

Speech by Eveline Thomson Scott '09.

When I graduated from the American College for Girls at Uskudar, my class was a very small one. We were only five. The mother of one of my Bulgarian classmates had graduated from The Home School and she came as a guest to the graduation of her daughter. She was a speaker at our Senior Dinner. I remember very well how much struck I was by her opening sentence: She said: "I can hardly believe that it is twenty-five years since I finished my school career."

Twenty-five years!

I thought to myself, what must it be like to have left your college behind you for twenty-five years? Your memories of life then must be very dim. And I was sorry for the mother of my classmate for I thought how old she was.

Now, it is more than twenty-five years since I graduated and I am standing here to tell you of my own college days. And do you know, I find it quite natural to have left my school days far behind. Also, my memories, instead of being dim, grow more vivid with the passing of time and lastly, I don't feel old at all, yet.

To begin with, I must say that my six years at the College except for the inevitable pains of growing up, were profoundly happy ones. At first, I was not very glad to be studying here. I wanted to go to college in England or America. I thought this college was small and unknown. But now, as I look back, I think

that I had a unique opportunity. I studied in an international atmosphere and my college mates were cosmopolitan. It was splendid to read history, ancient, mediaeval and modern and to be able to go out and see the very stones written about in our history books. And then what more charming setting could any college have than the beautiful and picturesque town of Uskudar?

Besides these advantages, I firmly believe that some of my teachers were very remarkable. I cannot mention them all, but I would like to recall a few and pay them a tribute of gratitude. There was to begin with, Miss Paton, who taught us science and who had a perfect passion for her subject. She impressed upon us with continual emphasis, the fact that scientists were among the greatest men of the human race, because they faced the truth and were not satisfied with anything less. Miss Robinson, who taught us psychology, was another wonderful teacher. She was also a very versatile person, interested in nature. She made a study of the birds of the Bosphorus and gave a series of fascinating lectures, having made herself several interesting discoveries of species of birds peculiar to this part of the world. There was Miss Jenkins, Teacher of English and History, who opened many new worlds to me, particularly the world of eighteenth century prose. And then there was Miss Doad, indefatigable about taking us sightseeing. Sometimes we were bored to go, but she would have us see the monuments of the city. And today when I find myself visiting a mosque perhaps on the outskirts of the city near the walls, I find it somehow strangely familiar, and then I remember: "Of course, I saw this mosque with Miss Doad."

Unfortunately I never had Dr. Patrick for a teacher. She was away in America during my Junior and Senior years, raising money to build these very buildings in which you are living. But when she was at the College, she was always an inspiration and even in her absence, we felt the strength of her personality.

What shall I tell you of our daily life? It was much more secluded and restricted than it is now. We never went out in the evening. We did not go home for the weekends. Only once a month were we allowed to go home over Sunday. Our life was more self-contained and we made our own amusements and interests. We had our plays and our societies, just as you have. I must mention a very interesting club called The Century Club, which met in the room of the History professor on Friday evenings. We would discuss politics and the condition of the world. The student body was much smaller than it is today, and there were very few day students. Only those girls who lived in Uskudar and Kuskunducuk were day students. I remember two very adventurous girls who came all the way from Beşiktaş every day. We thought them very bold and modern.

Events in a college career are usually not of a spectacular variety. They are adventures of the mind. How well I recollect the excitements and discoveries that we made--the books that we read, the poets that we found, the new subjects we took up. They were doors opening onto unexplored worlds. The Library was a small room, nothing like as imposing as what you have here now, but I read in it with enthusiasm, many red bound Teuchnitz editions of the classics and other old favorites. I expect they are still

here, old and worn no doubt among the newer and finer books that have been added later. Among some of our greatest pleasures, was hearing talks from distinguished visitors and there was a stream of them in my college days. Sir William Ramsay, the great archeologist of Asia Minor often visited the college and told us of his digging for classical remains. Sir Wilfred Grenfell came and told us of his wonderful work for the fishermen of Labrador. There were William Jennings Bryan, a man who was prominent in the political life of the United States for many years; W.T. Stead, editor of the Review of Reviews in London; George Edward Woodberry, poet and professor of Literature at Columbia University; and Edward Clodd, the great anthropologist. I remember, too, a visit from a Finnish lady. I cannot remember her name but I have a strong recollection of her personality and her intelligence. I think she was a journalist, which was more remarkable in those days than now. Her English was not very good, but she told us as well as she could about her beautiful country, Finland. We asked her if she had ever been in England. She said: "Yes, I once went to London and I got into a cab and gave the man the address to which I wanted to go. But he was drunk and we went round and round. Then he asked me for more money. I was so angry that I took my umbrella and smote him in the midst of his face." So I realized that she knew how to take care of herself.

I have said that most of the events of my student years were connected with adventures of the mind. But there were other events and very important ones that happened while I was

at college. When I was a sub-Freshman, Barton Hall burned down. I was in one of the dormitories and had to leave at ten minutes' notice. When the stream of girls reached the garden, they looked up to see the whole roof ablaze. The burning of Barton Hall was an event that made Dr. Patrick think for the first time of moving the college to the European shore. The very morning after the fire, while the garden was strewn with rescued furniture, and the firemen were still there, and the burned building was just a shell, with the roof gone, she said, looking into the future, as she always did: "We won't rebuild on this side, but we shall move to Europe." Another event was that during my last year at college, Turkey was granted a Constitution. That seems a very long time ago to you and many things have happened in Turkey since then. But it was the beginning, the first step in the wonderful emancipation and development of this country which we are enjoying today. In December of my Senior year, the first Turkish Parliament met. It was a very great day for us all. And we were very proud to belong to the first class which graduated after the granting of the Constitution.

Far be it from me to say anything in disparagement of these beautiful buildings in which the college is housed today. You are much more comfortable than we were. You have much better equipment. You are nearer the center of things and are much more accessible to the city. But, please, you must allow me to like Uskudar better than Arnavutkoi. It is one of the most beautiful towns on the Bosphorus. Do you realize what fine mosques are there? In one of them can be found some of the best tiles in

the city. Two of them were built during the reign of the great Suleyman, the Law Giver. Four of the imperial mosques were built by women. When I was at college, I was a feminist, and it pleased me to think that four of the greatest mosques of my college town were built by women.

And last of all I must mention our view of Stamboul. Here you have a splendid view of the Bosphorus, I know, and a large garden, but from the roof of our College in Uskudar, we looked upon that incomparable silhouette of Stamboul. Every evening we could watch the sun sinking, like a ball of fire, behind those domes and minarets. It is one of the loveliest sights in the world and during all our college years, it was a constant inspiration to us.

(Note: Mrs. Scott spoke from notes. This was written out afterwards from memory.)

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