REPORT

By ROBERT M. BERSI Assistant to the President California State College, Dominguez Hills

In these days of campus dis-mous publisher wrote in his ruption and student protests, I memoirs: "The most diabolical recall my student ingenuity could hardly have years at Stanford. These were done more to make both religion quieter times and I, a graduate and scholarship repulsive.

student working on my Ph.D., studied with interest the struggles and conflicts which beset our colleges and universities

My old professor of higher education used to tell me that down the centuries five factors chiefly precipitated student dis-

- The unharnessed vitality of
- The conviction of injustice being perpetrated upon them as a group or upon one or more of their number
- Gloomy career prospects during periods of economic depression; and
- Intellectual and emotional

The last two of these provoca-ions came into play on several eccasions during earlier periods but did not become crucial until the 1930's. The first three, how ever, pervaded American col-leges until about a century ago and inevitably invited persistent student turbulence.

PRE-CIVIL War America of PRE-CIVIL War America of-fered few ready-at-hand recrea-tional opportunities to anyone; and students, the majority of them away from home, had to create their own. Here, how-ever, they encountered prot-racted lists of required and pro-hibited activities specified in bited activities specified in des of "laws" enacted by their stiff-necked teachers. Weekdays customarily began with chapel at 6:30 in the winter and an hour earlier through the rest of the

Sunday included at least two Sunday included at least two long church services, and during all hours of every day and evening faculty members snooped for miscreants. "A law got nim out of bed and put him back again," an historian of the University of Georgia has written. "He ate by them, he studied by them, he recited by them — they were with him always" together with an awareness of the money fines listed for transressions.

STUDENTS could usually throw and kick balls, but the heavy penalties assessed for breaking windows or otherwise breaking windows or otherwise damaging property discouraged such exercise. Walking, yes; but only in pairs, never on Sunday and always within limited boundaries that skirted places housing "any public tavern, store, tippling shop or any other place where spiritous liquors are retailed." Indoor games like backgammon, cards, and of course dice presumably incited to gambling and incurred large fines. Dramatic performances also allegedly induced sinful conduct, and all colleges forbade them.

The spelling out in the rule books of so many ways to mis-behave inevitably encouraged adventurous spirits to taste for-bidden pleasures. Student chiefbidden pleasures. Student chief-tains also fomented noisy and s o m e t i m e s violent protests against the food served, the tuagainst the food served, the tis-tors and professors they dis-liked, the punishments meted out to fellow students, and the attempts to curb their traditional custom of hazing freshmen and doing battle with "townies." In short, rowdyism, riot, and re-bellion kept the old American college in almost perpetual tur-moil and made the professor "a detective, sherrif, prosecuting attorney, and judge,"

THE TWO spheres of legiti-mate interest — study and reli-gion — were no help what-soever. Both bred boredom, hooliganism, and organized opposition to authority. The nar-row-ranged classical curriculum failed to engage the enthusiasm or even the serious attention of any but the most zealous; the juvenile recitation method of in-struction triggered the invention of a multitude of devices for evading study and harassing in-structors; and the oppressive concepts of religion in vogue quickened the "Old Harry" rather than quelled the "Old Adam."

As a member of the Yale class

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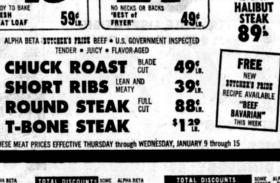
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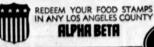
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