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My Acquaintance With Turkish College Girls

Ethel Stilz, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa.

CONSTANTINOPELE is no longer a city of veiled women. Most women prefer the soft, tightly draped headdress called a “yasak mak” to a hat. It is very becoming and makes possible a hat for every dress. To be sure, there were a few elderly or very conservative women who preferred to wear “tscharchafs,” as the combination of head cape and face veil is called, but they are in the minority.

Robert College, an educational institution for boys, is only two miles away from the Girls’ College or “C. C.” as it is generally known, and the classes in the two friendly schools call each other “brother” or “sister” classes, as the case may be, and attend plays, games and parties in a very comradely manner. Of course, when the girls go to Robert College they are chaperoned in accordance with their parents wishes, or they may go alone, if their parents permit. On Fridays, boys, brothers or cousins, may call at the college, as in any well regulated school here. I have chaperoned class picnics attended by boys and girls, and several all-day excursions on land and sea have been greatly enjoyed by faculty and students of both colleges. So you see there is contact with men in a very normal way.

A wall about seven feet high surrounds the grounds, and can be seen over in most any place, as the whole college property is on the hillside, and being in the country, a wall is a necessity, as would be true of any rural estate. The gateman, Ella, whose picture was very good, answers questions, gives directions and in a way “censors” visitors at the lower gate, which is a stiff five to ten minute climb below the buildings. A check is kept on students going out, just as would be done in any boarding school in this country.

Girls go to town as they do to Robert College, alone or chaperoned by upper class students or faculty, in accord with their parents’ written statement to the dean.

The college buildings are built in a row on a plateau cut in the side of the hill and all face the Bosphorus. Two buildings are yet to be construct-
ed to complete the plan of a bisymmetrical group. The college is under the direction of a board of trustees and is financed partly by fees and the rest by endowment and gifts of many people. It is one of the Near East colleges to be benefited by the fifteen million dollar drive that was begun last year and is still being carried on.

Constantinople Woman’s College is an American college in a foreign land and

The story, “Turkish College Girls,” which appeared in the October issue, was seen through the eyes of an Iowa State College graduate student, who taught chemistry in the Constantinople Woman’s College about seventeen years ago. Conditions have improved greatly since that time, and today this college is much like our American institutions.

In this article, Miss Ethel Stilz of Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pa., who returned in July from a three years’ professorship in home economics in the Constantinople Woman’s College, pictures the conditions as they exist at the present time.

When a girl graduates, she hopes to obtain a position, if it is financially necessary, but none that I knew came with her future decided for her. Interested people send girls to college sometimes, but “missions,” as we imagine them, do not exist in Turkey. There are some schools under the direction of the Foreign Missionary Board and these are non-sectarian and non-religious schools. There is no medical school at the college. Girls attend the Turkish medical school, a very good one and a co-educational one, too. There have been for years excellent and well known Turkish doctors, and at present a very comprehensive program for child care and public health nursing is being carried out by the government.

Plays are given by classes, by the dramatic society and for parties. Last year “The King’s Henchman” was beautifully done, and for May Day, a “Palio,” patterned on the one in Sienna, was a lovely out-of-doors entertainment. As for loving tragedy, what girl of sixteen or so doesn’t enjoy a few tears at a movie? A few girls may have passed through bitter experiences, which are never talked about, and I should say the greater number has had a normal, happy childhood.

Dormitories are a necessity because of limited space. There are single and double rooms, and students who care to and can afford them, occupy them. It is necessary to charge a few dollars more for a private room and I’m quite sure every girl longs for her own room.

Tea is a delightful break in the day’s work and is rather necessary between luncheon and dinner at half past seven. The girls think our early dinners very unusual and can’t imagine them. For tea, bread and tea are served and the girls provide their own sweets. The boarders are usually supplied with boxes from home and their spreads take place at tea time, rather than in the middle of the night.

The girls are keen about hockey, basket ball, tennis and hiking, and love to be out of doors. We have a field meet every spring and play (Continued on page 15)
the equipment who should be considered in its construction. Thus is opening up a commercial field for the woman who is trained in engineering.

Another commercial field open to women is that of demonstrating equipment. Many gas and electric companies are employing home economics or home equipment specialists who are conducting classes for women of the city, teaching them the proper use and care of the equipment. They also go into the homes and help solve the household problems. Besides these commercial types of work, there are numerous others, such as radio work, and advertising. There are also numerous calls for teachers, research workers and extension specialists, as more and more the public is beginning to realize the possibilities of these various fields.

So, perchance, when our western college installs an equipment department, our professor friend will find his chemical analysis is useless data, and that in the women are substances of which he knew nothing, and which are priceless beyond measure.

Turkish College Girls

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match games with the teams from the English High School for Girls. The hockey field is a plateau above the Bosphorus and playing there with the blue sea below and the hills of Asia beyond is a delight. No matter what the weather, snow or wind or rain or sun, there are girls walking around.

During the day the girls wear simple school clothes, wash dresses when it is warm enough and wool ones in cold weather. My home economics classes last year made middy blouses and wore them proudly, and copied them for their friends. Most of us changed for dinner into something thinner or gayer but not an evening dress. For a special party, some "dressing up" is done and when they go to the city, the girls look very trim and smart in suits or coats. I do not think time and attention are given in the extreme to clothes.

Arranged marriages are passing, too, with many of the old customs. I attended several weddings where the bride wore white satin with a veil, exactly like my sister's a few years ago, up to the minute in fashion, and the bridegroom was present at the ceremony. Engagements are announced and the happy pair are often seen together. There is a marked feeling of respect for older members of a family and probably the parents' wishes influence their daughter's choice, but very few young people are coerced into doing things nowadays.

Turkish women have always been educated, though perhaps not according to our standards. Theirs has been the training prevalent in Europe and in this country in its early days, to educate a "lady." Girls were taught at home; music, literature, languages and embroidery, perhaps. Sometimes they studied in groups and the children of employees shared the advantages of the heirs of the household. The spirit of democracy in family life is very striking in Turkey. Old and trusted servants are treated as friends. And while I have an opportunity, I would like to correct a prevalent idea of harem. The "harem lik" was the part of the house in which the women lived; grandmother, mother and children; and the "selam lik" was the men's quarters. For an excellent description and explanation of education in Turkey today, I refer you to "School and Society" for Nov. 17, the article by Dr. Lucy Wilson, who spent the summer of 1928 there.

More women in Turkey are being given education today in public and private schools, and undoubtedly their influence will be great.

HOMEMAKERS YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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every other way, the nursery school has an important part to play.

Apart from these things which have been taken from the home, what has the mother left to do, or what effect will this have on the home?

The mother can be either a bridge friend, a club member, or a happy medium, who spends her time educating herself to be better able to care for her child and perform her job of homemaking rather than housekeeping.

The mother must be more than a cook today; she must be a dietitian, so she can select the proper foods, whether she prepares them or not, so that from the standpoint of health her children will be an asset to the community, instead of a liability.

Besides these, the mother must be a companion to the children. She must have a knowledge of psychology to understand their actions. She should