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A Narration of the Events Leading up to,
and the Meetings with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as Recorded by:
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In complying with the request of the secretary of our Glendale Assembly that I record my personal experiences and the events connected with the meetings had with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, I shall be as brief as possible while yet attempting in a small way to tell of his far reaching influence in our family.

About two years prior to receiving my first tablet translated by ‘Alí Kull Khán, February 6, 1909, I accepted the message which was given to me by my sister-in-law, Mrs. Cordie Cline. Her sister, Miss Aida Chandon of Marysville, California, now living in Yuba City, California, had attended some lectures given by ‘Abdu’l Faḍl and ‘Alí Khán in Wasington, D.C. and had become interested. She told Cordie about the teachings, and Cordie in turn interested me.

We were living near San Francisco at the time. Later we moved to Tropico, than a suburb of. Los Angeles. Our Tropico group of believers was quite active in advancing the Cause in Southern California at that time, and for some years afterward. The Franklands, Winterburns, Becketts, Ropers and Clines made up the original group of families. In after years Tropico became a part of the city of Glendale.

It was as the delegate from Tropico, I attended that wonderful convention in Chicago at the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit there. My beloved friend Henrietta Wagner was the delegate from Pasadena and Sigurd Russell represented the Friends in Los Angeles.

I shall pass over the many wonderful talks which he gave while we were in

Chicago; the dedication of the Temple Grounds and various other gatherings, as they have been accurately chronicled by others many times. Aside from my own interview with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, there is one special meeting I would like to touch upon, though I know the event has been fully recorded by Ella Cooper and Henrietta. Through Mrs. Goodalls efforts, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá granted the California delegates a special early morning interview. With our California was Elizabeth Mutner of Honolulu. She had journeyed the farthest of anyone to greet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and I guess we from the Pacific slope followed her in being next in line in point of distance in America. As he remarked later in Los Angeles that Los Angeles was the greatest distance he had travelled from ‘Akká. After greeting each one individually he gave a very interesting talk. Dr. D. Evelyn said that California was called the Golden State, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quickly replied that he hoped California would become the Diamond State, and that he expected great things from the California believers.

Right here I would like to mention an incident that occurred which will tell to future generations the love, and obedience to the slightest wish of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which so many of the American Believers had. Miss Georgiana Dean, one of the early Chicago Believers, who had come west and was engaged in the occupation of nursing the sick, had answered the request of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for a nurse to volunteer her services in the care of that wonderful soul, Mrs. Dealy of Alabama, who had been afflicted with blindness. Miss Dean had left a good position ere and few realized the extent of the sacrifice she made. However, then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Chicago she came north with Mrs. Dealy, who wanted to meet the Master. On seeing Henrietta and me at the convention she burst into tears, and unburdened her heartache and longing to see her California home and friends. I suggested to her that she go to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the matter; that it might be possible that her time of service was over, and she could return with us. So she was granted an interview and as she left us to go to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, she asked us to pray for her, as she said her heart would break if she could not return to California. Well, we waited for “Deanie”, as she was familiarly known, and presently she entered the room. Tears were streaming down her face, but it shone with a radiance I have seldom seen. “He told MB to stay with Mrs. Dealy as long as needed me, and I am going to obey with all my heart and soul”, she said. Such was the spirit of the Friends in those days. However, a few days later, Mrs. Dealy’s plans were changed and “Deanie” was not needed. So her prayers were answered after all, and she returned to California.

The time of our eventful sojourn in Chicago was drawing to a close, as Henrietta and I were to leave on Saturday morning for home. We were informed that on Friday morning we were to be granted an interview with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and an opportunity to personally extend to him the greetings and love of our respective Bahá’í Groups. We waited with bated breath, in the little reception hall outside his room, as many were coming and going, wondering when our turn would come. Presently, someone entered and said with authority, “There will be no more interviews this morning.” The floor seemed to have opened beneath me, and everything was darkness, for I had travelled thousands of miles at the

expense and sacrifices of my beloved friends in Tropico just for this purpose. To personally convey to him their love and Bahá'í greetings, and to tell him of their longing to see him, and at this last minute was to be denied. I was utterly crushed. Then from the depths of the hallway, a rich, musical voice called, "Mrs. Cline and Mrs. Wagner." Someone entered and told us we were to remain for an interview. In after years it has often come to me how utterly cruel, and heartless those words, "There will be no more interviews today," struck. And yet how casually they were spoken. Being naturally oversensitive, I have hesitated many times to speak up when I should have and refrained from uttering words which should have been spoken, just because of that deep wound. I have feared I would be unwittingly hurting some other soul. I realized now how keenly 'Abdu'l-Bahá was aware of what went on within my nature, at that moment. For he immediately called me to his room, and stepping quickly to my side he placed one arm around me, and patting me on the shoulder said with such heavenly solicitude, "You are my daughter, you are my daughter, I have prayed for you many, many times. I have prayed for you many, many times." Presently I realized I had been sobbing my heart out, and Dr. Baghdádí, who had been standing beside me, was also weeping. Suddenly this emotional storm passed on, and looking up into 'Abdu'l-Bahá's face I found him smiling at me with an expression of much happiness. A sense of great inner calmness took possession of my soul, and I knew that no matter what my experiences in this life would be, nothing could ever take that from me. I then gave him the message of the Tropico Friends, told him how they were praying that he would come to California, and they could have the privilege of seeing him. He replied that in meeting me, he had met them all, and I must tell them he loved them all very much, and they had made him very happy. I must give each and every one of them his love, that he would always be with them.

The next day Henrietta and I turned our faces homeward. Happy that we were bringing back to them the love and blessings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Not so very long after our return, word came to us that 'Abdu'l-Bahá might possibly make the journey to California. And if anything did bring him, I am sure it was the fervent prayers of the Friends.

The morning after his arrival in Los Angeles, we were informed that for a short time he would receive the Friends. Mr. Cline and I went with the Becketts, to the Lankershim Hotel, his headquarters while in Los Angeles. There were assembled many of the San Francisco Friends, also, who had come South with him.

The meeting was all very informal, like a father gathering his children around him. This was my husband's first experience in meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The room was crowded and Mr. Cline was forced to sit on the foot of a bed in a position not exactly facing 'Abdu'l-Bahá, yet quite close to where he was sitting during the talk which he gave. 'Abdu'l-Bahá began talking about flowers and gardens. He dwelt at length upon the various varieties, some tiny and fragrant like the violet, others masses of vivid coloring. Some thrilling us with their

exquisite loveliness like the rose. Then he suddenly ended the talk as he looked over toward Yr. Clime, and said smilingly, "Our friend, Mr. Cline here is a very beautiful flower."

Most of our Tropico group were in attendance when 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the grave of Thornton Chase. Of that inspiring event I shall not go into detail, except that as 'Abdu'l-Bahá knelt and kissed the soil which covered all that was mortal of Thornton Chase, I felt He had made holy all the soil of my native State.

He gave one public talk in the meeting hall in Los Angeles. We took Mr. and Mrs. Roper, who were with us at the time, and had become interested in the Cause. I could not think of the words he was saying that night. It seemed to me that they were only the outward expression of the force that was emanating from that Center. I felt he was bestowing upon us such a spiritual Bounty, sowing the seeds (in this far off garden of Bahá'u'lláh) of flowers that were yet to bloom. Sunday was to mark the end of his visit with us, so that morning my husband and I brought in to see him, Grandfather Cline, my brother-in-law, Clarence, our two oldest children, Wilfred Jr. and Frances, our daughter, and Russel Roper. All but the three children and me, are today in the other world. By way of data for future reference I might add here that Russell Roper is now a mining man operating at the upper end of Death Valley. Ey daughter, Frances, is the wife of Walter Greene a motion picture critic, and Wilfrid is a Technicolor cameraman, both live in Hollywood. Another and younger son, William, also lives in Hollywood.

On that morning 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave a very beautiful talk. He sat in a large arm chair, and calling to him our daughter Frances and little Helen Frankland, had the children stand on each side of the chair with his arms encircling them while he spoke. After the meeting as we entered the hall to leave for lunch, we noticed 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Persians waiting for the elevator a short distance from where we were standing. On seeing us, he suddenly left the group, and then followed by the Persians approached us. He took the two younger men and then the three children each in turn in his arms and blessed them, kissing them on each cheek after the oriental fashion. Then he embraced father Cline with especial fervor saying, "I hope you will live ten years longer, I hope you will live ten years longer." The whole scene was very touching. Just ten years from the following November, 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed beyond our mortal gaze forever, and upon father Cline hearing of it he said with great emotion, " 'Abdu'l-Bahá has gone, I have nothing to live for now and I shall follow him soon." Father Cline lived about four months longer, a little more than the ten years 'Abdu'l-Bahá had given him.

Another interesting thing which 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to Father Cline that morning was he should remain for the afternoon meeting, but to bring all of his family. It so happened that the only other member of our family who had remained at home was my sister-in-law, Frances, who at that time was not at all interested. Of course, at the insistence of her brothers she too came.

The meeting had already begun when Clarence and Prances entered the room. There were many children at that gathering as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had requested the Friends to bring the little folks. A number of boxes of candy were on hand and as he walked among them talking about the children of the Kingdom and the importance of the children, he doled out the candy to them by the fist full. For some months to come ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s generous helpings of chocolates was a subject of much conversation among the children. At the end of that talk ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went around the room shaking hands with each of the grown folks, and greeting them individually. When he came to father Cline, with great emotion he took father’s head in his hands and kissing him many times said, “You are my ancient companion, my ancient companion.” Many wept at this demonstration of love and affection, and my sister-in-law was completely overcome. I knew then that she would someday accept the message. Today there is no more ardent Bahá’í than Frances, now Mrs. Henry Kuphal of Sacramento. After this meeting was dismissed, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was giving a few private interviews, I ‘phoned my sister that it was imperative she bring in her two daughters to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She was a believer.

My last meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was shortly before I took the train next morning for my early home in northern California. That morning as he spoke to me he stood against the white wall of the room. Sunlight was pouring in from an adjoining window heightening the radiance of his face. Of all the times I had seen ‘Abdu’l-Bahá I had never witnessed such spiritual radiance. It so flooded my own soul that I sat watching him as though in a dream. Ahmad Sohrab interpreted as he told me this time of the wonderful spiritual capacities of my husband. He admonished me to serve him and teach him, that spiritual confirmations would rain down upon him. Those who knew my husband will testify as to how absolutely ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words came true.

My time was growing short, and as he finished talking he hastily gathered from a dish on the table some various fruit, and said in English to me, “Here, take this fruit ,you will be hungry, and you must eat.” Then after the manner of the Orient he annointed me with the rose water. A custom with which so many of the early believers are familiar. I was soon speeding northward on the train, my mind engrossed upon the happenings of the last few days. Presently I thought it must be time for a call into the diner, and as I had no watch asked the conductor when lunch would be ready. He looked at me incredulously and replied, “Why lady, there is no diner on this train, and everyone got off for lunch at a station two hours ago. It was announced twice.” I thanked him, but suddenly felt very hungry as I had been travelling since eight that morning, and it was in the middle of the afternoon. I remembered the bag of fruit by my side, and as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had bidden me, I ate. I know that volumes could be written by the believers about experiences such as this one, and also their experiences in meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. I know that one hundred years from now, our various personalities will have faded into the background of non-existence as far as future generations are concerned. But these events which we are recording, will have served their purpose as they bring closer to them that day and age when

‘Abdu’l-Bahá walked upon the earth.

As I had left early in the morning, I was not present at that last meeting of the Friends with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá just before he left for the East, but I do know that when he turned his face homeward he left a spiritual rose garden in California.

In conclusion would like to say that it has been very difficult to chronicle these treasured personal experiences, but if it is for the Cause in future generations, I regard it as a sacred duty, willingly performed.