

this includes making the life of the laborer worth while. It will not take much more to divert from the academic life young men and women of the sort that now makes our best teachers. Hitherto they have sought college teaching largely because it offered a life better worth living than they saw in careers obviously more lucrative. It will not long remain better worth living unless the college restores its local habitation.

CHARLES SEARS BALDWIN

### Progress of the New Freshman Course

Those who have followed the plans of Columbia College for the last nine months will remember that in December of 1918 discussion of a new freshman course began. The course was called at first by various names. "Contemporary History," "The World We Live In," and "Peace Issues" were names suggested; but the idea was constant. It was that an effort should be made to give to the freshmen an opportunity to engage in a discussion of the problems which perplex men of this generation. All were agreed that discussion would be fruitless unless an impartial presentation were given of the different positions taken in the questions at issue. With this purpose in view, plans began to develop; and in February a group of instructors from the Departments of History, Economics, Philosophy, and Government began to work upon a syllabus. They worked steadily until June, and as a result there has been introduced this fall in Columbia College a new freshman course called "An Introduction to Contemporary Civilization." During the summer one of the group, Mr. Irwin Edman, wrote a book to be used in one of the earlier sections of the course and gave it the title *Human Traits and their Social Significance*.

The current academic year is six weeks old; and, though one cannot judge accurately of the final result of the course, it is not too early to state that even the most sanguine advocates of this innovation in freshman education are surprised at the success achieved by the fifteen instructors who are giving the new course. The major part of the success is doubtless due to the fact that the stu-

dents like the material presented. In the first two weeks the physical features of the earth and the natural resources of the different countries were studied in an effort to impress upon the students the important place occupied in civilization and its history by the material structure of the world in which they find themselves. The next section of the course, which will close about Thanksgiving time, is devoted to a consideration of the important characteristics of human nature. The types of human behavior are studied: instinct, habit, reflection. Then in survey form the more important human traits are presented, and in every instance an attempt is made to show the social results of these same traits.

Another reason for the success of the course is that the instructors are an unusually competent group of men who have planned the course and who are enthusiastic supporters of the educational ideal which the course seeks to realize. Besides, all the instructors are working in a field which has never been treated in just this way before. As one rather clever freshman put it, "I like this course because it is new and my professor is still interested in it; he is not just going over the same old thing again."

But a reason for the success of the course which must not be overlooked is to be sought in the very nature of the freshman class, which is unusually intelligent and mature. The maturity doubtless comes in part from the four years that have just passed. The war and its issues have made even boys thoughtful, and the social unrest which has come with peace has intensified reflection.

The new mental tests given to all our freshmen have made possible the formation of classes on a basis of intellectual uniformity. Men of about the same mental caliber are studying together. As an educational device this is effective, since it permits a variation in method of presentation and in the breadth of discussion encouraged. The brilliant student is not bored, and the dull student is not lost, as is so frequently the case when classes are organized on a basis of alphabetical rather than intellectual division.

Thanks to the generosity of the Early Eighties, a new study, a memorial to the late George Renault of the class of 1883, has been provided and is being used constantly by the students in Contem-

porary Civilization. It is their study and they appreciate this fact. At the present time the students are deciding on fifteen immortals whose pictures are to be placed in the new study. A list of seventy-five of the greatest men was given to the students, twenty-five each from the fields of science, art, and social and political leadership. From each of these fields five names are to be chosen. The mere study of the lists is no small education.

No account of the progress of the new course would be complete without mention of the profit which the instructors from the four Departments—Philosophy, History, Economics, and Government—feel when they come together to discuss from their various angles a single course in which they are all engaged. It is an educational enterprise which calls for hearty cooperation between departments, and the University may well congratulate itself that this cooperation is not only possible but actual.

JOHN J. COSS

### Thanksgiving Day at Columbia

Thanksgiving Day is a recognized Columbia festival. Though the day itself, of course, is a holiday, the eve always brings together a characteristically communal assembly. The national import, quickened by the sense of being in a body made of all American strains, deepened by the challenges of the great war, has been focused in his annual addresses by the President of the University. To see and to feel how these have at once answered and kindled the idealism of the student throng filling St. Paul's Chapel has been a thrilling reminder of Columbia's progressive response to the national tradition of educated leadership, that youth should know deeply in order to give fully. The singing of the Columbia hymn on Thanksgiving eve has become one of the great moments of the college year; its loyalty has resounded with dedication.

At the assembly this year, on November 25, Dr. Butler spoke as follows:

"On the threshold of another Thanksgiving Day we stop to worship and to think. In this act of worship we give voice to our

