

## ***An Education for Armenian Women: Theory and Practice at Euphrates College***

The education of women was an integral component of progressive social, political, and intellectual movements in the West in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenian national renaissance, or “awakening,” was not an exception: the Armenian National Constitution of 1860 recognized the importance of education for females, citing the need “to spread equally among boys and girls of all ages of maturity the knowledge of things which are necessary for mankind.”

Euphrates College, established by American missionaries in 1878 in the remote city of Kharpert, Ottoman Turkey, represented an attempt to adapt American educational principles to the needs of Armenians living in an undeveloped part of Eastern Turkey. This paper examines the female department of the College in the context of the contemporary debates about women’s education as well as the evolution of educational theories and practices, beginning with the opening of the College until its closing in 1915. It also considers the suitability of the education offered at the College to the needs of the Armenian women in the area. Strong support from American women at home insured the maintenance and expansion of educational opportunities for female students at Euphrates College, while the local reaction from a generally conservative and patriarchal Armenian society ranged from begrudging acceptance to enthusiastic endorsement.