

... description: 1921, Coy - A Week in Abdul-Bahas Home  
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## **1921, Coy - A Week in Abdul-Baha Home**

**Genevieve Coy, Cora Grey, Mabel Hyde Paine and Sylvia Paine**

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### **September 1 to 8, 1920**

(The four pilgrims who made this glorious journey together were  
Mabel Paine, Sylvia Paine, Cora Grey and Genevieve Coy.) BY  
GENEVIEVE COY

“We have beheld the King in His Beauty; we have seen the land that is very far  
off”.

Item #1: From

Star of the West

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pp.163-167 {{p163}}

### **September 1, 1920**

Our party of four American pilgrims had left Cairo on the evening of August 31st. Three of the Egyptian Bahá'ís had come to the train to bid us farewell, and to give us messages to take to Haifa. One of the group was an Armenian, who brought a basket of fruit for the Master. Another was MírzáTofik, a young man of twenty-one or -two years of age, who is student in the college at Beirut. He interpreted for us often during our five days in Cairo, and also served as a most pleasant and helpful guide in some of our trips about the city. The third person to bid us Godspeed was Muḥammad Taqíṣfahání, in whose home we had spent some of our happiest hours in Cairo. He speaks no English, but he gave us many sweet thoughts, through MírzáTofik's interpretation, and his smile was a benediction. We loved him so much that we could not have borne parting from him had it not been that the goal of our journey was Haifa and the Master! His parting gift to us was a tray of delicious pastry, and a lovely bouquet of roses. Through all the next day's ride the flowers kept fresh, and on the day after that there were two or three buds that were fresh enough to be given to the Master,

when Mírzá Muḥammad Taqí's message of love was told him. The Master wore them in his girdle all the rest of that day, and said that he always was happy when he thought of the loving heart of the Bahá'í who had given us the flowers.

When we woke on the morning of September first, the train was running through the desert country of southern Palestine. For mile after mile the rolling sand dunes stretched into the distance. Long lines of camels were passed; and occasionally acres of date-palms, loaded with green dates, showed where a little moisture was held in the sand below the dry surface. For hours we looked out of the window, watching with an intense fascination, those long miles of desert. Some one in our party that said she could quite understand why the children of Israel murmured in the wilderness, if that was the kind of country that they had to travel through! We wondered whether Joseph and Mary, and the infant Jesus, had traveled so hard a road when they went down into Egypt. But later, in Haifa, we were told that the tradition of the country says that they went to the port at the foot of Mt. Carmel, and from there continued their journey to Egypt by boat.

During the middle of the day, the train passed from the desert into the pasture land. That is as different from our green American meadows as one can imagine. The pastures are brown and dry, and we wondered how the many herds of goat and sheep that we saw could find enough food to keep them alive. We saw almost no cows, and in Haifa we found that it is very difficult to obtain milk; we did not see any butter while we were in Palestine. Instead of butter, a white, salty cheese made from goat's milk is served.

In the afternoon we rode through the beautiful valley near Joffa, with its thousands of fruit trees. The fields have to be irrigated, but when that is done they "blossom abundantly," and the trees are loaded with oranges and lemons, which were green at that season of the year. A little farther north is the valley of Sharon, and we tried to remember some of the beautiful words of the Old Testament with regard to that valley. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

The last part of the journey was very beautiful. The train ran close to the edge of the seashore, and we saw the sun drop down through fleecy clouds and sink in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. On the right a low range of hills rose – rocky, and sparsely covered with vegetation. Beyond them appeared line after line of hills, until, far in the distance, high blue mountains towered in to the sky. We thought that they must be the Lebanons, and we wondered whether we should soon see the valley of 'Akká. After a time the lowest range of hills rose so close that all the others were blotted out. Cora suggested that perhaps the termination of this range was Mt. Carmel, and so it proved to be, for suddenly we rounded a point of land, and Haifa appeared to the east, with Mt. Carmel above.

Haifa lies on a narrow plain at the foot of the mountain, but there are buildings scattered part way up the slope. A long white road traverses the length of the hill, and reaches the top near its western extremity. I looked for the Tomb of the Báb, but I am not sure whether I saw it then. The train runs through a considerable part of the town, before reaching the station, and our eyes were very eager in their search for the various places of which we had heard so much. Suddenly I remembered that we should now be able to see ‘Akká across the bay, and hurrying to the other side of the car, I looked out – and across the water I glimpsed the city of the Lord, the “door of hope.” We were so happy to be so near our journey’s end, – we were so full of expectation, that it seemed as if the train would never reach the station. But at last we did pull up in front of it! Cora went out to look for a porter, and I was ready to pass baggage out of the window to her. But almost immediately a hand was reached in to shake mine, and we were welcomed by a young man, whom we later learned was Rúhí Effendi, one of the Master’s grandsons. Soon a familiar figure appeared in the car, Fugeta, whom we had last seen in New York. He helped pass out bundles, and soon we were all on the platform with our numerous parcels and bags beside us. We shook hands with several young men, Bahá’ís from the Master’s household, and then we four American pilgrims were in the auto, with the driver, Rúhí Effendi, and some of our baggage. Said Effendi, who had just arrived from Alexandria, Fugeta, and the other friends waited for the car to return for them.

The car ran through several streets, going steadily upwards, – and I was too happy and too far from ordinary speech to be able to say a word. Suddenly we turned a corner, and after going less than a hundred yards the car stopped. {{p165}}

I recognized the Pilgrim House, from the picture of it in *The Light of the World*. On the other side of the road was the wall of the Master’s garden, and rising above it, the little room, like a watch-tower, in which the Master often stays.

During our ride from the station, Rúhí Effendi told us that the Master was staying was staying on the mountain for a few days, to rest from the many demands made on his time when he is in his house in the town. We would not see him until the next day. Perhaps we were disappointed for a moment, but here one knows that all that the Master does is wisely done. And next morning we were sure that it was well that we should have time to rest, and drink in the exquisite peace of the place, before meeting him.

At the door of the Pilgrim House we were met by two Americans, Mrs. Hoagg and Malcolm McGillavrey. Malcolm had been in Haifa a week, but Mrs. Hoagg had been there since early in the summer. She acted as hostess for the Pilgrim House; she showed us to our rooms, – one for Cora and me, another for Mabel and Sylvia. Simple, clean, and filled with a faint fragrance as of incense, is our place of rest, the place the Master has provided for those who come from the West. Every hour I wonder more at the love and kindness which has so provided for our comfort! Whenever we sit down to a meal, I think, “This is the meal

the Master has given us!" The material food has come now, but the spiritual food had reached us in America!

Fugeta cares for the house; he gets the breakfast; he serves the lunch, the food for which is brought over from the Master's house; he washes the dishes, he cleans the lamps, he is always busy in serving us. In the evening he helps wait on table, at dinner in the Master's house. The other boy who serves at dinner is Khusraw, who came from Burmah when he was very young, to serve the Master.

After our arrival at the Pilgrim House we sat on the porch for a while. The night was beautiful, – a full moon, and yet the stars were very bright. At about half past seven, Mrs. Hoagg took us over to the Master's house to meet the ladies of the household. We entered a gate that is covered with a luxuriant growth of vines, and walked under an arbor to the entrance of the house. It was hard to believe that we were really there! We had seen pictures of the house often and it was so very like the pictures! (That is true of everything here. The pictures we have seen have been very good, I think, for one recognizes places and people immediately.)

We went up a rather long, broad flight of steps, turned to the left, and were in a high-ceilinged room of moderate size. There were many chairs and divans against the wall and at the end of the room was a big wicker chair which one knew at once was the Master's. Immediately the ladies came in they greeted us with the Greatest Name, they inquired about our health, our journey, about the believers in America. Rúhí Effendi translated for those who did not speak English. There were present the Holy Mother, the Greatest Holy Leaf, two of the daughters, TúbáKhanoum and RoohaKhanoum; two or three young girls, granddaughters of the Master, – and Fu'ad, the adorable four-year-old grandson, whose picture I had seen in Mr. Latimer's note-book.

The Holy Mother spoke about BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S commands about education. The two daughters talked with us about the friends in America. Little Fu'ad ran in and out on a very sturdy pair of legs. I cannot remember much of what was said. We knew that we were very welcome. We knew that we were at home as never before! I could not but try to realize that these were the women who had been for years prisoners in 'Akká, who had undergone unspeakable hardships – these women with smiling faces who welcomed us so cordially.

After a time, how long I cannot tell, – someone came and announced dinner. The ladies said "good night," for they do not come to the table where the men pilgrims are. We were taken out into a big, big room, which had a long table down the center. Many men came filing in and seated themselves. There were probably twenty or thirty at the table. Later we learned that five religions, and six or seven nationalities were represented. Christians, Muḥammadans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews – were met in love and unity at the table of our Master. Egyptian, Persian, Arab, Burmese, Japanese, American, Parsee, Turk, – and perhaps other nationalities were infinitely happy because they had found the joy that passeth understanding, – because they were the guests of 'Abdu'l-

Bahá! One does not remember words here, but the atmosphere of joy and peace is unforgettable.

As we were leaving the house, Rúhí Effendi, who had just come down from the mountain, brought word that the Master would either come down, or send for us the next day.

At the Pilgrim House we sat out on the porch in the moonlight and talked until almost ten o'clock, – and then went to our rooms to pass our first night in the Holy Land! I slept peacefully, and the night was all the more beautiful because I woke several times for a few minutes of happy realization that we were at last in Haifa, – in the “land of heart’s desire!”

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### September 2, 1920

To waken in the Pilgrim House in Haifa is a very, very happy experience! From our west windows we could catch a glimpse of the Tomb of the Báb, and how eagerly we looked up at it, knowing that there the Master was dwelling; there was the memorial to the wonderful young herald of our Faith, the Supreme Báb.

Breakfast in the Pilgrim House comes at seven o'clock. It is a simple, friendly meal. The food consisted of tea, toast, poached eggs, honey and cheese. And the lovely companionship of the friends! There were the seven of us who slept in the House, and Said Effendi and MírzáLuṭfu'lláh always came in and had breakfast with us. MírzáLuṭfu'lláh came down from the mountain each morning bringing handfuls of jasmine blossoms from the garden of the Tomb, and these he strewed on the table. They were a lovely reminder of the spiritual fragrance of that spot!

After breakfast on that morning I was sitting in our room praying. Cora was writing at the table, the door into the living-room was open and the various sounds of the household drifted in to us. I was having a very happy time reading some of the prayers in the little prayer-book, and also in praying for the friends who were not there with us. I found myself bathed in a wonderful atmosphere of love and peace. It was like nothing I had ever experienced! It was not supernatural, in the sense of seeming queer or strange. It was simply an all-pervading peace and calm that seemed to fill my whole heart and spirit. I seemed to be at one with all the beauty and joy and light in the universe. Thus, I think, some ray of love from the Master's thought prepared me for meeting him that day.

At lunch Rúhí Effendi brought word that we were to go up to the Tomb at about four in the afternoon, to see the Master! After lunch we all went and rested for an hour and a half. That is part of the day's program always. At three o'clock came tea, another invariable occurrence.

As the hour drew near when we were to go up the “Mountain of the Lord,” to meet ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, I remembered one evening we had spent with

{{p167}} Juliet Thompson not long before we had left New York. She had said with deep earnestness, “When you are in the Master’s presence do not be self-conscious, if you can help it. Do not be afraid. There is nothing to fear. He is all love and kindness. Pray, pray, all the way on your journey, that your hearts may be freed from all self-consciousness. Go to him freely, gladly!”

I had tried to remember that, I had prayed for purity of heart that I might learn the lessons the Master will teach those who are ready to learn. And yet as we rode up the steep road toward the Tomb, there was a strange mixture of love and dread and longing in my heart. The way seemed very long! And yet it was very beautiful. We saw the valley of ‘Akká, with the river Kishon winding through it down to the sea. Across the bay, ‘Akká shone brightly in the afternoon sunlight, – that “White Spot,” which so many, many pilgrims have sought because the Glory of God had lived there.

Finally we turned off from the main road, and the carriage drove down a steep incline toward the MossaferKaneh [musáfir-kháníh], – the Persian Hospice for men. There we alighted and Mrs. Hoagg led us along a wide path, which is bordered with cypress trees on one side and with fig trees on the other. We passed the house of the care-taker, with the little room on top where the Master sometimes sleeps when He is on the mountain, and walked around to the front of the Tomb.

Item #2: From

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pp.179 - 183, 186-188 {{p179}}

In front of the Tomb of the Báb we found perhaps thirty of the men pilgrims sitting. One of the most majestic was a tall man, dressed in a long black robe, – one of the Bahá’í teachers from ‘Ishqábád. And with all his dignity, he had the most beautiful laughter-wrinkles around his eyes! One soon realized the cause of the latter, for he smiled almost all the time!

We were shown to seats in front of the Tomb, on the edge of the beautiful garden of the terrace. We were told that the Master would come soon. During the last few days I had prayed so much for the ability to learn to serve the many children of the Father. I had found myself trying to imagine what the Master’s presence would be like, – and then had tried not to do that for fear I would be hindering my realization of his actual presence! And so I had tried to go to him with only the thought of the love of God in my heart.

Suddenly all of the believers rose and faced the East. Then, from around the corner of the Tomb came the Master with two of the young men walking a little behind him. He came slowly toward us, – and said, “Welcome, welcome!” in English; and then, “Sit down, sit down!” Sylvia sat next to him; then Mabel

Paine, myself, Cora, and Mrs. Hoagg. The other friends were beyond her, in two rows.

When the Master had walked toward us, it seemed to me that I had seen him come just that way at some previous time. He seemed to be so beautifully familiar to me! I suppose it must have seemed so because of the pictures I have seen of him, and the stories I have heard other pilgrims tell. It was a moment that one would prolong if one could, that one would never forget!

The Master began to speak in Persian, and Rúhí Effendi translated into English. He asked several questions; he talked of principles of living. Sometimes he would be silent for several minutes, – with his eyes looking far, far away. It is very difficult to remember much of what he said. Indeed, it was almost difficult to listen!

I wished only to look and look at the beauty of his face! For that was what impressed me first, – the exquisite beauty of the Master. It was like the most beautiful pictures we have of him, with life and color added. His is a face of living silver – the wonderful silver of hair and beard, and the blue of his eyes. The side face is majestic and sweet and loving. It was that which we saw most of the time. The full face is more dignified; {{p180}}to me it seemed more awe-inspiring. And yet, when he smiled, it was most exquisitely friendly, and human!

But he looked very, very tired. And one of the secretaries had said in the morning that he looked more rested than when he had gone up to the Tomb a few days before. It hurt poignantly that any face of such beauty should be so weary. We had brought letters from friends in America to give to him, but when we saw the weariness of his face, we could not bear to add at all to the burdens he has to carry.

And yet the weariness was not, I think, a weariness of spirit. I cannot tell why I felt that way, partly because he can reach, as no one else can, the infinite sources of spiritual strength.

I had no desire to speak to the Master; there was nothing that I could say. I do not know what happened in my mind and heart. There was no shock, no surprise, no sadness, no thought of my own faulty past. But I came to understand that for one who has been long in his presence, there can be no desire except to serve him; that one's life would be happy only as one pleased him; that one would be sad only as one grieved him. I felt then that I had begun to learn, – that the will to serve was becoming greater, as I had prayed that it might. Having seen the Master but once, I could make no promise to myself that that longing would carry me through and beyond all my selfish habits of the past. But I knew that to be in his presence would mean that I must love him, that I must do his will.

After a time, perhaps half an hour, some English visitors came; the Master begged to be excused; we rose and watched him until he disappeared from sight. Afterward we walked about the garden at the front of the Tomb. We saw the

big reservoir for rain-water, built into the terrace, which supplies water for the garden and for many of the people of the neighborhood. MírzáLuṭṭu'lláh brought us figs from one of the trees in the garden. We looked across the beautiful blue waters of the bay, to 'Akká, shining in the distance. We caught a suggestion of luxuriant growth of trees, and were told that it marked the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh. The sun sank behind the mountain, and finally Mrs. Hoagg said it was time for us to be going down but that first we might see the interior of the Tomb.

The care-taker opened a door at the southwest corner of the Tomb, and spread a piece of matting in front of it. Mrs. Hoagg went with us to show us the custom used in entering the Tomb. We removed our shoes, and then the care-taker poured rose-water on our hands, from a little glass cruet. We followed Mrs. Hoagg into the first room. It was perhaps fifteen feet square, and the floor was covered with a beautiful dark Persian carpet. There was no furniture of any kind. Directly in line with the outer door was a second door that led into an inner room. That was also covered with beautiful rugs. Standing on the floor were exquisite glass vases with candles burning in them. They were in groups, perhaps of three, and they gave the impression of flowers of living flame. I think there must have been other objects, a few, in the room. But the whole impression was one of exquisite beauty, simplicity, and peace. The inner room was raised several inches above the outer, and the raised threshold was covered with an embroidered cloth.

Mrs. Hoagg walked slowly up to the threshold, knelt there a moment in prayer and then came back to a corner of the room. Cora followed her, and then came my turn. I had heard of the custom of prostrating oneself at the threshold of the Tomb, and I had wondered whether it would not seem stilted and formal. But it did not in the least! Perhaps it was the dignity and majesty of the Tomb, perhaps it was because we had been with the Master so recently. I was filled with a feeling of humility, with a longing to be "evanescent at His threshold," and the kneeling in prayer seemed the most natural thing in the world! After that moment at the threshold, I walked to the back of the room while Sylvia and Mabel in turn went forward. We knelt in prayer a long time. I cannot guess what was in the hearts of the others, but my own was filled with a great longing to lose my old selfish self, and to acquire the unselfishness of service. It was a wonderful time. I thought of that "radiant youth called the Báb," who had given everything, – friends, family, life itself, to prepare the way of the Lord. I thought of the Master and the years of imprisonment and hardship that he had spent in the service of the Blessed Beauty. For the first time, since coming to Haifa, I was almost ready to weep, – not from sorrow, but from the sense of the greatness of the power of God.

No thought of death entered my mind while I was there. It was not a place of mourning! When I thought of the Báb, it was to be happy that one so pure of heart had lived and served. The only grief was for my own faults and failures; and the future, with the hope of service, was much more vivid than the past!

Finally Mrs. Hoagg, Cora and I had left the Tomb. Mabel and Sylvia had not

yet come out. We were about to put on our shoes, when suddenly the Master came around the corner! He smiled at us, and took up the cruet of rose-water. He held it out toward us, and I realized in a few moments that he wished to pour some on our hands. But I did not dream of going into the Tomb again, and so I did not realize what he meant! So he poured some on his own hands, put some on his face, and again held out the rose-water, giving us a glorious smile as he did so. That time we understood that he was waiting to anoint our hands, – and we gladly held them out for the fragrant drops. Mrs. Hoagg whispered, “We will go in again” – and just then the men believers came in a long line from the front of the Tomb. The Master anointed the hands of each, and they passed into the Tomb. Each knelt at the inner threshold a moment, until all had risen, and stood in a circle about {{p182}}the room. Then the Master spoke to Rúhí Effendi, who began to chant a long prayer, one of the Prayers of Visitation. His chanting was the sweetest, the most melodious of any I have ever heard. After the prayer the believers knelt at the threshold, and then passed quietly out. We four Americans were the last to leave, and as soon as we had left the Tomb, Mrs. Hoagg came to say that the Master was waiting to say good-bye to us. He stood at the northeast corner of the Tomb, and as we passed he shook hands with each of us, adding a caress for Sylvia. We turned and watched him as he walked back to the Tomb, waiting for the last glimpse! Then we walked down the mountain in the gathering dusk, and we were very happy. On the way down MírzáLuṭfu’lláh told us interesting stories of the spread of the Cause in Persia, of the self-sacrifice and patience of the believers in trying to bring others to see the Light of this day.

Of the Master’s talk on that first afternoon I can remember the following: He said that we were very welcome, and inquired whether we were well. Then almost immediately he asked about Mr. Vail. Mrs. Paine said, “He sends his love and longing. He wishes to do the Master’s will. “

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: “Mr. Vail is a good man, a sincere man. He is very illumined.”

CORA GRAY: “It is through his teaching that we are here.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ “You must be very grateful to him. He has been the cause of your life. He has educated you. He has no aim save to serve the Kingdom.

“Some people are ready for education. They are like the fertile ground. Some have not capacity, they are like the barren or salty ground. His Holiness Christ has told a story of the seed that fell on stony ground and so it could not grow. Other seeds fell in the shallow earth, and they soon withered away. But some fell on the good fertile earth, and grew and produced fruit. So it is with my words. Some fall on hearts that have no capacity; they do not take effect at all. Those people do not understand. Others hear and seem to understand, but they forget my words and do not live in accordance with them. But others have great capacity; they {{p183}}hear my words; they understand; they live accordingly.

“Have you seen JenabeFaḍil in America?”

CORA GRAY: “Yes, twice, just before we left New York.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: “He is a very pure-hearted man. He is a real Bahá’í. He is confirmed in service. He who is confirmed is confirmed in all things. Of the Persians who have gone to America only two have been fully confirmed Bahá’ís – his honor, Abu’lFaḍl, and his honor, Faḍil. They are both very good.”

Then the Master told the story of MírzáAbu’lFaḍl, and the English ladies who insisted on seeing him! Finally, when they had knocked very persistently and continuously, MírzáAbu’lFaḍl became tired of hearing it, so he went to the door, and said, “Abu’lFaḍl is not here.” Up to this point in the story, the Master had been speaking in Persian or Arabic, and Rúhí Effendi had been interpreting, but when the Master came to this part, he spoke in English, very distinctly, and then repeated it, “Abu’lFaḍl is not here!” and then he smiled the most adorable smile!

When we first saw the Master, he asked whether we had had any troubles or difficulties on the way. Cora replied that if we had had any, we had now forgotten all of them.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: “There is a Persian poet who says that when one has attained to the goal of one’s journey, the end of one’s search, he forgets all that has happened on the way.”

Cora said that the friends in Alexandria and Cairo had been so kind to us, and had helped us so much.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: “That is the duty of any Bahá’í. He is greater who serves most. That is the way to progress. Some flowers have color and no fragrance. Some have both fragrance and color; some have neither. So it is with the hearts of men.”

### **September 3, 1920**

On September 3d we did not see the Master at all, for he was still up on Mt. Carmel. I was very, very happy, with a calm peace. During the morning I wrote in my diary. In the afternoon we had tea with the ladies at the Master’s house. Some one told Mrs. Paine to sit in the big wicker chair at the end of the room, and she was happy to sit in the Master’s chair. I talked to TúbáKhánúm for a time, mostly about education. Her daughter, Soraya, is to go to Cairo, to the Protestant School for Girls this year, and TúbáKhánúm was saying how much they disliked to have to send their children away from home. But the schools in Haifa are not advanced enough for study beyond the age of fourteen or fifteen. She said, “We like to have our children at home in the evening in order that we may give them some spiritual teaching ourselves.” I could faintly imagine the loss to those children from separation from the lovely daughters of the Master! TúbáKhánúm said that the previous year Soraya had been in a girl’s school in Beirut. She had been eager to go, for{{p166}}evidently life is a very restricted affair for a girl in Haifa! But this fall Soraya was not quite so eager to go to

Cairo. Perhaps she had begun to realize how different her home in the Master's household is from the ordinary places of living!

We told the ladies that we hoped some of their children would come to America to study. But of course they think that a very long way from home to send them. Shoghi Effendi is now in England, just ready to enter Oxford, and Rúhánges, his sister, is to enter some college for girls there. TúbáKhánúm, and, on another day, RúhákHánúm, spoke of their hope of the founding of a Bahá'í School on Mt. Carmel. They are so sweetly appreciative and kind; they act as though the person to whom they are talking had all beautiful characteristics, – and one longs to arise to meet that faith with deeds! TúbáKhánúm made me feel that way, when in speaking of a future Bahá'í school on Mt. Carmel, she said, "When such a school is founded I hope you may come and teach in it." What could be more wonderful! But one would have to "live the life" perfectly in order to be worthy to teach in such a school.

After a time Mrs. Paine told me to come over to sit in the wicker chair. That brought me near dear RúhákHánúm and the Holy Mother. They talked to me about education. The Holy Mother said that when I was teaching my classes I could show forth Bahá'í love and kindness, even though I could not directly give the Bahá'í teachings. Besides, she said, there were many of the Bahá'í teachings that I could mention in class, even though I did not label them "Bahá'í."

The Holy Mother is very, very sweet. She is quiet, calm, giving one the impression that no disturbance ever ruffles the evenness of her life. Her voice is low, and yet assured. There is a "sweet reasonableness" in it that seems to say, "Why be impatient? All will be well in God's good time!" She makes me think of the verse in the Hidden Words, "Be contented with what we have ordained for thy sake. This is for thy good if thou art content with it." The Holy Mother is content with His will. She was not in the group of prisoners who were exiled to 'Akká in 1868, but came from Persia with her brother. The journey was very hard. Much of the time she had to sleep at night in the same room with several men, and therefore she had to wear a veil at night, as well as in the daytime. Imagine the faith and courage of a young woman, who would come all that journey of months, through wild countries, in order that she might enter the Prison City, and marry – a Prisoner! When she reached 'Akká, the Bahá'ís had been removed from the barracks, and were living in a small house, one we saw when we visited 'Akká. One can only faintly imagine the warmth of the greeting she must have received when she came to be the wife of the beloved Greatest Branch! At that time the Master must have been twenty-seven or eight years old. We know that even then he was the comfort and joy of the whole Bahá'í colony!

One of the ladies apologized because they had not been over to the Pilgrim House to call on us, for they had been unusually busy. There is much to be done in that big household, and in addition, two or three of the children had been quite ill. I think it was RúhákHánúm who was saying that they wanted to see more of us, and she continued, "One should go and call on one's guests

– and yet we do not!” Then she smiled and said, “But you are not our guests! You are members of our family!” What sweeter hospitality could one desire!

I have mentioned the big wicker chair at the end of the room. However, I never saw the Master sit in it! Whenever we saw him in that room, he sat in a corner of one of the divans, – always in the same place.

I think it was this same afternoon that the ladies took us out and showed us the garden. The whole plot of ground upon which the house stands is from one-third to one-half an acre in size, and all of it is a beautifully cared-for garden, except for the parts where buildings actually stand. (There is nothing comparable in it to our American lawns of grass!)

The garden has all been made since 1911 or 1912, by one faithful Bahá’í who loves to serve the Master in that way. I think many of the seeds, cuttings, etc., have been sent by Bahá’ís from various parts of the world. The result of the gardener’s work is a lovely place. Flowers, fruits and vegetables of many varieties grow there. We saw peaches, lemons, and pomegranates hanging on the trees. The pomegranates were just ripening and one of the ladies picked some for us to taste. There were two varieties, a sweet kind, that everyone likes, and a rather sour kind which reminded us of our red currants. Cora and I liked its sharp tartness, but most of the others did not care for it. The pomegranates are a beautiful fruit, with their dozens and dozens of bright red drops, crowded together within the reddish-yellow rind.

The Greatest Holy Leaf walked about several of the garden paths, looking at all the plants and trees. Some one told us that that was the first time in months that she had been in the garden! Apparently the ladies seldom go into the garden, because there are always men about who do not belong to the immediate family! And the Master says it is still not the time for the Bahá’í women in Haifa to go contrary to the custom of the country with regard to veiling when strange men are about. The ladies are longing for the time to come when they can lay aside the warm black veil!

To return to the garden: Several of the paths have trellises over them, with vines which make them very lovely. Above the main gateway there is a big bougonvillea plant which was covered with many blossoms when we were there. Beneath one of the arbors, against the house, and just below the Master’s window, was a garden-bench, where the friends often sat and talked. Cora and I went over there and sat for an hour two or three times, drinking in the beauty and peace. I had heard much of the Master’s garden, and I was so happy to see it with my own eyes!

At dinner that Friday evening the friends were very merry. There was a constant chatter, laughter, and teasing! MírzáBadi‘ (who is interpreter for the English governor) sat next to Mrs. Hoagg, and they carried on a gay conversation. He has the nicest face, and his eyes twinkle with fun all the time!

We had watermelon for dessert. When the Master is not there to give the signal

for leaving the table, it is the custom for all to watch until every one has finished eating; then all rise at once. But that evening, Malcolm and Mírzá{p188} Luṭfu'lláh lingered over their watermelon longer than the others! – I think Mrs. Hoagg and MírzáBadi' were responsible for flashing a signal down the table, that we should rise and leave them there! So some twenty-three people rose and looked on while Malcolm and MírzáLuṭfu'lláh finished their watermelon, while everyone laughed at them! We were all like the simplest children who had played a prank on two playmates!

All day Friday we had been wondering when the Master would come down from the mountain. We were eager for him to come because we knew that we should see more of him then. – And yet, remembering how tired he had looked, I could not help but wish he might stay longer in the quiet peace near the Tomb, in the hope that he might become more rested.

All that day I had been very happy and content not to see him, but as the evening came on I began to long to see his beautiful face again! And so I could not help but be happy when we heard that he was coming down the next morning – that Esfendiar was to go up for him sometime between six and seven! And so I went to sleep in our quiet room in the Pilgrim House, rejoicing that on the morrow we should see him again.

#### **September 4, 1920.**

On Saturday morning, Cora and I rose in the darkness of 4:30 a.m., dressed, and by 5:15 we were on our way up the mountain toward the Tomb of the Báb. That early hour was a bit too late, for even then we found the climb warm, and the sun rose before we had reached the Tomb. We stopped to watch its glorious arising from behind the Lebanon hills. There were enough clouds to make a really beautiful sunrise. The valley of 'Akká was radiant, and the river winding through it gleamed silver! It looked, in its outward physical seeming, “a door of hope!” We continued up the hillside to the Tomb. As we passed the caretaker's house, he saw us, and by a gesture, asked whether we wished to enter his house. Perhaps he thought we had come up to see the Master, whom we knew was either in the house or at the Tomb. But we motioned toward the Tomb. He smiled, and preceding us, opened the west door into the room where we had been on Thursday. Then he quietly departed.

The candles were not lighted and the central room was not quite so beautiful on that account. But a soft light filtered in through the doors, – and the exquisite peace filled our hearts. We stayed for perhaps an hour, in meditation and prayer.

*(To be continued)*

Item #3: From

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pp. 195-199, 203-204 {{p195}}

It must have been after seven when we went out into the garden. We walked about a bit, and then Rúhí Effendi and MírzáLuṭfu'lláh came out to wish us good-morning. On the previous evening we had told Rúhí Effendi that we were going up to the Tomb early in the morning. But when he saw us there, he said, "You really came! I didn't think you would! Americans never get up early!" At which we laughed much! Rúhí Effendi's English is very good, – but sometimes a phrase or some slang expression is used which he does not understand. He looks courteously questioning, half surprised, and waits for some one to explain!

The two young men talked to us for a few minutes, and then asked whether we would like to see the circle of cypress trees where BAHÁ 'ULLAH used to sit. Of course we wanted to see them, and so MírzáLuṭfu'lláh went with us, while Rúhí Effendi went to the caretaker's house. I wondered whether the Master had already gone down the mountain, and decided that he probably had, because it was after seven.

MírzáLuṭfu'lláh led us up a path, onto a terrace back of the Tomb, and there we saw the circle of cypress trees. There are ten of them, planted quite close together so that their boughs interlace, forming an almost solid wall. They are on a bit of ground which is raised about three feet from the surrounding field, and is held up by a stone wall. We went up into the circle of ground between the trees. Above our heads was a small circle of blue sky. The ground was brown with needles from the trees. I thought of the Blessed Beauty, and was glad that at one time in His storm-tossed life He had been able to withdraw to that quiet green spot. But we had been there only a few minutes, when Rúhí Effendi came toward us, calling that the Master wished to see us! And we went on eager feet, following Rúhí Effendi to 'Abbás Kuli's house. ('Abbás Kuli is the caretaker of the Tomb of the Báb.)

Cora was ahead of me, and she told me afterward that when she entered the room where the Master was sitting on a divan, she was not sure what to do! He bade her welcome, but still she stood in the doorway! Then he rose, held out his hands and motioned her to a chair. She went and sat down. Just then I came in, and the Master motioned me to a chair beside Cora. I cannot remember whether he shook hands with us or not. (Usually he shook hands with us when we left him, but not when we came into his presence.) MírzáLuṭfu'lláh and Rúhí Effendi sat by the door, and a tall Persian or Turkish man sat near us.

The room we were in had a north window, which looked out over the Bay of 'Akká. Like all windows in the eastern houses, it had several iron bars across it to keep out intruders. The house is high on the hillside and there was a wonderful view across the bay. The Master sat on a divan in front of the window, and occasionally arranged some letters and other small objects, which {{p196}}he finally put into a small handbag. As he did this, he talked to us. He said, "This location here by the Tomb is very beautiful. "

We said, "Yes, we enjoy it greatly."

Then he talked to us a little about the Báb. He said, "After the Báb was martyred, his body was kept in Persia for several years. It was never kept in the same place for more than a few years. Not many of the friends, even, knew where it was at any one time. After a long time it was brought here to Haifa, and placed in the Tomb on Mt. Carmel."

Cora asked how long ago it was brought here. I think the Master's reply was, about twenty-four or five years ago.

Cora asked MírzáLuṭfu'lláh to say that we hoped that the Master was feeling more rested.

He replied, No, he was not rested, but that did not matter. And his expression implied that physical weariness was a matter of small concern.

'Abbás Kuli brought to the Master a little tray with a teapot full of what looked like tea. The Master poured out some and drank it, explaining that it was a kind of herb drink. Then 'Abbás Kuli brought us tea in the lovely little Persian glasses. Afterward he came in with a tray full of things to eat and placed it on a chair in front of us. The Master told us to eat. "He says you must eat your breakfast here," MírzáLuṭfu'lláh interpreted. We did not really want to eat – when we could be looking at the Master – but at his command we ate a little. The tray had on it ripe figs, ripe olives, honey, and slices of white bread, – and the latter were the only slices of white bread we saw on our whole journey! I ate one or two figs, and a few olives. After a time the tray was passed to the tall Oriental next to us. Thus we had breakfast with the Master at the Tomb of the Báb! As we ate he was silent, looking out of the window upon the sea of 'Akká. His beautiful profile was outlined against the window; his gaze seemed to dwell on distant 'Akká, – and I could not but think of those long years of imprisonment that he had spent in barred 'Akká. Some slight vision of all he had suffered swept over me. I knew then, beyond all question, that I had found him as the Master. My spirit knelt in humility at his feet.

After a while he gave the bag he had been arranging to Rúḥí Effendi, and said that he was ready to go down the mountain. We followed him from the house to where Esfendiar was waiting with the carriage. We had expected to walk down the mountain, but after the Master had ascended to the middle seat, he motioned to us to get in the back seat. And so Cora and I rode down Mt. Carmel with the Lord of our hearts. No word was said, but we were very happy. At the gate of his house he alighted, and, saluting us with uplifted hand, he left us and entered his home!

At the Pilgrim House we found Rúḥí Effendi and MírzáLuṭfu'lláh, who had walked down and were there before us. Then we ate of the breakfast that Fugeta had prepared!

## September 6, 1920

September 5, 1920.

This morning all of us had finished breakfast at about 7:45 and were sitting at the table talking. No, MírzáMuḥammad Said had not finished; he had just come in, and was waiting for Fugeta to bring him some tea. Suddenly, Mrs. Hoagg said, "The Master is coming!" She had seen him pass the window! We all rose, just as he entered the door. He came in like a ray of light and life. He sat down at the end of the table, bade us be seated; told Fugeta to give Said Effendi his breakfast. But Said Effendi did not eat! He drank the tea Fugeta brought, because, as he said later – that was not so hard to do, but he could not eat toast and eggs while the Master was speaking! We quite {{p197}}understood his feeling, as we remembered our experience at the Tomb yesterday morning!

The Master said that he hoped we were well and very happy. Then he asked again if we were well.

Mrs. Paine said, "We are all very well except Sylvia, who was a little ill in the night, but that is not serious."

‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: "I hope she will soon be well."

Sylvia smiled and nodded and the Master said, "That will soon pass away and you will be well again." Then he continued, "Your food and rooms are very simple here, but your purpose in coming here makes them seem good to you. When a man is good, all things about him are good. When a man is bad, all things about him are bad. It is necessary that man be very good. "

After a pause the Master said, "You have come here, and every day you try to improve. You try to improve more each day. You must become pure in heart. Then when you return to America, you must carry spirituality and inspiration with you. You must be like Jacob, who inhaled the fragrance of the garment of Joseph from a distance. But more than that, you must be one who carries the garment, who spreads the fragrances of the Spirit."

Turning to Mrs. Hoagg, the Master told her to take us to church this morning. Then he continued by saying, "The purpose of going to the church should be to worship. Turn your hearts to God and worship Him. One can worship God anywhere, in a church, in a mosque, in all places. But here I hope that you will go to the church. "

Then he rose, smiled on us, said "Goodbye," and walked from the room, and down the steps. We went to the door, and watched him till he disappeared behind the wall.

I think that neither Cora nor myself had said a word all the time he was with us. I do not know how she felt, but for me, there simply was nothing that I could say. To be in his presence, to look on the beauty of his face, to listen to his voice, was all I wished to do. I do not know how or why, but in his presence,

all life is lifted higher; it acquires freshness and beauty.

MírzáLuṭfu'lláh translated the Master's words in this talk.

Following the Master's request, we attended the little Episcopal chapel which is near the Pilgrim House. After our return from there, we called on RúḥáKhánúm for almost an hour, and such a happy time as we had! Her house is just next the Master's, so that she can easily help entertain the Master's guests, and yet look after her own household. She and her two sisters talked with us often, giving us wonderful stories about the Cause and instructing us in many ways. That day she told us about the Master's life, during the Great War; how he gave food, money and encouragement to all those who sought his help, no matter what their race or religion. The people of the household lived on the simplest food in order that they might have food to share with the hundreds who came begging for bread. She told us, too, how few letters and papers came from the friends all over the world, and how they longed for news of the welfare of the Bahá'ís in the different countries.

That afternoon after tea, we went over to the Master's house and talked with the ladies for a short time. Then word came that the carriage was ready to take us up the mountain, for the regular Sunday afternoon meeting. TúbáKhánúm, and one of her sons, Soheil, went with us. In front of the Tomb many of the friends were gathered; more than forty, I think. For a time we talked with the people near us. Then MírzáLuṭfu'lláh brought out the large guest book, and asked us to write in it our names, addresses, the date of our arrival in Haifa, and some word of greeting. Cora wrote, {{p198}} "The valley of Achor shall be unto them for a door of hope." Mrs. Paine wrote, "Beautiful beyond compare is Mount Carmel, the joy of the whole earth." And I added the sentence from the Hidden Words which I love so much, "Lift up thy heart with delight." On that mountain one learns so much about why one should "lift up one's heart with delight."

In a short time the Master came from around the eastern corner of the Tomb, followed by little Fu'ad. The Master was radiantly beautiful. He wore a dove-colored overcoat or wrap, for the wind was cool on the mountain-side. Fu'ad was dressed in a stiffly starched white dress, and made a staunch little body-guard for the Master. (Some one told us that one night Fu'ad went up to the Master after supper and said, "You go to bed now and rest. I will take my gun and lie across the threshold. If any thieves come, I will scare them away!")

The Master gave us the talk about Elijah, which MírzáLuṭfu'lláh took down in Persian, and later translated into English, so that we might have a copy of it. At the Tomb that day Mírzá 'Azíz 'Ullah interpreted for us.

As always the beauty of the Master's face, its power and majesty, held my attention so that it was difficult to listen to what he said. After the talk, the door at the west end of the Tomb was opened, and we all filed past the Master, who anointed our hands with rose-water. Never again will we be able to inhale

that special rose fragrance, without the memory of that western entrance and the Master at the door, coming to our minds!

The candles were burning in the glass vases; there was utter stillness except when the Tablet was being chanted; and, as on the previous afternoon, my heart was won by the peace and glory of the place. While the tall, black-robed Bahá'í from Eskabad chanted the prayer of Visitation in Persian, the Master stood in the doorway, and the room was filled with a divine radiance of Love. At the threshold of that Tomb one may lay all burdens down. Life becomes simple and straight because one feels surrounded with Divine Love.

After the meeting in the Tomb the carriage took us back down to the Pilgrim House, and then returned to bring the Master. Cora and I watched for his return for a long time, while the quick twilight faded into darkness. Soon above us, on the mountain, there shone out the light in front of the Tomb, which is lighted every night unless there is very brilliant moonlight. At last, the carriage drew up before the door of the Master's house, and we caught a glimpse of white as he swept down from the high seat, and we heard the murmur of his greeting to the men who were sitting in front of the gate, waiting for the call to go in to dinner. So do all the pilgrims linger near his house, hoping that they may but glimpse his face as he passes by them.

That night at dinner, the Master said, "I hope the health of the friends is good. Today you went to visit the shrine (the Tomb of the Báb). Are you happy?" His smile, his care for our happiness and comfort, would have made any one happy, and our smiles of reply must have been bright enough to show him a little of how happy we were!

For dessert that night we had grapes, although on every other night we had watermelon. While we were eating the grapes, he said, "His Holiness Christ once was eating grapes. He said, 'I will not eat of the fruit of the vine again until I eat it with you in the Kingdom.' But the grape of the Kingdom is other than these grapes. In the Kingdom there is no bread like this. Now also, I say to you all, we will eat together of the divine bounties, God willing, in the Kingdom, – that is, divine food, heavenly food. Its taste is everlasting. Its sustenance is everlasting. God willing, there we all together will eat of that heavenly food."

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### **September 6, 1920**

On Sunday afternoon the Master said to us, "Tomorrow, I am sending you to 'Akká!' and his smile was light itself.

We left the Pilgrim House at about 8:00 a. m. Zia Khánum, Mehranges, Riaz, of the Master's household and Esfendiar, called for us. Mrs. Hoagg and we four people added five more to the group. With joy in our hearts we began the two hours' drive to 'Akká. Down through the narrow streets we rode, and then eastward past the railway station. We passed through a grove of tall palm

trees, and down to the shore. At last! that beautiful “way of the sea,” toward the Holy City, ‘Akká! How often we had read of the journey along the white sand, where the horses’ hoofs play in and out of the water, as they follow the hard-packed sand at the sea’s very edge. We watched the waves rush up and then back, sweeping with them tiny sea animals. We passed trains of camels and donkeys, all on that universal highway “not made with hands.”

We thought of all the happy, longing pilgrims who have gone to ‘Akká by that same “way.” Doubly happy were we that our Master was living safely in his own house in Haifa, and not as a prisoner in ‘Akká!

Always ahead of us was a glimpse of ‘Akká, which shone more clearly as our three horses trotted along the shore. To the East, the hills of Lebanon were purple in the distance.

As we neared ‘Akká, Mrs. Hoagg pointed out the walls, the gate, the cemetery where some of the Bahá’ís of that group of exiles are buried. Finally, Zia Khánum pointed out the tower of the barracks.

Outside the gate we halted, for one of our horses had lost a shoe. The blacksmith was sitting under a tree, with his tools about him. But at Esfendiar’s request he came and put on the needed shoe. While we waited, we looked at the high wall of the city, which showed how much a prison city it had been. The walls were high and thick; the gate was small, and beyond the outer wall was a second inner wall. A long train of camels passed us, going into the city, and one tiny donkey, heavily loaded, came out! People in oriental garb drifted by us, and glanced at us curiously, but not in unfriendly fashion. I remembered the showers of stones from small boys with which the Bahá’í pilgrims to ‘Akká used to be greeted, and I meditated on the changes that time brings!

We entered the gate, passed between the two walls for a distance, and on into the town. Esfendiar stopped the horses at the foot of a long flight of steps. It was the way to the barracks. At the head of the stairway a soldier met us, and conducted us about, for the barracks are now occupied by a few soldiers. This man looked like an Arab, but he was under British orders, I think. He led us through many winding passages, showing us several places in which we had no special interest. But finally he led the way to the tower on the west side of the court, the tower where BAHÁ ULLAH was imprisoned for two long years. Zia Khánum told us of the various places associated with Bahá’í history. She showed us the room where BAHÁULLAH had lived, the window from which He had looked out upon the plain of ‘Akká. She showed us the rooms where the immediate family had lived, and the roof from which the Purest Branch fell. The rooms were small, rude; a sad exchange for the royal palaces of Persia, as far as physical comfort was concerned. Yet joy was there, because they might suffer hardship in the service of God. To have been there in the days of BAHÁ’U’LLÁH – for that privilege one might have been able to bear much!

Afterwards we crossed the large court, **{{p203}}** and saw the pool, or reservoir, in

the center, from which the exiles obtained the slimy water which was their only drink during the first twenty-four hours of their imprisonment! On the south side of the court we saw the rooms where most of the exiles were imprisoned. They are like rather wide and long corridors. At present they are quite well lighted, but Mrs. Hoagg said that the British have changed them a great deal, and have let in much more light. When she first saw them, they were very dark and gloomy. And in the days of the Turkish rule, they must have been very dirty, unwholesome and dark. Here, amid all manner of privations and sufferings, the band of exiles praised God for having led them to believe in His greatest and newest Manifestation. As we walked about the barracks, Zia Khánúm told us stories of those early days, making them live again, for our instruction.

After we left the barracks, a few moments' drive brought us to another house where the Bahá'ís had been imprisoned. Bahá'í families live in it now, and they welcomed us with sweet kindness. We saw the little room where BAHÁ'U'LLÁH lived for seven years. In an adjoining house, which now seems to be a part of the first house, the holy family lived for many years more. There BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S room has been left as it was when He used it. The windows overlook the sea; to the south there is a view of distant Haifa; to the north, the plain of 'Akká. I think BAHÁ'U'LLÁH practically never left the house while they lived there. We hear of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's caring for the physical needs of the friends, as well as it could be done under the very difficult conditions; engaging in trade that he might have money with which to equip a bath; in all ways constantly serving his father!

It was to the smaller of these two houses that the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá came from Persia. I am not sure, but I think that some of the daughters were born there.

In the family of Bahá'ís who care for these two houses, we met a woman, Sakineh Sulṭán, whose husband, at the age of twenty, was martyr in Persia! When we were there she was probably over fifty years of age. A few years ago her daughter died leaving a baby boy, Labib, for whom she is now caring.

Whenever one is with these Bahá'ís who have been intimately associated with BAHÁ'U'LLÁH or 'Abdu'l-Bahá, one marvels at the spirit of service and self-sacrifice they show. We longed to acquire in its fullness that attitude of evanescent service.

It was after eleven when we left the city of 'Akká behind us, and drove toward the Riḍván. We went north of the city wall, toward the east. By strange track-like roads we drove, past gardens walled with cactus plants. It was perhaps a mile and a half or two miles before we came to the Garden, – the Riḍván. Just before we reached it we turned to the south, and the road followed a little stream. We passed a water-wheel, turned by a small donkey, and later we saw the water he had pumped, as it fell from a fountain in the garden.

At the gate we left the carriage, and Esfendiar unharnessed the horses that they might have a well-earned rest.

How I had longed to see the Riḍván at ‘Akká! That spot between “the two rivers,” that garden on an island! It is a place of beauty and peace. Tall palm trees, pomegranate trees loaded with ripe fruit, beautiful vines bearing many-colored blossoms, – all add to the beauty of the Riḍván. From the fountain, streams of water run to the north, south, east and west, watering the plants.

But the place of most wonderful associations {{p204}} is the spot on the side of the stream, where the two great mulberry trees form the “tent not made with hands,” “over land and water.” There, in the later days, the Blessed Beauty used to sit beneath the trees. It is a place of rest and peace. The troublous world seems very far away. Love and peace are in the wind, in the soft rustling of leaves, and the murmur of the water.

Our lunch was spread on a rug beneath one of the mulberry trees. We ate of the Persian foods from the Master’s household, of the fruits from the Riḍván. We were utterly content to sit in that heavenly place and watch Riaz, and another small boy who had come with us from ‘Akká, sail boats down the tiny stream from the fountain.

After lunch we all rested for an hour or more, after which we had tea. It was too sweet a place to leave, but the hours were passing, and the supreme goal of our day was still ahead of us, – the visit to the Tomb of BAHÁ’U’LLÁH. And so we left the Riḍván, with the prayer in our hearts that we might come again to that lovely garden of our Lord.

We drove to the north, across the rolling ‘Akká plain, till the Bahjíe appeared before us. Here BAHÁ’U’LLÁH lived after He left ‘Akká, still technically a prisoner, but permitted to live among trees and flowers, instead of being shut in by the dark prison walls. At the Bahjíe we turned westward, and soon rounded the corner of a long, low building, where the caretaker of the Tomb lives, SiyyidAbu’l-Cassim. There we alighted, and Zia Khánum indicated a small gate into the garden. Slowly, with wonder in our hearts, we followed the path through the garden to the door of the Tomb. In the little outer room we removed our shoes. A short flight of steps brought us into the large room of the Tomb.

We found ourselves in a large room, with a garden in the center. At the west end were several windows, and floods of light poured down upon us from the glass windows in the roof. In the north-west corner of the room, a curtained door led into the Tomb itself.

Zia Khánum drew aside the curtain but the door was closed. We knelt in the space before the door, and Zia Khánum chanted the prayer of Visitation. I tried to remember the words of the Tablet of BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, “Cause me to drink of the cup of evanescence, clothe me in its mantle and immerse me in its sea, “ but my mind seemed almost a blank. I remember the promise that the prayer one prays in all sincerity at the Tomb of BAHÁ’U’LLÁH shall be answered. With my whole heart I prayed for “evanescence” at His Threshold, and for the power to serve His Cause. Then I prayed for various people I knew, who were in need

of a vision of the greatness of God's love. And then for the Bahá'í friends in America. . . .

And how I longed to enter that closed door, into the Tomb itself! I remembered that. . . . and. . . . had been inside and that they had been somewhat surprised at being led in, for they knew that people were not always permitted to enter there. I realized how very far short I fell of the purity of heart of that party of pilgrims. I knew that the Master gives to each one what he most needs. And so it was as though the Master said to me, "You have not yet learned enough to appreciate the atmosphere of that inner room. Live the life; serve the Cause; achieve purity of heart. Then perhaps if you return here, the rewards of the pure in heart will be yours!" And with my whole mind and spirit I pledged myself to the accomplishment of that task.

*(To be continued)*

Item #4: From

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pp. 211-214 {{p211}}

We were in prayer at the threshold of the Holy Tomb of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH for a long time. Finally Zia Khánum went out toward the outer door. We followed her, ready to leave that place of light. But she returned, went to the front of the room, and opened the curtained door. I do not know why she did it; perhaps Mrs. Hoagg reminded her that it was our visit to the Tomb. But I am sure that in some way, the Master's will entered into it. When I fully accepted his will for me as my guide, "acquiesced," then my desire was granted.

The heavy curtains at some of the windows were pulled back, and the setting sun poured a radiant glory of light into the room. "His resting-place shall be glorious" – with torrents of physical light, as well as with spiritual glory. I do not know how long we knelt there. Time's passing ceased for us. My very breathing was a dedication of myself to our glorious leader, BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

Our drive home was a silent one. I think we were all rather weary, physically, from our long day. But the spiritual significance of all we had seen filled us with so much to think about, that we had no desire for speech.

The sun set in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, in a majesty of color. Darkness came down and shut us in on that crescent sea-shore. The horses sped along through the darkness, toward the distant lights of Haifa. We were eager to be again in the Master's presence.

We reached Haifa a short time before the dinner-hour, weary, but happy. At dinner that evening the Master said, "Did you have a happy day in 'Akká?" And we replied, "Oh, yes, it is a day we shall always remember!"

He replied, "You must always remember it! It must be like images cut in tablets of stone!"

That evening as he bade us good-night, after dinner, he said in his dear, measured English, "Go – and rest! Go – and rest!"

By the Master's love for us, we know something of the love of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. And from the love of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH we know of the Love of the Infinite Father, whose voice comes to us through the Supreme Pen: "I knew My Love in thee, therefore I created thee; upon thee I laid My Image, and to thee revealed My Beauty. \* \* \* I loved thy creation, therefore I created thee. Wherefore love Me that I may acknowledge thee and in the Spirit of Life confirm thee."

### **September 8, 1920.**

On the morning of September 8th, I went alone to the Tomb of the Báb at sunrise. Cora had not been sleeping well, and so she did not feel like rising at 4:30 that day. But I woke, dressed and was almost to the Tomb before the sun rose. When his full splendor began to loom above the horizon, I sat down on a stone in the field below the MossaferKhaneh (Pilgrim's House), and watched the lord of day cast his first light across the valley of 'Akká.

After a time I went on up to the Tomb, {{p212}} passing along the path with its beautiful cypress trees. At the Tomb I entered the room on the east side, and stayed there in prayer and meditation for almost an hour. The tall Bahá'í from Eskabad came in and knelt in prayer for some time, and then chanted. After he had gone, a younger man whom I did not know came in and chanted very softly and sweetly. He went out and I was alone for some time. The folds of the long veil I wore fell about my face and shoulders, and seemed to shut me in with God. His radiant Presence was very near.

I tried to fill my heart with the exquisite beauty and peace of that heavenly place, for I knew that was my last morning on the mountain. I knew that many and many would be the times that I would long to be kneeling at that Threshold.

Finally I knew that it was time to be going down the mountain. Just as I was leaving the Tomb, MírzáLuṭfu'lláh came in. I went out into the garden, and walked about a bit, drinking in the beauty of flowers, hills, water, and sky. Soon MírzáLuṭfu'lláh came out and bade me good-morning. Then he suggested that we gather jasmine blossoms to take down to the Pilgrim House. So we pulled off dozens of the fragrant flowers, and filled our pockets and handkerchiefs with them. Later we strewed them on the breakfast table. MírzáLuṭfu'lláh said that he used to fill a basket full of blossoms, stripping the bushes each morning. He took the basket to the Master, who scattered them everywhere he went.

About 7:00 a. m. we started down the mountain. MírzáLuṭfu'lláh had a stone-bruise on his heel, and was wearing a loose slipper and carrying a cane; but never once did I hear him complain about it. Instead he talked of how the Master works, with no thought of physical fatigue. He works all day long, interviewing

callers, etc. He goes to bed possibly by 9:00 or 9:30, but often he is up again at midnight, chanting and praying. Then he may correct Tablets for a while, and then sleep two or three hours more. And at perhaps 6:00 a. m. he rises for the day's work! Apparently he averages not more than four to six hours of sleep a night! So his whole life is given to the service of mankind.

MírzáLuṭfu'lláh said, "The real Bahá'í activity is not to stay here in the light of the Master's love. It is to go out into the world and spread his message of service. Be happy that you are going out to work for him."

But at another time he said, "Pray for us who live here in the Master's household. We have many temptations to guard against. We must never become impatient or give way to any depression. Not long ago when the Master was speaking to us, he said, 'You must be an example to all who come here. In you they must see what a real Bahá'í should be.' So we need your prayers that we may live up to that work."

We had thought of the great joy of being a member of the Master's family, but then we began to realize that only those of great unselfishness may be his helpers there in Haifa.

On that beautiful morning we entered the Pilgrim House before breakfast was quite ready, and strewed the jasmine blossoms over the table.

The Master came in after breakfast, and stayed only a few minutes. He smiled at us all, and we were very happy to be near him. He asked especially about Mrs. George's health. He said a few words to her, smiled at all of us, and then rose and left us. We all went to the door and watched him as he disappeared through our gate.

After breakfast we went over into the Master's garden, and waited for an opportunity to talk with him for a few moments. After a while RúḥáKhánúm called Mabel and Sylvia in to see him. While they were gone we stood talking with Mrs. Hoagg and some of the young men. I shall not forget the look on Mrs. Hoagg's face when she spoke of the Master's longing for unity among the friends. His only happiness is to know of the increase of unity among the believers, and of their spreading the Cause. His face always becomes sad if he hears of any contention or lack of harmony. "If people in America could see the Master, could realize how he works, they would never do anything to sadden him," she said. When one is in the Master's presence it seems utterly impossible that one should ever do anything that would sadden, or make any heavier the load of work he carries! "In the light of his holy presence, all desire dies save the desire to be like him."

Later in the morning Cora and I were called in to see the Master. RúḥáKhánúm translated for us. We gave the Master the letters we had brought from American friends. We asked him to bless the ringstones and rosaries we had bought at MírzáEnyat 'Ullah's shop. He took them in his hands, said a few words that must have been a prayer, kissed them, and handed them back to us. And so we

brought back to America Bahá'í ringstones, made doubly precious by his touch of love.

The Master said that he was sorry not to have seen us more, but that he had been very busy while we were there. "But," he continued, "it is not the length of time that one spends here that is important. Some people stay a short time, and then go and do great service. Other people are here a long time, and they learn nothing. There is some wood that is very dry: it catches fire quickly and burns well. There is other wood that is so wet that it will not burn even though you should try for a whole day. There is no result but smoke. It will not blaze, it will not keep any one warm; it will not even cook anything!" As he said the latter he smiled. But when Rúhí Khánum translated it, Cora laughed out loud. That seemed to delight the Master, for he laughed very heartily with the most unaffected enjoyment.

Cora asked how one should teach the Bahá'í Movement to our United States southerners, among whom race-prejudice is so strong. He said, "Go slowly at first. Be kind and courageous and patient. Live the Bahá'í life among these people. Do not mind if they oppose you. Their prejudice is so strong. It is like a religion. But when they become Bahá'ís they will be very good and sincere ones. But at first teach the principles and be kind to them. The rest will follow in time."

After this we went and talked with some of the ladies of the household. Soon the Master called for Mabel and Sylvia, and gave Sylvia a Bahá'í name, Badia which means "something new and wonderful." We were not present when he gave her the name, but Mabel said that he walked up and down the room, radiating power and love.

When Sylvia came back with her new name, the Holy Mother brought out a box of candy, in honor of Sylvia's nameday. The candy was white with a little chocolate center. Bringing it out in Sylvia's honor was one of the sweetest, kindest acts of simple thoughtfulness that we saw in Haifa. Needless to say, Sylvia Badia Paine was a very happy girl that day.

It was on that morning that the Greatest Holy Leaf showed us the pictures of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH and the Báb. We had already seen pictures of the Báb, and so I think most of our attention was centered on the photograph of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH. The pictured face was of dignity, power and majesty. But the feeling of the power, the glory, the supreme Reality of BAHÁ'U'LLÁH which came to me in Haifa, did not come from seeing His photograph. That Reality is living and vibrant in the unselfish lives of the friends; it makes radiant the atmosphere of the Tomb on Mt. Carmel and the Tomb at Bahjí; it shines from the Master's eyes.{{p214}}

Later in the morning Cora and I were sitting on a bench in the garden, just below the window of the Master's writing-room. Occasionally his voice floated down to us, as he dictated or talked with a caller. Once he came out of the house, and walked to the corner of the garden, where some masonry was being

done. Soon he returned, and his voice was again heard from his room. Such brief glimpses made us very happy, for he radiates such life that one is lifted toward supreme joy just to know he is near. In his Essence he is so detached from earthly things, he is so different from all human beings one has ever seen, he is Love incarnate.

Mírzá ‘Azíz ‘Ullah came and talked with us for a while, and told us stories about the European Bahá’ís whom he had visited not long ago. Other friends passed and stopped for a word. It was a perfect morning and we were sorry when the lunch-hour called us back to the Pilgrim House.

After dinner that evening RúḥáKhánum took us to receive the Master’s farewell. I can remember very little of what he said. He told us that his love and thoughts and prayers would go with us. He sent his love and greetings to all the Bahá’ís in America.

I knew that I should not see him again, but I felt no sadness or grief. His love was too great: it poured in a radiant flood about me, and held me suspended in a priceless moment, when time stood still, and I lived in eternity. His eyes were glorious stars of light and love. No words can express their beauty.

He shook hands with us in parting. When he said good-bye to Sylvia, he smiled down at her and said, “Sylvia! – BadiaKhánum! – MissBadia!” – and his voice was filled with the most affectionate and sweet laughter!

Thus we left the Master’s house, that wonderful home, of which he has said, “My home is the home of peace. My home is the home of joy and delight. My home is the home of laughter and exultation. Whoever enters through the portals of this home must go out with gladsome heart. “

Next morning, before daybreak, we ate our last meal in the Pilgrim House and said farewell to our happy housemates there. Saïd Effendi, MírzáLuṭfu’lláh, Rúḥí Effendi, and faithful Esfendiar and his horses, took us to the train which left at 6:00 a. m. We had a half-hour’s talk with the young men before the train pulled out – but of that time I remember clearly one thing. MírzáLuṭfu’lláh turned to us as he said good-bye, and added, “Be good! Be good!” Then he smiled and said, “You know what I mean!” And no one who had seen the members of the Master’s household for a week could fail to know that “to be good” is love and service and the spreading of the ideals that the Master teaches.

In the Hidden Words BAHÁ’U’LLÁH has said, “If thou run with all immensity and speed through the space of heaven, thou shalt find no rest save in obedience to Our Command and in devotion before Our Face.” In Haifa one learns, as never before, the meaning of that sentence. The will to obey, a longing for devotion, are born in one’s heart and spirit.

Since we left the Master’s home, the days and weeks and months fly past, and are filled with many duties; many calls to help in the work of the world. But the beauty of the Master’s face is with us. “In the light of His Holy Presence all desires die save the desire to be like Him.” Alláho’Abhá!