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#### Notes

Notes taken by George O. Latimer at Dublin, New Hampshire, July 29-31, August 1, 1912.

Upon arriving at the 'Parsons' Farm House about 4 P.M. on the 29th of July, 1912, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"You are welcome, welcome. You have taken trouble and travelled a long distance. I met your mother and father in Chicago. When a person has a great longing, the distance will seem to him very short. Are there Bahá'ís in Portland? Have you regular meetings?"

G.L. "There are a few. Every Sunday evening we have a public meeting, and also we celebrate the Nineteen Day Feast."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Very good, very good. You should be very sympathetic to each other in these Feasts, so that they may become a point of love and friendship."

G.L. "We give little attention to the material part of the Feast."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Very good! The aim is to bring together the friends of God and refreshment or food is not the most important part of the Feast. How many days since you have left your city?"

G.L. "It is nearly six days since I left Portland."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "You have undertaken a great deal of trouble. Six Days! It is a great deal to travel six days in this country. It is like sixty days in the east, may rather more."

*(Here tea was brought in by the venerable old Siyyid Asadu'lláh Geni) and 'Abdu'l-Bahá turning to me said in English: "Persian tea! Persian tea! You drink Persian tea." After the meeting was finished 'Abdu'l-Bahá said there was going to be a meeting at Mrs. Parson's house and asked: "Would you like to*

*come or stay here?" after an affirmative answer, 'Abdu'l-Bahá started up the hill with the Persians and myself following at a distance of twenty or thirty feet, in an ordinary conversational tone I was speaking with Aḥmad Sohrab of the beautiful and peaceful country and the splendid rest that the Master would have after the stern days passed in New York, when suddenly 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke up:*

"Our aim is not to rest, but to become assisted to serve the Cause no matter where we are. Our purpose is to become enabled to render a service at the Holy Threshold. If this be realized, it will be very good. Otherwise life itself is meaningless. We have not come here (to America) to rest or to inhale the pure air or to walk in the delightful country places; but we have come here to serve you. When a person travels for the sake of commerce, he will only think of the extension of his trade, no matter what kind of weather he encounters; but if his trade is not prosperous and thriving, should he live in the most delightful climate, he will not feel happy. Now you must beg of God to confirm is in this services. The tree needs the rain, and when it falls, whether it is warm or cold it does not matter."

'Abdu'l-Bahá and his party arrived at Mrs. Parson's house and as it was not yet time for the meeting, He sat out on the veranda. He commented upon the beautiful country and the scenery and the charm of the place. Then He said:

"For eleven years we lived in Baghdád. The heat in that place was very intense, yet we were most happy, because we were assisted in serving at the Holy Threshold. One cannot experience a greater amount of heat than in Baghdád; at that time the summers were unbearable. We were strangers and penniless, yet our joy was supreme."

*(Here 'Abdu'l-Bahá laughed very heartily as though He were enjoying the mental realization of these days. Then He continued after a little pause.)*

"The trip from Ṭihrán to Baghdád and the days spent in Baghdád in the presence of the Blessed Perfection are very vivid in My memory and shall never be forgotten. Those days were overflowing with joy and fragrance."

Here silence fell over the group and 'Abdu'l-Bahá turned His face toward the Monandook Mountain, clothed in green and very beautiful. Then suddenly He turned to me and asked:

"What are the friends engaged in at Portland, Oregon?"

G.L. "They are all working in different professions. The members of our assembly are workers. They are all poor people."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Always the poor ones advance toward the Kingdom of God. The poor are very near to the Divine Kingdom, they are very favoured before God, for their hearts are tender."

After a pause, I spoke of Dr. David Buchanon, his illness and his desire to serve in the Cause.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I hope he will get well. Are the souls progressing in Portland? Are they becoming more spiritual day by day? Are they more illumined, more enlightened? Are they advancing or stationary?”

G.L. “This year it is much better. Last year little was accomplished through misunderstandings of the friends.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Stagnation is the cause of retrogression. Man must always advance. As soon as man remains stationary in a certain cause he will go backward. Therefore he must strive that man may advance day by day, that he may progress in all the worlds. Man from the beginning of his life up to thirty years is progressive; from thirty to forty he is stationary; and from forty onward he is retrogressive. In reality the beginning of his retrogression is the day of his stagnation. If the faith of man does not progress day by day, he is retrogressing. This tree is growing until it reaches the degree of stationariness, after that it goes backward. The friends of God must always strive so that in faith and assurance they may advance day after day; and that the tests may not cause their stagnation; for the cause of stagnation is often the tests and trials of God.”

*(At this point, the meeting was announced and we all entered the house and listened to a wonderful talk on \_\_\_\_\_ by the Master given to about fifty people.)*

At 9:30 A.M. July 31, 1912. As the Master walked up and down the veranda He spoke to us as follows:

“The Bahá’í must first be informed of the Principals and Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, thence forth and spread the message. It is like unto a soldier, who must arm himself with the buckler and armor, and then he enters the battlefield to fight against the foe. But if he goes to fight without arming himself, he will be defeated. The Bahá’ís are the Army of God. Their defensive instruments are:

First, Faith;

Second, Assurance;

Third, Severance;

Fourth, Complete Attraction to the Kingdom of ABHÁ.

If they are armed with these weapons, they will gain the victory in whatever field they may enter. As long as he is not equipped with these weapons, he will not be successful. He must cut himself entirely from all limitations.”

“In Persia we were under the sword. From one moment to the other we had an unassured life, and during our long imprisonment we were in constant danger. As we were not attached to this life, we were entirely forgetful of these outward conditions. Therefore we remained firm. We did not notice the gleaming, flashing swords around us. But in reality we were happy. (Here he laughed heartily.) At that time there were many severe tests, but there was abundant spirituality. We were walking on the earth, but in reality we were soaring toward the

Supreme Concourse. (Laughing.) What these days, and what are these days! Those days were the cause of the development of the souls. Those days people progressed and advanced spiritually.”

“During the eventful days of Nassar Ed Din Sháh, those people who were Bahá’ís were fearless, filled with the glad-tidings of God, overflowing with supplication and communion. When a Bahá’í walked in the streets, in his heart he was praying to God, begging of God: ‘Make me a sacrifice in Thy Path! Let the enemies surround me, carry me to the arena of martyrdom, make me a ransom to Thy Cause!’ it is very easy now to be martyred, but it was very difficult at that time. These frightful looking soldiers, these horrible executioners, these dreadful fur rashes, and especially the \_\_\_\_\_ with their fierce moustaches. They threw four into the hearts of the staunchest and the firmest. Yet the friends were most firm and resolute before the faces of these beings of terror. At the time of trials, wonderful confirmation descend upon man, regenerating him and making him a new creation.”

“Mírzá Ghorban ‘Alí, who was one of the Seven Martyr, a man of great piety and learning, was a strong Bábí, but he was fearful and timid. He was so fearful of being known as a Bábí that when he met the friends in the streets he would not look at them. He shunned their association. Yet the enemies found him out somehow, and brought him into the prison house. As he was well known among the military class for his wisdom and devotion, two of these influential official went to Mírzá Taqí Khán, the Prime Minister, and interceded for him. When the Prime Minister found out that such important men were interceding for him, he became very lenient and told them to bring him to him so that he might recent. This Prime Minister was such domineering and bloodthirsty man that the army was in constant fear of him, so that when he was reviewing the army if he just turned his eyes upon one of the soldiers he would tremble and would shake with fear. Finally these two officers took Mírzá Gherban ‘Alí to the Prime Minister and they were so happy that he would be released before long. When he came before the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister looked at him and said: ‘These friends of yours have interceded for you. Are you ready to repudiate ‘Alí-Muḥammad (The Báb)?’ Mírzá Gherban ‘Alí, looking around, saw the executioner about fifteen feet from him, and then he turned to the Minister and asked: ‘Who shall I repudiate, ‘Alí or Muḥammad?’ (Muḥammad being the Prophet and ‘Alí the son-in-law, they are considered the Holy Ones in the Muḥammadan world. The name of the Báb is composed of these two.) The Prime Minister became so angry that he ordered the executioner to take him away and kill him, and he left the presence of the Prime Minister with serene face and a heavenly smile on his countenance. At such a time, a firm believer is known!”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked Mrs. Hoagg whether the friends in San Francisco were alive and active in the Cause. Upon answer that some were very sincere and active, while others believed deeply but did not know how to serve best, He replied:

“Today the way to serve is to carry out the Precepts of Bahá’u’lláh and to teach.

I carry out the Precepts and you see me here teaching. They must do likewise. When this is so the confirmations of God will reach them. Day by day it will become greater.”

The Master impressed upon us all several times the importance of the Nineteen Day Feasts; that they should be held to unite the friends in love and harmony; that anointing or anything, with the exception of some material food, was not essential, the main thing being the coming together of the friends and that this was very essential. He said it made no difference what we called the Feast, the Persian word coming from the root meaning ‘guest’ and also including the meaning “to divert” or “invitation”.

In answer to my question regarding what should be done for people who have become interested in the Cause and then have lost their interest the Master said:

“It is because you do not finish with them. They have their old superstitions and their hearts are attached to them; after a while they become cool again. They must have a new birth as His Holiness Christ said. They must become Bahá’ís. That only their idea that Bahá’ís are good is not enough. People are ignorant, they must become wise; they are blind, they must have sight; they are deaf, they must find hearing; they are sick, they must be treated; their children must arrive at maturity; they are earthly, they must become heavenly, - then they will become Bahá’ís.”

(Signed) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

*(‘Abdu’l-Bahá signed his name, after I had taken down the above talk in my notebook.)*

On the evening of July 30th, the Master with Mrs. Parsons drove to the station to meet Mr. and Mrs. Hannen and Miss Fannie Knobloch, stopping on the way at the Inn to see that the rooms were in readiness for the visitors. While they were waiting for the train to arrive, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá suddenly left the little group and stode over to a ragged and bare-foot country boy who was standing between two carriages. Suddenly He turned to Him and in His majestic voice said in English; “How are you?” The boy, unabashed by the suddenness of the remark and the strange costume of the Master, quickly replied in a characteristic manner: “Alright” at which the Master laughed heartily and pulled out some silver coins from His bountiful pocket and gave the boy a quarter. Immediately, it is reported, several other boys appeared as if by magic and they were ‘alright’ also, each being rewarded with a silver piece.

At the house, Wednesday morning, Mr. and Mrs. Hannen and Miss Knobloch being present, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

“Anyone when I send to a place is confirmed, anyone. One of them is Miss Alma Knobloch. God has confirmed her. In the beginning she was teaching in Stuttgart. Now she is in Leipzig.”

One of the party was obliged to leave on the afternoon train because of a promise made to another; ‘Abdu’l-Bahá desired all to remain, but upon hearing the facts said, “Let two remain and one go.”

“The Bahá’ís must be prompt in the fulfilment of their promises, and perform whatever promise they have given. In reality, the length or shortness of the meeting has no influence whatever. It depends upon capacity. A piece of dry wood, as soon as it comes in contact with fire, receives the ignition; but a piece of wet wood, even if it stays in the fire a long time, is not ignited; it will only produce smoke and fumes. No matter how long a piece of stone is in the fire it will not dissolve. Therefore the length of time has no sway whatever. There must be capacity. Although the length of time of the meeting with Mr. Hannen is short, yet it is my hope that its results will become manifold. From here with a shining face, a merciful heart, and a heavenly power may you return and become the cause of the guidance of the people; to be the cause of the firmness of the souls in the Covenant.

“I desire to answer some letters that Miss Knobloch has sent. They have been here for some time, but there has been no opportunity whatever to answer them.”

After some time of dictation to Mírzá Aḥmad Sohrab, the Master said: “I am writing while you are silent. Is this permitted?” (To Miss Knobloch and Mrs. Hannen.) “You enjoy it because the letter is to your sister. It is fortunate for her that I find time to answer today. Letters come by bundles, but there is no time to answer them.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá finished dictation, and surveying the mountains with a convenient field-glass. Commented on the beauty of the panorama. It was indeed matchless – superb. In the distance a chain of mountains stretched, lofty Monadnock the highest, the others reaching as far as the eyes could see. In English He said: “Good mountains; good greens; good meadow; good plain; good view. Speak to me. Speak to me!” told of the study of Íqán in the Wednesday night meetings in Washington. His comment was, “Very good Very good! It is very good to memorize the logical points and the proofs of the Holy Books. Those proofs and evidences which establish the fact that Bahá’u’lláh is the fulfilment of the Promises of the Holy Books. Those proofs ought to be collected and memorized. As soon as someone will ask you – What are your proofs? – you may cry out at the top of your voice and say: “Here they are!”

A question was asked based upon the familiar reply to those who say there is good in all things, as to say when asked: ‘Of what use are the flies and mosquitoes?; there being an over-abundance of them in Dublin. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:

“Answer the questioner: ‘What is the use of your creation? What benefit have you given to the world?’ the same benefit that harms and sucks in the human blood; but you kill animals and eat them. Therefore, you are more harmful than the mosquito. You do not suck blood, but decapitate the animals. By this I

mean that man commits greater sins. But that which is the reality of the matter is this: The world of life, the world of existence is connected, each with the other. All the created beings are the members of this stupendous body. Each one is a member and that member should not remain imperfect. If that member, is, for instance, harming the human body, but it is useful from some other standpoint, because it is one member of the Members of this creational book, is it allowable that a member of the members of this great world be imperfect? For instance, we do not know what is the use of this nail. It grows and it is cut again. We see that we have the nail; but we do not know that there are a thousand wisdoms within the creation of this nail. For instance, men ask: 'Why should we have the beard; why should we have the moustache?' They shave. But in reality there is a great wisdom in this. It is healthful. The skin receives the oxygen through the beard."

Asking for further questions, the problem of contributing for the care of the poor or the Bahá'ís who may be sick or infirm, was presented; in view of the fact that there are many demands at times and the friends are able to do but little, generally speaking.

"The friends must strive and show efforts and assist. Whosoever is a believer and assured, firm in the Cause, there is no doubt that he will contribute towards the assistance of the poor. This is an evidence of the faith. But if a person comes in contact with another who is in the utmost need, and he sees that he can help, and if he fails, this is an evidence of the weakness of his faith. If his faith is firm and strong it is impossible for him not to assist. There is no greater trial than the test of riches. Whosoever you see that is helping and assisting the poor ones according to his ability, know of a certainty that his faith is strong. Continue according to your ability, not beyond your power, and tell him to content himself with it. Not that he may receive your assistance; if he were able to work it is not allowable to assist him. Lazy people should not be assisted; otherwise everybody would leave his work and expect others to support him. There would be no end to it. But there may be someone who is either unable to work or is striving to find some work and is not able to find it; it is not really a shortcoming but he cannot succeed. Such souls are to be assisted. The aim is this, that the friends of God must assist each other, and in assistance be greater than all the other communities of the world. If one of the friends find out that another has no feed for this evening, for instance, he should not rest, he should not sleep till he finds food for him. All the members of humanity are in need of each other."

At 10:30 A.M. August 1, 1912. Mrs. Hannen and Miss Knobloch had driven over to say farewell to the Master.

After their hearty welcome by the Master and after enquiring after their health and where they were going He spoke as follows:

"You are strong, you are firm, you have the love of Bahá'u'lláh in your hearts. You must withstand all the people of the world. The Hosts of the Supreme

Concourse are behind use, therefore our hearts are strong when the love of Bahá'u'lláh is in our hearts. If all the people arise against us, the heart of one Bahá'í can withstand them. In brief, now that you are returning, you must return with the utmost Glad Tidings. You must spread them so that they will reach Me here. Whenever you enter you must cause such happiness that I can feel it here."

"All the people of the world are sowing in barren ground and they ride on the surface of the water. Therefore you consider that all their efforts are fruitless; they strive, work, endure troubles, but in the end they come empty-handed into this world and they leave empty-handed. But the friends of God are under the shade and protection of the Blessed perfection. They sow in pure soil, they ride on the surface of iron and steel. That is why they gather many harvests and their writings bestow Eternal Significances. Therefore they must be in the utmost happiness and rejoicing that God has chosen them from among the people and distinguished them with this most Eminent Bounty."

After this beautiful talk the Master turned to me and told me that I could depart with Mrs. Hannen and Miss Knobloch. I asked for a Message for the Portland Assembly and He replied that no better Message than the one above could be given.

Just before our departure He revealed the following prayer to us, to said upon entering a city:

"O God! Assist me with the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse and make me firm and steadfast in the Convenient and Testament. I am weak in the Covenant and the Testament, confer upon me strength; I am poor, bestow upon me Wealth from the Treasury of the Kingdom; I am ignorant, open before my face the Doors of knowledge; I am dead, breathe into me the Breath of Life; I am dumb, grant me an eloquent tongue so that with a fluent expression I may raise the Call of Thy Kingdom and guide all to the Firmness of Thy Covenant. Thou art the generous, the Giver, and the Mighty."

(Signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.

*This also was signed in our notebooks by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*

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(The following excerpt from Ahmad Sohrab's Diary letters was sent Mr. Latimer's family in Portland. No date or place of writing being included by Mr. Hannen. September 20, 1914, M.M. Rabb.)

"'Abdu'l-Bahá is addressing a party of Oriental Believers and \_\_\_\_ the latter from all over the world. He is relating incidents of His American tour, \_\_\_\_ has come to the Portland Coast trip, says:

I may mention to you the name of Mr. George Latimer, who is a young, enthusiastic Bahá'í. when I was in Dublin He travelled from Portland, Oregon to see me. He was with me during my stay in San Francisco. Now He is a teacher of



the cause, and is travelling with Mr. Remey. He begged me to go to his city, but I could not do it.”