

WOMAN'S PART IN TURKEY'S PROGRESS

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HISTORICAL events must have certain laws governing them although they are not yet discovered. Henry Adams had some reason in proposing to depersonalize history. Great personalities who seem to shape human destiny are nothing but vital expressions of forces working within that particular society. Just as great civilizations spring up in fertile valleys along great rivers, geniuses are the outcome of societies where there are constant undercurrents of thoughts and life. Let those who take the part of woman in Turkey's progress as a sudden phenomenon, due to the activities of a single or a few men and women, look more carefully into the forces at work in Turkish society throughout history. I believe that a brief account of the nearest Turkish background in history is necessary here. Because the period was the most stabilized I will take women in Turkey between the fifteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

In the domain of thought and literature woman played a secondary but by no means a negligible part. Tahir-el-Mevlevi, a Turkish writer, in his book entitled *Ottoman Authors*, mentions twenty-three women writers within those centuries. As far as I can judge none of them was first-rate but on the whole none was very much below the mark of any secondary man author. I met a Russian Orientalist in New York who told me that he had discovered in the British Museum a manuscript of Zeineb, a woman poet of the fifteenth century, and that he was going to surprise the world by proving that she was the greatest Turkish writer of all ages. I have no right to doubt his knowledge of Turkish literature, but I do not know the extent of his critical powers—Orientalists like archaeologists are apt to overestimate the value of old things.

The Turks of those centuries resembled the Americans at least in one way—they emphasized social welfare and were very efficient organizers in that respect. And women stood shoulder to shoulder with men in that particular activity. The Turkish woman of those centuries founded soup kitchens, hospitals, hostels, even lunatic asylums, as far back as the seventeenth century. She founded primary schools for both sexes, higher schools for both sexes, higher schools for men. She built roads, bridges, fountains, mosques and inns for travelers. Education, such as it was in those



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centuries, was a domain where she distinguished herself. Public utility and public health were her special concerns. And it was not restricted to the rich and the mighty women of the land either. If some of the fine school buildings in use today (parts of the University and a few principal women's Colleges) were founded by women of fame and name, the unknown and the humble woman founded smaller schools, built tiny street fountains, or at least paid for the education or the upkeep of a few orphans in her particular quarter. The endowment charters of those days of public institutions created by women form a very important and interesting part of the arch-

ives of the Ministry of Pious Foundations. Even a partial reading of those documents proves that women vied with each other to add a new feature to their Foundations. Music for a lunatic asylum and money to take the children to the country in the summer are rather modern ideas in those centuries.

Generally speaking the Turks of those centuries meant to keep Turkish society in its Islamic and Eastern frame. Woman was man's equal in economic rights according to the laws of Islam, but in all other respects woman was dominated by man. It is somewhat interesting to note how far women ventured out into other fields of activity. On the whole it was an Islamic society and, at least in its social laws, women were bound to remain within traditional ground. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that the Turkish woman of those days must have been keenest for social changes if she had any desire for change. There is not much literature on the subject in the earlier part of this period. We have only royal decrees ordering women of the people to veil in the traditional

way. It may mean that women of the people had not accepted the veil up to the early part of the eighteenth century. It may also mean that they were effecting changes contrary to the Sultan's idea of an orthodox society.

The West, as represented in the French school of thought, entered Turkey in the early days of the nineteenth century. Turkey began to face the West. All progress from 1800 onwards became synonymous with the adoption of some Western method or way. Progress is a misleading word anyway. Some call it a change for the better and some call it a change for the worse. Those who are for or against it are found mostly among the Romantics. The Right Romantics look at it as a destroyer of dreams and beauty in life. On the other hand the Left Romantics advocate all progress which tends to better and advance mankind. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the supreme type of a left Romantic, had a telling effect in the minds of some Turks, Selim the Third being the foremost among them.

It is also curious to note how the position of Western women was attracting the attention of the Turks. The Turkish ambassador, Seid Ali, in an official report on the political situation in France, cannot keep himself from inserting the following lines: "Women are free and most respected here. The most highly placed men rise reverently at the entrance of the humblest woman."

Selim the Third himself depended on his favorite sister, Princess Hadijé, for encouragement and approval to carry out his reforms. He visited her often and consulted her on every important action. The Princess aimed to influence the women in her surroundings. She received some members of the diplomatic corps in her palace and entertained them, although she did not appear in person at those entertainments. Her relations with the Christian architect Melling aroused unfavorable comments among the conservatives. She had learned the Latin letters and he had learned Turkish. So the interpreter was dispensed with as they conversed. She punished severely the members of her house who made Melling's work and position difficult in her household. Melling represented progress to her, and she had courage enough to stand by him.

The Sultan paid with his life for his progressive ideas and the palace women remained behind the veil very long. But there was another significant expression of the change which was taking place among the people themselves. A school of literature with a naturalistic tendency was rising. There was frankness and spontaneous-

ness in the way they expressed the life of the time. The poets of this school were mostly second-rate but without them it would have been impossible to study the woman of the age.

We have a unique human document in a poem written at the time. It was a dialogue between two women—a mother and a daughter. The poem is written with the rich idiomatic Turkish used by the women of Istanbul. The poet belonged to the poorer classes and the women he describes could easily have been his wife and daughter, and they are really representative of the masses since they belong to the class of women who do their own cooking and pine for leisure and riches.

The daughter, Pembé Hanım is a girl of thirteen. She is being lectured by her mother and we get a living picture of the girl. She is always going out instead of occupying herself with housework and embroidery. She is affecting the manners and the dresses of public dancers. She is throwing her handkerchief at men and exchanging jokes with them from behind the lattices—in short, she is a flirt. And all this is not favorable to being asked in marriage by some rich and serious man with a villa on the Bosphorus. "Be a womanly woman and not a Street Broom," is the refrain of the mother.¹ If the words denoting the fashions, the amusements and occupations of the time were changed, the lecture might be that of a conservative mother of today addressed to a present flapper daughter. The Street Broom (Flapper) of the early nineteenth century imitated the public dancers, threw her handkerchiefs at men or spoke with them from behind the lattices: the present Turkish flapper imitates Greta Garbo or some other film star; she has joy-rides with her boy friends in Ford cars. There is a remark in the mother's lecture which gives food for thought. She tells the daughter to study hard and obey the "Lady Teacher," and acquire a profession which might enable her to earn her own bread. It is evident that the girls of the poorer classes, after leaving the Mosque schools, could follow their studies with a private woman teacher, and the profession of a lady teacher is preferable to a rich marriage. There is almost a note of early suffragettes in it.

The daughter's answer is a long cry of revolt. She will do as she pleases and marry whom she chooses. "I will seek a boy of

¹The poem is by Vassif. A translation is given by Gibb in his "History of Ottoman poetry." Although the translation is pretty good the author's ignorance of Turkish idioms make some terms inexact. The term Street Broom is given as a "Slut"; it meant merely a flapper.

fifteen and him my sweetheart make," is her refrain. She has no difficulty in managing her father. "I can wheedle daddy, just let me pass my white fingers through his beard," she says.

This tendency of the woman of the time to live her own life and to express herself is not restricted to women of the lower classes either. The poet, Fitnat Hanim, circulates freely at fashionable Turkish resorts, exchanges remarks with men poets. The reaction to the past restrictions and inhibitions at times steps over the boundaries of refined language. A revolt against social bondage is evident in general among the Turkish women of the age. As the Turkish woman has never been under economic tutelage, it is natural that her entire struggle for freedom and equality should be on social lines. If life had followed a normal course this reaction against social restrictions might have developed a Turkish Suffragette movement on social lines. But it did not. This spontaneous naturalism in life and art gave way in two generations to a stronger and more organized movement of thought.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the Left Romantic influence of France had triumphed. A Western school of literature was creating a tremendous urge to bring about changes, political or otherwise. This school is commonly called the Tanzimat. Never had Turkey produced such a galaxy of first-rate men of letters. And like the philosopher poets of France they had an aim and a purpose in their art. They were advocating the union of races and their equality; they were struggling to bring about a liberal and constitutional régime. There were quite a number of minor women writers and a single great one, who unfortunately produced only three poems. All of them were ardent admirers of J. J. Rousseau and Condorcet. Due to their influence they began to talk somewhat vaguely but strongly about bettering the position of the Turkish women and giving them the high place in society they deserved. They were not definite about what they wanted to accord women, but they were clear about the cause which made them lay stress on the value of woman as a factor in progress.

The writers of the Tanzimat were distinguished students of history. They made an exhaustive study of the East in general and of the Islamic world in particular. At the moment the East and the whole Islamic world, except Turkey, were almost entirely under the domination of the Christian West. The position of the Turkish Empire seemed not very secure either. Zia Pasha, a poet of the

school, expresses their thought in these lines: "I have passed through Christian Realms and have seen castles and prosperous cities; I have wandered through Islam and have seen only desolation and a heap of ruins." I could point out passages down to this day, in prose and verse, which express exactly the same thought.

What was it that gave the Christian West this superiority? The only difference between the men of the East and the West, according to those writers, was the attitude of mind towards their women. This was a superficial way of looking at things but it created a new point of view. Evidently they saw nothing wrong in the status of Western and Christian women. None of them had read *The Subjection of Women*, by John Stuart Mill. With a naïve logic they affirmed that if the East and Islam adopted the same attitude of mind towards women as that of the Christian West, regeneration and restoration would be immediate. The greatest poet among them, Abdul Hak-Hamid, said: "The measure of a people's progress is the status of its women"; and this motto hangs on the walls of the present training school of women teachers in Istanbul.

The forces which have built the Turkey of to-day within the last twenty years have outrun almost every item of the platform of the Tanzimat writers. Their ideals of democracy and the "union of races" gave way to nationalism and to dictatorships of parties or persons. But the ruling element remained faithful to the doctrine of emancipating women. They continued to believe that the greatest force in progress is woman. This persistent idea had immediate results for Turkey, but it will go far into the future of the changing East and Islam as a working force. Turkey is the first Islamic country which has succeeded in standing on its feet after adopting the idea of emancipating its women. And this will affect the destiny of millions of women. Curious that the indirect part of the Turkish woman in progress has a greater world significance than her actual part in progress, although the latter is by no means negligible. It is as it should be. For neither in Turkey nor in the changing Eastern and Islamic world is the struggle confined to the adopting of a particular form of government modelled on the West. It is deeper than that. It is a struggle for change, from the old to the new. The boiling pot contains age-old ingredients as well as brand new elements. The Turkish idea of consider-

ing woman as the essential feature of national salvation has a chance of being raised into a universal dogma in the East.

It was the influence of the Tanzimat writers which led to the education of high-class Turkish women in Western languages. French and English became the languages which the Turkish woman of the better class had to learn instead of Arabic and Persian. When Abdul Hamid replaced the benevolent despotism of his two predecessors (an age which had made the Tanzimatist writers possible) by his reactionary and obscurantist régime, he was unable to stop the education of women entirely. His ministers, who had adopted a reactionary attitude in public affairs to please their sovereign, were different in private life. They continued to educate their women on Western lines.

In addition to foreign tutors and governesses girls managed to go to foreign schools which were unfavorably looked upon by Abdul Hamid. It is at this period that Pierre Loti visited Turkey and met a group of highly educated Turkish women. He found them speaking French and English like their native tongue, reading Western literature, and playing Bach and Beethoven with a great deal of skill and emotion. He also noted that his heroines yearned for hats and balls and the free life of the Western women, the kind of life where they could exhibit their accomplishments and pretty persons. They were the Western editions of *Pembé Hauim*, the girl of thirteen of the early nineteenth century in Vassif's poem. If life had gone on in the normal way the "Désenchantées" of Pierre Loti also might have developed a superficial stratum of women



A LITTLE TURKISH GIRL

with a great deal of refinement and ability but altogether restricted. Side by side with these attractive ladies there were some women among the poorer classes, receiving training as teachers. They spoke neither English nor French and the education they received was old-fashioned. But they were the first women officials. They were sent to the provinces as teachers in the primary schools which the state was opening for girls. They seemed to have a wider range of influence. The age had some worthwhile women writers as well; a paper, *The Women's World*, was being published by them. Fatima Aliyé and Eminé Semiyé, two women novelists, and a number of other women poets were keeping alive the desire and necessity of doing something for women.

Although women were not interested in politics still there was a great reaction among women of all classes against the tyranny of Abdul Hamid. He often issued decrees ordering women to adopt the old costumes and stop the somewhat general tendency toward imitating Western attire. His police were helpless where women were concerned. But it was easier for women than for men to defy Abdul Hamid. For the tradition of Islam which handicapped woman in some ways also gave her great security.

With the constitutional Revolution of 1908, Turkey entered an intensively active stage. Women took no part in the preparation of that Revolution. Among the early members of the Committee of Union and Progress in Macedonia there was only one woman, Eminé Semiyé, the novelist. But if they had nothing to do with the establishment of the Constitutional Régime, they welcomed it warmly, partly because they had all hated Abdul Hamid's tyranny and partly because the New Régime stressed the necessity of doing something for women seriously. Among the vast number of demonstrators who celebrated the New Régime there were large crowds of women for the first time.

In a few years, partly from the difference of temperament and partly from the external and internal events which forced their hands into drastic action, the Young Turks abandoned the democratic ideals of the Tanzimat for a more radical, violent and nationalistic platform. But they remained even more determined to train women, to educate women on equal terms with men. The State made great efforts to establish a Western system of education. In six years the change brought about in the system, and in its generalization and efficiency, constitutes the best feature of

the Régime which came into existence in 1908. And the system offered equal opportunities to women. In 1908 there was only one old-fashioned training school for women teachers and a few primary schools and Mosque schools for girls. About 1914 the number of training schools and Lycées for girls was nine; they had spread out into provincial centers. Primary schools for girls had multiplied and the Mosque schools had been thoroughly modernized. There were women students sent by the State to the American College in Istanbul, and women students in Germany and Switzerland. Into this educational activity women threw themselves heartily. Quite a number of secluded young women who had specialized in languages, music, and drawing during the Hamidian Régime became teachers in the state schools. Besides the new state schools there was a general educational mobilization throughout the country. Women as well as men organized classes for adult education.

The sudden rise of nationalism among the Turks, which has some tragic aspects in the domain of politics, has helped the cause of woman. The writers of the period were studying the pre-Islamic past of the Turks, emphasizing the position and the importance of women in that early period. It was important for the masses to know that the desire to emancipate women, to make them coöperate in the building of a progressive Turkey, was not an imported Western idea. It had been inherent in Turkish society itself. It gave women a broader view and developed a public responsibility. They were expected to serve and to save the country and the nation. It prevented sex antagonism and promoted unity among all the progressive elements. The first woman's club, called "The Elevation of Women," for the first time inaugurated lectures for women. Men began lecturing to women's audiences and women began lecturing to men's audiences. The Nationalist club, Turk Ojagi, played an important part; mixed audiences began in the Turk Ojagi. With the youth of the Turk Ojagi, to restore Turkish woman to her old responsible and honored position in the Turkish Society was almost a religious duty. As early as 1912 it was evident that the Turkish women meant to share men's service and men's responsibility. The Balkan disaster found them nursing in hospitals, and creating useful institutions for the orphans and the widows of the Balkan refugees.

The Great War brought events to a crisis. Turkey was fighting with forces at least twenty times her superior numerically or other-

wise. All her manhood was at the front. The ordinary business of life, even the governmental machinery, was threatened with collapse. Women stepped into the breach. The provincial women, even the peasant women who had been kept away from the rapid changes taking place in the cities, were obliged to invade those cities in search of work or for markets. Woman had to take charge of the family. The army was dressed and fed by the organized activities of women labor battalions. The vacancies in the governmental departments were filled by them. Furthermore, the war years which took away boys from colleges, filled the colleges with girls. The difference of centuries, at least in education, was being reduced as between men and women.

In 1916 women entered the University. And in the same year the state passed the revised family law. Interpreting marriage in Islam as a contract between a man and a woman, the new law gave the woman the right to divorce her husband as freely as her husband could divorce her, provided she had such a clause put in her marriage contract. Polygamy, which was a grievance with woman, was not abolished by a law, but both public opinion and economic distress had made it rare. Furthermore, under the new revised law she could at once divorce a husband who took a second woman.

The veils in general had disappeared from the faces of the younger generation and the women who had work. The world was too busy to take any notice of the fundamental change which had taken place in the life of the Turkish woman. She herself was hardly conscious of it; the bigger issues of national life mattered most; woman was occupied in the general struggle for survival and for progress.

In 1918 Turkey was invaded and threatened with annihilation. A national disaster of such magnitude would have touched women of any period. But in 1918 the Turkish woman had a strenuous and practical training of ten years behind her. Her sense of responsibility towards the country had grown and had become general. She threw herself into the great nationalistic movement and struggle from 1918 to 1922 as she had never done before.

The first objective of the struggle was to clear the country of the invaders, to obtain a lasting peace, and to secure universal recognition that the Turks were to be left free in a smaller Turkey where the Turks were in an incontestable majority. From the humble peasant woman to the highly educated city woman this point was

clearly understood. The organized guerrilla fighting, the prelude of the struggle in Anatolia, has a list of women martyrs. For the transport and a l i m e n t a t i o n of the entire country in the second and more organized military s t r u g g l e, women were the principal figures.

The second objective was to create a more up-to-date Turkey. That also was understood by all classes of women. In 1921, I addressed in Angora an assembly of women which included a large crowd of peasant women. The gist of the talk was this: an armed struggle,



A VILLAGE WOMAN WITH A
PRIMITIVE WOODEN JUG

however necessary for the moment to clear the country from the invaders, would not create the strong and civilized Turkey we needed; there must be another kind of mobilization to reach our objective. After the talk, a half-blind and old peasant woman came to me and embraced me. She told me that she already knew what I meant by another kind of struggle. She was the washer-woman of the training school for women teachers in Angora. She was working daily in spite of her age and infirmity in order to send her daughter to that school as a student. She believed that the daughter was going to help create the country we had in mind. I could multiply the example indefinitely.

The first objective was reached in 1923 when the Treaty of Lausanne opened a new era of peace for Turkey. And the date is a turning point in Turkish history and in the life of the Turkish woman. Woman's part in Turkey since 1923 is different from her part in the earlier stages of progress. All historic epochs in Turkey before 1923 were created mainly by men. The Republic is built on the equal sacrifice, suffering, and effort of women. They have faced persecution, imprisonment, and death in order to create the present Turkey. Any simple peasant woman in the country has as much

right as any general who commanded an army during the struggle to say: "Lo! I have my share also in saving and building the Turkish State."

Turkish women are better prepared and trained for their present work. No wonder that in the Turkey of today woman is a most intelligent and important factor of progress. In their age-old profession, that of teacher, they have multiplied enormously and have obtained a high efficiency. Women doctors have increased in numbers. As assistants in hospitals they do useful work. Quite a number of them marry men doctors and go out into the interior to work. The woman lawyer often pleads in public. Government departments have a considerable number of employees. Women secretaries, stenographers and typists are the principal elements which have made the conduct of business in Latin letters possible. The banks and all commercial institutions employ them in large numbers. They open modest commercial houses and conduct business quite ably. They have equal chances of training and equal wages in whatever department of life they may be employed. The number of Turkish women students in the Turkish University and in European universities is constantly increasing. In short there is no section of life where one does not meet women doing distinguished or useful work. The fact is that the progress of women as an idea and as a reality has been the outcome of an evolution, slow up to 1908, and accelerated within the last twenty-two years; therefore it has a steadier and more serious aspect than some of the other reforms in Turkey.

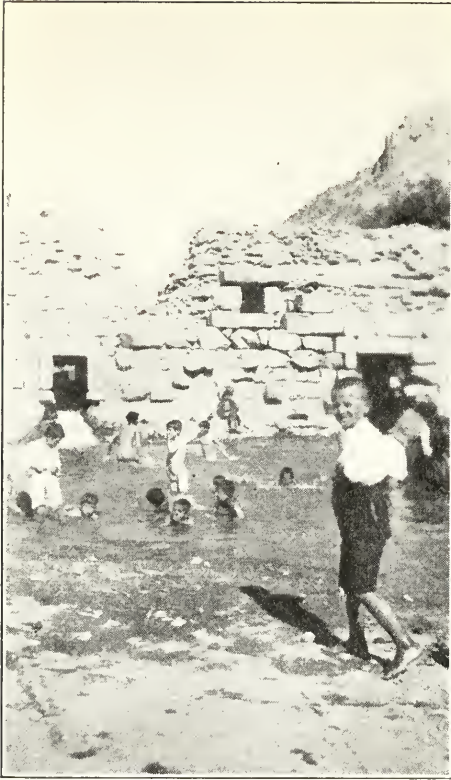
There are two important changes touching the woman in Turkey which have taken place since 1923.

The new civil code which was accepted in 1926 is the first and the greatest reform which touches the constitution of Turkish society profoundly. It takes away from the Islamic Church its supreme right of legislation in regard to marriage, divorce, and inheritance. The revised family law of 1916 had been abolished by the Sultan's government in 1919. In 1924, after the establishment of the Republic, the National Assembly took up the question. At a large meeting of women in the Nationalist Club in Istanbul, a committee of women was chosen to study the situation and to send a petition to the National Assembly. On the whole women did not care to have the revised family law of 1916 restored. Although the extreme modernists think that the revised family law of 1916 was more liberal

and in keeping with the spirit of the present day, Turkish women did not think so. Contrary to the modern Western woman the modern Turkish woman desires a more rigid stability in marriage and more difficult divorce. Therefore the committee of women in 1924 made a special study of the family laws of Sweden, France, England, and Russia, and having found the Swiss law most suitable, they sent a translated copy of it to the Assembly with a petition attached. In 1926, the young and progressive element in the National Assembly, working for the adoption of a western code, managed to get adopted the present civil code which is based on the Swiss civil code. The present law takes away from the individual the right to divorce and gives it to a court. Polygamy is punished by the law. Woman's desire for the betterment of her social position has been on this line for centuries. No reform expresses the realization of such an old and forcible desire and need in the feminine part of Turkish Society.

In 1930 Turkish women were given the municipal vote. It was not due to any particular agitation on the part of the Turkish women. It was rather due to the recognition of their value as a political force by the People's Party, the only ruling party at the moment. Although women had not shown a great desire, from a personal point of view, to enter the political arena in the principal cities women voted in large numbers. In 1930 was a curious moment in our dictatorial régime. The Turkish dictator had launched a second Party under the name of Free Republicans, with a more liberal political outlook. It seemed as if Turkey was becoming a constitutional country (it is only constitutional in name and form at the present time). The Free Republicans, who lasted only a few months and then were obliged to dissolve, had their candidates in the municipal elections of 1930. Women who owed their vote to the People's Party voted for the Free Republicans. The People's Party bitterly accused women of ingratitude. The situation resembled that of the English Conservatives who extended the vote to women of twenty. However the principal cities of Anatolia and Istanbul have women members in the Municipal Councils at present. The only significance of women's voting for the Free Republicans is that they are more favorable to a constitutional régime even if a Dictatorship gives them a few important privileges.

On the whole woman continues to be less interested in obtaining the political franchise than in her other activities. The



THE OLD ROMAN DAM OF ANKARA

Woman's League in Istanbul was formed in 1924, and has been the only organization agitating for the vote. Although it has been allowed a free hand in its activities by the present government it does not have a strong or large following. Woman's part in the social and the educational fields has a long past. Politics is a new field.

To conclude: the indirect part of woman in Turkey's progress will stand out and go far beyond the Turkish borders, as has been already stated. Beginning with women in Syria and Egypt, who are feverishly passing through the stages which Turkish women have already passed, it will go through-

out the Moslem world as an irresistible wave.

The direct part of woman in Turkey's progress is much more complicated. The outstanding points in this historical phenomenon can eventually be summarized as follows: Turkish woman in the Near East had a far more telling part in the educational and social domains, in spite of the handicaps of her traditional seclusion and social inferiority.

The ideal of the Tanzimat to elevate woman to the status of man, at least educationally and socially, made woman go through a long preparatory period between 1839 and 1908. As the idea belonged to the intellectual and to the élite, woman's education on Western lines also began among the well-to-do and the enlightened minority and penetrated very gradually into the masses. The change in woman's life up to 1908 was personal and abstract. There was

very little activity on her side in the practical and national fields.

The revolution and change of 1908 was brought about by a group of people who rose from the masses. Although influenced by the ideas of the Tanzimat, there were almost no great intellectual figures among them. They were composed of young staff officers and young and second-rate officials. Practical and narrowed down to nationalistic aims, they were determined to use every Turkish element to create the state they had in mind. What element more forcible and vital than woman? Fortunately Zia Keuk Alp, the outstanding sociologist and historian of the age, managed to establish an ideology of the new movement. Although the writer of this article did not agree with the political ideas of Zia Keuk Alp, his social preachings were sound. He tied the social movement to an idealized past and saved it from becoming a mere imitation of the Western world in its externals. He tried to prove that woman was an essentially active figure of Turkish society. Therefore woman had to be trained, woman had to be made to work to the breaking point, if the Turkish nation was to survive. And it was the woman of the lower classes who threw herself into the general educational and economic activities. A normal time might have brought about a strong opposition. The constant menace of war, revolution and national disaster averted the public attention to other fields. The very nature of the critical times up to 1922 accepted woman's service in progress as a necessity.

In 1922 the threatening crisis had passed with the aid of woman. Relatively speaking, peace had come to Turkey for the first time after twenty years of armed struggle. Therefore it is natural to call the last ten years a new period in Turkey. It also is natural that the greatest reform in regard to woman's life and in regard to the family institution, should take place in this last period in the form of the Civil Code. It was the culmination of a desire and struggle of centuries.

Woman's activities as a wage earner did not frighten man in Turkey. Those who travel and study in the interior of Turkey see that the fields in which woman has gone to work follow the old tradition with a slightly better equipment. A large number of looms for carpet weaving or homespun material are starting in homes. Small and humble machines for knitting stockings and dresses are being adopted on a very large scale. The woman remains still the principal factor in agriculture. As nearly ninety percent of the

population is agricultural and woman still a drudge, the greatest need of the future is to spend the greater part of national energy, brains, and resources in improving her condition.

There are occasional signs which denote that woman's coming into the political activity, if ultimately realized, will arouse opposition. There is already a youthful association in Smyrna under the name of "The Defence of Men's Rights," against woman's probable political franchise. If woman gets the political vote the opposition might stiffen. But so far there has been no steady and general desire on the part of woman to invade the political field. The somewhat sinister and detrimental political activities of the palace woman in old Turkey ended in the eighteenth century. It was an essentially Byzantine influence. And it would be well not to tolerate a veiled and irresponsible political activity. However, during the municipal elections of 1930, there was a working woman in Istanbul, a certain Hava, who became quite a figure in the electioneering campaign. There may be individual women who are prepared or who have political ambitions, and the National Assembly may enfranchise women at any moment, but on the whole at least for a generation women in Turkey will be content to serve without demanding the political franchise.

The characteristics of woman in Turkey's progress offer complex and contradictory aspects. But the general features can still be traced to the trends and influences which have been dominating Turkey within the last century.

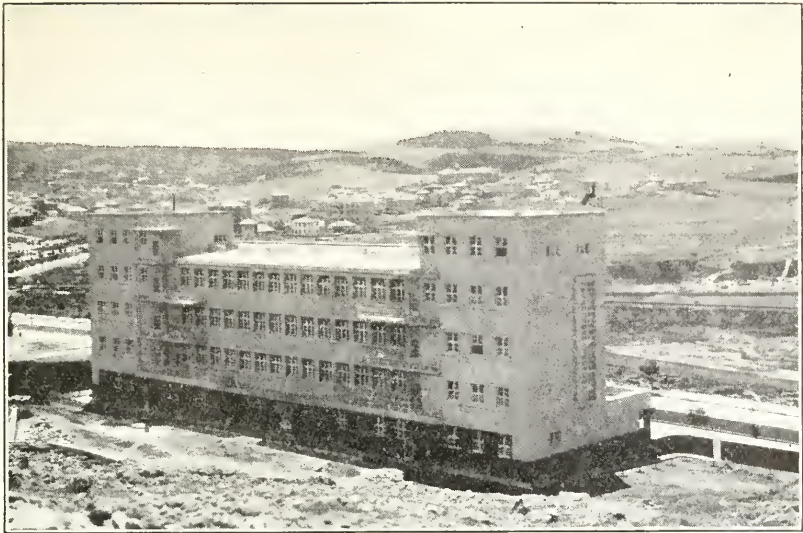
There are women who are the survivals of the Tanzimat. They want education and approve of the Civil Code but they are bitterly opposed to the rapid external changes. Bars, dances, beauty contests, and disregarding of the veil shock them. In 1930 there was a "Miss Turkey" in Paris. She paraded with the rest of the candidates. An elderly woman of the class mentioned said to me:

"Alack for the day in which a young Turkish woman exposes herself to crowds of men of strange countries, degrading herself by being personally inspected like a Mediaeval slave."

This sort of woman believes that progress taken from an alien civilization should be restricted by tariff walls. However these are mostly women above fifty and will pass away entirely in a generation.

The two classes of women who dominate present Turkey are the following:

I. Women who believe that progress means external change



GIRLS' SCHOOL IN NEW ANKARA

and a complete adoption of everything that is Western. For them hats, dances and beauty contests are as essential for progress as railways and schools. They are a repetition of Pierre Loti's *Désenchantées*, without the extreme culture of the latter. Only, while Pierre Loti's heroines pined for change for their own pleasure, their successors believe those purely external changes are necessary for the creation of that type, the "European," at which the limited but influential minority of the People's Party aim. This class of women will be limited and will depend on economic prosperity or depression, above all, on the attitude of mind of the ruling party in regard to progress. For the leading women among them are mostly either the wives of high officials with large salaries or the wives of the new rich, which each ruling party creates by political backing. The present ruling party, beyond its aim of creating the "European," has no ideology as yet. A vague mixture of Europe, America, Sovietism and personal innovation vacillates in the launching of reforms. However, the stranger usually takes this class of woman as the typical new Turkish woman. For they are the only ones who can afford to travel or entertain.

II. The majority of women, who play a bigger and more telling part in Turkey's progress, however, are different from those


mentioned above. An army of women teachers, women students, an ever increasing number of women doctors, social workers, lawyers, writers, small traders, officials, and employees constitute the class of women in progress. Their numbers will be increasing and one may call them a more stable element. Those who are young and have leisure, join in the new forms of Western ways of amusement. Some are almost fanatically against such, but on the whole none of them considers those externals as essential or important. There are a number of young writers among them. Halidé Nusret has standing as a novelist (she is not to be confused with the writer of this article). Suat Dervish, another woman novelist, has also been quite successful in producing critical and analytical articles on the influence of the present changes. The modern Turkish theater has able Turkish actresses, and the world of painters counts talented young women. There is a brilliant woman lawyer, still in the early thirties, who pleads quite frequently in court. One of our most famous lawyers, Kenan Bey, engaged her two years ago to plead a personal lawsuit of his.

Space forbids going into a more detailed account of the groups of women who interpret progress in Turkey in as many contradictory ways as men. There will be confusion and contradiction until a big enough mind synthesizes the forces at work and produces the ideology which will be universally acceptable in Turkey. After all we are a people who are changing our skins. The change of skin is not merely skin deep. It affects the entire physical and psychic make up. Until we shed our old skin and grow a new one, until the new one loses its rawness and tenderness in its contact with the harsh realities of life—the fever, the struggle, to establish a new and progressive Turkey will continue.


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