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THE USABLE PAST: A STUDY OF THE HARVARD COLLEGE REBELLION OF 1834

ROBERT A. McCAUGHEY*

Whatever failings historians might acknowledge, reticence is not among them. Yet in the scholarly commentary that accompanies the current crisis of the American universities, they have deferred to the sociologists and philosophers, to the political scientists and even to the law professors.¹ As an historian I am tempted to suggest that such forbearance is symptomatic of an unseasonal fit of magnanimity that has lately infected the profession; but more persuasive, if less laudable, explanations keep intruding.

Only recently have American historians begun to expend a sizable portion of their collective energies examining the institutions in which they pursue their professional lives. With a few notable exceptions (e.g., Samuel Eliot Morison), the most gifted historians of the first half of this century wrote off the study of higher education as parochial, partisan, and professionally self-serving. Much of the work done in the field, as Professors Bernard Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin have indicated, lends credence to this view.² Consequently, few of the monographic studies that must precede a synthetic study of the role of higher education in America have yet been undertaken.³ We continue to know more about the origins of the Boston and Albany Railroad than those of Columbia University, and are more familiar with the compositions of workingmen's clubs in the 1830's than those of college faculties of the same era. Compared with the enigma of aca-

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1. See D. BELL & I. KRISTOL, *CONFRONTATION—THE STUDENT REBELLION AND THE UNIVERSITIES* (1968); *THE BERKELEY STUDENT REVOLT* (S. Lipset & S. Wolin eds. 1965); L. FEUER, *THE CONFLICT OF GENERATIONS* (1969); C. FRANKEL, *EDUCATION AND THE BARRICADES* (Jan. 1968).

2. B. BAILYN, *EDUCATION IN THE FORMING OF AMERICAN SOCIETY* 53-60 (1961); L. CREMIN, *THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF ELLWOOD PATTERSON CUBBERLEY* 42-46 (1965).

3. Two of the closest approximations of such a study are R. HOFSTADTER & W. METZGER, *THE DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM IN THE UNITED STATES* (1955) and F. RUDOLPH, *THE AMERICAN COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY* (1962). Rudolph's bibliographical essay is a useful survey of the work that has been accomplished in the field and the problems that await future consideration.

democratic finances, President Harding's extra-marital pursuits are an open book. Magnanimity may commend silence, but ignorance dictates it.

Historians have traditionally explained their neglect of higher education by asserting the subject to be far removed from the larger, more pervasive themes of the American past: immigration, the frontier, industrialization, politics, wars, urbanization. However persuasive one finds this reasoning (it seemed compelling only thirty years ago), it leaves the historian at work today in an awkward position. After years of carefully avoiding the hint of obscurantism in the selection of subject matter, he suddenly finds himself defending his calling to those who demand "relevance" as the lowest common denominator of all intellectual endeavor.⁴ The more reflective, that is less apocalyptic, academic radicals are coming to recognize the usefulness of knowing something of the history of the institutions they are committed to "restructuring," while conservative defenders of the university have occasionally acknowledged their need to learn more precisely what it is they are defending. In this context it is the historical antecedents of the railroads and organized labor that are peripheral.⁵

Yet most discussions of the state of the universities continue to lack even the semblance of an historical dimension. Assertions of singularity abound, often as breathlessly stated as unfounded, and vague references are still made to an era when all professors taught gladly (and held unlimited office hours), all students learned eagerly, and someone paid willingly for this irenic exchange. When worrying over present difficulties, few of us are immune to the chimera of a golden past.⁶

In resisting such a seductive notion, an historian even casually acquainted with the conditions of American universities during a previous period is tempted to assert categorically that higher education has always existed in a state of crisis. This is not to concede to *Ecclesiastes* the ultimate wisdom; some things are new under the academic sun.⁷ The quantitative differences between a modern university and, for

4. See generally N. Y. Times, Dec. 29, 1969, at 24, col. 2, N. Y. Times, Dec. 30, 1969, at 27, col. 1.

5. Kristol, *Writing About Trade Unions*, N. Y. Times, Feb. 1, 1970, § 7 (Book Review), at 6, col. 1.

6. This tendency recognizes no generational or national boundaries, as review of the following will indicate: B. EHRENREICH & J. EHRENREICH, *LONG MARCH, SHORT SPRING* (1969); N. VON HOFFMAN, *THE MULTIVERSITY* (1966); J. KUNEN, *THE STRAWBERRY STATEMENT* (1968); S. SPENDER, *THE YEAR OF THE YOUNG REBELS* (1968).

7. For a view that stresses continuity, and the persistent culpability of the students, see L. FEUER, *supra* note 1.

example, the largest pre-Civil War college imply qualitative differences as well. The racial tension that is a fact of contemporary campus life has no nineteenth-century analogue, unless, in a milder form, it was that generated by the presence of Southern students on Northern campuses in the 1850's.⁸ Today's ubiquitous, non-teaching administrator is a phenomenon for which the twentieth century is solely responsible.

Many of the apparent differences, however, turn out to be illusory. The professor preoccupied with an upcoming trip to Washington which he hopes will lead to a lucrative government contract is only a latter day version of the early nineteenth-century professor preoccupied with his guest sermon which he hoped would produce a permanent pulpit.⁹ The cash nexus binding most ante-bellum colleges to sectarian patrons persists today in slightly modified form with the federal government paying the piper, and calling a few of the tunes.

Student grievances (e.g., parietal rules, indifferent teachers, irrelevant courses) and the means of seeking redress (e.g., petitions, boycotts, disruptions) have changed very little. Equally resistant to modernization have been the responses of college officials. The intrusion of the surrounding community into university affairs (and vice versa), the spilling over of "real world" issues onto the campus, the incidence of violence, the resort to the police power of the state: all these antedate Mario Savio and Grayson Kirk, the Free Speech Movement and Vietnam. Indeed, the anti-institutionalism and egalitarian rhetoric which inform the radical critique of the "multiversity" were very much a part of the radical critique of the college in the age of Jackson.¹⁰

There is continuity as well as change in the history of American higher education. By documenting this point the historian may make his modest contribution to the awesome task of transforming the potentially destructive and inevitably contending forces that inhabit the American university into engines of institutional strength and personal enrichment. The following study is offered in this spirit.

8. J. AVORN, *UP AGAINST THE IVY WALL* 20-21 (1968).

9. John Quincy Adams (Harvard 1787) bitterly complained as an undergraduate about instructors in terms not so different from those Jacques Barzun uses to chastize certain contemporary teachers. Compare H. ADAMS, *HARVARD COLLEGE 1786-1787* in *HISTORICAL ESSAYS* 80 (1891) with J. BARZUN, *THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY* 34-62 (1968).

10. Compare the barrage of criticism that greeted C. KERR, *THE USES OF THE UNIVERSITY* (1963); a sampling is contained in *THE BERKELEY STUDENT REVOLT*, *supra* note 1 with the views in J. BANCROFT, *REPORT ON DIMINISHING THE COST OF INSTRUCTION IN HARVARD COLLEGE* (1845).

"The Augustan Age" of Harvard College

Harvard College formed an integral part of Massachusetts colonial society. Founded in 1636 by Puritans fearful of the brutalizing effects of the wilderness, the Cambridge seminary had sent forth more than two thousand graduates before the severing of political ties with England in 1776. Harvard alumni dominated the learned professions of New England, while the Corporation and the Board of Overseers, the two governing bodies of the college, constituted the political and religious leadership of Massachusetts. In addition to serving the local gentry, Harvard provided a launching pad for more modestly situated families like the Adamases of Braintree who hoped to propel their son John into the ranks of Boston's professional elite.¹¹

The War for Independence made few discernible marks on the college, nor did the peace bring any drastic changes. The prescribed curriculum and the system of daily recitations persisted. The Corporation (President, Treasurer, and five Fellows) remained co-optative; the Board of Overseers continued to be dominated by members of the upper house of the Massachusetts legislature and Congregationalist clergymen. It is a striking indication of how modestly the leaders of the struggle for independence intended their revolution in that no sweeping academic reforms attended it.¹²

The war, however, had seriously jeopardized the solvency of the college. Mismanagement of the endowment, the drying up of private English sources of revenue, and the general post-war depression combined to make Harvard's financial position more tenuous than at any time since the seventeenth century. Burdened with its own debts, the state was unable to help out as had the colonial government on occasion. Operating expenses had to be met out of tuition income, a fact that made the sharp drop in enrollments in the wake of the Revolution all the more serious. With Yale, Dartmouth, and Brown fighting for the limited supply of college-bound New England boys, Harvard found itself in a tight buyers' market. This situation persisted

11. The principal sources for the history of colonial Harvard are S. MORISON, *HARVARD COLLEGE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY* (1936); S. MORISON, *THREE CENTURIES OF HARVARD* (1936); J. QUINCY, *HISTORY OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY* (1840). An adequate discussion is also contained in *THE TEACHER IN PURITAN CULTURE*, 36 *HARV. EDUCATIONAL REV.* 394 (1966).

12. This continuity has been noted by B. BAILYN, *supra* note 2, at 45 and Fleming, *American Science and the World Scientific Community*, J. *WORLD HIST.* 669 (1965).

through the Civil War and had ramifications beyond merely financial matters.¹³

During the closing years of the eighteenth century Massachusetts society, heretofore relatively homogeneous, split sharply along religious and political lines. A schism within the dominant Congregationalist Church had been in the making since the beginning of the century. Delayed by the political turmoil attending the Revolution, the definitive break came in the 1790's when the liberals identified themselves as Unitarians, thus confirming what more orthodox Calvinists had long suspected.¹⁴

Harvard, had it tried, probably could not have remained aloof from this religious controversy. But it did not try. When the Corporation announced in 1804 that the Hollis Professorship of Divinity was to be filled by a Unitarian, it both scandalized and permanently alienated thousands of orthodox Calvinists who had previously patronized the college despite its liberal tendencies. From then on, they sent their boys to New Haven or, later, to Williamstown and Amherst.¹⁵

No less partisan politically, both the Corporation and the Harvard faculty remained conspicuously Federalist long after the Jeffersonian Democrats became a contending force in Massachusetts politics. Aspiring Democratic politicians joined with Calvinist clergymen in condemning Harvard as the last refuge of a discredited aristocracy and the sink of atheistic debauchery. Harvard-baiting became a popular campaign device, evidence of one's egalitarian sentiments. Within thirty years of the Revolution the wide base of popular support upon which colonial Harvard rested had been destroyed; the college was obliged to reckon with the fact that large blocs of public sentiment existed which desired nothing so much as to see it go under.¹⁶

Prospects for the college seemed to take a turn for the better in 1810 when the Corporation offered the presidency to the Rev. John Thornton Kirkland. Boston's choice, the affable bachelor was a Unitarian and a Federalist, but outspoken as neither. Members of the Corporation saw in Kirkland a man capable of restoring Harvard's reputation among the disaffected alumni of the capital.¹⁷ Things looked still brighter when Democratic reverses on the eve of the War of 1812 permitted the

13. II J. QUINCY, *supra* note 11, at 182-209.

14. C. WRIGHT, *THE BEGINNINGS OF UNITARIANISM IN AMERICA* 252-80 (1955).

15. *Id.* at 280; II J. QUINCY, *supra* note 11, at 284-85; Letter from John Randolph to Josiah Quincy, Dec. 11, 1813, in John Randolph Papers, Library of Congress.

16. S. MORISON, *THREE CENTURIES*, *supra* note 11, at 164-91.

17. *Id.* at 195-97.

Federalists to regain control of the state legislature. In 1814 a bill was passed for the "encouragement of literature, piety, morality, and the useful arts and science" which levied a ten-year tax on state banks with approximately \$10,000 of the annual proceeds going to Harvard. This windfall, representing one-quarter of the college's income over the next decade, temporarily relieved the Corporation's financial embarrassment and gave Kirkland a splendid opportunity to recover lost ground.¹⁸

The money was quickly put to work: several building projects were undertaken; funds were set aside to supplement faculty salaries; and a scholarship fund was established. Wealth begat wealth as Bostonians funnelled an impressive portion of their wartime profits into professorships. Enrollments increased in direct proportion to the college's willingness to subsidize tuition costs. The graduating class of 1818 numbered eighty-one, a figure which reestablished Harvard as the largest degree-granting institution in the country.¹⁹ President Kirkland began talking of transforming the college into a genuine university "after the most approved establishments of the kind in Europe." So promising were the signs that Ralph Waldo Emerson, then an undergraduate, thought his alma mater on the threshold of "a new morning." More than a century later Samuel Eliot Morison hailed the Kirkland era as Harvard's "Augustan Age."²⁰

Unfortunately, as with most windfalls, the legislative grant could not be institutionalized. Just as the bank tax came up for renewal in 1823, the Federalist party lost control of the General Court. The Corporation was informed by the presiding Democrats in 1824 that Harvard's financial problems no longer concerned the Commonwealth. Although members of the state senate continued to dominate the Board of Overseers and to pass judgment on decisions made by the Corporation, direct state aid had ceased.²¹

This withdrawal of the college's principal benefactor came amidst a series of reports reaching the legislators of riotous goings on in Cambridge. Popular among the students, Kirkland failed as a disciplinarian. By declining to exercise his authority in good season, he permitted the undergraduates to terrorize their tutors. Interclass battles broke out regularly in the commons, while explosions and window smashings

18. II J. QUINCY, *supra* note 11, at 307.

19. *Id.* at 312-20, 330-31; C. Shipton, Chart on Admissions to Harvard College (1725-1859) (Harvard University Archives).

20. Kirkland, *Literary Institutions—University*, VII NORTH AM. REV. 270-78 (1818).

21. II J. QUINCY, *supra* note 11, at 358-59.

were nightly events in the Yard. Professors who attempted to intervene found themselves physically intimidated. Things reached such a state in 1818 that Kirkland resorted to mass expulsions in a belated attempt to restore order. Five years later forty-four seniors were expelled only days before graduation. Clearly something was wrong in Cambridge.²²

In view of the tender age at which students matriculated in the 1820's (freshmen were accepted in their twelfth year), undergraduate carousing had reached epic proportions. Mid-week drinking bouts lasted through the night, halted only by the need to appear at morning chapel. Weekends meant jaunts into Boston which included visits to the West End brothels and often ended with town-gown brawls on the Common.²³ One observer of Harvard undergraduates during the Kirkland era offered this description of the prevailing life style:

The time not spent in classes is divided between eating and drinking, smoking and sleeping. Approach the door of one of their apartments at any hour of the day, you will be driven back from it, as you would from the cabin of a Dutch smack, by the thick volumes of stinking tobacco smoke, which it sends forth; should you dare enter, you will find half a dozen loungers in a state of oriental lethargy, each stretched out upon two or three chairs, with scarce any indication of life in them than the feeble effort they make to keep up the fire of their cigars.²⁴

Critics snapped up such reports of high living and low morals as proof that Harvard was unsuited to instruct the sons of God-fearing democrats. Even before scholarship funds had been slashed in 1824, enrollment figures again began slipping. Entering classes between 1820 and 1825 averaged seventy-five, a drop of ten from the previous decade. Yale, with its reputation for orthodoxy and good order, forged ahead in the numbers competition, not to be headed until the Civil War.²⁵

As a result of Kirkland's refusal to assume daily responsibilities for

22. A. PEABODY, *HARVARD REMINISCENCES* (1888); J. QUINCY, JR., *FIGURES OF THE PAST* 16-43 (1928); MORISON, *The Great Rebellion in Harvard College and the Resignation of President Kirkland*, in *XXVII PUBLICATIONS OF THE COLONIAL SOC'Y OF MASS.* 54 (1928).

23. See generally I *DIARY OF CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS* (A. DiPace & D. Donald eds. 1964).

24. Cogswell, *On the Means of Education, and the State of Learning in the United States of America*, IV *BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE* 546, 550 (1819).

25. S. MORISON, *THREE CENTURIES*, *supra* note 11, at 253; C. Shipton, *supra* note 19.

maintaining order, he spent much of his time in Boston, disciplinary functions devolved upon the resident faculty. This both reduced their effectiveness as teachers and deprived them of time for scholarly pursuits. German-trained instructors like Edward Everett, Joseph Cogswell, and George Bancroft found the parietal duties attached to a Harvard teaching position intolerable. Bancroft spoke for all three when he wrote in 1823:

I have found College a sickening and wearisome place. Not one spring of comfort have I had to draw from. My state has been nothing but trouble, trouble, trouble, and I am heartily glad the end of the year is coming so soon.²⁶

He left after his first year.

Except for George Ticknor, who retained his sanity and his scholarly interests by living in Boston, away from the nocturnal activities of the Yard, the Harvard faculty consisted of men like Edward Everett who used Cambridge as a way station, or older men like Sidney Willard who had long ago resigned themselves to being "a permanent instructor of youth."²⁷ Underpaid, overworked, and prodded by the ambitious Everett, the resident faculty attempted in 1824 to improve their condition by asserting their rights to a voice in the Corporation. Informed by the Corporation that they were employees of the college and were to restrict their attentions to "the pleasant duties of the classroom," the faculty responded by quietly sabotaging every academic reform proposed by the non-resident Ticknor.²⁸

For the first time since the 1790's enrollments in 1826 dropped below two hundred. That year more than \$4000 of the endowment was expended to meet an operating deficit. It may be said that whenever a Boston institution starts eating off its capital the situation is serious.²⁹

Retrenchment was obviously in order, but Kirkland declined to administer it. He and the College Treasurer, Judge John Davis, had

26. I M. HOWE, *THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF GEORGE BANCROFT* 163 (1908).

27. D. TYACK, *GEORGE TICKNOR AND THE BOSTON BRAHMINS* 85-128 (1967).

28. J. LOWELL, *REMARKS ON A PAMPHLET BY THE PROFESSORS AND TUTORS OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY* 34, 39-40 (1824); D. TYACK, *supra* note 27, at 118-23; E. Everett, *Memorial of the Resident Instructors*, May 31, 1824. The controversy is discussed from the Corporation's viewpoint in II J. QUINCY, *supra* note 11, at 338-53.

29. G. Ticknor, *Remarks on the President's Report* (April 11, 1827), in *Corporation Papers* 24 (1827), Harvard University Archives. The most damning indictment of the Kirkland administration is to be found in N. Bowditch, *College History* (May 1828) (Harvard University Archives). Bowditch apparently intended to publish this as an exposé, but decided against doing so.

managed money matters during the state-grant years without the encumbrances of a bookkeeping system. Drafts submitted by the President, whether for salaries or classroom furniture, were honored by the Treasurer with no questions asked. When Davis resigned in 1826 his "accounts" consisted of some entries made on the backs of envelopes.³⁰

Finally, Nathaniel Bowditch, a newly elected member of the Corporation and not a graduate of Harvard, stepped into the void. After pressuring Davis into resigning, the Salem Navigator *cum* Boston insurance executive, secured the election of another non-Harvard businessman, Ebenezer Francis. Together they set about putting the college's chaotic finances in order. Faculty salaries were cut; professorships were consolidated, left vacant or eliminated; operating expenses were pared to the bone. For the first time in years college provisioners found their bills being scrutinized.³¹

A gruff, humorless man, Bowditch went about his self-assigned salvaging duties "with the zeal of an apostle." He had little use for Kirkland and none for his cavalier ways with the college's money. "The President," Bowditch declared in tones of moral disapprobation, "is no businessman." After a series of minor disagreements, Bowditch took the occasion of the March 27, 1828 Corporation meeting to tell Kirkland precisely what he thought of his administration. The next morning the President announced his resignation, thus bringing Harvard's "new day" to a gloomy close.³²

Toward "A Well-Disciplined High School"

The Corporation spent nine months hunting for a new president. Success came only after the voters of Boston unexpectedly decided that six years of Mayor Josiah Quincy had been quite enough. Son of a revolutionary patriot, fourth generation graduate of Harvard (Class of 1790), outspoken Federalist Congressman (1805-1813), state legislator, municipal judge, and head of one of New England's most prestigious families, Quincy had presided over his native city since 1823. Although Bostonians later used Quincy's administration as

30. N. Bowditch, *supra* note 29; Microfilm of Judge Davis' Accounts in Harvard University Archives.

31. R. BERRY, *YANKEE STARGAZER: THE LIFE OF NATHANIEL BOWDITCH* 203-10 (1941).

32. Letter from Eliza S. Quincy to Robert C. Winthrop, July 7, 1879, in Robert C. Winthrop Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; N. Bowditch, *supra* note 29, at 37.

their standard, they were sufficiently tired of his autocratic rule after six terms to deny him a seventh.³³

The Corporation hoped to turn Boston's loss into Harvard's gain. Both Bowditch and Joseph Story, who divided his energies between the Supreme Court and Harvard, were close friends of Quincy's; they knew him to be a man of personal integrity, a proven administrator, and, as he demonstrated in dealing with Boston hoodlums, a champion of law and order. The other members of the Corporation agreed that he possessed the essential qualifications to preside over Harvard at this critical juncture. They also calculated that, as a layman long removed from national politics, he stood a good chance of securing the necessary approval of all but the most partisan Overseers.³⁴

Approached by Bowditch early in January and assured that "while a great deal has been wasted and lost at Cambridge, there is much notable property left," the fifty-seven year old Quincy agreed to accept the thankless job. Later in the month, by a vote of forty to twenty-six, the Board of Overseers confirmed his election as the fifteenth president of Harvard College. Some thought he might well be the last.³⁵

Quincy came over to Cambridge in June with few illusions about the dimensions of his assignment. He had been chosen by the Corporation neither for his scholarly attainments which were considerable, nor his teaching experience which was non-existent, but for his demonstrated capacity to govern the recalcitrant. The president-elect shared the view of Ticknor and the Corporation that "if we are ever to have a University at Cambridge, which shall lead the intellectual character of the country, it can be . . . only when the present college shall have settled into a thorough and well-disciplined high school."³⁶ All agreed that before the quality of instruction could be improved, the flow of private benefactions revived, and student ranks replenished, a disciplinary system that would bring an end to campus turbulence had to be implemented. Yet the permissiveness of the Kirkland years,

33. Morison, *Josiah Quincy*, in XV *DICTIONARY OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY* 308, 310 (D. Malone ed. 1935).

34. Letter from Edward Everett to Isaac Parker [a member of the Corporation], Jan. 22, 1829, in Edward Everett Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society; Letter from George Ticknor to Nicholas Biddle, July 9, 1828, in George Ticknor Papers, in Harvard University Archives.

35. Journal of Eliza Susan Quincy, extracts printed in IV *CAMBRIDGE HIST. Soc'y PUBLICATIONS* 90 (1909).

36. Letter from George Ticknor to N.A. Haven, October 26, 1825, in I *LIFE, LETTERS, AND JOURNALS OF GEORGE TICKNOR* 357 (A. Ticknor ed. 1876).

combined with the general anti-authoritarianism characteristic of Jacksonian America, promised to make such implementation difficult if not impossible. "An age almost lawless from its love of liberty," Quincy sardonically remarked during the course of his Inaugural Address, "is calling for restraints to be taught her, which it neglects itself to teach and practice, and has no disposition to countenance elsewhere."³⁷

The new president's first reform was standardization of the chaotic grading system bequeathed by his predecessor. For several years Harvard instructors had been devising their own grading schemes, a practice that led to general confusion and frequent charges of favoritism. Quincy's solution was a "Scale of Comparative Merit," a fantastically involved system that awarded or denied points in multiples of eight for virtually every move made by an undergraduate. During the course of four years it was possible to accumulate as many as 29,920 points! The President kept the books.³⁸

The Scale of Merit did not prove a popular success with the undergraduates, who much preferred the casual ways of the old regime to the impersonal efficiency of the new. A leading objection to the system was that it fostered competition among the students (precisely what Quincy had had in mind) and, in so doing, attempted to make academic achievement a badge of distinction (also part of the plan).³⁹ It quickly became clear that any academic reforms would have to be instituted in the face of student opposition. Quincy's business-like approach to the presidency might save the college, where Kirkland's easygoing approach had put it in peril, but the new president could never hope to win the affection that students so generously bestowed upon his predecessor. He would have to make do with their fearful respect.⁴⁰

A Harvard student's life revolved around his class, a social fact reinforced by the lock-step curriculum. Classes were small in the 1830's, never exceeding seventy students, and loyalties quickly developed that were to last a lifetime. Lavish class banquets, the freshman class in 1832 ordered six gallons of whisky and rum for an anticipated forty

37. Address of Josiah Quincy upon Inauguration as President June 2, 1829, in Harvard University Archives.

38. A. PEABODY, *supra* note 22, at 30-31; Harvard Corporation Papers (1829 folder), in Harvard University Archives; Letter from Richard Henry Dana to R. H. Dana, Jr., Oct. 31, 1831 in Richard Henry Dana Correspondence, Massachusetts Historical Society.

39. J. Quincy, Abstract of the Petitions of the Classes Against Rank, in VI Harvard College Papers 109-10 (1834), Harvard University Archives.

40. S. MORISON, *THREE CENTURIES*, *supra* note 11, at 220-21.

guests, instilled a sense of common identity, or at any rate, communal inebriation.⁴¹

Another element that unified the students was a common distrust of the faculty. One tutor compared student-faculty relations during this period to that "between Jews and Samaritans." Consequently, unless a college officer caught a student redhanded, the most heinous acts of student criminality went unreported. "The *esprit de corps* was strongly against tale-bearing, [a Harvard man later recalled] and if anyone did know the offender . . . he did not reveal it."⁴²

Student reputations came not from academic ranking, dismissed as an administrative matter, but from feats of daring done within the ranks. The hearty soul who stood up to his instructor became an instant hero; his suspension made him a martyr; his eventual reinstatement elicited demonstrations appropriate for the Second Coming. Conversely, students suspected of talking with members of the faculty were ostracized. One suspended Harvard student revealed the prevailing sentiment in a letter to a "dear ex-classmate":

I hear some of your relations in Cambridge say that you had nothing to do with our disturbances; If I were you, I would not let such a report, *so much to my discredit*, be circulated if I could help it.⁴³

In short, Harvard students were thick as thieves and boasted an ethical code to match. So long as they defied the college authorities (the "Government") in what the *Laws of the College* called "combinations," they had the upper hand. Virtually the only response to mass insubordination available to the Government was mass expulsion. This, as the students well knew, could not be used with impunity at a time when student enrollments constituted the principal index of institutional vitality and competing colleges were prepared to snap up what Harvard discarded. Furthermore, the publicity that attended such action did little to enhance the reputation of Cambridge as a place of peaceful reflection.

The Corporation recognized the problem of trying to separate the hoodlums, arsonists, and demolition experts from those undergraduates

41. Letter from G. E. Channing to Richard Henry Dana, June 2, 1832, in Richard Henry Dana Correspondence, Massachusetts Historical Society.

42. I THE JOURNAL OF RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR. 20 (R. Lucid ed. 1968).

43. Morison, *The Great Rebellion*, *supra* note 22, at 26.

who were merely rowdy and tightlipped. In 1826 Kirkland was authorized to make full use of "the proper civil tribunal" in cases involving "any person or property which is cognizable by the Laws of the Land." When a professor was assaulted in the Yard less than a year later, the faculty pleaded with the President to have a non-cooperative witness to the event summoned before the Court of Common Pleas sitting in Concord. But as long as "jolly old Kirkland" remained in office, the students knew that "being sent to Concord" remained an idle threat.⁴⁴

They could not be so certain about Quincy. Called together in the fall of 1829, Harvard undergraduates had their first opportunity to size up the new president. He began slowly, congratulating the students for their recent behavior. Then he went on to note a few lapses: the blowing up of a recitation room; ransacking the Cambridge armory for explosives; nightly harassment of the librarian's house; a short but destructive fire set in the Commons; pilfering of library books for resale in Boston. "The knowledge of these facts," Quincy reminded his unrepentant audience, "is not and can not be confined within the walls of this university. They are blazoned abroad."⁴⁵

The President then proceeded to lay down the law as promulgated by the Corporation a week earlier:

Voted—Unanimously—That in all cases of gross theft and depredations upon the property of the University or of others, or of gross trespasses, or injuries done to persons or property within the precincts of the University, or charged upon any of its members, it shall be the duty of the President, first taking the advice of the faculty, or Corporation, to cause prosecution to be instituted before the established tribunals of the state; and the usual forms of proceeding to be pursued which are applicable to like crimes and offenses when committed by other citizens or residents, according to the laws of the Commonwealth.

The Corporation, Quincy explained, had decided on this policy for two reasons: (1.) the recognized incapacity of the faculty to elicit testimony from unwilling students; (2.) the conviction that the tradi-

44. Corporation Minutes, VI College Records 303 (July 20, 1824), in Harvard University Archives; X Records of the College Faculty 124 (June 12, 1826), in Harvard University Archives.

45. Address by Josiah Quincy to the Students, (Oct., 1829), in Josiah Quincy Papers, Harvard University Archives.

tional double standard that exempted students from criminal prosecution had itself contributed to campus turmoil.⁴⁶

Quincy asked the assembled students to look upon this new policy as "a Magna Charta for the young men of this seminary." In a way the description is apt: suspected students would now be afforded an opportunity to prove their innocence by availing themselves of due process.⁴⁷ Yet few if any undergraduates viewed the policy in this light. On the contrary, most saw it as a unilateral and intolerable change in the ancient rules of campus warfare.

The Morphology of Rebellion

Possibly intimidated by the new president's brusqueness, the students only slowly took up the challenge implicit in the Corporation ruling. Quincy's first year passed quietly, and not until the spring of 1831 did any significant disturbance occur. On March 17 the faculty voted to suspend a popular sophomore, George William Amory, for neglect of studies. Amory's classmates reacted to this decision by gutting his vacated dormitory room and then proceeding to disrupt evening chapel services. The President attempted to reason with the class by reading a letter from Amory's father approving the faculty action. "This, instead of silencing them," wrote a freshman, "made them all the more turbulent, and the confusion continued until the services were over."⁴⁸

When disruptions were repeated the following morning, Quincy announced that expulsions were in the offing and hinted at the possibility of sending the entire sophomore class to Concord to testify about the destruction of college property. This extinguished the rebellion. "Thus a great disturbance has arisen from nothing," one undergraduate concluded. "This is the first serious difficulty President Quincy has met with, and it is a trying time with him, since his future success, must, in a great measure, depend upon his present management."⁴⁹

A more sustained disturbance occurred the following spring, this time in the freshman class. A scholarship student, Augustus Kendall

46. Corporation Minutes, VII College Records 149 (Sept. 29, 1829), in Harvard University Archives.

47. J. Quincy, Communication to Students on New Regulations (Oct. 1829), in Josiah Quincy Papers, Harvard University Archives.

48. II Diary of George Moore, 1828-1836, entry for March 17, 1831, in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

49. *Id.* at entry for March 18, 1831.

Rugg, had been called before the faculty to discuss his knowledge of events surrounding a recent dormitory explosion. When he refused to talk, Rugg was told he would be sent to Concord. His fellow freshmen, assuming he was covering for implicated classmates, rallied to his aid.⁵⁰

"A meeting was called at which all the class but two or three very timid and mean spirited lads attended," a freshman recalled later; "we passed resolutions that we would sustain our classmate and proceeded to act accordingly." Chapel services were disrupted for three days and so complete was a freshman boycott of classes that the faculty announced a week's holiday. But what had begun to look very much like "the open rebellion" the freshmen predicted, collapsed when Rugg confessed to sole responsibility for the dormitory explosion. Thoroughly frightened by his imminent appearance before the grand jury, he went to the President and admitted that self-preservation, not class loyalty, accounted for his earlier silence. This incidence proved to Quincy the effectiveness of the off-to-Concord-with-you strategem. Rugg received a two-year suspension, while eight of his trusting and disruptive classmates found themselves rusticated for six months. The eight left Cambridge, as one sophomore noted "amid the huzzas of the students." Huzzas or no, Quincy had won the second round.⁵¹

Except for a brief town-gown scuffle, Cambridge remained placid throughout the 1832-1833 academic year. The fall and winter terms that followed were positively dull. Harvard seemed to be settling into the "well-disciplined high school" that Quincy was determined to make it. "College thus far this present year has been more calm and still than I ever knew it before," wrote George Moore, a restive senior, on March 8, 1834:

Everything goes on regularly—we scarce have a bonfire to vary the monotony of College life. Far be it from me to wish any such thing but I have some time thought that a rebellion, or some scrape, and would be a good thing for the sake of variety.⁵²

Like the antecedents of a war, those of a college rebellion may well be rooted in what becomes for some the intolerable boredom of peace.

50. Dana, *Autobiographical Sketch*, *supra* note 42, at 20-22.

51. Dana, *Autobiographical Sketch*, *supra* note 42, at 22; Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entries for March 3, 5, and 10, 1832; J. Quincy, Account of the Disturbances in Harvard College, (March 1832), in Josiah Quincy Papers, Harvard University Archives.

52. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for March 8, 1834.

Six weeks later Moore's wish was answered. The Harvard College Rebellion of 1834, unlike those of 1818 and 1823, began in a classroom. On Monday, May 19, an argument broke out between a freshman, John Bayard Maxwell, and his instructor of Greek, the twenty-two year old Christopher Dunkin. After declining an invitation to recite, and refusing an order to do so, Maxwell challenged Dunkin's authority to direct the class. The latter sent his rebellious student to the President, who warned Maxwell that he must apologize to Dunkin or "take up his connections." After deliberating for two days, the freshman decided Harvard not worth an apology, and quit.⁵³

Such defiance required a demonstration of sympathy by the freshman class. "Crackers were fired off in chapel" following the announcement there on Friday evening, "and a continuous noise by scraping and kicking kept up during the services." Later that night the recitation room regularly used by Dunkin was set afire, its furniture shattered and thrown out into the Yard. When two nightwatchmen tried to intervene, they were beaten. Chapel services were disrupted by freshmen throughout the weekend.⁵⁴

On Monday morning, May 26, several sophomores joined the freshmen in causing still another disturbance at chapel. Their reasons for doing so also involved a classroom dispute with Dunkin. The zealous instructor had decided earlier in the spring that Harvard sophomores ought to learn to write as well as to read Greek. His students found the assignment both distasteful and unprecedented. A class petition to this effect had been sent to the President in early May. Quincy returned it during the week of the Maxwell affair, informing the sophomores that writing Greek would not inflict permanent damage either upon their health or upon college traditions. On Monday the sophomores rejoined with their feet.⁵⁵

Isolating the source of a disturbance in a room crowded with two hundred students often proved impossible. But procedural difficulties aside, Quincy considered it essential that he respond forcefully and quickly to Monday morning's disturbance. Less than two hours after the close of chapel services, he announced the expulsion of Jonathan Barnwell, a sophomore transfer student.⁵⁶

53. *Id.* at entry for May 23, 1834; XI Records of the College Faculty 138-139, 140 (May 21, 26, 1834), in Harvard University Archives.

54. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 27, 1834.

55. Sophomore Memorial to Faculty, March 1834, in VI Harvard College Papers 115-17, Harvard University Archives.

56. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 29, 1834; XI Records of the College Faculty 141 (May 28, 1834), in Harvard University Archives.

The means used to single Barnwell out were much disputed. Quincy insisted that he had been the only student positively identified by the tutors and, while not the only offender, had been among them and therefore liable. Students dismissed this explanation as casuistry; they assumed that Barnwell had been selected because "he was but little acquainted, as a Southerner, and one over whom no disturbance would be made." However calculated, Quincy's use of what he called "selective punishment" greatly exacerbated an already dangerous situation.⁵⁷

News of Barnwell's expulsion precipitated a series of class caucuses in the Yard to "take some measure on the subject." These meetings, in violation of college regulations, were in themselves a challenge to the Government. Out of them emerged a petition signed by nearly all the undergraduates calling for the immediate reinstatement of Barnwell. Although one of the signatories described it as "couched in mild terms and without any abusive or menacing tone," the petition concluded by demanding that a response be forthcoming—"by tomorrow morning." "We are on the eve of a Rebellion," wrote George Moore now fully recovered from his earlier boredom with college, "and something serious will—must—soon be done."⁵⁸

While Quincy conferred with the faculty before responding to the student ultimatum, sophomores assumed the lead of the Rebellion. They boycotted their Tuesday classes and, on Wednesday, stormed into the middle of chapel services, completely disrupting them. When Quincy ordered them to take their seats, they turned and marched out. Furious, the President suspended the entire class on the spot. By three o'clock that afternoon, forty-four sophomores had been sent home.⁵⁹

The next morning, Thursday, Quincy announced that he and the faculty had reviewed the student petition and had rejected its demands. "Groans and hisses" greeted the news as did calls for yet another round of class meetings. Far less temperate than those of Monday, these sessions were highlighted by "speeches, flaming rebellious speeches, denouncing the Government and their proceedings." With the sophomores chased from the field, the freshmen again asserted their claims as leaders of the attack upon the Government by hoisting above their dormitory "the black flag of rebellion."⁶⁰

57. J. Quincy, Statement Before the Board of Overseers, July 31, 1834, in VIII Records of the Overseers 170-75, Harvard University Archives.

58. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 27, 1834.

59. *Id.* at entry for May 29, 1834; XI Records of the College Faculty 140-41 (May 28, 30, 1834) in Harvard University Archives.

60. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 29, 1834.

Most upperclassmen, however, were at this point uncommitted. "We can look coolly on these matters," wrote one senior; "we have experienced enough to know that the Government [is] generally right in [its] decisions and that they would not take rash measures without good cause." At one point on Friday it appeared that Quincy had won over this moderate sentiment when he called in several upperclassmen to assure them that Barnwell had not really been expelled, only suspended for two years. This "concession" seemed to satisfy the seniors and prompted the juniors to rescind inflammatory statements made earlier at their class meeting. By Friday evening it looked like the Rebellion had run its course.⁶¹

Unfortunately for the Government, the freshmen proved more intractable. Saturday morning found them back in chapel scraping away. Two of them received suspensions, as did a member of the junior class. This last suspension, apparently justified, nonetheless lost yet another class to the Rebellion. Juniors began sporting black armbands in memory of their suspended comrade-in-arms as a symbol of their opposition to the Government.⁶²

By Sunday, Quincy had recovered from momentary lapse into conciliatory politics and had decided to wheel out his major weapon. Students were notified that on June 12, when the grand jury next sat in Concord, each member of the freshman class would be called before it to testify as to his involvement in the destruction of Dunkin's recitation room and the attack upon the nightwatchmen. Even seniors long perched on the barricades now leaped over to the rebels' side. "This is a course that will never favorably operate," wrote the now thoroughly aroused George Moore. "The members of the College will not suffer it—the community will not tolerate it."⁶³

As Moore implied, the Harvard Rebellion had by this juncture acquired a public dimension. Talk in Boston on Artillery Election Day, June 2, focused upon Quincy's unprecedented decision to involve the state courts in what many regarded as just another case of undergraduate highjinks. Critics of the college and longstanding political enemies of the President were thoroughly enjoying the spectacle of Harvard tearing itself apart. They had even more cause for amusement when reports of what was transpiring back in the Yard reached Boston. As one eyewitness described it:

61. *Id.* at entry for May 30, 1834.

62. XI Records of the College Faculty 146 (May 31, 1834), in Harvard University Archives.

63. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 31, 1834.

about 11 o'clock an effigy of Pres. Quincy was hung with a rope about the neck from the Rebellion Tree [clearly visible from the President's house]—a bonfire built near it—a loud shouting raised—and after being exhibited for some time in this way—it was set on fire and burnt while crackers were firing around, and explosions going on continually from powder in the body! This was done by the Junior Class, and by a vote of that Class!⁶⁴

What had begun as a classroom altercation had in the course of two weeks escalated into an open confrontation between the entire student body of Harvard College and its president, with the whole state looking on.

Whatever illusions Quincy might have retained of residual support in the senior class were shattered on June 11 with the publication of *A Circular of the Senior Class of Harvard College on the Recent Disturbances*. Intended for public distribution, the *Senior Circular* purported to be a point-by-point refutation of the official explanation of events contained in a letter sent from the President to the parents of suspended students. Blame for the disturbances was placed squarely on Quincy and his "want of discretion." The *Circular* concluded by disputing his personal qualifications to remain at the head of the college:

The manners of President Quincy toward many of the students have not been such as to conciliate their esteem and affection. His defective memory, and the natural impetuosity of his character, often give the appearance of acting in an arbitrary and capricious manner: and though his friends allow his sincerity and integrity, yet it can not be wondered at that many of the students, whom he has not made his friends, should entertain a different view.⁶⁵

Boston newspapers traditionally critical of Harvard and much of the sectarian press joined with the students in calling for Quincy's resignation. Editors vied with one another in resurrecting stories out of his political past to corroborate the charge of impetuosity. Admittedly, when dealing with a man who had once stood up in a Democratic-

64. *Id.* at entry for June 2, 1834. On June 6, 1834, the Attorney General of Massachusetts, James Trecothick Austin, offered Quincy the use of public officers to preserve and vindicate the public peace. VI Harvard College Papers 180, in Harvard University Archives.

65. A CIRCULAR AT THE SENIOR CLASS OF HARVARD COLLEGE ON THE RECENT DISTURBANCES 8 (June 11, 1834).

controlled Congress and called for President Thomas Jefferson's impeachment, such stories were not hard to find. Yet even the *Boston Courier* and the *Columbian Centinel*, generally sympathetic when discussing Cambridge problems, reprinted the *Senior Circular*, appending a few words of support for Harvard's embattled president.⁶⁶

"I am not a man to be frightened from a post of duty and usefulness," the sixty-three year old Quincy assured his friends; "the harder the tempest rages, the tighter I shall stick to the rudder." He obviously derived a certain grim pleasure from all the turmoil, which he went so far as to liken to his stormy days in Congress. "I have known what it is to endure the calumnies and clamour of grown men," he wrote at the height of the Rebellion, "there are no terrors in those of half-fledged boys." But more than half-fledged boys were after his scalp.⁶⁷

Although the Corporation unanimously supported Quincy in all his decisions including that to resort to the state courts, comparable backing was lacking from the faculty and the Board of Overseers. Students imagined the President and the faculty, "meeting like the Inquisition, ever ready to proceed against new offenders," when in fact they seldom agreed. The President's tough policy usually prevailed, but always in the face of considerable faculty opposition. Anywhere from two to a majority of the nine regularly voting members of the faculty took exception to his tactics at one time or another. The acknowledged leader of the dissident faction was Karl Follen, a political refugee from Germany where he had been implicated in student-led disturbances of the 1820's. The holder of a temporary professorship (due to expire in 1835), an outspoken advocate of student self-government, and popular with the undergraduates, Follen was in Quincy's admittedly jaundiced view, a troublemaker.⁶⁸

Strained relations between Quincy, representing the Corporation, and the Board of Overseers were virtually unavoidable. As constituted, the Board was an anachronism, a carryover from the days when the Commonwealth actively supported the college as a public institution. By the 1830's it could do little except criticize decisions made by the

66. *Boston Advocate*, June 18, 1834; *Boston Courier*, June 19, 1834; *Boston Transcript*, June 16, 1834; *Columbian Centinel*, June 16, 1834; *Mercantile Journal*, June 18, 1834.

67. Letter from Josiah Quincy to Charles W. Upham, June 21, 1834, in Josiah Quincy Papers, Harvard University Archives.

68. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for May 31, 1834; XI Records of the College Faculty 138-70 (May 21-Aug. 26, 1834), in Harvard University Archives. For an indictment of Follen as a student provocateur in Germany see L. FEUER, *supra* note 1, at 59-66.

Corporation. The fact that fifty of the eighty Overseers in 1834 had not attended Harvard meant that the Corporation could not depend on it to exude much "old school" loyalty in a crisis. Many of the Overseers serving by virtue of their election to the state senate regarded the Board as simply another instrument by which they might further their partisan objectives. This tendency revealed itself in the opposition voiced by several Whig Overseers to the Corporation's decision to award an honorary Doctor of Laws degree to President Andrew Jackson in 1833. It revealed itself again in 1834.⁶⁹

At the Board of Overseers meeting, held on July 17, 1834, a Whig senator, Alexander Hill Everett, introduced the *Senior Circular* for discussion. During the ensuing debate, Everett espoused the seniors' position by contending that the disturbances in Cambridge would not have occurred but for a series of presidential "indiscretions." When friends of Quincy moved that he be given a vote of confidence, they found many of the Overseers unwilling to do so. The vote-of-confidence resolution was tabled, while a committee was appointed to investigate the allegations made in the *Senior Circular*. Everett, who had been a candidate for the Harvard presidency in 1828 and still fancied himself in that position, was appointed to the committee. Fortunately for Quincy, so was his lifelong friend, John Quincy Adams.⁷⁰

On August 21, 1834, the Board of Overseers held a meeting that ranks as one of the stormiest and least productive on record. Everett moved at the beginning of the meeting that it be thrown open to the public. After much heated debate, this unprecedented proposal was narrowly rejected. There followed a protracted discussion over which of two committee reports, that drafted by Adams and approved by the committee, or that "corrected" by Everett, should be presented. The Overseers decided to adjourn for four days and directed the committee to decide among themselves what report represented their findings.⁷¹

Finally, on August 25, Adams was permitted to deliver his report.

69. VIII Records of Overseers 165 (Feb. 13, 1834), in Harvard University Archives; Davis, *Jackson's LL.D.-A Tempest in a Teapot*, XX Mass. Hist. Soc'y Proc. (2d series) 490-515 (1906).

70. VII Records of the Overseers 168-75 (July 17, 31, 1834), in Harvard University Archives; Letter from Leverett Saltonstall to Joseph Story, Sept. 29, 1835 in Leverett Saltonstall Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society.

71. Diary of John Quincy Adams, at entries for Aug. 8, 19, 21, 1834, in Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

He spent little time making clear where his sympathies lay. "There is within the recollection by your committee," he wrote in the opening paragraph, "no previous example of disorders, in their origin or in their progress so unprovoked and unjustifiable, on the part of the students, as in the present case." Critical alike of the underclassmen, whom he blamed for the disturbances, and of the Overseers, who appeared to condone their actions, Adams saved his most embittered remarks for the "untenable pretensions" of the *Senior Circular*. Here he went far beyond a defense of Quincy's actions to make an impassioned plea on behalf of the older generation in the face of what he believed to be a wanton attack made by the young:

In estimating the true character of this charge of want of discretion, preferred by the undergraduates, scarcely yet themselves of the ordinary age of discretion, against the President of the University, a man of more than three score winters, who, for nearly forty years, has successfully filled, by the confidence of his fellow citizens, offices of the highest trust, legislative, executive, judicial, civil and literary, and always with unsullied honor; always with untainted reputation; the first sentiment that forces itself upon the Committee is, that of the rule of proportion in the moral standing of the two parties, the accuser and the accused, before the committee.

The Circular of the Seniors *claims*, from the Government of the College toward them, the delicacy of and the tenderness of the parental relation, and descants upon the *duties*, which this relation imposes. It occurs to this Committee that, in the relation of parent to child, there are correlative duties of the child toward the parent, of which the Senior Class and their Circular are strangely forgetful.

Have the authors and avowed approvers of that Circular, fathers of their own? And if they have, and should, in the course of their lives, unhappily, have had occasion to observe in them a want of discretion, do they feel, as if for them, in their *filial* relation, to proclaim that, if there be one moral duty of a child to his parent more imperative than another, it is that of drawing a veil over his infirmities, and of hiding the fault they see? Have they yet to learn, that primeval curse pronounced in Holy Writ was upon the son, who beheld and exposed his father's frailties? Have they yet to learn, may they never learn by the contemplation of their own example,

'How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.'⁷²

Everett denounced the report as "a fulsome apology," but most of the Overseers were sufficiently moved to give Quincy and his policies their belated endorsement.⁷³

The President was still not out of the woods. Rumors circulated since the close of college in mid-July that the seniors intended to boycott Commencement Day to protest the suspension of the seven instigators of the *Senior Circular*. On August 20, seven days before graduation, a majority of the seniors meeting in Cambridge voted not to accept their degrees or to participate in Commencement ceremonies unless the seven were reinstated in time to receive their degrees.⁷⁴

As graduation day approached, cooler heads began to prevail. A senior class meeting held on August 23 voted to permit those with assigned parts in Commencement ceremonies to perform them. The decision to refuse degrees stood, but only after several members of the class indicated they would not be bound by the vote. Perceiving a break in the ranks, Quincy delivered an ultimatum to the seniors: appear for your degrees at the prescribed time, or never.⁷⁵

On the afternoon of August 27 thirty-seven of the fifty-four members of the Class of 1834 stepped forward to receive their Harvard degrees. The Commencement ceremonies, to the relief of all in attendance, "passed off without disorder." "Mr. Quincy and his family appeared in a state of considerable elation," one guest remarked at the close of the festivities, "and on the whole I do not wonder."⁷⁶

Quincy did not always help his own cause. Heavy-handed tactics at times unnecessarily exacerbated the situation: the Barnwell incident was poorly if not disingenuously handled; the timing of the announcement to send freshmen to Concord was provocative; the lack of rapport between the President and the most moderate students was continually evident. To a critically disposed public, Quincy too often gave the appearance of acting unilaterally, while regularly underestimating the resourcefulness of his antagonists. Order was restored, but only after the suspension of the entire sophomore class, six freshmen,

72. VIII Records of the Overseers 193 (Aug. 25, 1834), in Harvard University Archives.

73. *Id.* at 196.

74. Diary of George Moore, *supra* note 48, at entry for Aug. 20, 1834.

75. *Id.* at entry for Aug. 23, 1834.

76. *Id.* at entry for Aug. 27, 1834.

seven seniors, and one junior, plus the securing of three criminal indictments in the Middlesex County Court of Common Pleas.⁷⁷ There may have been a less costly method.

Yet the fact remains that Quincy won. "By proving to your associates that it was possible to govern," a member of the Harvard faculty later wrote to the President, "and to your pupils that it was necessary, as well as honorable to obey, [you] made the future task of control far easier."⁷⁸ No serious student disturbance occurred during Quincy's remaining years at Harvard. Before retiring in 1845, he instituted a far-ranging elective system, began to develop research facilities, increased enrollments, doubled the endowment, and initiated the agitation that led to the removal of the Board of Overseers from the state political arena. Upon this sturdy base, President Charles W. Eliot constructed one of the world's great universities.⁷⁹

Today, like other American universities, Harvard finds itself challenged from within as from without. Its capacity to survive is again being tested. With approximately equal measures of luck and perseverance, Josiah Quincy had held the college together through very different but no less critical times; perhaps those presently charged with the institutional integrity of the university can draw a measure of solace from this fact. One only wishes he could offer them more.

77. The indictments were later dropped by Quincy.

78. Letter from Gorham Palfrey to Josiah Quincy, Sept. 12, 1845, in John Gorham Palfrey Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

79. For President Eliot's acknowledgement of Quincy's role in "the conversion of Harvard College into a university . . ." see Eliot, *Remarks*, LVII MASS. HIST. SOC.'S PROC. 6 (1924).