

... description: 1954 May 16-25, Clara Edge — incomplete
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"HAIFA NOTES CLARA A. EDGE MAY 16-25, 1954"

"NOTES ON CLARA EDGE'S REPORT OF VISIT TO HAIFA" (1-1/2 PAGES)

Notes On Report Of Visit To Haifa

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May 16-25, 1954

It was Sunday evening shortly after 6:00 p.m. when I arrived at the goal of my heart's desire — Haifa, magic word with all its great significance for the believer in the Bahá'í World Faith. The day had been spent sitting out the hours at Lydda awaiting my baggage; just imagine, waiting from 8:00 a.m. till 3:30 p.m. that near the Shrine of the Báb unable to go on without all my belongings. Well one can get close to exhaustion, but that first glimpse of the golden dome paid for all fatigue.

That precious little package of humanity — Jessie Revelle, came to the door of the American pilgrim house at the ringing of the bell. The latest pilgrim was ushered into her room, advised to rest. However, rest is difficult, particularly when one hears the voices of the dear residents of this charmed place. After about half an hour, am sure it was no more, tea having been served in the sitting room outside the rooms of Mason Remey, this pilgrim found herself with the others comparing notes for the day and awaiting the coming of the beloved Guardian, the 'Sign of God'. How does one ever even think of the possibility of going into that presence, unable to cast off the many, many frailties to which

we all seem too prone to fall heir, or take on. But one as to forget if they can bolster up their lagging spirits till the wonderful moment finally comes when the announcement is made that the Guardian awaits us at the table.

The latest arriving pilgrims, Lillian Richards (daughter of Solon Fieldman), and I — being given first place in the procession, walked down the winding stairs, across the large hallway into his presence. With such a gracious smile, he welcomes us so that all fears leave and we are seated across from him eagerly awaiting the much anticipated message we feel sure he is going to give us — specially suited to our particular needs.

Since there were two non-believers at the table, the conversation was general. However, whatever was said by the visitors was quickly brought back to the Bahá'í view point. At first one feels disappointed to have the beloved Guardian cramped in his message to all present; but the gracious kindness shown to the visitors makes one feel ashamed of impatience, and ready to enjoy the conversation and the handling of the situation by a past master at meeting difficulties.

The notes are few, but in response to conversational leads by one of the non-believers, the following came out:

In America, the power is now in the hands of the masses. This is not good for they can be and are swayed by the press. It is far better to elect, as the Bahá'ís do, in a three way election, Local Spiritual Assembly, State Convention, National Convention. The masses voting for a majority do not pick for the best qualities for office, but from the influence as above. The Bahá'ís is a three-way election. They pick the best for their spiritual and practical qualities (see *God Passes By* — page 218). National civilization will improve as soon as more emphasis is placed on spiritual qualities, rather than on the material. There is too much emphasis on material civilization in the West, and we must balance it by spiritual civilization through, first, periods of suffering and cleansing; second, through unification (could mean purging and welding through fire); third, establishment of a Bahá'í World State. There will be great destruction, the friends should move out of the big cities to villages. The Guardian was most gracious in expressing his gratitude to Lillian and her husband for the service to the cause in Ankara, Turkey.

May 19 — The Guardian in referring to the enthusiasm of the friends at convention said, “This enthusiasm is fine at the Convention, but after it is over, the friends forget. The American friends are very enthusiastic and industrious, but they do not carry through consistently.

Mary Elston — “What nation do you think is the most stable on the planet?”

The Guardian: The British are the most stable and carry through their undertakings. The Latin and Oriental are unstable and so are the Turkish, immature

and like children. They get very enthusiastic and then it fades away. Do you have any success with the Jews? When the Jews turn to Bahá'u'lláh, they have a deeper sense of reality than do others. When the Catholics come into the Faith, they are devoted.

He asked Lillian Richards if there any Jewish people in Turkey. "Yes, there are and also a large American community, but I cultivate mostly the Turkish people as they live there permanently." The Guardian answered that it is more important to reach the native people in every country. (There were three Persians who had left Istanbul and gone to Ankara. The Guardian said they should return to Istanbul and reestablish the Local Spiritual assembly because that would be the city where the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds would be built (partly because of the fact it was the place where Bahá'u'lláh suffered so greatly and also since it was the key to the Black Sea area.) The friends move where business is more convenient and where their lives (at the time) are safer. They must GO WHERE THE CAUSE NEEDS THEM. They must forget material comforts and think of the spiritual. Material civilization is DOOMED and WILL BE DESTROYED. It must be so. Mankind cannot be purified and cleansed except through suffering. The Lesser Peace will be in this century. (see insert — p.6)*

Question: "Do you mean by that, the 20th century?" Ques, "Will it be established by the youth of today?"

Answer: "It is very essential that the youth study deeply to the help usher in the MOST GREAT PEACE. The time of the Most Great Peace is a Mystery."

Question: "Will the global crusade have an influence in establishing world civilization?"

Answer: No, it will establish the Bahá'í World Faith about the world and will not have a direct influence in establishing the united states of the world.

Question: Will the pioneers be expected to return to America, to help in the reconstruction after cataclysm?

Answer: RECONSTRUCT WHAT!!!

May 20 — The beloved Guardian was feeling better, more rested when he arrived for dinner at almost 9:00 p.m. and was radiant. He reminded us of certain pertinent statistics regarding membership of committees in several countries as he had referred to them in his cables to the national conventions, making comparisons between a year ago and when the world crusade was first instituted and the present. He spoke of Africa, Germany, England, but his happiness was so great in speaking of Uganda where the numbers are phenomenal by comparison to American and other countries. He said that France has only 3 or 4 communities after over 50 years. (See April News Letter, we were told.)

Question: Should bodies be embalmed before burial, in order to complete the cycle back to the mineral, etc?

Answer: They should not be embalmed. If death comes in a state where the law demands embalming and cement vault, the body could be taken to an adjoining State where there might be no such law — since we must be obedient to the law. Further, the time could come when a body could be taken the width of a continent in an hour's time, and thus the Bahá'í law could be kept.

The authentic cave of Elijah is the higher one where Bahá'u'lláh revealed in a loud voice so that the priests could hear him — “The Tablet of Carmel” — not the lower one where the Moslem tradition places it. See Gleanings 14-21.

Asked about Bahá'u'lláh referring to Himself as This Youth, and its meaning, the Guardian said Bahá'u'lláh was only 27 years old when he espoused the Bábí Cause, and 35 years of age at the time of His first declaration (of being “HIIM WHOM GOD WOULD MAKE MANIFEST.”) Afterward there was a difference of opinion as to whether he said it expressed youth and vitality or eternal youth.

He spoke of the many changes in Palestine under different influences. One time it was the Land of Kings. The Jews have suffered much persecution. Once it was part of the Roman Empire, then under the Moslems (arabs and Turks), later mandated to the english. The Arabs have had the greatest influence on Palestine.

At one time less than 1,000,000 Jews were surrounded by 40,000,000 Arabs, yet they kept their freedom in a bloodless revolution. 1,000,000 arabs fled and 1,000,000 Jews moved in. The Jews suffered almost 2,000 years punishment for three years' persecution of the Christ, who was the Son of God. Therefore the Moslem people will suffer much more than the Jews did. Bahá'u'lláh was the Father, Christ the Son. The persecution of Bahá'u'lláh lasted for over 50 years, therefore that will cause the Moslems to suffer far greater punishment than the Jews and in a very short period of time. The Moslems will be scattered with great suffering.

When the Beloved Guardian rose to leave, with the sweetest and most expressive smile, he spoke directly to allen and Mary Elston (from Kampala, Uganda, “I have extended your stay for another day, and you will have one day in Jerusalem and one in Tel aviv. I have a treasure for you to take back to the people of Uganda.”

The next evening after his message, the treasure given to them was a coat of Bahá'u'lláh. Needless to say, they were not only excited but astonished and very, very happy to have something so wonderful to take back to the friends of Uganda.

May 21 — The Guardian though tired, spoke with great emphasis — his voice rang out. He was discouraged, all to apparently with the American believers, lashed out at them for their apathy, corruption, decadence and heedlessness of his many warnings, for the corruption and decadence of the American people influence the Bahá'ís — too, too, much.

In referring to the American Bahá'ís he said, "I can urge them, but I can't create the spirit." It is unhappiness for me and danger for them (the believers) — that is what really counts. They SHOULD PACK AND GO. No one has the right to prevent them WHEN THEY ARE INDEPENDENT. They should take their passports, pack and go. The cause triumphs in spite of the inactivity or inaction of a large number of its supporters.

There are 700 negro Bahá'ís in one year in Africa. If America does not respond, they will suffer, they will suffer materially and spiritually. The cause will not suffer, but the believers will suffer. In fifty (50) years there are now only 500 negro believers in the united States, but 700 in Africa. This is a true eye-opener.

Those who do not respond will lose everything. Those who do respond will gain everything. The large cities are centers of materialism and the believers there will be caught in a trap. Cities like LONDON, PARIS, CHICAGO, NEW YORK, SAN FRANCISCO, will suffer. 'Abdu'l-Bahá warned the people about the danger of the racial problem in America, but they did nothing and had two wars. The situation is very grave and I wish the friends to realize it. They calculate too much, there is not enough self-sacrifice, not enough trust in God. While they are calculating, the BLOW WILL BE STRUCK. They, themselves, WILL EVAPORATE (go up in smoke), YES THEY WILL!!! The American continent is going to suffer, particularly THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT. This is a very grave challenge and if they on't face it, they will be very sorry.

To Mary Elston; "Did you ever dream of such results? (in Kampala). Kampala has set an example to the whole Bahá'í world. The Cause is stagnating in America. Africa is full of vitality. America is a stagnant pool, everything is declining there, manners, art, music, money is depreciating, there is terrible corruption, they are full of fear and disillusionment. These are all signs of decline and it is all because of this materialistic civilization. They should be less materialistic, more spiritual, less intellectual and more spiritual. People are going to church in fear. Irreligion and agnosticism are increasing. There is so much godlessness and it is increasing. Everything is carried to excess in the United States. An ordeal will share them. Fear is driving them to churches. The Pope is shaking in his shoes. Anything can happen. People are enveloped in a fog. They are fascinated by the life of the great cities, they have much contamination in large cities and the Bahá'ís are affected by this through association.

The Guardian here read from material sent him from a large city in America. He was disgusted with — what shall I say — almost puerility of admonishment to the believers — in a vein in which Bahá'ís should not be addressed. But on the other hand, they should be reminded from the teachings of their obligations/ to the Cause. He spoke in no uncertain terms of his disgust, etc. (and responsibilities)

The home front is an absolute failure. This was as of Feb. 14, 1954. Thirty (30) cities have fallen below 9. There are 10 states with no assemblies. They have SO

MUCH ORGANIZATION and they have NO SPIRIT. They MUST BE FIRED WITH THE SPIRIT. They feel an urge for a second, then it evaporates. They read superficially. People say, "I have read the Íqán like a tourist who says: "I ave done Paris, I have done London in 2 hours and know all about it." They have too many material preoccupations, they read so many magazines, which are absolutely trivial; they should throw them away into the wastebasket. This is what is called materialistic civilization. There is no progress in this suffocating atmosphere, there is a great DANGER!!!

To Mary Elston, "You must be very grateful and proud of Africa." After 50 years there are only 4 Indian tribes having believers in America. In Africa there are believers in 70 tribes who have entered the Faith in 2 years. Those with independent means should take passport, pack and go, they do not have to ask the NSA. Those who are independent financially should take their passports, pack and go, they can go anywhere they want to. They must have the urge to go and be inspired to go, the must be consecrated. The Americans feel they must have a car, a radio, one or refrigerators, television (latest model).

I CANNOT CREATE THE SPIRIT, all I can do is use the tools given me, I am the person who will direct those who arise. When I find no response, I become unhappy, I become paralyzed, I cannot do anything. This creates unhappiness for me and danger for the believers. The friends know that a MASS RESPONSE will make me happy. The Cause triumphs in spite of the inactivity of a large number of its supporters. In some mysterious way the Cause triumphs. They bring into their schools the American standard instead of driving it out.

In the British Isles sixty percent (60%) have left their homes. In America the atmosphere is STIFLING, STAGNANT. The Bahá'ís reflect this atmosphere. They MUST PURIFY THEIR ATMOSPHERE BY GETTING OUT. The Cause is steadily rising in Africa, but this is not so in the States. There were 495 volunteers in the American Conference, only 200 actually left. There should have been 3000. The Bahá'ís must PROMOTE THE BAHÁ'Í STANDARD, not the American standard. They must drive the American standard away. They should persevere and NOT LONG FOR HOME, SWEET HOME. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Would to God I could go on foot." America has cultivated such a high standard of living that it is difficult for the Bahá'ís to lower those standards. They reflect the American standard. The standard here in Haifa will be raised, but it will have to be lowered in America. He asked "What is sacrifice?" Then answered, "we will go at any cost." Americans have to alter their standards of living. They do everything with the slightest (least) exertion, ride in cars. They have more leisure and time to do non-essential things (Note: for unsensible things). They should go to Africa and lead a strenuous life.

There should be MASS-MIGRATION, and they should dedicate themselves permanently to the task. Africa and the Isles of the seas will have a great future. The cause will triumph in spite of the neglect of the Bahá'ís. If one country fails (falls short, another country will make up for their failure. The friends must realize that if they do not do their duty, they will LOSE EVERYTHING, but

THE CAUSE WILL TRIUMPH. Spanish Guiana is the only country not settled in Africa (someone told us that a pioneer or more has settled there). There are 195 centers in Africa, 700 colored Bahá'ís in Africa — 70 tribes — 30 languages.

The Guardian was asked if it was true that if pioneers went out it was protection for those left at home and he replied, "GO FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION."

May 22 — The Guardian, much to our great relief and happiness, came for dinner though we had been told he was too tired to come. He had brought a letter or copy of one written to the NSA of United States (so we understood) by a young man who was ready to go pioneering. It was as the Guardian noted — very spiritual, and showed definite desire to consecrate his life to the Cause wherever he might go. The Guardian in no uncertain terms said that here was a young man eager to go pioneering, but he would be discouraged from going — even prevented. Then, if he has the means he should go anywhere he wishes. The NSA should back him up when he arrives at his post. He does not need permission from the NSA or any COMMITTEE. He is permitted to go whether he is sponsored or not if he has the means. Ultimately, it is the spirit that counts and that is something between God and the individual. This is A CRISIS, a spiritual crisis. Bahá'ís (meaning NSA *** and committees) time is occupied with details, details that are absolutely dry and empty. I can visualize these things. The time is occupied with trivial matters, they are immersed in material things. They are occupied with the things in the cities. Bahá'ís will soon become involved. The large cities have a very bad effect on morality or on spirituality. It is becoming positively dangerous to live in the cities.

Non-Bahá'ís are even realizing that the great cities are doomed because there is so much crime, immorality, etc., etc. WE MUST GET TO A SIMPLER LIFE. NOW IT IS LIKE BABYLON, ROME, POMPEII. The Master said that in general in Central Asia there are cities which have been destroyed (leaving nothing to show how destroyed). It is absolutely hopeless for those who are capable teacher in these cities. God must remedy the situation. The Master warned them (people in the United States) about the racial problem, but they were heedless to His warning. As a result there have been two wars and it is not ended. For fifty (50) years the fortunes of mankind have been steadily declining. There are two reasons for this:

1. Mankind did not heed the Master.
2. Materialism, which will lead to the BURNING OF THE CITIES.

The last war was only the beginning. The next conflict may give a chance for the non-white to contribute its share. (The yellow race could come and take possession of the U.S. and could be followed in the same manner by the negro race.) CITIES ARE DOOMED. WHITE people have done a great deal of harm and will suffer. America will become a storm center of the future. THERE ARE VERY, VERY DARK DAYS AHEAD. The situation is very, very grave. Anything can happen, decrease in population, destruction of cities. WESTERN

CIVILIZATION HAS INVOLVED THE WORLD IN ONE OF THE GREATEST OF CRISIS. In 1912 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saw it and {{p6}} warned them, now the people are beginning to see it. America is the most disturbed nation on the earth. This is reflected in the Bahá’ís of the west, in their activities. THEY ARE LIVING IN A FOOL’S PARADISE. The excesses to which the Americans have gone have raised up enemies (induced hatred). Russia is the greatest enemy. It is all in God’s plan. Who would think the [time] could come when America would have such fear! Anything can happen and any time SUDDENLY. Bahá’u’lláh praised agriculture, A GREAT FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE. A new race of men will appear after the cataclysm (catastrophe) We must have a totally new mode of life — NEW CITIES — SIMPLER.

Tower of Babel was not a building, but it was carrying things to excess and God stopped them. THE STORY OF NOAH IS RENACTED NOW. Godlessness, materialism — everywhere. We must have the right kind of education...

To the writer (/): “Now you know what to tell the friends at home!”

Clara: In other words, I’m not to pull my punches.” A sad smile was his only response. He left us so overburdened with the worries of the Bahá’í world, tired to exhaustion, and that was the last time Lillian and I were to see him. He was unable to leave his bed the rest of our stay 23, 24 and 25.

INSERT to page 2 — He gave further instructions, but the important thing was that she did not have to go home to tell these friends what they must do — for the beloved Guardian turned to Leroy Ioas, gave him instructions to write Ankara. This it was not to be through Lillian but directly to the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly in Ankara from the Guardian, and there could be no misunderstanding or difficulty caused for a pioneer in an older community.

Note: Prayer of Ahmad was revealed in Adrianople — “this remote prison”.

[END]