

... description: 1921, Grace Krug
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title: Pilgrim Notes notes: ...

Pilgrim Notes

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Grace Krug

19th of November 1921

ACCOUNT OF THE PASSING OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ BY GRACE KRUG,
(MRS. FLORIAN KRUG) PRESENTED AT “THE CABIN” IN WEST
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY, WEDNESDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 28,
1934.

Dearly. beloved Friends,

To give you a word picture of this very important event, without some of the intimate details is impossible. Since the room is filled with Believers only, I will speak freely.

On the 19th of November 1921, Dr. Krug and I arrived in Haifa. The ship dropped anchor about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Rúhí Afnán and Fugita met us at the pier. After the custom and formalities were over; we drove at once to the American Pilgrim House. The beloved Master was waiting inside the gate to welcome us with a love ineffable. I noticed how tired He looked, my spirit sank, and I said to Rúhí Afnán, “Has the Master been well of late?” He replied, — “Yes.” After escorting us into the house and telling us to be seated, the Master inquired, with His usual solicitude, as to our health, the comfort of our journey, etc., and to tell how happy He was that we had come. Suddenly He arose, asking us to follow Him, led the way out of the house, up the street, to the gate of His own residence, into His garden, and up a flight of outside stairs to a room over the garage that had been built during absence of the past year. He turns, smiled and said: “Now I am going to give you and Dr. Krug my room.” I burst into tears, I don't know why such a feeling of apprehension came over me. His grandson, Rúhí Afnán, tried to comfort me by saying, — “The family are all very happy, Mrs. Krug, that the Master has decided to move back into the big house, as we were anxious about His sleeping out here alone.”

Friends, the last nine days in which we were blessed with His presence on earth, His life from hour to hour was so busy and beautiful to watch, that after my

early morning visit each day to the Shrine of the Dab, I stood at my window to catch as many glimpses of the Master as possible. In the morning He would seat Himself in the garden, under the grape arbor, to receive the many visitors seeking His wisdom. There were Generals in gaudy uniform, Arabs again a poor man or woman asking alms. He was so beautiful and serene, with a sweetness of spirit that I had never noticed before. There was an air of finality and completeness around Him. The first private interview that Dr. Krug and I had with the Master in His reception room, I knelt at His feet and held my miniature up to Him to bless. He looked at it intently with an expression on His dear face unutterably sad and said: "It is most beautiful, but put it away, do not wear it while you are in Haifa as my enemies will use it against me." Then He chanted a short commune, placed the miniature upon His heart for a moment and returned it to me. Again that same feeling of sadness came over me.

A few days before His passing, the Master had fever. Rúhí Afnán suggested to Dr. Krug and me that we go to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and ask Him to please rest more. We went. Dr. Krug begged Him not to make the physical effort of walking daily to the American Pilgrim House to meals. The Master replied: "Very well, for your sake Doctor, I won't go any more." I left His presence again in tears and said to the Doctor: "We creatures through our love and devotion for the Nester put our finite wills over His and when He grants our requests we are sadder than before."

The next morning, Friday, He said to His daughter, Rúhí Khánum, "Today Kasro must be married." Fiends, I will digress for a moment and give you a brief history of this remarkable man, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's body servant. Many years ago while the Master was still a prisoner in 'Akká, one of the Hindu Bahá'ís on his way to visit Him passed through the Slave Market in one of the large cities in India, and saw a forlorn child, aged six years, standing on the block to be sold. The Pilgrim's heart was so moved at this pitiful sight that he bought the poor boy and took him with him to Palestine. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had him educated, brought him up with His own family and he has proved to be a most faithful servant. There are no words to describe his sincere devotion to the entire family. Kasro's bride was a daughter of one of the Persian martyrs, and she too, was bought up in the prison with the family. Friends, I am certain, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, Kasro, in his agonized grief, would have killed himself had he not been married. Think of the Master's foresight!

Kasro's wedding ceremonies took place early in the afternoon. The Master called us about 5 o'clock to His reception room. The bride was seated at His side. All those in His presence were very happy. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with a twinkle in His eye, looked at me and said: "Dr. and Mrs. Krug must have a second honeymoon here.," I replied: "Inshalla, Boved." (God willing). The Master was very much amused at my answer.

After His ascension, those last words addressed to me were very precious, memories.

Saturday He was not well, He saw none of the visiting, Pilgrims. In the afternoon, His daughter Moneva Khánum, found Him with a pillow under His Bahá'u'lláh's coat wrapped around Him without a pillow under His head on the divan in His room. She said to Him, - "Master, please permit me to put a pillow under Your head if you are not feeling well." He replied: "No, my head is not worthy of a pillow, all other heads are allowed pillows, but not mine." Oh Friends, the pathos of those last days of servitude!

Sunday, a Bahá'í brother from India gave a most beautiful feast at the Shrine of the Báb. Dr. Krug and I arrived rather early and waited with the friends for the family to come. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá's four sons-in-law entered the room without the Master, again that same feeling of dread came over me. The spiritual feast was most uplifting and the bountiful hospitality by our Parsee brother was greatly enjoyed. After the feast was ended, Rúhí Afán ran at once down the mountain to the Master's house and said to Him; "Master, all were disappointed that you were not at the Shrine." He replied: "But I was there in spirit." "When this body disintegrates and returns to dust, for that care not at all, it is as cloud that covers the sun.

Friends, that night at supper word came that the Master had no fever and was better. We were all so happy and unified in spirit that I doubt if over again in this world will I feel the same. Little did I know what awaited us!

We retired as usual, but Dr. Krug had a premonition that he would be called to the Master's bedside before morning. About one fifteen o'clock we were awakened by screams from the Master's house, "Come Dr. Krug, the Master, the Master!" Like a flash, the Doctor was up, dressed, out of the room and across the garden into the house. You see, friends, had we not occupied 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room over the garage, Dr. Krug could not have reached the Master so quickly. I stood absolutely petrified with fear. Finally I was able to slip a one piece dress over my night robe and rushed after the Doctor. Friends, how can I describe that scene in the Master's bedroom! Dr. Krug stood in the center, his hand raised saying "Silence, our Beloved Master has ascended." I ran to His bedside and there He lay in the majesty of death. His lovely eyes were still open, but the light of love and understanding that had for so many years cheered the souls of men was gone! My first thought was, my Adored One is freed from our endless questions, freed from His life of servitude and headaches. I turned and knelt at the feet of His sister, the Greatest Holy Leaf, put my head in her lap and in that agonized moment, she stroked my head and tried to comfort me. Friends, not one thought of herself! God has never created a more glorious woman than she!

For hours after the ascension that night, chaos reigned. The house was crowded with guests, there were at least 40 women believers with their babies, sleeping oriental fashion on the floor in the large hall of the Master's house. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daughters told me at the time of Bahá'u'lláh's ascension the same thing took place. Finally, Dr. Krug called me saying: "Fugita will make a cup of tea for the guests in the American Pilgrim House. Mr. and Mrs. John Bosh, of

Guyserville, California; Mr. Curtis D. Kelsey, Dr. Krug and I went over. Not a word was spoken and not a tear did shed, the agony of His passing was too deep. I stepped out on the stoop of the Pilgrim House and gazed at the myriads of stars over my head and prayed and wished from my soul, that the material veils would be lifted from my eyes, that I might see the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse bearing my Beloved Master in Triumph to His Divine Father, Bahá'u'lláh. As I sat in the silence of the night, was conscious that the Master's spirit, like attar of roses, had filled not only the town of Haifa, but the world.

In the early dawn Dr. Krug called me and said: "Come dear you must rest a little." At 9 o'clock that morning there were at least two hundred Muḥammadan women in the garden and on the steps of the Master's house, wailing, as the news of His passing spread like wild fire. After making my way through the crowds of the reception room and found Monever Khánum, the Holy Mother, with the four daughters, surrounded by friends of the family. Two Muḥammadan Mufti (priests) were chanting the Qur'án in the hall. I said to the ladies, "Oh, can't you be alone in your agony of grief?" They replied: "No it is not the custom here, God willing, tonight we will be by ourselves." All the servants were so grief stricken that the family was obliged to send to the Hotel in Haifa for cooks to come and prepare the midday meal. There were hundreds of people that had to be fed.

Tuesday morning before 9 o'clock crowds assembled for the funeral, thousands of people. The day was cloudless. Sir Herbert Samuels the Governor of Palestine motored all night from Jerusalem to attend the funeral. Over 10,000 men and women followed the casket up Mount Carmel, borne on the shoulders of men who truly revered 'Abdu'll-Bahá.

At the request of the Holy Family, Dr. Krug wrote for the archives of the Cause, a scientific diagnosis of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's illness :- "INSTANTANEOUS DEATH CAUSED BY CEREBRAL HEMORRHAGE."