

Education begins

Egyptian Modernizing

by Lois Bronson

THE modern vies with the ancient in Egypt today. Four Egyptian students at Iowa State working for their doctor's degrees in agriculture represent this contrast.

Literature, the theater, humanitarian work and medicine claim the 5 percent of Egyptian women who are in business. Because society requires that women patients be cared for only by women doctors, Egyptian women need not worry about quota systems in their professional education.

Most of the Egyptian students wear white uniforms in the summer. Girls begin primary school at six years wearing blue skirts and white blouses, proudly displaying their particular school insignia. Most girls enter 5-year high schools by the time they are 12 years old.

Colleges are coeducational, in contrast to high schools where boys and girls are segregated. Courses in foods and clothing are included in the coeds' program, as well as liberal subjects.

"One can easily tell if a college woman is married," smiled Mohamed Taha Eid, student of statistics. "Unmarried women do not wear lipstick."

When Egyptians enter college they know not only their native Arabic tongue, but English and French and if possible Latin and German. Both English and French are taught in primary school.

"El Hesani" and "Ahdas Elaziak" are read as avidly by Egyptian women as women in the United States study their fashion magazines. Their popular magazines, such as "Ana We Enta," have women's sections featuring homemaking.

Because it is against the Mohammed religion to refer to the cross except in holy connections, the Red Cross is called the Red Crescent. Egyptian women take active part in humanitarian societies. In 1925 Mrs. Sharawy Pasha founded a society whose branches work for hospitals and the furthering of education throughout the country. Egypt also has its YMCA and YWCA.

The theater is an everyday art in Egypt. Students of all schools and colleges put on plays coached by His Majesty King Farauk's government theater group teachers. To promote the theater, the Egyptian government owns film companies. The Office of Censorship controls the stage as well as the cinema.

Independent film companies, Crescent and Pyramid, are busy producing fare for a movie-going nation.

"Egypt is a beautiful country; the sparse land is relieved with landscaped public gardens. For example Alexandria has more than 300 acres of public gardens where one might find coolness on hot afternoons," reminisced Ahmed Heiba, student of crop breeding.

The villages are picturesque, alive with the Arabic chatter of peasant women dressed in their native robes. But the Eastern atmosphere is growing Western. Egypt is modernizing in business, customs, way of life. The Egyptians have begun with education.

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