

LOOKING BACK AFTER FIFTY YEARS

CHARTER DAY, MARCH 21, 1964

We are here again to celebrate Charter Day, the birthday of the College and to review again how it obtained its Charter. Besides this, we have another reason for celebration because this year is the fiftieth anniversary <sup>of the completion</sup> of the occupation of these buildings which we occupy in Arnavutköy. It is these two achievements that I want to speak about today. Many of you know the story well. Perhaps to some of you it is not so familiar. At any rate, it is always well to remind ourselves of the work, of the ideals, of the high purposes that have moulded this college of ours.

<sup>p</sup><sub>n</sub> Charter Day is one of those festivals that we all take for granted, but I wonder how much we have really thought about it. What is a Charter? Where did it come from? Why do we need a Charter?

In the dictionary the definition of a charter is "a written grant of right given by a sovereign or a legislature". In other words it is a precious piece of paper. Now if you think a minute, you realise that certain pieces of paper are very important indeed...a passport, for instance...that is only a piece of paper, but without it you cannot travel. Or a deed of a house or other property, or a check, or the statement of an armistice, bringing a long war to an end...they all mean something that has been aspired to, worked for, and when achieved jealously guarded. We at once think of a diploma. Most of you are striving for that...only a piece of paper, but what a precious piece of

paper it is!

Our College Charter was granted to us, changing us from a High School into a College by the State of Massachusetts "a written grant of rights given by a legislature." How did we get it? It did not drop from heaven. First it was only a dream in the mind of a remarkable woman. Then it was something to be worked for, here and in America. And at last it was an achievement...a triumph of which we can be justly proud.

To understand this achievement, it is necessary to know the history of our college and more than that, the personality of Dr. Patrick.

In the late sixties and seventies of the last century in America, a pioneer spirit of education was in the air, especially education for women. In those days, even in England and America, while there were some good schools for girls, there were not nearly enough, and as for colleges for women, they were just beginning, though colleges for men had existed for many centuries. It was also a time when noble-minded people in the west were much interested in foreign countries. An American couple, who travelled in Turkey in 1871, was impressed by the fact that while there were schools for boys in Turkey, there were very few for girls. They told some of their friends in Boston about the need here. A group of fine women raised enough money to begin in a very modest way a small high school for girls in a rented house in Gedik Paşa to which came an American teacher or two in 1871. The first ~~xxx~~ principal was Miss Rappeley and she began with three pupils. After a

few years, the school increased slightly and was moved to the top of the hill in Üsküdar, again maintained in a rented house. Other people in America became interested, more money was raised, so that finally through the generosity of many friends, led by Mrs. Bowker, a building was erected in Üsküdar in 1876 in a large and charming piece of property, which soon boasted a lovely garden. That was the nucleus of our college. But it was a very small affair, not a college at all. It was a High School. Those who came to teach in it wanted it to be a training in character as well as in scholastic subjects, so it was called The Home School. And the Home School it remained from 1871 till 1890...19 years. In those early days, most of the girls who came were Armenians, Greeks, some English and Americans and later Bulgarians. Because of government restrictions, very few Turkish girls were allowed to come...but some did, even to the Home School. More American teachers came to staff the school and there were always many other nationalities, but the subjects taught were modest.

If I were writing a play, I would say, "And now enter Miss Mary Mills Patrick, a young woman full of zeal and ambition." If you had been there, you would not have noticed her for she was young, only twenty-five, and her place was quite subordinate, but she already knew a good deal about the country, for she had spent four years in Erzerum in eastern Turkey. In 1875 when Miss Patrick joined the staff of the Home School, it was still housed in the rented building in Üsküdar, but by January 1876 the new building, Bowker Building, was finished

and the school moved in. You will smile when I tell you how many students there were when Bowker Building was occupied... 36..18 of whom were boarders. One of Dr. Patrick's very good friends was Clara Hamlin, the daughter of Cyrus Hamlin , who had founded Robert College. When Mrs. Williams, the principal of the Home School, left in 1883, Miss Patrick and Miss Hamlin were joint heads until 1889 , when Miss Hamlin left to be married. From then on until her retirement in 1924 (35 years) Dr. Patrick was head of the Home School, first for a year, and then president of the College as we know it today.

From those very early days Dr. Patrick was determined that the work of the school should grow and expand and that it should eventually become <sup>a</sup> college and that it should have great influence on the young women of the Near East. Dr. Patrick was a feminist and a pioneer, for, as I have said before, she was born into the era when there was a great forward movement for the education and emancipation of women. We, who come after her, may smile at her attitude of aggression, but the truth of the matter is, we are benefitting from the struggles of women like her, who had to put up a real fight for their educational rights. She was fortunate in the support of several young women who came to join her staff,...Miss Isabel Dodd, Miss Ida Prime and Miss Florence Fensham. And then too in America she had friends. Among them were Mrs. Pauline Durant, a wonderful woman who endowed Wellesley College and Miss Caroline Borden, an eccentric and strong-minded Bostonian, who was a bulwark of strength in all that Dr. Patrick was planning to do.

As the years passed the school gained in reputation and size. A second building was added, thanks to a generous gift from America and it was called Barton Hall and connected with Bowker Building by a long corridor. This was in 1882. (The Barton Hall you know on this campus was the summer house found on the property when it was bought for the college. It was named Barton Hall after the building in Usküdar, simply for sentimental reasons.)

The crucial year in the life of the school was the year 1888-89 which Dr. Patrick spent in America. It was during this year that she saw much of Miss Borden and they both felt that the school in Usküdar had progressed far enough to earn the charter of a college. So it was decided with other friends to put in a request from the State of Massachusetts, recognising the American School on the Bosphorus as a college with the right of bestowing an A.B. degree. In writing about this important effort Dr. Patrick said: "It was not an easy matter to persuade the legislature of the state of Massachusetts to grant a college charter to a small and almost unknown institution in a faraway city. Success was due almost entirely to the efforts of two leading women, Caroline Boden and Pauline Durant."

It is difficult for us to put ourselves back in time to the spring of 1890, when Dr. Patrick had returned from America and was waiting, together with all the faculty and students, for word from Miss Borden as to whether she had been able to persuade the legislature of Massachusetts to grant a charter or not. Again Dr. Patrick writes: "We in the school almost held our breaths as

we waited for the outcome, but we said very little to the outside world. It was one of the most thrilling moments in our history when, in March 1890, we received a cable from Miss Borden 'College Charter Granted'. Enthusiastic students decorated the buildings and covered the blackboards with the word, 'Long Live the College' written in Turkish and many other languages. Classes were discontinued for the day and in the evening a banquet was held."

Dr. Patrick does not add that without her enthusiasm, without her unflagging ambition and constant efforts, the charter would never have been granted, or at least, not till much later.

And now to turn to fifty years ago when we moved from Asia to Europe, from the older site in Üsküdar to these beautiful buildings in which we find ourselves. Strangely enough the impetus began with a disaster. How often ~~we think~~ what we think of as a catastrophe turns out to be something quite different. This is Shakespeare's year ..England is celebrating this year the four hundredth anniversary of his birth....so I am going to quote Shakespeare <sup>and</sup> what he said about good coming out of evil. He said:" There is some soul of goodness in things evil Would men observingly distil it out."

The <sup>S</sup>disaster in the case of the college was a very bad fire. In December 1905 Barton Hall in Üsküdar was burned to the ground. The fire started on the roof from a defective chimney, at about ten o'clock at night. Many girls were sleeping in the dormitories but they were able to get out of the building and there was no panic. Fortunately there was no wind, or Bowker

Building would have gone too. But nothing could save Barton Hall. You can imagine what a blow this was to the college. From then on, rooms were overcrowded, books and laboratory apparatus had to be replaced, and students were uncomfortable. There was no Assembly Room any longer, so that the girls had to sit at their desks in the Study Hall during Assembly and this place was also used for our modest plays. But Dr. Patrick refused to be downhearted. Even on the very morning after the fire, while the hall was still smouldering and puddles of water stood in the old classrooms, she said: "We'll build again but not on this side. We'll move to the European shore." This was her answer to disaster.

And she was as good as her word, though it took her nine years to accomplish her dream. She had no extra money and she had to raise it herself...with the help of American friends, but largely by herself. This lovely property in Arnavutköy was for sale and after much negotiation (that is a long story in itself) it was bought. Then came the proposition...where was the money to come from to build these buildings we now occupy? Dr. Patrick went to America for two years, 1908 and 1909, and during that time in the most miraculous manner, she raised enough money to build four buildings, Gould Hall, Mitchell Hall, Woods Hall and Russell Sage Hall. How did she do it?

Once she said to me: "I hate being a beggar." But she went ahead because she longed for results and there was no other way. This is what she wrote in her book: "The psychology of money raising is most interesting. The money-raiser for a sincere educational purpose must seek to be above all personal

considerations, and be ready to work day and night without stint" She goes on to tell how she stayed with Mrs. Helen Gould Shepard, a millionaire's daughter much interested in education. When she left, Mrs. Shepard handed her a check for 10,000 dollars, saying, "I want to start you in raising money for the new home of the college." Later Mrs. Shepard gave her 200,000 dollars for the construction of Gould Hall, which was named for her parents.

One more paragraph from her book let me give you.

She writes: " I think the only time in my career of money raising that I was turned away from the door was when I presumed to call on Mrs. Russell Sage; but Mrs. Sage afterwards became a friend. She eventually gave more than 1000,000 dollars for the erection of Sage Hall."

During those years it was the force of Dr. Patrick's personality (in 1908 and 1909) that accomplished her great work. Besides raising money, one of her outstanding successes was in enlisting the interest of a number of very fine men and women to act as trustees. That wasn't always easy. She tells how she went to Mr. George Plimpton, head of Ginn and Company, and an influential man of affairs, and asked him to become a trustee. He was already committed to other institutions, Wellesley and Amherst Colleges among them. When Dr. Patrick asked him if he would be a trustee of our college, he said emphatically, " I will not. No." Dr. Patrick adds, "I waited a little and I asked him again and he consented." In that simple sentence you get an echo of the strength of her personality.

These buildings were begun in 1910 and took four years



to build. The great day of dedication was June 3, 1914 when there were speeches and celebrations and that same George Plimpton was one of the trustees present. The move itself had been made in April of that year. You may imagine what a task it was moving the effects of a large institution across the Bosphorus. This was before there were camions or busses. Heavy bullock carts labored up the hill, bringing not only many furnishings that had been bought in America but the many heavy items from the college in Üsküdar. Everybody worked very hard and classes began ~~in~~ almost before the buildings were quite ready...such was Dr. Patrick's impatience.

The First World War followed almost immediately after the dedication of these new buildings. There were then many dark days for Turkey and the college. Part of that time Dr. Patrick was in America, trying to keep alive the interest of friends and trustees. You all know the history of the period that followed the end of the war...the days of foreign occupation and then the resurgence of the country under your great leader, Atatürk. Dr. Patrick was still here to see it all..and she was very happy when more and more Turkish girls were allowed to attend the college she loved so well. I don't need to tell you much more of its history for you are making it yourselves. Instead of the 38 students who moved into Bowker building in 1876, we have more than 600 students attending courses in 1964. Is it not a great achievement? Is it not fitting that we should show our enthusiasm and gratitude for it by setting aside one day in the year, when we remember the struggles of earlier years, the difficulties, the hard won victories? And no day is more appropriate than the day when the

high school was turned into a college, the day we call Charter Day and when we celebrate this year fifty years of the occupation of these buildings. ✓

My own student period at Üsküdar was very long ago. I was fortunate enough to know then Dr. Patrick, Miss Dodd and Miss Prime and Miss Fensham...the real founders of the college and the women who had joined the institution in the days of the Home School. Miss Dodd was renowned for her interest in achaeology and for starting our Museum. In that room you will see her portrait. She was a vivacious, redheaded, enthusiastic person, very devoted to Dr. Patrick, very much interested in the college and a great sight-seer. She would take groups of students sightseeing on Mondays (our holiday was Monday instead of Saturday) and you had to have a very good excuse to get out of going on these expeditions. Miss Prime was a small, earnest, frail woman, the college treasurer. She had an excellent sense of humor, great and unassuming devotion, and although she never taught any classes, I can still remember some of the good talks she gave at Assembly. Dr. Patrick's portrait is here in the auditorium and is familiar to you all.

We led very simple lives <sup>m</sup>compared to the fortunate young persons today. The college group was much smaller and perhaps more firmly knit. This was due to the fact that we were much more confined than you are and we had to make our own lives within the college walls. There were no cinemas, no telephones, no trams, no buses, no taxis, no electricity. (We had gas at the college and the lights had to be lighted by a long taper carried by the servant every evening) We travelled <sup>is</sup> to town and on the Bosphorus in ferry

boats but before 1914 no ferry left the bridge after sunset. We often used long, graceful caiques and sandals for our journeys. From the iskele we either walked or took an "araba".

During my years at Üsküdar the political situation was tense. We passed many anxious hours. There was the Counter Revolution, when Sultan Abdul Hamid was deposed; the war with Italy; the two Balkan wars. These were tragic times for the students and their families. The president and the faculty were exceedingly worried and very much alarmed at one point when it seemed that the city might be invaded. But the worst never happened and the college never closed its doors. We were not allowed to go home for the weekend except once a month... for the other three weekends of the month we were expected to stay and take part in the activities arranged for Saturday evening, Sunday and Monday. We never left the grounds after dark. There was nowhere to go and no one dreamed of going out. But please do not pity us in retrospect. We were exceedingly lively and happy...we made friends, put on plays, we organised clubs, went for charming walks in Üsküdar, read in the tiny library and found new worlds opening around us all the time. I wonder if the lessons learned here now are as interesting and exciting as those we had at Üsküdar. I remember with gratitude history lessons with Dr. Hester Jenkins, psychology courses with Dr. Mabel Robinson. I remember long happy hours in the little library, a single room with two windows looking onto the quiet garden. Here it was I discovered inestimable treasures of poetry and prose.

Of course there were drawbacks. When are there not?

We would have liked more freedom to move about. We would have liked smaller and more comfortable dormitories..a much larger library. We would have liked a calmer political atmosphere. Then too in those days there were few careers open to women, practically none for Turkish girls. You now can choose from a dozen different professions when you leave college ...very different from the restrictions ordained for girls fifty years ago.

But even then we considered ourselves lucky to be attending the American College for Girls. When you stop to think a minute, are we not lucky indeed? How many girls there are who would like to come here but cannot...either their parents are too poor, or their academic preparation is too inadequate or for some other reason college is barred to them.

I once knew an American woman who longed to go to Vassar College in America. Her father, though he was very well off, disapproved of women's colleges and would not let her go. Her sorrow was so great, her disappointment so keen, that many years later long after she was married and had daughters of her own, <sup>when</sup> she was driving with a friend along the Hudson near Vassar College, Her companion suggested that they drive through the beautiful campus of the college but she said: "No! No! I couldn't bear it! I longed too much to go there when I was young."

Eveline Scott

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