

THEODORUS COTTAGE
BEBEK
ISTANBUL TURKEY

Assembly at The American College for Girls

May 11, 1955

It is a very far cry in the history of the College and indeed of the world, from the time when I was chosen president of the Self-Government Association in 1908-09, and the installation of the newest president of the Self-Government Association here today.

Many of the features of college life in those days were quite different. When I was a student, the college was in Asia and now it is in Europe...though perhaps it is difficult to think of Üsküdar as Asia; when I was a student we were a part of the Ottoman Empire and the ruler was a sultan. Now the country is a Republic and the empire, like so many empires, has vanished. When I was a student very few careers were open to women and now their choice is almost limitless. You can think of many other changes... perhaps no country in the world has changed so rapidly in the last 45 years as Turkey.

You will smile when I tell you that in my class which graduated in 1909 there were only five students.....two Armenians, two Bulgarians and myself. It happened that the

When I was a student the enrollment of the college (with respect to Prep. School) was 101 students; & they gave me a vote of three times that number.

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What you call The Committee

class before me, to which Mrs. Black belonged, was twice as large and the one following even larger. But we were a handful of five. I do not know what your arrangements now are, but in those remote days, there were seven girls, including the president, on the executive committee and each day of the week was allotted to one of these girls, when she became the girl on duty. As we were only five and as there are seven days in the week, we had to elect two Juniors to help us out, for as you see every member of the Senior Class was elected on the executive committee. It was usual for the president of the Association to be on duty on Sunday, for I must remind you that we were not allowed to go home over weekends, but only once a month. There were classes on Saturday, meetings on Sunday and Monday was our holiday. But not always a free day, let me add. For often we were taken on Mondays to the city to view the monuments, and to be lectured to on Byzantine and Turkish history. And Monday afternoons were often taken up with meetings.

Although the college to you may seem very much smaller in those days, the duties of the president of the self-Government were

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arduous". I can remember how worried I was when I had to speak to my friends if they broke the rules. I remember how I listened to sinister sounds from the dormitory after the retiring bell. One learns a great deal in a short space of time...one learns self-control and the management of people, one of the hardest tasks in the world. Sometimes a weak girl on duty would rebel and say it was all too difficult and she would resign....whereupon the president had to bolster her up, try to give her courage, and generally work twice as hard because of a lack of cooperation. Dr. Patrick herself was always bolstering us up, with words of praise and admonition. She was inordinately proud of the Self-Government Association. She never failed to tell visitors how well it worked. And we were made to feel that we must live up to her estimation of us, even though we knew that we fell far short of her idea of our ability.

There was a system of reports. When a girl infringed a rule, she was "reported" by the girl on duty. At the end of the day, at four o'clock I think it was, we all assembled in the Study Hall and Dr. Patrick's Assistant, who was the adviser of our committee, came in and solemnly read out the names of

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the girls who were "reported." There was one rule that troubled us all. This was the language rule. A strange device was thought of to make all the girls speak English during the day...~~or French on the French days.~~ This was called the Medal. The girl on duty was given, early in the morning a chain, on which hung a small disk. When she heard a girl speak a language not English (it might be Turkish, Armenian, Greek, Bulgarian, French or German) she handed the culprit the Medal. Whereupon this girl had to hand it on to the next one whom she heard speaking the wrong language. Then at the end of the day, the girl who still held the Medal was "reported." You can see it was safer to break the rule early in the day rather than later! I can remember the frantic efforts of a girl who had the Medal, for instance, at three o'clock. One could see her bearing down on her comrades with her ears cocked to listen to what they were saying. There was a good deal of feeling aroused by the Medal. Many said all the girls who had spoken the wrong language should be reported, not only the last one. And there was some truth in their argument. After a while the Medal was abandoned. But for a time it worked surprisingly well.

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You probably have your own methods, new ones, for dealing with the transgressions of your fellow students. I would like to offer the new president my very best wishes, May she have the support and co-operation of her class, the respect of the teachers and students and very good luck through her whole term of office."

I am sure there are many tales that could be told by the older presidents of the Self-Government Association which would interest and amuse you. But I want to conclude my short talk by a tribute to one of the ex-presidents, the one who preceded me, Mrs. Black. We were young together and we shared the same responsibilities. We learned not only lessons from our books but very important lessons from our fellow students on how to keep order, do justly, suppress ^{our own} annoyance, and try to create an atmosphere of harmony and good will. I have known Mrs. Black as a student, a teacher, as ~~professor's wife~~ and as ~~president's wife~~. In each of her roles she has done extremely well. Now she is leaving us for America and we want to tell her how much we shall miss her. She has made through the years a very valuable contribution to the happiness of many

And always as a loyal friend.

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people at both colleges. Let us wish her happiness in her new rôle in America. We can ask her not to forget the old days... the really old days of Üsküdar, when she had her first contact with our college, where she spent part of her youth, held office and made friends; ^{+ to remember} ~~not~~ the more recent days, when she has been the wonderfully kind hostess of Kennedy Lodge ^{at N.C.} where all were welcome. ~~her wife has ever found her warm hospitality & her untiring efforts to make life easier & pleasant to many.~~ It has long been the custom to say to our departing friends "God Speed". But in these modern days when people fly from one place to another, we say ^{too} "Happy Landing." ~~May she~~ ^{she} indeed have a "Happy Landing" in America.
we wish her both,

ETS

I have been greatly impressed
by this very interesting cere-
mony. Nothing like this ever
occurred in the simpler
days of long ago.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Kişisel Arşivlerle İstanbul'da Bilim, Kültür ve Eğitim Tanıtı

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