

DR. PATRICK AND THE COLLEGE

A tribute paid to Mary Mills Patrick by her friend and colleague, Eleanor I. Burns, on the occasion of Dr. Patrick's Centenary, March 10, 1950, and of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Granting of a College Charter to the American College for Girls, Istanbul, Turkey, March 20, 1950

The Home School--the ancestor of the American College for Girls--was begun in 1871--at Üsküdar--and when Dr. Patrick joined its staff in 1875, it was of High School grade. Because she was unwilling to have the school remain at that level, she enlarged the curriculum and struggled to secure teachers who had adequate, specialized training. Finally in 1890, after years of effort on her part, in which she was strongly seconded by an influential Trustee, Miss Caroline Borden, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts granted the institution a Charter as a College of Arts and Sciences.

Throughout the years, from this first Charter until her retirement in June, 1924, Dr. Patrick continued to work with might and main to improve the course of instruction, to secure professors who were specialists, and to provide adequate buildings and equipment for the College.

Twice during these years, she demonstrated her ability to make the most of any opportunity. In 1905 there was a disastrous fire which destroyed the newest building at Üsküdar--Barton Hall. After the fire, Dr. Patrick wasted no time in "crying over spilt milk", but said: "Let us move from Scutari to the European shore, and build a plant that is worthy of our College." By heroic efforts she achieved her goal, and in April 1914, the College moved to Arnavutköy. On the new campus there were sixty acres of land, and five buildings that had no rival in the city.

After the first World War, Admiral Mark L. Bristol arrived early in 1919, with the dual title of U.S. High Commissioner and Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in Turkish waters. At once Dr. Patrick envisaged the possibility of opening a Medical Department at the College, because she now saw her way clear to secure the necessary clinical facilities. Again she was the opportunist who aroused the interest of Admiral Bristol, as well as that of the Near East Relief and the American Red Cross. After they had agreed to supply equipment and nurses for an American Hospital, she induced the Trustees of the College to open a Medical Department, to subsidize the Hospital, and to provide the salaries of the Director and Head Nurse of the Hospital. The Director was the head of the College Medical Department and also the resident doctor of the College.

The closing of the Medical Department by the legal regulations of the Turkish Republic coincided with Dr. Patrick's retirement in June 1924. It was a crushing blow, from which Dr. Patrick never fully recovered. However, as we look back, we realize that she did not labor in vain, because of two tangible results: the opening of the Government Medical School to women; and the establishment of the American Hospital in Istanbul.

No student of today and few of the present Faculty and Staff know Dr. Patrick personally, but so long as they believe in learning for its own sake, and in the high place women do and must hold in the Turkish Republic, Dr. Patrick will still be alive and dynamic. This is the centenary of her birth, and we honor one who was great not only as President of our College, but as a pioneer of her generation in which higher education for women was not widely accepted.

Eleanor I. Burns

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Dean and Vice-President

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