

# COLUMBIA'S HALL OF BABEL

## New Foreigners' Dormitory to House Students of Twenty-Six Different Languages

**A**MERICAN universities and other educational institutions are becoming so famous in all parts of the world that this country is being thickly settled with little colonies of foreign students who wish to add the best of modern thought and learning to the stores of the wisdom of the ages which they have acquired in their native lands.

This city, with its stellar system of universities, colleges and schools of all kinds, has the greatest foreign student population in this country, and its numbers are larger than those boasted by any European city, except, possibly, the Sorbonne in Paris. The reasons? Yes, the war is one, of course, but the others are the great advancement in education in this country in the last decade and the promise of unsurpassed achievements in new buildings, schools and curriculums in the next ten years.

Now the city is to have another inducement for foreign students. John D. Rockefeller Jr. is to give \$1,000,000 for the construction of a home near Columbia University for the foreign students who come to this city to attend Columbia, New York University, City College, or any of the many other public institutions of learning in this city. This new hall of many tongues will be a Cosmopolis, where East meets West in the field of learning. It will be conducted by the Cosmopolitan Club, a part of the Intercollegiate Y. M. C. A. system.

For many years Columbia University has felt the need of some great hall in its vast educational system where newcomers to the institution could have a good place to live and get first-hand information about such vastly important things as the intricacies of the New York streets, our strange customs of subway travel, and that even more strange puzzle to the correctly educated foreigner—the slang of the New Yorker.

It had not been expected that Columbia would receive this desirable addition before the money had been provided for so many other needs, such as new instruction buildings. The Cosmopolis was a dream until Mr. Rockefeller became interested and decided to provide the money.

This new gift will benefit the native-born students of Columbia as well.

Most of the foreign students at Columbia—and there were more than 500 there this year—wanted to live in the dormitories so that they could get close to the atmosphere of a great university and at the same time escape the horrors of the landlady who raised the rent. The result was that there was a Chinese colony in Hartley Hall, with smaller colonies of other nations scattered through the entire dormitory system. Their departure for the new building of the Cosmopolitan Club will enable Columbia to provide rooms for scores of additional American students at the low rates established by the university.

As for the foreign students, they will be able to burn incense, eat Turkish food, debate international problems in twenty-six different languages, and then get up and worship the sun—if they please. They will not be hindered by this peculiar American people, who never object to anybody staying up making noise until 5 o'clock in the morning, but who have come to think that it is unhealthy and in bad judgment for anybody to get up and make noise at that hour—which is what Chinese students do sometimes. The foreign students in the Columbia dormitories had all those privileges—or all that freedom—but not so the student who had to take a room where the landlady and her husband objected to sleep-destroying customs and Oriental talk and odors.

### The Colorful Cosmopolitan Club.

The history of the Cosmopolitan Club in Columbia University is long and pleasant, but now the officers of the club look forward to the expansion promised by a rapidly growing colony of foreign students and a munificent gift that will tend to stimulate growth. That history began when the foreign students in this city were numbered only in scores instead of hundreds and thousands.

So many opportunities for acquiring knowledge and culture outside the regular classrooms were offered by contact with the foreign students in the university that many Americans became members of the Cosmopolitan Club and joined the foreign students in all their quaint entertainments and ceremonials—for some of them are very near that. Sometimes it was a Turkish dinner at some restaurant or tea room near the university; or perhaps a dinner of dishes invented by the Hindus, followed by a discussion of the British naval policy by a Chinese student, contradicted by a student from Chile and upheld by an Armenian. Or it might be a lecture by some professor from Columbia University, followed by a discussion in which representatives of Columbia's forty nationalities clashed opinions and displayed various methods of handling the King's English.

Many who are not of the Christian faith have taken part in the colorful Christmas exercises of the club, held in Earl Hall, the home of the Y. M. C. A. on the Columbia University campus. In turn they have introduced their American friends to the quaint customs of other lands and other religions, and the result has been more tolerance for the beliefs of others.

### Majority of Foreign Students From Asia

The majority of the foreign students at Columbia University, and at other institutions in this country, come from Asiatic countries, and the Columbia authorities expect that the number of students from the Far East will increase in proportion to the students from other countries. The East is seeking the learning of the West, and the gifts of Mr. Rockefeller and other philanthropists, and the work of American educators, are making it more and more easy for them to come to America.

The proposed new home of the Cosmopolitan Club is to be almost within the boundaries of Columbia—the university of 30,000 students. From the proposed site it will command a view of Riverside Drive, Grant's Tomb and the "lordly Hudson," where the Atlantic fleet anchors so frequently and the ships of so many nations tie up while awaiting cargoes.

Authoritative announcement of the selection of the site for the new building has been withheld, but it has been said for months among real estate men that the spot desired is at Riverside Drive, right where 124th Street would cut into that thoroughfare if it ran east through Broadway and Claremont Avenue. It is presumed that this is the chosen site, and ~~and~~ of those who are

familiar with the plans for the new clubhouse has denied it.

Near this spot the Drive forks around Grant's Tomb, and on the east side widens into a little public park that runs back from the east fork to the cliff at Claremont Avenue. It is bounded on the south by 122d Street and on the north by private property running from the Drive back to Claremont Avenue. Except for the Dyckman Riding Academy, virtually a half block is vacant. Any building on this entire site would have frontage on Riverside Drive, on the park and on Claremont Avenue. A few minutes' walk would take a Cosmopolite to Barnard College, Teachers College, or any part of the main Columbia campus; or to the Union Theological Seminary, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Damrosch School of Music, the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, St. Luke's Hospital, and the other private institutions on Morningside Heights.

### Building Will Not House All.

Except for the meagre confirmation that the gift of Mr. Rockefeller was to be available for the erection of this new Cosmopolitan Club, those who are interested in the project have said nothing about definite plans. It is known, however, that these contemplate the construction of a building similar to the Y. M. C. A. buildings in this and other cities, but more elaborate and tasteful. There will be rooms for the students, dining halls, shower baths, play rooms and gymnasiums, study rooms, music rooms, meeting rooms, an assembly hall, and probably a garden on the roof. The building will be about ten stories high.

Big as this place will be, it will not be large enough to house even the foreign students at Columbia, if the present rate of growth continues. Two years ago Columbia University had about 361 students from foreign countries, or a little more than 5 per cent. of the total enrollment in the regular schools and departments. The number leaped to 477 last year, and this year the number is nearer 600 than 500. It is thought probable that it may go over 1,000 next year, because hundreds of additional inquiries have already been received, with the Fall term many months away.

In Columbia the bulk of foreign students come from China, on Chinese Government scholarships from the income of funds set aside by this country from the Boxer indemnity, or on their own resources. About 144 were at the university last year. Canada was second, with 105 students, a great increase over 1919-20, when only fifty-four Canadians attended. Japan was third last year, with eighty-two students, a slight decrease over 1919-20. Great Britain and France sent a dozen students each, with small groups from about forty other countries. Many come from South America.

Incomplete figures compiled by the Y. M. C. A.'s Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students show that about 10,000 foreign students are attending college in this country this year. About 2,000 are Chinese; 1,000 Japanese, 4,000 from South American countries, 300 Hindus, 50 Persians, 1,400 Filipinos in colleges and universities and 600 in high schools. There are smaller groups from other countries.

If Columbia is a typical institution, the majority of these students are taking graduate courses and many are candidates for the Doctor of Philosophy and other high degrees. Of the 477 students in 1919-20, about 189 were taking courses in education and practical arts; about 117 were under the Graduate Faculties, and the others were scattered through the professional schools and Columbia College.

The Columbia Law School plans expansion to meet the demand for courses in international law and diplomacy and the Faculty of Political Science is also expanding its courses, because these men wish broad information on the relations among countries and international problems. It is expected that the new medical centre, to be constructed by Columbia and the Presbyterian Hospital, will also attract many foreign students.

In all parts of the university the system of exchanging professors with foreign countries is bringing distinguished foreigners to this country for courses of lectures in Columbia and in other large universities. Columbia has had several this year, and more will come next year. One of the famous teachers who will be at the university next year is Dr. M. J. Cavalier, Professor of Metallurgy in the University of Toulouse.

Now countries are exchanging students. Twenty-four Belgians come to this country each year under the exchange system established by Herbert Hoover and the Belgian Relief Commission. A Pan-American Students' League has just been formed. Mexico wants to exchange students. The American-Scandinavian Foundation last year provided ten exchange fellowships. Six British scholars are here for their first year on scholarships provided by the Imperial College of Science and Technology, and more are coming. The number of these exchange students alone will soon run into hundreds.

And are they good students? Their marks are above average and the places taken by these students, particularly by the Chinese, upon their return to their own countries, prove that their training was not lost. Wellington Koo, a Columbia graduate, is Chinese Ambassador to Great Britain. Others are prominent in banking, politics, railroading and many other businesses in China. A Chinese graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism runs his own paper.

Before the war the Sorbonne in Paris had more than 3,000 foreign students, but no other university in France had a number that would run this total within half of the present number at American universities. The number of foreign students in this country equals the combined enrollment of Harvard, Yale and Dartmouth last year.

This makes America a world centre of education, and still they come. Who said we were provincial?