the colleges, --for the common run of businessmen are not sufficiently conversant with these matters to know the difference, or that there is a difference, between the college and the university. They are busy with other things.

It is true, men whose construction of the facts is coloured by their wish to commend the schools to the good will of the business community profess to find ground for the belief that university training, or rather the training of the undergraduate school, gives added fitness for a business career, particularly for the larger business enterprise. But they commonly speak apologetically and offer extenuating considerations, such as virtually to concede the case, at the same time that they are very prone to evade the issue by dwelling on accessory and subsidiary considerations that do not substantially touch the question of trained capacity for the conduct of business affairs. The apologists commonly shift from the undebatable ground of the higher learning as related to business success, to the more defensible ground of the undergraduate curriculum, considered as introductory to those social amenities that devolve on the successful man of business; and in so far as they confine themselves to the topic of education and business they commonly spend their efforts in arguing for the business utility of the training afforded by the professional and technical schools, included within the university corporation or otherwise. There is ground for their contention in so far as "university training" is (by subreption) taken to mean training in those "practical" branches of knowledge (Law, Politics, Accountancy, etc.) that [55] have a place within the university precincts only by force of a *non-sequitur*. And the spokesmen for these views are commonly also, and significantly, eager to make good their contention by advocating the introduction of an increased proportion of these "practical" subjects into the schedule of instruction.

The facts are notorious and leave little room for cavil on the merits of the case. Particularly is the award of the facts unequivocal in America, --the native ground of the self-made businessman, and at the same time the most admirably thoroughpaced business community extant. The American business community is well enough as it is, without the higher learning, and it is fully sensible that the higher learning is not a business proposition.

But a good rule works both ways. If scholarly and scientific training, such as may without shame be included under the caption of the higher learning, unfits men for business efficiency, then the training that comes of experience in business must also be held to unfit men for scholarly and scientific pursuits, and even more pronouncedly for the surveillance of such pursuits. The circumstantial evidence for the latter proposition is neither less abundant nor less

unequivocal than for the former. If the higher learning is incompatible with business shrewdness, business enterprise is, by the same token, incompatible with the spirit of the higher learning. Indeed, within the ordinary range of lawful occupations these two lines of endeavour, and the animus that belongs to each, are as widely out of touch as may be. They are the two extreme terms of the modern cultural scheme; although at the same time each is intrinsic and indispensable to the scheme of modern civilization as it runs. With the excision or serious crippling of either, Western civilization would suffer a dislocation amounting to a revolutionary change.

On the other hand, the higher learning and the spirit of scientific inquiry have much in common with modern industry and its technological discipline. More particularly is there a close bond of sympathy and relationship between the spirit of scientific inquiry and the habit of mind enforced by the mechanical industries of the modern kind. In both of these lines of activity men are occupied with impersonal facts and deal with them in a matter-of-fact way. In both, as far as may be, the personal equation is sought to be eliminated, discounted [56] and avoided, so as to leave no chance for discrepancies due to personal infirmity or predilection. But it is only on its mechanical side that the industrial organization so comes in touch with modern science and the pursuit of matter-of-fact knowledge; and it is only in so far as their habits of thought are shaped by the discipline of the mechanical industries that there is induced in the industrial population the same bent as goes to further or to appreciate the work of modern science. But it would be quite nugatory to suggest that the governing boards of the universities should be made up of, or should comprise, impecunious technologists and engineers.

There is no similar bond of consanguinity between the business occupations and the scientific spirit; except so far as regards those clerical and subaltern employments that lie wholly within the mechanical routine of business traffic; and even as regards these employments and the persons so occupied it is, at the most, doubtful whether their training does not after all partake more of that astute and invidious character of cunning that belongs to the conduct of business affairs than of the dispassionate animus of scientific inquiry.

These extenuating considerations do not touch the case of that body of businessmen, in the proper sense of the term, from which the membership of the governing boards is drawn. The principles that rule business enterprise of that larger and pecuniarily effectual sort are a matter of usage, appraisal, contractual arrangement and strategic manoeuvres. They are the principles of a game of competitive guessing and pecuniary coercion, a game carried on wholly within the limits of the personal equation, and depending for its movement and effect on

personal discrepancies of judgment. Science has to do with the opaquely veracious sequence of cause and effect, and it deals with the facts of this sequence without mental reservation or ulterior purposes of expediency. Business enterprise proceeds on ulterior purposes and calculations of expediency; it depends on shrewd expedients and lives on the margin of error, on the fluctuating margin of human miscalculation. The training given by these two lines of endeavour-science and business-is wholly divergent; with the notorious result that for the purposes of business enterprise the scientists are the most ignorant, gullible and incompetent class in the community. They are not only passively out of touch with the business spirit, out of training by neglect, but they are also positively trained out [57] of the habit of mind indispensable to business enterprise. The converse is true of the men of business affairs.

Plato's classic scheme of folly, which would have the philosophers take over the management of affairs, has been turned on its head; the men of affairs have taken over the direction of the pursuit of knowledge. To anyone who will take a dispassionate look at this modern arrangement it looks foolish, of course, -- ingeniously foolish; but, also, of course, there is no help for it and no prospect of its abatement in the calculable future.

It is a fact of the current state of things, grounded in the institutional fabric of Christendom; and it will avail little to speculate on remedial corrections for this state of academic affairs so long as the institutional ground of this perversion remains intact. Its institutional ground is the current system of private ownership. It claims the attention of students as a feature of the latterday cultural growth, as an outcome of the pecuniary organization of modern society, and it is to be taken as a base-line in any inquiry into the policy that controls modern academic life and work -- just as any inquiry into the circumstances and establishments of learning in the days of scholasticism must take account of the ecclesiastical rule of that time as one of the main controlling facts in the case. The fact is that businessmen hold the plenary discretion, and that business principles guide them in their management of the affairs of the higher learning; and such must continue to be the case so long as the community's workday material interests continue to be organized on a basis of business enterprise. All this does not promise well for the future of science and scholarship in the universities, but the current effects of this method of university control are sufficiently patent to all academic men,-and the whole situation should perhaps trouble the mind of no one who will be at pains to free himself from the (possibly transient) preconception that "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men" is, in the end, more to be desired than the acquisition and expenditure of riches by the astuter men in the community.

Many of those who fancy themselves conversant with the circumstances of American academic life would question the view set forth above, and they would particularly deny that [58] business principles do or can pervade the corporate management of the universities in anything like the degree here implied. They would contend that while the boards of control are commonly gifted with all the disabilities described -- that much being not open to dispute -- yet these boards do not, on the whole, in practice, extend the exercise of their plenary: discretion to the directive control of what are properly speaking academic matters; that they habitually confine their work of directorship to the pecuniary affairs of the corporation; and that in so far as they may at times interfere in the university's scholarly and scientific work, they do so in their capacity as men of culture, not as men of property or of enterprise. This latter would also be the view to which the men of property on the boards would themselves particularly incline. So it will be held by the spokesmen of content that virtually full discretion in all matters of academic policy is delegated to the academic head of the university, fortified by the advice and consent of the senior members of his faculty; so that the scholarly interests of the university are, by the free choice of the governing boards, in practice drawn out from under the control of these businessmen in question and placed in the hands of the scholars. And such, commonly, is at least ostensibly the case, in point of form; more particularly as regards those older establishments that are burdened with academic traditions running back beyond the date when their governing boards were taken over by the businessmen, and more particularly in the recent past than in the immediate present or for the establishments of a more recent date.

This complaisant view overlooks the fact that much effective surveillance of the academic work is exercised through the board's control of the budget. The academic staff can do little else than what the specifications of the budget provide for; without the means with which the corporate income should supply them they are as helpless as might be expected.

Imbued with an alert sense of those tangible pecuniary values which they are by habit and temperament in a position to appreciate, a sagacious governing board may, for instance, determine to expend the greater proportion of the available income of the university in improving and decorating its real estate, and they may with businesslike thrift set aside an appreciable proportion of the remainder for a sinking fund to meet vaguely unforeseen contingencies, while the academic staff [59] remains (notoriously) underpaid and so scantily filled as seriously to curtail their working capacity. Or the board may, again, as has also happened, take a thrifty resolution to "concede" only a fraction-say ten or fifteen per cent. Of the demands of the staff for books and similar working materials for current use; while setting

aside a good share of the funds assigned for such use, to accumulate until at some future date such materials may be purchased at more reasonable prices than those now ruling. These illustrations are not supplied by fancy. There is, indeed, a visible reluctance on the part of these businesslike boards to expend the corporation's income for those intangible, immaterial uses for which the university is established. These uses leave no physical, tangible residue, in the way of durable goods, such as will justify the expenditure in terms of vendible property acquired; therefore they are *prima facie* imbecile, and correspondingly distasteful, to men whose habitual occupation is with the acquisition of property. By force of the same businesslike bias the boards unavoidably incline to apportion the funds assigned for current expenses in such a way as to favour those "practical" or quasi-practical lines of instruction and academic propaganda that are presumed to heighten the business acumen of the students or to yield immediate returns in the way of a creditable publicity.

As to the delegation of powers to the academic head. There is always the reservation to be kept in mind, that the academic head is limited in his discretion by the specifications of the budget. The permissible deviations in that respect are commonly neither wide nor of a substantial character; though the instances of a university president exercising large powers are also not extremely rare. But in common practice, it is to be noted, the academic head is vested with somewhat autocratic powers, within the lines effectually laid down in the budget; he is in effect responsible to the governing board alone, and his responsibility in that direction chiefly touches his observance of the pecuniary specifications of the budget.

But it is more to the point to note that the academic head commonly holds office by choice of the governing board. Where the power of appointment lies freely in the discretion of such a board, the board will create an academic head in its own image. In point of notorious fact, the academic head of the university is selected chiefly on grounds of his business qualifications, [60] taking that expression in a somewhat special sense. There is at present an increasingly broad and strenuous insistence on such qualifications in the men selected as heads of the universities; and the common sense of the community at large bears out the predilections of the businesslike board of control in this respect. The new incumbents are selected primarily with a view to give the direction of academic policy and administration more of a businesslike character. The choice may not always fall on a competent businessman, but that is not due to its inclining too far to the side of scholarship. It is not an easy matter even for the most astute body of businessmen to select a candidate who shall measure up to their standard of businesslike efficiency in a field of activity that has substantially nothing in common with that business traffic in which their preconceptions of efficiency have been formed.

In many cases the alumni have much to say in the choice of a new academic head, whether by courtesy or by express provision; and the results under these circumstances are not substantially different. It follows as an inevitable consequence of the current state of popular sentiment that the successful businessmen among the alumni will have the deciding voice, in so far as the matter rests with the alumni; for the successful men of affairs assert themselves with easy confidence, and they are looked up to, in any community whose standards of esteem are business standards, so that their word carries weight beyond that of any other class or order of men. The community at large, or at least that portion of the community that habitually makes itself heard, speaks to the same effect and on the same ground, viz., a sentimental conviction that pecuniary success is the final test of manhood. Business principles are the sacred articles of the secular creed, and business methods make up the ritual of the secular cult.

The one clear note of acclaim that goes up, from the avowed adepts of culture and from those without the pale, when a new head has, as recently, been called to one of the greater universities, is in commendation of his business capacity, "commercial sense," executive ability, financiering tact; and the effectual canvass of his qualifications does not commonly range much outside of these prime requisites. The modicum of scholarship and scholarly ideals and insight concessively deemed indispensable in such a case is somewhat of the nature of a perquisite, and is easily found. It is not required that the incumbent meet the [61] prepossessions of the contingent of learned men in the community in this respect; the choice does not rest with that element, nor does its ratification, but rather at the other end of the scale, with that extreme wing of the laity that is taken up with "practical," that is to say pecuniary, affairs.

As to the requirements of scholarly or scientific competency, a plausible speaker with a large gift of assurance, a businesslike "educator" or clergyman, some urbane pillar of society, some astute veteran of the scientific demi-monde, will meet all reasonable requirements. Scholarship is not barred, of course, though it is commonly the quasi-scholarship of the popular raconteur that comes in evidence in these premises; and the fact that these incumbents of executive office show so much of scholarly animus and attainments as they do is in great measure a fortuitous circumstance. It is, indeed, a safe generalization that in point of fact the average of university presidents fall short of the average of their academic staff in scholarly or scientific attainments, even when all persons employed as instructors are counted as members of the staff. It may also be remarked by the way that when, as may happen, a scholar or scientist takes office as directive head of a university, he is commonly lost to the republic of learning; he has in effect passed-from the ranks of learning to those of business enterprise.

The upshot of it all should be that when and in so far as a businesslike governing board delegates powers to the university's academic head, it delegates these powers to one of their own kind, who is somewhat peremptorily expected to live up to the aspirations that animate the board. What such a man, so placed, will do with the powers and opportunities that so devolve on him is a difficult question that can be answered only in terms of the compulsion of the circumstances in which he is placed and of the moral wear and tear that comes of arbitrary powers exercised in a tangle of ambiguities.

Though Veblen's critique of lay governance was intemperate, it was a symptom of the growing hostility between the emerging intellectuals -- some of them academics -- and the laymen who had come, during the previous generation, to govern and support higher education in the United States. In part this hostility stemmed from hostility to the commercialization of culture: as aesthetes like John Jay Chapman would sneer, "Eliot goes about in a cab with Pierpont [Morgan], hangs laurel wreaths on his nose, and gives him his papal kiss. Now. . . what has Eliot got to say to the young man entering business or politics who is about to be corrupted by Morgan and his class?" (Hawkins, 197_, 216). And Henry Adams would bemoan his student's belief that "the degree of Harvard College is worth money to me in Chicago" as yet another example of the decline of the West. The Left, with which Veblen was more identified, had its own reasons for denouncing business control of the universities. But connecting both was a common conviction that "men of learning . . . ought to occupy the strategic loci of social control" in the emerging institutional order of modern society (Lasch, 1965, xiv).

As late as the 1870s, the faculty at institutions like Yale and Harvard still felt they had a voice in the governance of the institutions in which they taught. By the turn of the century, scholars had been pushed aside -- and a measure of their alienation was their diminishing contribution to university fund drives. In Yale's 1830, 1854, and 1870 fund drives, Yale faculty could be counted among the leading contributors, giving as a whole nearly 10% of the whole amount raised. Often their gifts were among the largest collected. By the 1926 drive, in which two-thirds of the \$21 million raised came in the form of subscriptions of over \$5,000, faculty contributions were insignificant. In the larger universities, faculty had become employees and increasingly regarded their boards -- not without good reason in many cases -- as hostile to the academic enterprise.

This alienation of the intellectuals, whose primary income often came from philanthropy, from the institutions which supported them -- private universities and other privately-funded institutions of learning -- would have a significant impact on the capacity of Americans to understand the importance of private for-profit and nonprofit institutions. Academics would, more often than not, be critics rather than supporters of private initiatives in the public interest. And academic attention to the role of philanthropy and voluntarism in American life would be negligible.

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