

The Sextant



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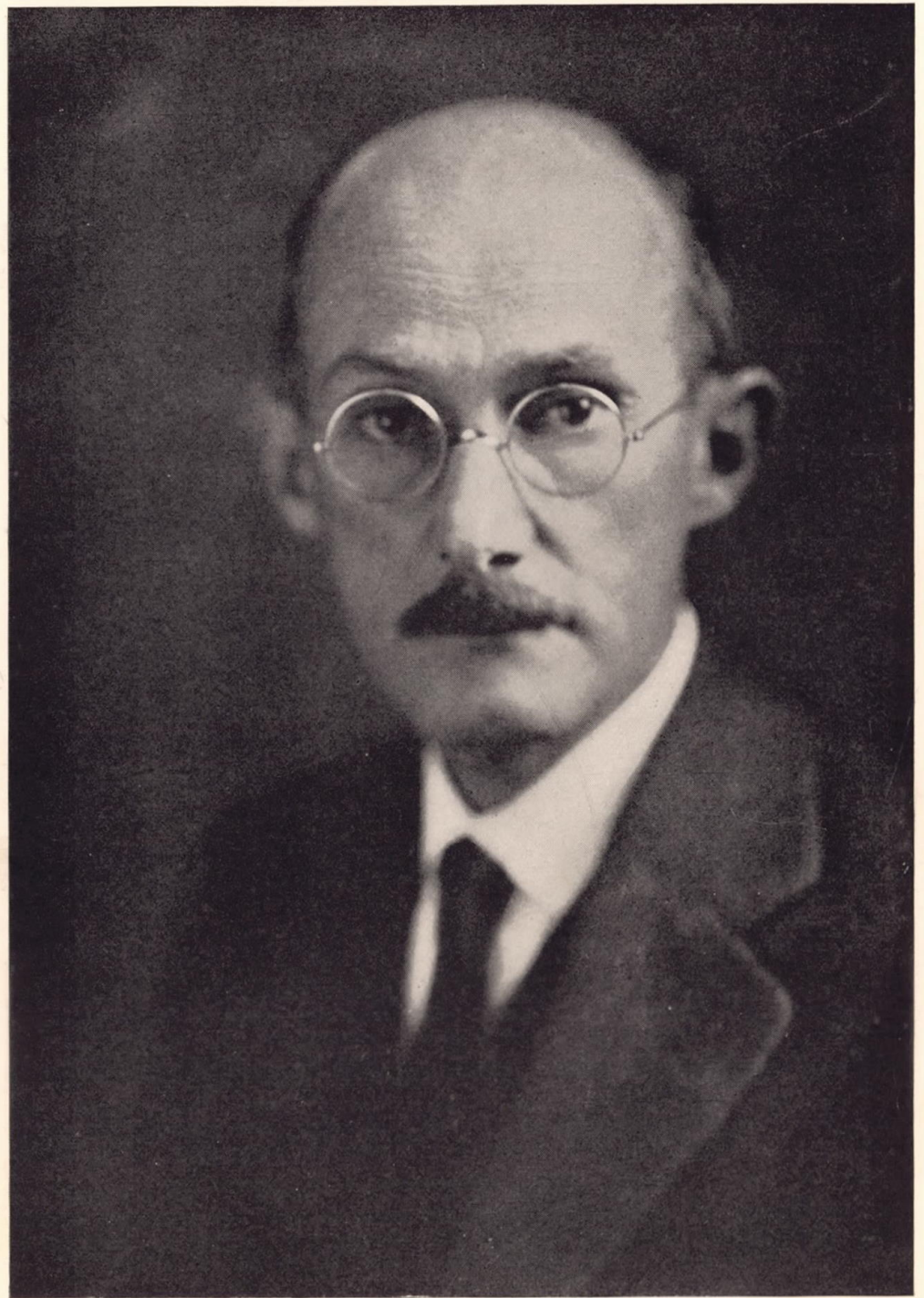
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THE SEXTANT

PUBLISHED BY THE BOYS OF THE BELMONT HILL SCHOOL

Editorial

IN the life of every boy Dr. Howe came in contact with, his death has left a vacuum. Our life at school seemed inseparably blended with his, and now he is gone. Yet the vital influence he had on our lives seems still to be influencing us. His intense personal interest in us has left an invaluable and imperishable mark on our characters. Thus the spirit of his life, which cannot die, partially fills the vacuum left by his death.

Running a school meant infinitely more to Dr. Howe than the performing of his executive duties. It meant the study of boys, the education and rounding out of each individual in the way that was most likely to make that individual happy. It was perhaps his most remarkable quality that he was able to perform his technical duties so efficiently and exhaustively, and at the same time take a special interest in the problems, school and otherwise, of every single boy and graduate, knowing well the personality, temperament, failings, praiseworthy qualities, and ideals of all. Above all he was their friend. True friendship is a lasting sincerity of feeling and unselfish interest. Certainly his continued concern in the graduates, even after they had graduated from college, is proof that this is what he felt toward all boys who proved worthy of it. His unrestrained delight over the accomplishments of the alumni was one of his most human traits.

One could describe indefinitely the various ways in which he made himself an intimate part of the school. You did not think of him as "the Headmaster." You thought of him as Dr. Howe — and colloquially as "Doc." His accessibility to all at all times, despite his myriad duties, brought him much closer to everyone and enabled him to keep in touch with all sides of school life and run the school as far-sightedly as he did. Even after supper in the evening, following a hard day's work, he would sit in his office smoking his pipe and hoping some

boy or group of boys would come for a quiet, all-around talk, as they always did.

Those few of us who have spent week-ends at the school are fortunate in having known both Dr. and Mrs. Howe under the most intimate conditions, their friendliness and sympathy helping to make the atmosphere seem truly home-like. Their warmth of spirit combined to give to the school at all times the sterling attribute of community warmth with which it has always been invested.

Dr. Howe's patience and understanding inspired in the boys and masters and in all connected in any way with the school a loyalty which was second only to his devotion to them and the school. This makes it sure that the spirit of "coöperative goodwill" with which he endowed Belmont Hill will be its everlasting heritage.

DR. HOWE AT MIDDLESEX SCHOOL

DURING the winter of 1901-1902 Reginald Heber Howe, Jr., joined the teaching staff of Middlesex School, and for nearly twenty years his connection with the School continued uninterruptedly. As a teacher his interest centered in the observational sciences: meteorology, geology, zoölogy, biology, botany, entomology and ornithology. His scientific tastes were along the lines of classification and the close observation of phenomena, rather than analytical or mathematical, and for that very reason he was particularly well fitted to introduce young boys to the world of nature. He was, by education and habit, very accurate and painstaking, and so was an ideal teacher for younger boys in any subject, for he had no patience with slovenly or inaccurate work. It naturally followed that in the class-room his contacts were largely with the lower classes in the School, and he had a real gift for teaching such classes. Many a small boy learned from him his first lessons in really accurate work, and grew up to thank him for standards of achievement which were to prove invaluable in after-life.

His untiring devotion led him to give all his abounding energy to everything he touched. Since he was, first of all, a science master, that interest naturally led all the others in his mind. He raised, by his own efforts, the money to build the Thoreau Museum, and under his guidance the work of the museum and its publications became known to scientists even in foreign countries. It made definite contributions, through him, to scientific knowledge.

But his interests were by no means limited to science and to his pupils in the class room. He was the first Librarian of the School, and organized and supervised the early use of the library. He was Secretary of the Faculty, and Recorder.

In the field of sports, his chief interest was rowing, and he was not satisfied merely to be coach of the crews, but applied to rowing the same far-seeing constructive executive ability which he showed in his work for the Museum. Again, by his own efforts, he raised the money to build and equip the boathouse and to enlarge the pond. He took an intense interest also in football, and was for years coach of the "Third Team." Indeed, it was due to his indefatigable enthusiasm as well as to his administrative ability that the Third Team became the institution which it is today at Middlesex.

These are by no means all of the ways in which Dr. Howe left a lasting memorial of himself at Middlesex in the outward and visible

life of the School. To mention each of the various activities which were inaugurated by him is beyond the scope of this brief sketch. The remarkable point is that he followed up to the end everything which he started, and kept an extraordinary number of varied activities in healthy condition over a long period of years. His interest in each separate one was never allowed to diminish.

He collected the material for the history of Middlesex School in the War, and supervised its publication. It was a labor of love with him, and the result was a beautiful little volume, accurate and complete, which will remain a lasting monument to its editor as well as to the graduates whose lives were snuffed out by the horrible hand of war.

In the inner life of the School he was not less active, and his influence on the development of the multitude of boys who came into close contact with him was untiring and constant. His death has brought genuine personal grief to Middlesex old boys everywhere, and to all the Middlesex masters who worked with him for so many years.

DR. HOWE AT BELMONT HILL

IN the fall of 1923 the habitual visitors to the rocks and open fields of Belmont Hill were surprised to find the lazy solitude of their Indian summer pierced from time to time by yells proceeding from a group of youngsters playing upon a small piece of level field protected on one side by stony crags and oaks, and on the other side by a small new building which had just appeared upon the landscape. On the crown of a swiftly rising slope was a building of English design, vacant for several years, now showing many signs of occupation, while at a short distance, on the highest point of the ridge was an open observatory of field stone, thatched with straw. From here the observer could look down upon the roofs and chimneys of Greater Boston, catching occasional glimpses of the sea beyond, and then turning about he might gaze upon meadows, rolling fields, and wooded hills. At this spot, just beyond the haze and strife of the city, where the repose and beauty of the country began, Belmont Hill School was established.

The School opened that fall with forty-three boys, chiefly from the surrounding towns, anxious to work and play in a spot so thoroughly in the country and yet so accessible to their homes. To control and teach this group without the ties of friendship, school cheer, or song, Dr. Howe had the assistance of three men recently graduated from

college and without teaching experience. It was a brave man indeed who embarked upon this adventure with such an inexperienced crew.

And yet those who were privileged to enjoy the earliest years of the school will look back upon them as the most pleasant years of their lives. Classes and forms were assorted and a regular school routine quickly established under Dr. Howe's able eye. Class Four, because of its larger number, was the first to gather class consciousness. Who does not recall Pullum, the Cuban naturalist, Knowles and his horses, Speare and his guns, Bowden and his Death Valley? Long winter evenings were spent in Mrs. Howe's parlor playing games, or in her kitchen, for those were the days before college examinations loomed at the end of the year. The delightful personality of Mrs. Howe, the efficient organization of Dr. Howe, and his active interest in each boy had their natural effect. More boys were applying for admission. For the next year the enrollment was to be doubled.

The School opened the second year with the large addition to Shaler House, providing an assembly hall, a dining room, and a dormitory. Notwithstanding the increased numbers, the informal atmosphere of the School continued. Cases of misconduct were still considered individually by Dr. Howe, and no rigid penal code was adopted. As the older boys began to take up college preparatory subjects, they, as did the masters, had to spend a greater proportion of the evenings at their books. Still as time went on, Mrs. Howe's parlor continued to be the gathering place for all boys in their free time in afternoons and evenings, while in and out of Dr. Howe's office went a constant stream of boys as the headmaster continued to keep control over every vital spot in the School's organization.

A museum next appeared, and a fitting place it occupied in the School's development. In spite of the growing demands upon his time Dr. Howe's keen interest in the sciences caused him to continue teaching the boys his familiar courses in natural history and human physiology, and to act as curator of the David Mason Little Memorial Museum. Here his natural instincts as a teacher held full sway. Kindled with enthusiasm, boys were soon scouring the woods for pollywogs, lichens, flowers, butterflies, and darning needles. One young fellow was found climbing a tall pine to look under a sleepy owl to ascertain for himself whether or not owls laid their eggs in March. Finding no eggs, the boy secured the owl for the museum. Many a promising meteorologist was uncovered whose prognostications for the weather were at least as accurate as the official forecaster's. Around the ceiling of the museum the twelve signs of the zodiac were carefully

arranged; the planets in their respective places to aid the students in visualizing the stars and their movements. So simply and nobly did Dr. Howe explain the functions of the human body in his course in physiology that many a graduate has gratefully acknowledged the tremendous value of this course. In this way the science courses assumed an importance quite foreign to the customary curriculum of a school.

Still the School continued to grow, sometimes it seemed almost dangerously. More class-rooms were needed, and Eliot House was opened in the fall of 1926 to be followed shortly after by the attractive faculty room in memory of Anne Brewster Meyer, the Atkins Memorial Library, and Underwood House. Hallowell Field emerged as the swamp was filled, ever receding each year until finally a beautiful little track appeared, shaded by lofty elms. A rustic bridge sprang up, crossing the brook to the new playing field: a pleasant vista through the old swamp, once the home of pheasants and lost baseballs.

The old wooden cages for inclement weather! Whoever has partaken of one of those famous basket-ball games between the School and the Faculty cannot forget them. And yet so soon have these been replaced by a modern Field House. Realizing the need for greater accommodations, an interested and enthusiastic group of parents and friends responded to the needs of the school. Each new building was, moreover, an improvement on the preceding one, both as to architecture and utility, for Dr. Howe had an architect's ability to sketch a building to meet the particular needs and to profit by earlier experience.

Dr. Howe's interest in sport manifested itself constantly. It was a rare game, either at the school or away, at which he was not present. Even on days of practise, he was apt to stroll around, commenting on a boy's improvement in tackling, remarking on his speed in skating, correcting a fault in the way he turned his oar. Ever, as he strolled about, his eye was alert for possible improvements. He was especially interested in maintaining an informal and friendly spirit in all games with other schools and frowned upon the use of paid officials. Instead, masters of both schools were asked to officiate at all games. The pleasant relations in athletic contests, which Belmont Hill School now enjoys with other schools, attest the value of this policy.

Dr. Howe also held strong views concerning "athletic probation." It seemed to him unfair that a conscientious student should be deprived of playing on school teams because his grades did not contain a set number of C's and D's. It was always a cardinal point in Dr.

Howe's philosophy that encouragement, not punishment, stimulated a lagging boy to renewed efforts. Consequently he maintained that so long as a boy deserved a place in the school, he deserved the privilege of representing it in whatever field his talents lay.

One of the duties of a scientist is to discover and classify new species. In the human field Dr. Howe was to pursue this course, taking great pleasure in working with boys who did not readily prove themselves as belonging to a certain type. Regarding it as a duty of the School to prepare for life as well as college, it pleased him to admit a certain number of boys who would not be considered college prospects. He was always opposed to a uniform code of rigid rules by which a boy's progress should be judged. In an age of standardization and mass production he was eternally emphasizing the individual needs of human nature. To understand a boy's behavior, it was often necessary to make a complete study of his past history. With this information it was then possible to adjust a boy to his new environment in a sympathetic manner. Belmont Hill under Dr. Howe was not a place where a boy must automatically fit or founder; instead it tried to adapt its policy to the requirements of the individual. It was not his wish that graduates should fare forth with the stamp of a definite type upon them, but that they should leave the school endowed with the attributes of sterling, though individual character.

The tremendous loyalty Dr. Howe inspired in his boys was based on his absolute fairness and the personal interest which he felt in each boy. Few boys ever graduated from the School or left by request without feeling that they had a real friend in the headmaster. Nor did admission to college terminate this interest. Some cynic has remarked that nothing is sure except death and taxes. Those graduates in college were shortly to expand this list. Regularly at term time, whether it was at Harvard, Michigan, or Cambridge a little note from the Headmaster with a return postal was sure to arrive. And woe to the graduate who failed to make a return!

At first these letters might have been regarded as intrusive by those failing to come up to the standards required. So sincere, however, was his interest and so helpful was he to prove himself to those in need that what might have been regarded as intrusive fast became a valuable tradition. The pleasure he evinced when a graduate gained some signal honor more than balanced this drain upon his time. He was always the first to be notified. Not long ago one of his graduates gained some honor, and within an hour three other graduates, realizing the pleasure it would give Dr. Howe, had notified him.

Thus the years passed by, each opening with an increased enrollment, a larger plant, a greater number of graduates. Over each group Dr. Howe continued to keep an active supervision, in spite of the growing demands upon his time. Whenever a vacation was mentioned, he always said that he would wait until the School had been established ten years. There was only one way by which the myriad threads which were slowly encompassing his life could be cut. Suddenly, before most of his boys realized he had been ill, he died.

A visitor to St. Paul's in London, happening upon the tomb of Sir Christopher Wren, finds no statue or memorial but merely the advice that he has but to look about him if he seeks his monument. The real monument to Dr. Howe is not to be sought in these grounds, noble though they be, but rather in the hearts and characters of those young men for whom he lived — and died.

REGINALD HEBER HOWE, JR.

JAN. 28, 1932

Too brief the span of life
Which held thee to us.

Dazed stand we here, incredulous
If it be true that nevermore
This side of heaven
We'll see thy face
Nor hear thy voice.

But yesterday
We spake with thee,
Heard words from lips
Now cold, forever still.
It does not seem that life
Could flow so swift in veins,
Could make the pulse throb fast
With hopes and plans for others' weal;
Then, in one wild and sudden turn
The sand glass empties.

Not storied heights of stone and steel,
High vaulted tenements of masonry;
Nor far-flung argosies
Joining the marts of trade —
Not these thy monument.

But thine was a consecrated life
Of service to thy fellow men,
Guiding the early steps of youth
Into the paths of light and truth;
Teaching them
To build as on a granite block
The lofty structure of manhood's strength,
To choose and hold
The hard right against the easy wrong,
To forge as in a white hot blast
The tempered steel of heart and soul.
Thyself to us
A great rock in a weary land.

* * * * *

Across the marble clock of time
The stately saraband glides on,
An endless, never-halting line
Of gray and silent forms
Urged on to God's eternity.

Here, too, a line of men goes on,
The quick and living,
Bearing the memory of thy stay with us,
To tread the path thy feet have marked
And do the work thy hand has given.

Henry Lichen Meyer
Wm. H. Clayton Jr
Katharine W. Atkinson

Wm. J. Underwood

Arthur T. L. Morse

Charles Jenney Jr.

Edw Keller

Henry B. Jackson.

Thomas N. Dabney.

Kent C. Sanders.

W. J. H. Lumbrell

W^r D. Alexander

Mr Harold Cleave

Albert Shapiro

Thomas R. Mow

William T. Barker

Mr. Danforth Hayes

Phillips E. Wilson

Parker Hamilton

John L. Clark

George Mercer

Alfred Swift Dewey.

Francis B. Sayre Jr.

Richard Greene

John Page

Thomas J. Darcy Jr.

Galton Emerson.

Charles S. Kellogg^{3rd}

John A. Strauss

Herbert W. Merrill

Henry B. Sawyer Jr.

David W. Pearson Jr.

William B. McLean

John H. H. Gill

Ernest W. Steele

Henry B. Sprague Jr.

Albert G. Hale.

John Clement

F. C. M. Pringle

Frederick A. Johnson.

John Chadwick

Charles H. Lawrence MD.

Robert D. H. Sewall

Thomas C. Van Noy

William J. Wymann

William A. Dickson

William H. Bancroft

Richard P. Northey
Edward Wigglesworth, Jr.
Francis Hopkinson
John D. Lawrence
Loyis B. Carr
Robert Holcombe
Thomas Sherwin
Paul William Jr.
Edmund S. Morgan
Richard O. Howl
Mark Dall
J. A. Fad
Austin W. Scott, Jr.
Walter Tufts Jr.
Robert S. Bacon
Richard H. Wiswall Jr.
Robert F. Tullney
Bruce Hunt Sarnald
Charles R. S. Sturgis
Peter T. Brooks
John W. Birdseye
Robert C. Barr Jr.
J. W. Bennett
Lyman B. Burbank
Hans L. Carsten
Edward F. Chase
William Ives Dennen

M. R. V. Dehnbolchi Dewakul.

William Doering

Francis C. Eaton

Eugene Emerson

Walter Benham

Douglas Erickson

Nesley H. Bracklee

Richard W. Douglass

David Emerson

Albert P. Gould

John C. Wood.

Samuel Vanghan Jr.

E. W. Goodwin

John R. Chapin Jr.

William H. Gilpatrick Jr.

J. L. Merganser

W. H. Shipley

Michael J. Silver

Albert C. DePiero

Gordon K. Scott

Dwight H. Ellis Jr.

Richard Williams

John D. Spregue

Stephen Stantor

Robert Francis Campbell

Wm. P. Carey

L. V. Carstein

Stephen Dewey

Gordon Donald

Robert J. Bernhard

Charles Butcher

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Caleb Foote

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H. Blain Lamont, Jr.

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George S. Tarbell, Jr.

Camillo F. Petri

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Charles A. Meyer

C. Dare Kellogg

John Sears

Arnold H. Williams

Thomas L. Talbot

Quelley Talbot

Jardner Hastings Page

Harold Ross, Jr.

John B. Bred

Walter P. Coolidge

David C. Eaton

Robert N. Ewell

Edward H. Baker III

Paul Jacobi

John H. Kendall

Harold F. Kellogg Jr.

Oliver Thundike Simpkins

Harry A. Wheeler

Robert Barr Kayses Jr.

Stacy Banks Kuse Jr.

Arthur E. Beane Jr.

Alan H. Shapley

Charles F. Whiting Jr.

Walter H. Foster Jr.

Kingman Brewster Jr.

Woodrow W. Sayer

Philip C. Beale

Nelson J. Darlin Jr.

William L. Wood, Jr.

Orren Wilkins

August R. Meyer

David Richardson

Douglas Mercer

Augustus W. Soule, Jr.

John T. Proctor Jr.

Philip J. Carr JR.

William Jay Underwood

William P. La Croix

Ellet Hubbard III

Roger C. La Croix

Edmund S. Lamont

Johnson Parker

Alfred Steel

Mary Fraughlin Jr.

Thomas Wigglesworth

Edward Clifford Perkins Thomas

John Butler Smith

Walter Temple Goodale

Geoffrey Clark

Roger Shapiro

James P. Baxter 4th

Wm. Claflin III

Ernest Paul Coulon

Gilbert Wilkinson
John Wellington
Tom Hadley
Warren Dellenbaugh
Stuart Rand
Johnny Rogers
John Allyn
John Howard
Baird Eaton
Peter Tufts
Shuburne Carter
Frederick Dellenbaugh
Charles McIlwain
Richard Holcombe
Stephen P. Baldwin
Ronald Feny
William C. Cate
Martin St. Boutillier
Ernest Silver
Frederick C. Bacon Jr.
Edward Blanchfield
F. Harrison Poole
Orson Head Thomas

Malcolm P. McHair Jr
Samuel Carr

William P. Ellwell

David W. Bailey

Robert B. Spaulding

Dunbar Holmes

David W. Baxter

Reginald K. Wing

Francis N. Bacon ^{2nd}

Z. Chafee III

John A. Brooks ^{2d}

Prescott H. Brown.

Kenneth Martin Jr.

Ralph R. Fitch

Reginald B. Ellwell

E. V. Merrill

Francis A. Martin

George W. Bartol.

Roland W. Boyden

Gym Wood

Robert S. Hubbard

Arthur Foote

Richard K. Pratt

William H. Horwitz

James Lawson Cole

