

UNIVERSITIES AS WINTER RESORTS

Chicago Tribune: In many cases students are extravagant idlers who, being able to afford it, spend their winters in fashionable universities, which they look upon as attractive winter resorts under the guise of institutions of learning and culture.

This was the purport of a drastic arraignment of American student life by Chancellor Samuel Avery of the University of Nebraska before the higher education department of the National Educational association in Mandel hall of the University of Chicago. Chancellor Avery is president of the higher educational department.

He lays the cause of student conditions at the feet of the faculties of the universities, who are unable on account of the great numbers, to come into intimate touch with the individual student.

"A student nowadays must be very brilliant or very troublesome before the college president becomes acquainted with him at all," Chancellor Avery said. "The enormous influx of students has changed the character of the student body. In the early days practically all college students came from cultured homes

or from homes animated by an aspiration for higher things.

"The students were a select group in character, training, ideals and antecedents—a thing vastly different from the student bodies of today. The college die has become so worn that we can scarcely find its impress on any of its alumni.

"The unrestrained life of American young people—a life more buoyant, more exuberant, and more uncontrolled than exists anywhere else in the world—finds its social expression in our schools. The favorite ready made clothing advertisement is a picture of a supposed group of college men.

"The annual 'proms' of some organizations in certain schools are reported to cost the students \$100 each for the expenses of a single evening. Girls in danger of a nervous breakdown from 'overstudy' sometimes dance until 3 o'clock in the morning. There is a universal lack of student seriousness.

"The statement that Blank college is a mighty good winter resort for men if they have the price shows the attitude of certain students there. Every college president knows, and if he is frank he will admit, that there is some truth in the strictures of the late R. T. Crane.

"The story widely circulated and commonly believed, that in the destruction by fire of a fraternity house at one institution the students lost their lives because they were too intoxicated to escape, and the other story of the drunken student who blundered into the wrong apartment and was shot as a burglar are sufficiently well known to make every college president wonder if these things are not present in his own institution.

"I quote from Birdseye: 'In many of our colleges and universities, and in too many of our smaller ones, a very considerable part of the college home life is rotten—terribly so. Some of the smaller and older colleges, with grand records in the past, have as low a standard of student morals as the larger universities. Some of the worst conditions prevail in minor denominational institutions which are presumed to be ultra-religious and to be the chief places for furnishing clergymen for such denominations.

"The ultra-social element in our colleges has meant a marked lowering of standards for college young women. In my own college days most of the coeds were more or less of the schoolma'am type. There was some frivolous courtship, I admit, but relatively little social frivolity. No young woman of that day would tolerate the semi-firtatiousness, the near-profanity, the easygoing use of first names on short acquaintance.

"The difficulty in combating these and other tendencies is that the young people in each institution feel they should be allowed to go just a little farther than would be tolerated anywhere else. If the publications of other colleges contain a naughty picture the local institution certainly is a bigoted one if it will not 'stand for' a dirty one, and any one attempting to uphold the standard of decency followed in the better Christian, Mohammedan, or Shinto homes is accused of trying to run a university on a Sunday school basis.

"The system of handing in written work has been the source of an enormous amount of dishonesty. I can not but feel that our faculties are somewhat responsible for the growth of 'cribbing.' Dishonesty is one of our most serious problems, because unless surrounded by an atmosphere of intense honesty, even classical culture may produce such leaders as Abe Ruef.

"College authorities must do more

than they have done heretofore. They must see to the elimination of graft in student organizations; must see to it that favors and promotions are not passed out as matters of social or organization favor; must pre-

vent the existence of societies whose memberships are concealed. The ideal university is an institution without snobbishness or aristocratic tendencies, without idleness, without dishonesty, without vice."

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