

... description: 1909 Rabb Box 7 Susan I Moody  
author: Mrs. Corinne True  
title: Pilgrim Notes notes: ...

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Mrs. Corinne True

1909 Rabb Box 7 Susan I Moody

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## Pilgrim Notes

Susan I. Moody

1909

COPY

(Card from Dr. Moody.)

Haifa, Syria, Oct. 1909

Landed 7.30 last night. Am writing in 'Ináyatu'lláh's store. Mírzá Asadu'lláh is here. Oh! how fine he is. Looks stronger then in photo. Dr. Faríd is detained in Cairo by Mr. Kinney's illness. Hopes to come over on Sunday. Rest have gone to Cook's for mail. The agent told me I had two letters. We have the Message to a missionary yesterday. When we said good bye his face showed great love and warmth.

(Signed) Susie

" Sydney Sprauge

" Cecilia

" Louise

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(Letter)

Haifa, Syria, Oct. 10, 1909

Dear Eva

Here we are at the foot of Mt. Carmel and so happy! We are in after dark Friday night and never can forget the landing by small boat-the uproar-the rearing and tearing of the lawless native-and we are glad to come out of it with our lives. I am mourning the loss of my black bag which I gave to Cook's man. It may turn up at Beirut. Mírzá Asadu'lláh says it will come back. He and 'Ináyatu'lláh.

called that night and the latter has been very good to us ever since. His shop is exactly opposite the door of Hotel Nassar, where we are staying. He closed it and took us to Dr. Faríd's house and dispensary – really a home and built on his own lot near the Brittingham place. Oh how Razeah Khánúm loved us over and over again; had me sit by her and every little while patted my knee. Farahangese is growing into a little beauty and she joined the party as we went to visit the Greatest Holy Leaf at Rúḥá Khánúm's (Madam Jackson's house). The beloved sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked us many questions about America and all the friends and her face lighted and glowed as she heard, of the love that was sent with us to them all. She was dressed in white, a light wool princess dress, with a delicate soft veil, bordered with tatting, neatly drawn back under her hair which is plainly combed back. The strong face is full of love, and so strongly marked by suffering that it is touching in the extreme. We were with her a long time and then went to 'Ináyatu'lláh's for a cup of tea. Khanoum Zeah, his wife, is very lovely. I like her so much. She had a turquoise blue trained princess gown and a large, long veil wound around her head and falling about both shoulders. It had the same fine tatting border. Little Hádí is growing. He was at first very shy. He has very heavy black hair and large eyes. I gave him one of Miss Albertson's balls; the kitties pleased him so much. Khánúm Zeah showed us charcoal sketches of herself and Hádí, by Juliet Thompson. She certainly has skill, as the heads were very characteristic and individual.

From there we climbed up Mt. Carmel to the Tomb of the Báb. Our land ladies on the left of the path and runs at least 300 or 400 feet, part of which, they tell me, belongs to doctor. Mrs. Harrison will bring the leaves. The land needs attention. More vines should be planted, and almond, olive and St. John's bread trees. I will ask Razeah Khánúm about it before we leave. Dear, we then crossed over to the Tomb of the Báb. A silence fell on us as we neared the building. An old man heating coffee or water over a little fire outdoors. The flowers in front were four o'clocks, roses, jessamine and still a few orange blossoms. After greeting the keeper we took off our shoes and entered the carpeted (rugs) vestibule. Mírzá Asadu'lláh advanced to the door, knelt and bowed his head to the threshold, touching with his lips three times. Each followed in turn while the holy solemnity intensified and soon Mírzá Asadu'lláh began a beautiful chant. The Tomb vibrated until every atom of our bodies responded. Dear Eva, no word can give you the rest of it. I thought of and longed for you and prayed for the dear ones. I can see in this our preparation for 'Akká. Without it I know not what would be left of me. Mírzá 'Ináyatu'lláh sent word to 'Akká and 'Abdu'l-Bahá commanded us to wait until Monday, as He is entertaining the Governor and officials every night.

Today we are to drive, then call on Riḍvánie (Arna's friend) and the wife a third Yazdí. She is not well. Then we have a Pillow dinner at 'Ináyatu'lláh's and tomorrow at 9 to 10 A.M. go over to the Holy City.

Love and to all,

(signed) Susie.

Lovingly,

(signed) Louise

" Cecilla

" 'Ináyatu'lláh.

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Letter of Dr. Susan I. Moody, en route to Persia to Mrs. Eva W. Russel of Chicago

Robert College, Constantinople,

October 12, 1909

Dearest Eva:

With only two days in the Holy City, you will know that I could not write letters, but I shall try to give you all the detail following my last which left us at 'Akká's gates.

The curtains are drawn to protect us and I think there could not have been a more peaceful entry into 'Akká. No one seemed to notice us except two boys who ran up behind and raised the back curtain to peak in. We entered the outer gate, then turned and drove through the inner wall, passed the prison house where Bahá'u'lláh and the seventy followers were first confined. How it recalled the days when we read Bakia Khánum's thrilling account of their suffering! The very walls spoke to us of it. Then we entered the court of "the Home" which we reached at last, October 11, 1909, 10:30 A. M.

Mírzá Munír, Mírzá Mahrah, the aged cousin of the Báb, and three visiting Zoroastrians were among the friends who welcomed us in the courtyard. Mírzá Munír said that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been with them, but had just gone up to His room. Mr. Sprague was given the room next to His, and Cecilia and Louise one on the other side of His, and I a little farther on, next to the woman's apartments.

Monever Khánum came to us very soon and visited for three quarters of an hour. She asked for many of the former pilgrims and said all were eager to hear of the progress of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár (Temple) in America. In appearance she is just what I had pictured. Her wonderful eyes, her smile are beautiful. So Rúhí Khánum's eyes seem to look into your heart also. The Greatest Holy Leaf (Sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá) impresses one most powerfully. Her face shows the tragic life of suffering. Last night as we sat in a dimly lighted room, talking with her and the mother, she really resembled pictures of the agony of the cross.

It is the time of the fast of *azan and most of the Household are keeping it, but dinner was served for us, a heap of fragrant jessamine blossoms lying beside* plate. We had this meal by ourselves. As we left the dining room, Louise went first and on stepping into the open court, she saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá

passing to His room. She drew back, but He motioned her to come on and stood facing us in the door of His room as we passed. She said she knew Him instantly. I thought, "This is the most wonderful man I ever saw – is it He?" When He recalled in our room later He was in pure white, and I thought perhaps I had been mistaken, but later I knew it certainly was He.

He came to us at 2:00 P.M. Monever Khánum had told us of His coming and all gathered in my room as it was the largest. Himself saying: "I am happy that you are here. Did you have a good journey? How are all believers? When one has so great an aim for a journey as this, the little losses and trials you have on the way should not upset you. When you have the ocean, you do not need the river. When you have the sun, you do not need a lamp. When you have heaven, you do not need the earth. All the prophets desired what is your today. You must be happy here. You must be very happy. When you possess a large house, it does not trouble you if it has a crack or a broken window, so long as you have the house – that is the main thing."

He then took us each by the hand, saying He would see Mr. Sprague, and left us sitting silent with Monever Khánum for some minutes. He seemed to float out of the room. His carriage is superb – the stately majesty of simplicity and naturalness. The light of the eyes and the love expressed in the face are so brilliant that it was only by favour of a flood of tears that I could continue to look into them.

Dear Monever Khánum sat with us for some time and when we found our voices, we spoke of the great privilege which had come to us. She said: "Yes, it means much, but if you treat it as a child does a toy, it is worth nothing. If it does not benefit our lives, if we do not live the teaching, all is lost. Thus some come and go away without any benefit." Then she continued: "Is it not strange that little 'Akká should be the place of this light? Think how many beautiful cities there are in the world, and yet little 'Akká is the place! Many have not even heard of 'Akká, and many right here do not know Him. They realize that He is a great and good man, but they are indifferent. They will not even stop to inquire why it is that He is different from other men."

Then we talked of the loving hearts which were following us every step of the journey here and were longing for the blessing of the spiritual meeting here with us. We asked if she would like to go to America and she said simple: "It is better to be where we can serve best" Then added with a bright smile: "would it not be a great thing for America if 'Abdu'l-Bahá should go there?"

Mrs. Harrison asked Monever Khánum if she thought it were possible for one to remain in a state of great spiritual upliftment and intoxication and still contact with the world. Monever Khánum replied: "It would not be best; one must strive to reach these great spiritual heights, then have a season of assimilation and giving forth of what they have received, or nothing is gained. It is the same as if a child went to school and receive lessons continually. He must have time for preparation."

Toward evening, on looking from the windows of my room which front on a court and garden, we could see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sitting in front of a small wooden summer house with tiled roof, which has replaced the tent used by Him as a resting-place and to entertain His guests for so many years. You remember the photo in Mr. Chase’s book.

Seyyid Mahdi, the Persian who came with us from Port Sa’id, is with Him and Mírzá Ḥabíb’u’lláh – very dark hair, very tall and straight, in the black uniform of the Persian Consulate (where he was formerly employed), – goes in to sit with them. We could hear the murmur of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s voice and twice caught the words “Írán – Irani” and saw the Seyyid bow in response. We slept well that night under His roof.

I shall not give any of the Table Talks or those of the noble old men who met with us after dinner. Louise will give them all out when she gets home.

About 5:45 the next morning I arose, too happy to sleep any longer. I had been up also at 3 A.M., looking out of the stars, when I heard ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s voice just outside my door calling one of the women who came and went with Him and soon returned to the corridor and called softly a name which sounded like “Fatullah.” After a short talk her light disappeared within the women’s apartment. I only speak of this by the way and because every little incident seems of moment within these walls – some service done, some protective thought for others evidence.

A mosquito had been bussing around my head and as the nets were down, I improvised one, putting my suit case on and at the head and making a mound of the cover. I threw my silk kimona over and slept to have a morning dream.

The Mediterranean had very suddenly risen far above its usual bounds, was lapping vigorously over the very door – stones and my first thought was, “This house will be swept away.” Then we went out among the people to warn them. We opened their doors and told them what was going on. The first room was crowded full of strange, wild looking people. A very dark man, with rough hair and beard, was holding a child. All in the room deemed to be angry because we came in. Then we went to many other homes, – some of my relatives. At one place the waves were so high that we could not get around the corner of the house to the door many of the people got their things together to go to a safe place. One wagon drove past as we were standing on our own doorsteps. The wagon sides were barred like a cage. A young woman pleaded with us to take from her a large pasteboard box. We told her that our house would probably be swept away also, but she insisted, so I reached up and took it from her. This seemed to settle everything, for my dream finished right there.

I got up, as I said, at 5:45 and before I had finished dressing, heard voices in the courtyard. Three figures of women in black and veiled were crossing the courtyard. They were Bahá’í women who had come to join in chanting Tablets with the women of the Household. A little chubby girl about twelve years of age came and rapped at the door and said: “Be ready in twenty minutes.” Then at

6:50 Monever Khánúm came and we went with her to the room where the women are met by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He was already in the room kneeling, or sitting in Oriental fashion in the corner of the divan which runs around three sides of the room. He motioned us to sit on either side of Him. Louise and Cecilia took the right hand and I sat at the left.

While one of the women chanted, He continued sorting and addressing Tablets. Soon He stopped the one who was chanting and told Monever Khánúm to take it up. Her voice is extremely sweet and the words seemed to ripple over her lips like a tiny booklet. After she had chanted several of the prayers, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told the little girl, who called us, to continue. As she pitched her voice low and was using the false vocal cords, He spoke and she raised the key, letting her voice out freely.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked after our health. Then, “Have you had a good night? Did you see Mrs. Bede? How is Mrs. Brittingham’s health? Is she on the way?” Saying He would see us later in the day, He went out. The sisters of Moneber Khánúm – Zeah Khánúm and Tooba Khánúm – came to us with loving greetings. We embraced and then the other women gathered around and we talked with them in the smile language. All of the daughters speak English. Zeah Khánúm asked especially about Mrs. Haney and the baby.

“To be continued.”

Love, in His Name,

(signed) Susie.

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Letter of Dr. Susan I. Moody, en route to Persia to Mrs. Eva to Mrs. Eva W. Russel of Chicago

Robert College, Constantinople,

October 24, 1909

Dearest Eva:

I am continuing my story of our two days in ‘Akká, although sitting here, looking out over the Bosphorus. In rushing about every minute I have tried far ahead of the letters, but will try and catch up during our five days on the Black Sea. I wonder if you will care for all the details I have to write. It will take many pages to tell all.

After breakfast on October 12th I watched ‘Adbu’l-Bahá walking up and down a shady walk – his favourite one in the garden. A beggar had wandered into the court. ‘Adbu’l-Bahá went toward Him and put his arms across the trunk of a Soria tree. (Lena has is as a shrub with feathery foliage and pinky plumes.) Leaning His head in His arm, with face turned toward us, He talked, making a beautiful picture. He stood there for some minutes, then moved on into the court, calling aloud to someone. As I leaned forward I could see Mr. Sprague

waiting for Him to pass and then about a dozen of the friends followed under the arch into a lower room. I heard the murmur of His voice for about ten minutes as He talked to them in a room below. The beggar had followed and leaned against one of the pillars of the arch till a man came to him and he went out.

Later ‘Adbu’l-Bahá went to the little house in the garden called first Mírzá Munír, then Mírzá Ḥabíb’u’lláh and later Mr. Sprague. I felt greatly privileged to thus quietly observe the love and reverence of the Eastern believers, shown in His presence. Mírzá Nouneddin left Him, stepping backward to the gate in the most reverential way. All are ready at His call.

There are many sparrows in the garden; they are twittering. The blue, blue sea is covered with ripples. There is a low fringe of light clouds. Mt. Carmel’s point is in the distance. What a background for the scene in the garden!

A row of olive trees in this court are laden with fruit, with very few leaves on the side toward the house. In the court, on the other side of our corridor are two tall date palms, with three large bunches each, which have been sewed up in burlap to protect them from the weather until fully ripe. In this court the flowers are lovely. A climbing vine with many purple blossoms, three petaled, covers the side of the long flight of stone steps. It has long arms which reach out and wave gracefully with every stir of air – a very decorative plant, leaf like a castor bean, but woody trunk; and another shrub with a dozen of more large white lily-shaped blossoms, each at least six inches across.

While I write I hear His voice. Mr. Sprague has just been in to tell me of his interview. We two are to leave tomorrow, Wednesday evening, and take the boat for Constantinople on Thursday. ‘Adbu’l-Bahá said, “This is for your own good. If you delay, the weather will be cold and the journey will be much more difficult.”

Mr. Sprague asked if he might take Feriborz, the son of Kai Khusraw (the man in India who gave his life for Mr. Sprague) with us, and the reply was: “If all of his family are willing, it will be good.”

How blessed a privilege it is to stand here in the window and watch Him walking and talking! Mírzá Asadu’lláh and Dr. Faríd have just arrived and are now with Him.

Razeah Kahnum came with them and has called on us. Dr. Faríd came later and said that ‘Adbu’l-Bahá talked with him of my going to Persia and said: “Do you think she can stand the privations there?”

10:45 A. M.

Our beloved ‘Adbu’l-Bahá sent Monever Khánum to tell me to go to Him. He had me sit beside Him and said immediately: “You are to go to Persia. At first you will find things difficult, – the convenience are not the same. Many of the people are poor and sleep on the floor, as they have no beds. You must not look at their circumstances, but at their hearts. They will love you very much

and I want you to be happy there. You must have much patience and try very hard to be faithful; lose sight of yourself entirely; work only for the love of God and you will succeed. You will find much love there – all will love you.”

I asked Him to pray that I might be separated from the self, so that I might fulfil His Command and He said: “I will often pray for you – you are never separated from Me.”

I then asked about having a home and He approved of it greatly and said: “Have your office in your home.” He approves of my having Feriborz in my home, saying: “He is delicate and needs a mother’s care.” I spoke of later also having one of the orphan Bahá’í boys and thus make a real home life. This, also, is sanctioned by Him.

Then I told Him of the thirty lost supplications, regretting the disappointment to each of the dear friends who had written. With a loving smile He said: “Tell them it is just the same as if they were all received. They are all accepted and you are favoured to have been their messenger.” Again I spoke of all the love that was sent and which I now laid at His dear feet. He said: “You are a worthy messenger,” and He arose and placed His hands on my shoulders and drew me to His side. I asked if I could come again in the future and He said: “Yes, and I only send you away go soon because the Black Sea gets cold and stormy soon and it is for your good that you are to go tomorrow, since the steamer leaves next day, but you will never be separated from Me.”

At 3 P. M. Miss Gamblin, the English teacher, had tea served in our room and visited with us. Just as we were finishing, ‘Adbu’l-Bahá came in and sat with us for a few minutes. He asked Miss Gamblin if she would try to interpret for us, but she blushed and said she would rather not, so He did not stay long. I had twisted my ankle in going to call Mr. Sprague for the tea, – caught my heel on the sill of the dining room door and fell flat before the door of ‘Adbu’l-Bahá. I had a handful of jessamine blossoms which were spilled. I gathered them up in spite of the pain. After tea was over I ‘fessed up and Miss Gamblin brought liniment and bandage, which I had to wear over a weak and save my ankle every step I took but, fortunately, managed to get through without having to make any explanations to the Household. Cecilia and Louise used to cover up my advance and retreat very successfully.

The rest of the afternoon was spent visiting with Razeah Khánum, Tooba Khánum and Monever Khánum. Zeah Khánum’s baby is very delicate and requires constant attention. I showed them my Bahá’í album and Louise took photos of little Marahanghes with me, and I took one of them. Then Cecilia and I had one together – all in my room. Dear Eva, I have asked Louise to give you a set for me. She will explain about it. I had meant to tell that ‘Adbu’l-Bahá asked us whether we had ever met Miss Gamblin before, and Mr. Sprague he had and that she had been a member of his choir in Christ Church at Neuilly. He said: “It is possible to greet one another as brother and sister here, even though we come from distant parts of the earth.”



As I told you, I leave the Table Talks and the after talks by Mírzá Asadu'lláh, Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí and Mírzá Mahram for Louise to give you from her notes.

October 13, 1909.

Slept with my foot higher than my head. It ached, but I slept all the same. Arose at dawn, bathed, dressed and looked out at the wonderful sea until they called us to the chanting of prayers by the women. ‘Adbu’l-Bahá motioned us to the same seats beside Him, and Cecilia says that while I was placing myself on the divan, He looked me through and through very searchingly. I did not know it, but this accounts for the instant consciousness I had of being absolutely nothing, weak, asjamed of my former self, and as Zeah Khánúm, in her wonderful and sympathetic voice chanted the first prayers, I felt myself melt and melt until the tears rained down my face. I realized my unworthiness and His great love. When I tho’t that this was my last day, I had to exert myself to restrain my longing to kneel there and His feet.

Gradually my horizon cleared and through the chanting of Monever Khánúm and two other maid-servants, I became tranquil again. Dr. Faríd and His father and mother had stayed all night. After the women were through chanting, Razeah Khánúm told ‘Adbu’l-Bahá that I had chanted “Sobhani kya ho” for them and He turned and asked me to chant my prayer now. I felt happy when He turned and smiled and said: “Khali khoob” when I finished. Then He went out.

Louise was too hoarse to respond to the request to give one of her Bahá’í hymns, as she had done for the other gatherings.

All of the women greeted us again and said they had wanted to be with us the night before, but whenever they sent over we were still in Mr. Sprague’s room where to sets of the men came to call on us.

A visiting Zoroastrian woman seemed very glad when I asked how she was and said goodbye in Persian. Indeed, all are interested in my prospects of learning the language.

Three of the women, including Miss Gamblin, are going to Haifa to help Nurse Rúhá Khánúm, who is still very ill, and the others are tired out. Zeah Khánúm and Monever Khánúm again joined us and we had a delightful social visit, again going through the album in which they saw many of whom they had heard and some they had seen.

Love to all, and please send this around, as I can only write a postal occasionally to anyone else. In His Name,

(signed) Susie.