

**Contents**

'Abdu'l-Baha in London .....	1	The Message from Afar .....	19
Tablet From 'Abdu'l-Baha to Britain.....	1	All are His Children away from Haifa .....	20
Abdu'l-Baha Free to Travel! Would He come to Europe?.....	2	Seeking the Kingdom through Unity.....	20
Arrival in London; First Impressions.....	2	Scotland.....	20
About His Stay .....	3	Message to the Theosophists.....	21
Baha'i Visitors.....	3	The Last Morning.....	21
Orientals .....	4	Awakened Minds .....	22
Jalalu'd-Dawlih Impores Pardon.....	4	What Happened to the Visitors?.....	22
Workman Who Left His Tools .....	4	Talk of 16 Jan 1913.....	23
Maharajah of Jalawar .....	5	Table to the Friends in the UK of Mar 1912 .....	24
Indian Visitors .....	5	'Abdu'l-Baha in Paris.....	25
E G Browne.....	5	Abdu'l-Baha's Journeys.....	25
Wellesley Tudor-Pole.....	5	Plans for France; Scenes in France .....	25
Archdeacon Wilberforce; Address at Congregation of St. John the Divine .....	5	A Rowdy Scene and the Loaf .....	25
Planton Drakoules .....	6	Questions about Abdu'l-Baha.....	26
Mr. Albert Dawson - Christian Commonwealth Editor	6	Abdu'l-Baha's Routine in France.....	26
Annie Besant (Head of Theosophy); A. P. Sinnett....	6	Paris Talks .....	26
Sir Richard and Lady Stapley; Eric Hammond .....	6	Mannerisms and Atmosphere.....	27
Alice Buckton; Eager Heart Performance.....	6	Questions Answered Before Asked.....	27
Mrs. Pankhurst (Leader of the Suffragettes) .....	7	Social Worker from French Congo .....	27
Numerous Guests Named .....	7	A Child's Operation.....	27
Drama of the Kingdom .....	7	An Artist and the Sun of Truth.....	27
Offerings of Flowers and Fruit; Freedom and Light in England .....	7	Encounters with the Intolerant .....	28
Sharing with the Poor .....	8	Japanese Ambassador to a European Capital; Japan	28
Companions; Morning Routine.....	8	Abdu'l-Baha Threatened.....	29
Cable from Tihiran Assembly.....	8	Mother told by Child to Visit.....	30
Donations Never Accepted .....	8	Persian Persecutor Entreats Help.....	31
Arrangements for Guests.....	9	Effects; Epilogue.....	31
Titles - Master and Abdu'l-Baha.....	9	Contents.....	32
Daily Custom in London.....	9		
Woman Turned Away Called In .....	10		
The Tramp .....	10		
Those from Afar; Lunch Tables.....	12		
Shrivelled Apple from Ishqabad .....	12		
Leading Guests to the Table.....	12		
Two Ladies from Scotland and the Reporter .....	12		
Pleasure at Laughter; Men Doing Chores.....	13		
Lord Mayor of London; British Justice and a Pasha Imprisoned .....	14		
Newspaper Photographers .....	14		
Meetings at Friends' Homes.....	15		
Mrs Cropper and Miss Rosenberg; the Auto .....	15		
Love of Children .....	15		
Nature and Light.....	15		
Prison Times .....	16		
Clifton .....	16		
Friend Who Gave Abdu'l-Baha a Rest in Chelsea ..	16		
Reception by Sir Richard and Lady Stapley; Riding on the Car Roof .....	17		
Refused Money but Accepted Small Tokens; Red Slippers .....	17		
Congregational Church Spell-Bound .....	17		
Oxford with Dr and Mrs Cheyne.....	18		
Abdu'l-Baha Runs Up Stairs.....	18		
Halos and Light; Miracles; Abdu'l-Baha at an Operation.....	18		

**Chosen Highway - Abdu'l-Baha in Europe**

**'Abdu'l-Baha in London**

**Tablet From 'Abdu'l-Baha to Britain**

To the Baha'is of Britain:

O ye Sons and Daughters of the Kingdom!

Your letter, which was written by heavenly inspiration, has arrived. Its contents are full of interest, and its message expresses the feelings of radiant hearts. Verily, the Baha'is of London are steadfast believers and faithful in service.

They shall not slacken with years, nor shall their light grow dim.

For they are Baha'is. They are children of Heaven. They are of God. Surely they will be the means of uplifting God's word and of fostering the oneness of the world of humanity.

They will proclaim the equality of man and spread the Divine Teachings.

It is easy to accept the Kingdom of God; to endure therein with steadfastness is difficult, for temptations are great and strong.

The English have always been resolute, not swerving in the face of difficulties. Having taken up a cause, they are not ready, for trivial reasons, either to leave it or to lose heart and enthusiasm.

Verily, in all their undertakings they show firmness.

O my friends, though you dwell in the West, praise be to God, you have heard the Divine Call from the East, and like unto Moses and the burning bush, you have become aglow with the fire, lighted in the "Tree of Asia."\*

You have found the Right Path. You have become as shining lamps, and have entered into the Kingdom of God.

Now in thanksgiving for this bounty, you have arisen to offer prayers for blessings to fall upon all mankind: that, by the light of the Star of the Kingdom of Abha, the eyes of all may be opened and their hearts, like unto mirrors, reflect the splendour of the Sun of Truth.

This is my hope—that the breath of the Holy Spirit may so inspire your hearts, that your tongues may begin to reveal the mysteries and to expound the truth and the meaning of the Holy Books.

May the Baha'is, by the Divine Teachings, become physicians to heal the long-standing infirmities of the world, to restore sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and life to the dead, and to awaken those that sleep.

Be assured that the blessings of the Holy Spirit will descend upon you, and that the hosts of the Kingdom of Abha will come to your succour.

Upon you be the glory of the Most Glorious!

Written by 'Abdu'l-Baha at Ramleh, Egypt, on the 9th May, 1911.

Translated into English by Y. Dawud.

### **Abdu'l-Baha Free to Travel! Would He come to Europe?**

The beloved Prisoner was free! Free to obey the charge laid upon Him by Baha'u'llah to go forth into all the world to carry the message of the Renewal of Peace and Unity, of Joy and Service, and to call mankind to immediate action for averting the "Great Woe."

Would His strength be sufficient for these journeys? Our hearts sank as we thought of His captivity in the pestilential air of 'Akka. Entering it as a young man of twenty-four; leaving that death-dealing atmosphere at the age of sixty-four (August 1908).

News came of His sojourn in Alexandria from one who said of Him: "Seeing 'Abdu'l-Baha and His most holy life has made me believe in Christ. Never before did I think His existence possible. Now I can understand."

As we thought upon all these marvels, we waited and wondered whether it was to be our privilege to see Him. Would it be given to us to hear the teachings of Baha'u'llah from 'Abdu'l-Baha Himself?

Should we travel to Egypt, or would He come to Europe? If He were to come to London, where would be the roof to shelter Him? We who had quietly prepared our home in the hope that He might deign to sojourn there awhile, sent the invitation. Soon a telegram came:

### **Arrival in London; First Impressions**

"'Abdu'l-Baha arriving in London 9th September<sup>1</sup>. Can Lady Blomfield receive Him?"

And now at last 'Abdu'l-Baha was coming into the western world, even to us in London!

He arrived, and who shall picture Him?

A silence as of love and awe overcame us, as we looked at Him; the gracious figure, clothed in a simple white garment, over which was a light-coloured Persian 'aba; on His head He wore a low-crowned taj, round which was folded a small, fine-linen turban of purest white; His hair and short beard were of that snowy whiteness which had once been black; His eyes were large, blue-grey with long, black lashes and well-marked eyebrows; His face was a beautiful oval with warm, ivory-coloured skin, a straight, finely-modelled nose, and firm, kind mouth. These are merely outside details by which an attempt is made to convey an idea of His arresting personality.

His figure was of such perfect symmetry, and so full of dignity and grace, that the first impression was that of considerable height. He seemed an incarnation of loving understanding, of compassion and power, of wisdom and authority, of

---

<sup>1</sup> 8th September, 1911

Perhaps their unstained nature sensed the breath of holiness which was always with Him, and caused these little ones to liken Him to the most Holy One of Whom they were conscious.

### **Persian Persecutor Entreats Help**

One day, a certain man, a Persian of high degree, came to 'Abdu'l-Baha: "I have been exiled from my country. I pray you intercede for me that I may be permitted to return."

"You will be allowed to return."

"Some of my land has been bought by one of the Baha'i friends. I desire to possess that property once more."

"It shall be given back to you and without payment."

"Who is the young man standing behind you? May he be presented to me?"

"He is Mirza Jalal, son of one of the martyred brothers of Isfahan."

"I had no part in that crime."

"The part you took in that event, I know. Moreover, your motive I know."

This man, with his fellow-conspirator, the "Wolf" (so named because of his ruthless cruelty and greed), had borrowed large sums of money from the two noble and generous brothers of Isfahan. To accuse them of being followers of Baha'u'llah, to bring them before a tribunal which condemned them to be executed, and to have the brothers put to death, was their plot to avoid being required to repay the loans.

After the death of the "Wolf" some documents were discovered, relating to the borrowed money. This, with the addition of the interest which had accumulated, now amounted to a considerable sum. The lawyer who was in charge of the affair wrote to the son of the martyr, asking into what bank the moneys should be paid. The reply sent, with the approval of 'Abdu'l-Baha, was that he declined to accept repayment of money which had been one reason for the shedding of his father's blood.

Mirza Jalal was now married to a daughter of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

### **Effects; Epilogue**

Whilst these episodes were taking place, we who witnessed them seemed to be in a higher dimension, where they were natural indications of the presence of the Light which in all men is latent and in 'Abdu'l-Baha transcendent.

The constant awareness of an exhilaration, which carried us out of our everyday selves, and gave us the sense of being "one with the Life Pulse, which beats through the Universe: is an experience to be treasured rather than an emotion to be described.

The reader will understand that it is impossible to find fitting words for the thoughts and feelings which were with us in those Paris days.

"Oh, Master! We do not wish that you should go from us in that manner." I was overcome with sorrow and terror.

"Be not troubled," said 'Abdu'l-Baha. "These enemies have no power over my life, but that which is given them from on High. If my Beloved God so willed that my life-blood should be sacrificed in His path, it would be a glorious day, devoutly wished for by me."

Therefore the friends surrounding the much-loved Master were comforted, and their faith so strengthened, that when a sinister-looking man came up to a group who were walking in the gardens and threateningly said: "Are you not yet sufficiently warned? Not only is there danger for 'Abdu'l-Baha, but also for you who are with Him," the friends were unperturbed, one of them replying calmly: "The Power that protects the Master protects also His other servants. Therefore we have not fear."

The man departed, abashed, saying nothing more.

#### **Mother told by Child to Visit**

Two days before the close of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visit, a woman came hurriedly into the gathering at the Avenue de Camoens:

"Oh, how glad I am to be in time! I must tell you the amazing reason of my hurried journey from America. One day, my little girl astonished me by saying: 'Mummy, if dear Lord Jesus was in the world now, what would you do? 'Darling baby, I would feel like getting on to the first train and going to Him as fast as I could.' 'Well, Mummy, He is in the world.' I felt a sudden great awe come over me as my tiny one spoke. 'What do you mean, my precious? How do you know?' I said. 'He told me Himself, so in course He is in the world.' Full of wonder, I thought: Is this a sacred message which is being given to me out of the mouth of my babe? And I prayed that it might be made clear to me.

"The next day she said, insistently and as though she could not understand: 'Mummy, darlin', why isn't you gone to see Lord Jesus? He's told me two times that He is really here, in the world.' "Tiny love, Mummy doesn't know where He is, how could she find Him?' 'We see, Mummy, we see.'

"I was naturally perturbed. The same afternoon, being out for a walk with my child, she suddenly stood still and cried out, 'There He is! There He is!' She was trembling with excitement and pointing at the windows of a magazine store where there was a picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha. I bought the paper, found this address, caught a boat that same night, and here I am."

The above was written down as it was related to me. This is the second instance which came to my knowledge of the pictured face of 'Abdu'l-Baha arresting the beholder with a compelling force. The first incident was that of a man in deadly despair, about to take his own life; and now this innocent child.

It was of great interest to notice the effect the presence of 'Abdu'l-Baha had upon some children. One little girl whispered, "Look, that is Jesus when He was old."

strength, and of a buoyant youthfulness, which somehow defied the burden of His years; and such years!

One saw, as in a clear vision, that He had so wrought all good and mercy that the inner grace of Him had grown greater than all outer sign, and the radiance of this inner glory shone in every glance, and word, and movement as He came with hands outstretched.

"I am very much pleased with you all. Your love has drawn me to London. I waited forty years in prison to bring the Message to you. Are you pleased to receive such a guest?"

I think our souls must have answered, for I am not conscious that anyone uttered an audible word.

#### **About His Stay**

The history of 'Abdu'l-Baha's stay in our house lies in the relating of various incidents, connected with individuals, who stand out from amongst the crowd of those persons who eagerly sought His Presence.

Oh, these pilgrims, these guests, these visitors! Remembering those days, our ears are filled with the sound of their footsteps--as they came from every country in the world! Every day, all day long, a constant stream. An interminable procession!

Ministers and missionaries, Oriental scholars and occult students, practical men of affairs and mystics, Anglican-Catholics and Nonconformists, Theosophists and Hindus, Christian Scientists and doctors of medicine, Muslims, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians. There also called: politicians, Salvation Army soldiers, and other workers for human good, women suffragists, journalists, writers, poets, and healers, dressmakers and great ladies, artists and artisans, poor workless people and prosperous merchants, members of the dramatic and musical world, these all came; and none were too lowly, nor too great, to receive the sympathetic consideration of this holy Messenger, who was ever giving His life for others' good.

In this short chronicle I must be content to omit many details and only touch lightly on such personalities as pass before my eyes in the memories of those unforgettable days.

#### **Baha'i Visitors**

First of all there were the Baha'i friends, who assembled to greet the Master. These arrived eager and elated nearly every day during His sojourn, often bringing a friend or relation; Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper, Miss Ethel Rosenberg, Miss Gamble, Miss Herrick, Mrs. Scaramucci, Miss Elsie Lee, Mr. Catanach, Mr. Cuthbert, Miss Juliet Thompson, Mr. Mountfort Mills, Mr. Mason Remey, Mrs. Claudia Coles, Miss Yandell, Miss Julia Culver, Mrs. Louise Waite, the Reverend Cooper Hunt, Miss Drake Wright, Mrs. Movius, and many others.

Foremost amongst our visitors were Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney, the brilliant French scholar and his no less brilliant American wife, who spoke Persian

with 'Abdu'l-Baha, translated for Him, and were altogether helpful, courteous, and charming.

### **Orientalists**

Very important arrivals were the pilgrims from Persia, who had journeyed far to attain the Presence of the Master. Now at last this was possible, after long years of confinement, of danger, and of persecution. Several were sons of those who "steadfast unto death had been martyred for the Cause of God."

These survivors of the Martyrs were accorded a very special and loving welcome by 'Abdu'l-Baha, Who was deeply affected as they entered His Presence. We were all overcome by the poignant emotions of such meetings.

*Jalalu'd-Dawlih Impores Pardon*

As a contrast to these faithful souls, came a man of imposing appearance, also a Persian, Jalalu'd-Dawlih, who had caused two young brothers to be cruelly tortured and killed for refusing to deny their faith in what they held to be the Trust of God. This man entreated to be received by 'Abdu'l-Baha, at Whose feet he fell prostrate, imploring pardon for his inhuman crimes.

When all was understood, this was a heart-rending episode.

Another day came a deputation from the Bramo-Somaj Society, inviting the Master to address them. 'Abdu'l-Baha was much pleased with the enlightened spirit of their movement.

Members of the Muslim Community of Great Britain came to pay their respects, and at their request 'Abdu'l-Baha visited the mosque at Woking, where an important gathering of their friends gave an enthusiastic welcome to Him Who, albeit the bearer of the new Message to all the religions of the world was descended from the ancient line of nobles in Islam.

Members of the Persian Legation came to see Him from time to time, entertained Him, and were also entertained by Him.

Another Persian nobleman, Dust Muhammad Khan (Mu'ayyiru'l-Mamalik) was a constant visitor, and sometimes accompanied the Master to His country meetings.

### **Workman Who Left His Tools**

A workman who had left his bag of tools in the hall was welcomed with smiling kindness by 'Abdu'l-Baha. With a look of sadness the man said: "I don't know much about religious things, as I have no time for anything but my work."

"That is well. Very well. A day's work done in the spirit of service is in itself an act of worship. Such work is a prayer unto God."

The man's face cleared from its shadow of doubt and hesitation, and he went out from the Master's presence happy and strengthened, as though a weighty burden had been taken away.

meeting Him.

"I am very sad," said Her Excellency. "I must not go out this evening as my cold is severe, and I leave early in the morning for Spain. If only there were a possibility of seeing Him." This was told to the Master, Who had just returned after a long, tiring day.

"Tell the lady and her husband that, as she is unable to come to me, I will call upon her."

Accordingly, though the hour was late, through the cold and the rain He came, with His smiling courtesy, bringing joy to us all, as we awaited Him in the Tapestry Room of the Hotel d'Jena.

'Abdu'l-Baha talked with the Ambassador and his wife of conditions in Japan, of the great international importance of that country, of the vast service to mankind, of the work for the abolition of war, of the need for improving conditions of life for the worker, of the necessity of educating girls and boys equally.

"The religious ideal is the soul of all plans for the good of mankind. Religion must never be used as a tool by party politicians. God's politics are might, man's politics are feeble."

Speaking of religion and science, the two great wings with which the bird of human kind is able to soar, He said: "Scientific discoveries have increased material civilization. There is in existence a stupendous force, as yet, happily, undiscovered by man. Let us supplicate God, the Beloved, that this force be not discovered by science until spiritual civilization shall dominate the human mind. In the hands of men of lower material nature, this power would be able to destroy the whole earth."

'Abdu'l-Baha talked of these and many other supremely important matters for more than an hour. The friends, wondering said: "How is it possible that, having spent all His life imprisoned in an Eastern fortress, He should so well understand world problems and possess the wisdom to solve them so simply?"

Truly we were beginning to understand the majesty of greatness, whether mental, or spiritual, is always simple.

### **Abdu'l-Baha Threatened**

One day, I received a disquieting letter: "It would be well to warn 'Abdu'l-Baha that it might be dangerous for Him to visit a certain country, for which I understand He proposes to set forth in the near future."

Having regard to the sincere friendship of the writer, and knowing that sources of reliable information were available to him, this warning obviously could not be ignored. Therefore, as requested, I laid the matter before the Master.

To my amazement, He smiled and said impressively: "My daughter, have you not yet realized that never, in my life, have I been for one day out of danger, and that I should rejoice to leave this world and go to my Father?"

"Thou are very welcome. I am happy to see thee. All true art is a gift of the Holy Spirit."

"What is the Holy Spirit?"

"It is the Sun of Truth, O Artist."

"Where, where, is the Sun of Truth?"

"The Sun of Truth is everywhere. It is shining on the whole world."

"What of the dark night, when the Sun is not shining?"

"The darkness of night is past, the Sun has risen."

"But, Master, how shall it be with the blinded eyes that cannot see the Sun's splendour? And what of the deaf ears that cannot hear those who praise its beauty?"

"I will pray that the blind eyes may be opened, that the deaf ears may be unstopped, and that the hearts may have grace to understand."

As 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke, the troubled mien of the artist gave place to a look of relief, satisfied understanding, joyous emotion.

#### **Encounters with the Intolerant**

Thus interview followed interview. Church dignitaries of various branches of the Christian Tree came, some earnestly desirous of finding new aspects of the Truth—"the wisdom that buildeth up, rather than the knowledge that puffeth up." Others there were who stopped their ears, lest they should hear and understand.

One afternoon, a party of the latter type arrived. They spoke words of bigotry, of intolerance, of sheer cruelty in their bitter condemnation of all who did not accept their own particular dogma, showing themselves obsessed by "the hate of man, disguised as love of God," a thin disguise to the penetrating eyes of the Master. Perhaps they were dreading the revealing light of Truth which He sought to shed upon the darkness of their outworn ecclesiasticism. The new revelation was too great for their narrowed souls and fettered minds.

The heart of 'Abdu'l-Baha was saddened by this interview, which had tired Him exceedingly. When He referred to this visit there was a look in His eyes as if loving pity were blended with profound disapproval, as though He would cleanse the defiled temple of Humanity from the suffocating diseases of the soul. Then He uttered these words in a voice of awe-inspiring authority: "Jesus Christ is the Lord of Compassion, and these men call themselves by His Name! Jesus is ashamed of them!"

He shivered as with cold, drawing His aba closely about Him, with a gesture as if sternly repudiating their misguided outlook.

#### **Japanese Ambassador to a European Capital; Japan**

The Japanese Ambassador to a European capital (Viscount Arawaka-Madrid) was staying at the Hotel d'Jena. This gentleman and his wife had been told of 'Abdu'l-Baha's presence in Paris, and the latter was anxious to have the privilege of

#### **Maharajah of Jalawar**

The late Maharajah of Jalawar, an enlightened and cultured prince, paid many visits to 'Abdu'l-Baha. He gave an elaborate dinner and reception in His honour, to which we also were invited. The Maharajah and members of his suite sometimes dined at our house with the Master, who delighted all the guests with His beautiful courtesy, recounting interesting stories, often full of humour; He always loved to see happy, laughing faces. And what grace He possessed—as of a king—this serene and dignified Personage Who had spent a lifetime in prison!

#### **Indian Visitors**

'Abdu'l-Baha was always very glad to welcome visitors from India.

He would speak to them of the "Spiritual Sun of Truth, which has always shown from the eastern horizon, and again of the great Spiritual Teachers, who have all arisen in the East." The Message of Krishna was a Message of Love; every true Prophet of God has given the same message, that of Love. We must all strive to spread this Love among the sons of mankind.

"It would be well for the Western peoples to turn to the East for illumination," He would say again and again.

"The East and the West should unite to give to each other what is lacking in each. This exchange of gifts would form a true civilization, where spiritual ideals would be translated into action in the material world."

#### **E G Browne**

Professor Edward Granville Browne, who had written much concerning the Babis and the Baha'is, came from time to time, speaking in Persian with the Master, Who was delighted to see him, and talked over many things, especially the momentous occasion when that intrepid Cambridge Orientalist succeeded in obtaining permission to enter the presence of Baha'u'llah.

#### **Wellesley Tudor-Pole**

Mr. Wellesley Tudor-Pole, who had visited the Master in Alexandria, with the clear insight of a student of things sacred and mystic, had recognized the inspiring influence which emanated from 'Abdu'l-Baha. Mr. Tudor-Pole had helped us to understand something of the power of Baha'u'llah, working in the realm of thought, to awaken the hearts and minds of those who, through inner training, had attained capacity. These explanations were very illuminating to us, who were waiting and hoping for the coming of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

#### **Archdeacon Wilberforce; Address at Congregation of St. John the Divine**

Soon after His arrival in London 'Abdu'l-Baha received Archdeacon Wilberforce in audience. This was a remarkable interview. Our dear friend, the Archdeacon, sat on a low chair by the Master. 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke to him in His beautiful Persian. He placed His hand on the head of the Archdeacon, talked long to him, and answered many questions. Evidently His words penetrated further than the outer

ears, for both were deeply moved. On this occasion the invitation was given for 'Abdu'l-Baha to speak to the congregation of St. John the Divine, at Westminster, on the following Sunday.

The beloved Messenger from the East passed through the midst of the crowded church, hand in hand with Archdeacon Wilberforce, up to the chancel, where they stood together, two men of God, one from the East and one from the West, united in their loving service to the "Ruler of the throne and of the dust." 'Abdu'l-Baha's beautiful voice filled the church with its powerful vibrations. The translation was read by the Archdeacon in his own impressive way. This was indeed a soul-stirring event, far-reaching in its influence!

#### **Planton Drakoules**

Dr. Planton Drakoules, who had invited the first Baha'i gathering in England to meet at his chambers in Oxford, paid several visits to the Master.

#### **Mr. Albert Dawson - Christian Commonwealth Editor**

Among other guests were Mr. Albert Dawson, editor of an interesting paper, The Christian Commonwealth, dealing with religious and ethical matters. The Rev. R. J. Campbell was one of the earliest to arrive. At his invitation 'Abdu'l-Baha, for the first time in His life, addressed a Western audience. This took place at the City Temple. On this occasion Mr. Wellesley Tudor-Pole read the translation.

#### **Annie Besant (Head of Theosophy); A. P. Sinnett**

Mrs. Annie Besant visited the Master one day, also Mr. A. P. Sinnett, who came several times, and they each invited 'Abdu'l-Baha to address the Theosophical Society.

#### **Sir Richard and Lady Stapley; Eric Hammond**

Sir Richard and Lady Stapley were frequent visitors. Mr. Eric Hammond came several times. He was the author of that interesting book The Splendour of God, dealing with the Baha'i Message, published in The Wisdom of the East series.

#### **Alice Buckton; Eager Heart Performance**

Miss Alice Buckton was an earnest visitor. She had written Eager Heart, a very interesting Christmas mystery play. The performance of this mystery play at the Church House, Westminster, was honoured by the presence of 'Abdu'l-Baha. This was a memorable occasion, as it was the first time He had ever witnessed a dramatic performance.

The Master wept during the scene in which the Holy Child and His parents, overcome with fatigue, and suffering from hunger, were met by the hesitation of Eager Heart to admit them to the haven of rest which she had prepared, she, of course, failing to recognize the sacred visitors.

The Master afterwards joined the group of players.

It was an arresting scent. In the Eastern setting the Messenger, in His Eastern robes, speaking to them in the beautiful Eastern words of the Divine significance

#### **Mannerisms and Atmosphere**

The words of 'Abdu'l-Baha can be put on to paper, but how describe the smile, the earnest pleading, the loving-kindness, the radiant vitality, and at times the awe-inspiring authority of His spoken words? The vibrations of His voice seemed to enfold the listeners in an atmosphere of the Spirit, and to penetrate to the very core of being. We were experiencing the transforming radiance of the Sun of Truth; henceforth, material aims and unworthy ambitions shrank away into their trivial, obscure retreats.

#### **Questions Answered Before Asked**

'Abdu'l-Baha would often answer our questions before we asked them. Sometimes He would encourage us to put them into words.

"And now your question?" he said.

I answered: "I am wondering about the next world, whether I shall ask to be permitted to come back here to earth to help?" "Why should you wish to return here? In My Father's House are many mansions--many, many worlds! Why should you desire to come back to this particular planet?"

#### **Social Worker from French Congo**

The visit of one man made a profound impression upon us:

"O 'Abdu'l-Baha, I have come from the French Congo, where I have been engaged in mitigating the hardships of some of the natives. For sixteen years I have worked in that country."

"It was a great comfort to me in the darkness of my prison to know the work which you were doing."

Explanations were not necessary when coming to 'Abdu'l-Baha!

#### **A Child's Operation**

One day a window in deepest mourning came. Weeping bitterly, she was unable to utter a word.

Knowing her heart's grief, "Do not weep," said 'Abdu'l-Baha, wiping away the tears from the poor face. "Do not weep. Be happy! It will be well with the boy. Bring him to see me in a few days."

On her way out, this mother said: "Oh, my child! He is to go through a dangerous operation today. What can I do?"

"The Master has told you what to do. Remember His words:

"Do not weep, it will be well with the boy. Be happy, and in a few days bring him to see me."

In a few days the mother brought her boy to the Master, perfectly well!

#### **An Artist and the Sun of Truth**

One evening at the home of Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney, an artist was presented to 'Abdu'l-Baha.

Father, make way!" The Master passed through the midst of the crowd, now become silent and respectfully saluting Him. "Thank you, my dear friends, thank you," He said, smiling round upon them. The poor were always His especially beloved friends. He was never happier than when surrounded by them, the lowly of heart.

#### **Questions about Abdu'l-Baha**

Who is He?

Why do the people gather round Him?

Why is He here in Paris?

I hope to indicate, albeit inadequately, something of that Messenger, the "Trusted One" Who came out of an Eastern prison to bring His Father's message to the bewildered nations of earth. During the Paris visit, as it had been in London, daily happenings took on the atmosphere of spiritual events. Some of these episodes I will endeavour to describe as well as I can remember them.

#### **Abdu'l-Baha's Routine in France**

Every morning, according to His custom, the Master expounded the principles of the Teaching of Baha'u'llah to those who gathered round Him, the learned and the unlearned, eager and respectful. They were of all nationalities and creeds, from the East and from the West, including Theosophists, agnostics, materialists, spiritualists, Christian Scientists, social reformers, Hindus, Sufis, Muslims, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, and many others. Often came workers in various humanitarian societies, who were striving to reduce the miseries of the poor. These received special sympathy and blessing.

#### **Paris Talks**

'Abdu'l-Baha spoke in Persian, which was translated into French by Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney. My two daughters, Mary and Ellinor, our friend Miss Beatrice Platt, and I, took notes of these "Talks" from day to day. At the request of the Master, these notes were arranged and published in English<sup>2</sup>. It will be seen that in these pages are gathered together the precepts of those Holy Souls Who, being Individual Rays of the One, were, in diverse times and countries, manifested here on earth to lead the spiritual evolution of human kind.

---

<sup>2</sup> When the 'Talks' were ready, the book was sent to 'Abdu'l-Baha for His comments. He read them through and was well pleased with the English translation. He wished them to be published without delay. Accordingly, the book came out in May 1912 and is now obtainable from Baha'i Publishing Trust, London. In 1939 Talks of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Paris was translated into French by Madame Hesse. With the assistance of Mrs. Lynch and of Madame Dreyfus-Barney the book was published in Geneva. It is found to be of great use in teaching the various seekers in Paris and other towns in France.

of the events which had been portrayed.

#### **Mrs. Pankhurst (Leader of the Suffragettes)**

Another interesting visitor was Mrs. Pankhurst, who was much cheered by her interview, for the Master told her to continue her work steadfastly, for women would very shortly take their rightful place in the world.

#### **Numerous Guests Named**

Mr. Stead had a long and earnest conversation with 'Abdu'l-Baha. I see also passing before me Mr. Francis Skrine, author of a book on the Baha'i Message, Lady Wemyss and her sister, lady Glenconner, Princess Karadja, Mrs. Douglas Hamilton, Mrs. Forbes, Baroness Barnekow, Mr. David Graham Pole, Miss Constance Maud, Miss Mary Maud, Mrs. Charles Blomfield and her tiny girl.

From time to time children were brought, who received an especially loving welcome from the Master.

Other guests were the Rev. Roland Corbet, the Rev. Rhondda Williams, Mr. Claude Montefiore, Dr. Hector Munro, Miss Felicia Scratchard, Miss Louise Heron, Miss Eve Faulkener, Mrs. Cecil Headlam, Mrs. Alexander Whyte, Miss Leggatt and her sister, Miss MacLeod, Madame Bricka, Lady Evelyn Moreton, and Miss Katie Wingfield.

Mr. and Mrs. Felix Moscheles, who were very eager to hear the Master's teaching on the imperative need for a universal language, arranged a meeting at their studio, at which many Esperantists were present:

The Ranee of Sarawak, Colonel and Mrs. Seymour, Mr. Keightley, Lady Agnew, Sr. Michael Sadler, Mirza Nayyir Afnan, and many, many others who came were privileged to share in the joyous atmosphere created by the presence of the Master.

#### **Drama of the Kingdom**

One evening in the drawing-room of Mrs. Gabrielle Enthoven, the Master asked her whom he called "Hamsayih" (neighbour):

"What is your great interest in life?"

She replied: "The Drama."

'Abdu'l-Baha said: "I will give you a play. It shall be called the Drama of the Kingdom."

The Master then gave a plan, from which a play has been written by my daughter, Mary. This has been approved by the Reviewing Committees of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Baha'is of the British Isles, and of the United States and Canada.

#### **Offerings of Flowers and Fruit; Freedom and Light in England**

Day by day friends brought offerings of flowers and fruit, so that the dinner table was laden with these beautiful tokens of love for 'Abdu'l-Baha. Whilst cutting off

bunches of grapes and giving them to various guests, He talked to us of the joy of freedom, of how grateful we should be for the privilege of dwelling in safety, under just laws, in a healthy city, with a temperate climate, and brilliant light—"there was much darkness in the prison fortress of 'Akka!"

#### **Sharing with the Poor**

After His first dinner with us He said: "The food was delicious and the fruit and flowers were lovely, but would that we could share some of the courses with those poor and hungry people who have not even one."

What a lesson to the guests present!

We at once agreed that one substantial, plentiful dish, with salad, cheese, biscuits, sweetmeats, fruits, and flowers on the table, preceded by soup and followed by coffee or tea, should be quite sufficient for any dinner. This arrangement would greatly simplify life, both as to cookery and service, and would undeniably be more in accordance with the ideals of Christianity than numerous dishes unnecessary and costly.

#### **Companions; Morning Routine**

'Abdu'l-Baha was accompanied by a secretary, Mirza Muhmud, and Khusraw, His faithful servant.

He rose very early, chanted prayers, took tea, wrote Tablets, and dictated others. He then received those who flocked to see Him, some arriving soon after dawn, patiently waiting on the door-steps until the door would be opened for their entrance.

#### **Cable from Tihran Assembly**

On an early day of His visit a telegram came from the Tihran Baha'i Assembly:

"That the holy feet of 'Abdu'l-Baha have crossed your threshold receive our felicitations. Blessed are ye."

\* \* \*

A book entitled 'Abdu'l-Baha in London was compiled soon after His visit, and contains many of His addresses. I will therefore describe some episodes and incidents which came under my own observation, and which, as I believe, are not elsewhere recorded.

#### **Donations Never Accepted**

One striking fact that 'Abdu'l-Baha never asked for donations, and even refused to accept money or any costly gifts that were offered to Him.

One day in my presence a lady said to Him: "I have here a cheque from a friend, who begs its acceptance to buy a good motor-car for your work in England and Europe."

The Master replied: "I accept with grateful thanks the gift of your friend." He took the cheque into both His hands, as though blessing it, and said "I return it to be

until you become brimful of joyfulness like a cup of wine from the bounties of Baha'u'llah—the Blessed Beauty—that you may be the cause of the illumination of the world!

'Abdu'l-Baha 'Abbas

### **'Abdu'l-Baha in Paris**

#### **Abdu'l-Baha's Journeys**

Much has been written of the journeys of 'Abdu'l-Baha, 'Abbas Effendi. Having been released from the prison fortress of 'Akka, after forty years of captivity, He set Himself to obey the sacred charge laid upon Him by His Father, Baha'u'llah. Accordingly, He undertook a three years' mission into the Western world. He left the Holy Land and came to Europe in 1911. During that and the two following years He visited Switzerland, England, Scotland, France, America, Germany and Hungary.

#### **Plans for France; Scenes in France**

When the days of 'Abdu'l-Baha's first visit to London (in the autumn of 1911) were drawing to a close, his friends, Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney, found an apartment for His residence whilst in the French capital. It was charmingly furnished, sunny, spacious, situated in the Avenue de Camoens (No.4), whence a flight of steps led into the Trocadero Gardens; here the Master often took solitary, restful walks. Sheltered in this modern, comfortable, Paris flat, He Whom we revered, with a secretary, servitors, and a few close friends, sojourned for an unforgettable nine weeks.

Who is this, with a branch of roses in His hand, coming down the steps? A picturesque group of friends (some Persians, wearing the kulah, and a few Europeans), who are following Him, see little children coming up to Him. They hold on to His 'aba (cloak), confiding and fearless. He gives the roses to them, caressingly lifting one after another in His arms, smiling the while that glorious smile which wins all hearts.

Again, we saw a cabman stop his fiacre, take off his cap and hold it in his hand, gazing amazed, with an air of reverence, whilst the majestic figure, courteously acknowledging his salutation, passed by with that walk which a friend had described as "that of a king or of a shepherd."

#### **A Rowdy Scene and the Loaf**

Another scene. A very poor quarter in Paris—Sunday morning—groups of men and women inclined to be rowdy. Foremost amongst them a big man brandishing a long loaf of bread in his hand, shouting, gesticulating, dancing.

Into this throng walked 'Abdu'l-Baha, on His way from a mission hall, where He had been addressing a very poor congregation at the invitation of their pastor. The boisterous man with the loaf, suddenly seeing Him, stood still. He then proceeded to lay about him lustily with his staff of life, crying "Make way, make way! He is my



the friends must become the essence of essences; each one must become a brilliant lamp. People all around the world are entering the Cause, people of various tribes and nations and religions and sects. It is most difficult to administer to such heterogeneous elements. Wisdom and Divine insight are necessary. Firmness and steadfastness are needed at such a crucial period of the Cause.

All the meetings must be for teaching the Cause and spreading the Message, and suffering the souls to enter into the Kingdom of Baha'u'llah. Look at me. All my thoughts are centred around the proclamation of the Kingdom. I have a lamp in my hand searching throughout the lands and seas to find souls who can become heralds of the Cause. Day and night I am engaged in this work. Any other deliberations in the meetings are futile and fruitless. Convey the Message! Attract the hearts! Sow the seeds! Teach the Cause to those who do not know. It is now six months that Siyyid Asadu'llah implored that I write a few lines to my sister, my daughters. I have not done this because I find I must teach. I enter all meetings, all churches, so that the Cause may be spread. When the 'Most Important' work is before our sight, we must let go the 'Important' one. If the meeting or spiritual assembly has any other occupations the time is spent in futility. All the deliberations, all consultations, all the talks and addresses must revolve around one focal centre, and that is: Teach the Cause. Teach. Teach. Convey the Message. Awaken the souls. Now is the time of laying the foundation. Now must we gather brick, stone, wood, iron, and other building materials. Now is not the time of decoration. We must strive day and night and think and work; what can I say that may become effective? What can I do that may bring results? What can I write that may bring forth fruits? Nothing else will be useful today. The interests of such a Glorious Cause will not advance without such undivided attention. While we are carrying this load we cannot carry any other load!

#### **Table to the Friends in the UK of Mar 1912**

Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Baha to the Friends Sent to Us by "Lutfullah" [Hakim] in March 1912

Cry aloud and say:

O friends, a hundred times Glad Tidings that the Light of Reality has shone and enlightened the world.

The Proclamation of the Kingdom has reached you.

The ears heard and shook with this great sound!

The Doors of the Kingdom were opened.

The Heavenly Troops have arrived Army by Army, and they help the Baha'is (friends of God).

Anyone who is free from ambition and (earthly) desire will be victorious on this plane, and anyone who is pure and holy from the suggestions of evil, and is a refined (purified) soul, he will shine in reality like the Star of the Most High!

Then, O friends, strive with all your might to make yourselves free from ambitions

used for gifts to the poor."

"We have never seen the like before. Surely such deeds are very rare, it was whispered amongst the friends.

#### **Arrangements for Guests**

In all the arrangements for the comfort of the numerous guests, Miss Beatrice Platt, Dr. Lutfullah Hakim, and my daughters, Mary and Ellinor, were occupied from morning till night. They also took notes of the addresses of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and made appointments for interviews with Him.

#### **Titles - Master and Abdu'l-Baha**

We very swiftly grew into the habit of calling Him "the Master," a name used by Baha'u'llah when speaking of Him, and afterwards by His family and His intimate friends, though He Himself preferred to be called "'Abdu'l-Baha ('Servant of the Glory").

"Come ye people into the Kingdom of God, for this day the doors are open, and the station of Servitude is the highway thereto."

This station of Servitude—how great! How marvellous! We very gradually began to have a tiny glimmer of comprehension of what Service could mean, as the life of this Servant unfolded itself daily before our eyes.

#### **Daily Custom in London**

The Master's customs was to receive the visitors by twos or by threes, or individually, during the early hours of the morning. Then, about nine o'clock, He would come into the dining-room whilst we were at breakfast to greet us. "Are you well?" Did you sleep well?"

We tried to prevail upon Him to take some breakfast with us (we were always concerned that He ate so very little). At last one day He said He would like a little soup—then we had it brought in every morning. He smiled and said: "To please you I will take it. Thank you, you are very kind." Then to the servitor who offered it to Him: "I give too great trouble," He said.

In a few minutes He would go to His room, where He would resume the chanting of prayers and dictating of Tablets in reply to the vast number of letters which incessantly arrived.

Visitors having gradually gathered in the drawing-room (about ten o'clock), 'Abdu'l-Baha would come to us, pausing just inside the door, smiling round at the guests with a look of joyous sympathy which seemed to enfold each and all who were present; they rose simultaneously, as though the kingship of this Messenger were recognized by an inner perception.

"How are you? My hope is that you are well. Are you happy?" Speaking so to us, He would pass through our midst to His usual chair. Then He would talk rather with us than to us; so did He reply to unspoken questions, causing wonderment in those who were waiting to ask them—weaving the whole into a beautiful address, in the

atmosphere of which all problems and pain and care and doubt and sorrow would melt away, leaving only happiness and peace.

The power of Diving Love we felt to be incarnated in Him, Whom we called "the Master."

Now came the hour when He would receive those who had asked for appointments for private audiences. Careful time-tables were made and strictly adhered to, for very numerous were these applicants for so unique an experience, how unique, only those knew when in the presence of the Master, and we could partly divine, as we saw the look on their faces as they emerged—a look as though blended of awe, of marvelling, and of a certain calm joy. Sometimes we were conscious of reluctance in them to come forth into the outer world, as though they would hold fast to their beatitude, lest the return to things of earth should wrest it from them.

"My sorrow is still with me," said one woman clad in deepest mourning, "but He has taken away the sting, and turned it into joy."

#### **Woman Turned Away Called In**

One day a woman asked to be permitted to see the Master. "Have you an appointment?"

"Alas! No."

"I am sorry," answered the over-zealous friend who met her in the hall, "but He is occupied now with most important people, and cannot be disturbed."

The woman turned away, feeling too humble to persist in her appeal, but, oh! so bitterly disappointed. Before she had reached the foot of the stairway, she was overtaken by a breathless messenger from 'Abdu'l-Baha.

"He wishes to see you, come back! He has told me to bring you to Him."

We had heard His voice from the door of His audience room speaking with authority:

"A heart has been hurt. Hasten, hasten, bring her to me!"

#### **The Tramp**

Another day, whilst several personages were talking with 'Abdu'l-Baha, a man's voice was heard at the hall door. "Is the lady of this house within?" The servitor answered "Yes, but—" "Oh please, I must see her!" he interrupted with despairing insistence. I, overhearing, had gone into the hall.

"Are you the hostess of 'Abdu'l-Baha?" he asked.

"Yes, Do you wish to see me?" "I have walked thirty miles for that purpose." "Come in and rest. After some refreshment you will tell me?" He came in and sat down in the dining-room. In appearance he might have been an ordinary tramp, but as he spoke, from out the core of squalor and suffering, something else seemed faintly to breathe.

After a while the poor fellow began his pitiful story: "I was not always as you see

was "engaged to attend a garden party."

It is not ours to know how many were conscious of the vital breath of that atmosphere of "Love and Wisdom and Power," which was always around the Master, more penetrating and significant than even His words, although they were spoken with authority.

Of those who came into touch with that pervading influence, some were awed and transformed. Their very souls seemed wrapt by an unforgettable experience. The power of this atmosphere was overwhelming, but could neither be described nor defined.

Some of the Western visitors felt this hitherto unknown or unaccustomed atmosphere of the Spirit with moving gratitude and awe. To the Eastern guests this wonder was as the air they breathed. They accepted the Power with the reverence of the Oriental soul, trained to recognize the influence of holiness manifest in Him, Who had suffered long years in the Path of God, and Who had at length succeeded in bringing together the Message into the open air of the world.

Minds and motives must needs be varied because their quality depends upon the stage of advancement of each in spiritual evolution. Such an awakened consciousness alone determines the capacity to recognize Spiritual Truth.

The appeal of the Word of God to the spirit of man being so intimately sacred, it is not our province to judge any other human being in this matter.

"The earth is full of the signs of God; may your eyes be illumined by perceiving them," said 'Abdu'l-Baha.

For comfort and encouragement we are able to perceive these signs as stars of hope and fulfilment on every hand, whilst they are developing on the crowded stage of the world since 'Abdu'l-Baha's coming to the West with His warnings and His injunctions.

"The Great Woe" (the World War) proves the truth that when spiritual civilization is neglected and material civilization alone is cultivated, the whole edifice collapses into ruin, there being no firm foundation.

"And great is the fall thereof."

That terrific catastrophe shows that too few were the helpers who arose in answer to the Master's Call.

#### **Talk of 16 Jan 1913**

Talk Given at 97 Cadogan Gardens, London, England

16th January, 1913

The Cause has become very great. Many souls are entering it—souls with different mentalities and range of understanding. Complex difficulties constantly rise before us. The administration of the Cause has become most difficult. Conflicting thoughts and theories attack the Cause from every side. Now consider to what extent the believers of God must become firm and soul-sacrificing. Every one of

We had witnessed a solemn act in the Mysterious Sacred Drama of the World.

'Abdu'l-Baha's sojourn in London was ended.

We stood bereft of His presence.

Of the friends who gathered round Him at the train, one had been a constant visitor, a charming Eastern potentate [\* The Maharajah of Jalawar], dignified and picturesque in his jewelled turban. He was an example of earthly kingship, one of the many other great personages of the world, all of whom, absent and present, were so small, so insignificant, when compared with the Ambassador of the Most High, as He stood, clad in a simple garment, speaking courteous words of farewell, smiling that love-laden smile which comforted all hearts.

#### **Awakened Minds**

Discarding preconceived ideas, a new consciousness seemed to awaken when in His presence.

Some of the minds, though as yet so finite, reached out to a recognition of the Light of the great Manifestation, now being diffused by 'Abdu'l-Baha on all Humanity. To us He was impregnated with that Light, "as a vesture wrapped about him, like a garment round him thrown."

Small wonder that we mortals were overwhelmed with awe, as we drew near to the heavenly Messenger of that immortal Spirit of Truth and Light, which had come to save the children of men from chaotic destruction.

Would Humanity awaken? Or would they continue to sleep "unaware"?

#### **What Happened to the Visitors?**

A question, natural, and often asked, is this:

"Where are those people who crowded to 97 Cadogan Gardens, during the two visits of 'Abdu'l-Baha, and how have they answered His call?"

"I have come with a torch in my hand, seeking out those who will arise and help me to bring about the Most Great Peace."

Who shall say how much or how little of the Message given by the Servant of God was understood by those persons, well-known and unknown, gentle and simple, who sought His presence in those days?

States of consciousness and powers of vision being so varied, one visitor would come to hear and to see "some new thing" out of curiosity, hoping to witness a magic happening, an astounding phenomenon.

Of another kind was a man who, being on his way to Japan, heard that 'Abdu'l-Baha was in England. He broke his journey at Constantinople, and hastened to London for the joy of spending one evening in His presence.

Still another type of mentality was that of a popular preacher.

Often voicing his hope and desire that a Great Messenger would again come to the world, he answered an invitation to visit the Master by sending regrets as he

me now, a disreputable, hopeless object. My father is a country rector, and I had the advantage of being at a public school. Of the various causes which led to my arrival at the Thames embankment as my only home, I need not speak to you."

"Last evening I had decided to put an end to my futile, hateful life, useless to God and man!"

"Whilst taking what I had intended should be my last walk, I saw 'a Face' in the window of a newspaper shop. I stood looking at the face as if rooted to the spot. He seemed to speak to me, and call me to him!"

"Let me see that paper, please," I asked. It was the face of 'Abdu'l-Baha.

"I read that he is here, in this house. I said to myself, "If there is in existence on earth that personable, I shall take up again the burden of my life."

"I set off on my quest. I have come here to find him. Tell me, is he here? Will he see me? Even me?"

"Of course he will see you. Come to Him."

In answer to the knock, 'Abdu'l-Baha Himself opened the door, extending His hands, as though to a dear friend, whom He was expecting.

"Welcome! Most welcome! I am very much pleased that thou hast come. Be seated."

The pathetic man trembled and sank on to a low chair by the Master's feet, as though unable to utter a word.

The other guests, meanwhile, looked on wonderingly to see the attention transferred to the strange-looking new arrival, who seemed to be so overburdened with hopeless misery.

"Be happy! Be happy!" said 'Abdu'l-Baha, holding one of the poor hands, stroking tenderly the dishevelled, bowed head.

Smiling that wonderful smile of loving compassion, the Master continued:

"Do not be filled with grief when humiliation overtaketh thee.

"The bounty and power of God is without limit for each and every soul in the world.

"Seek for spiritual joy and knowledge, then, though thou walk upon this earth, thou wilt be dwelling within the divine realm.

"Though thou be poor, thou mayest be rich in the Kingdom of God."

These and other words of comfort, of strength, and of healing were spoken to the man, whose cloud of misery seemed to melt away in the warmth of the Master's loving presence.

As the strange visitor rose to leave Him Whom he had sought and found, a new look was upon his face, a new erectness in his carriage, a firm purpose in his steps.

"Please write down for me His words. I have attained all I expected, and even more."

"And now what are you going to do?" I asked. "I'm going to work in the fields. I can earn what I need for my simple wants. When I have saved enough I shall take a little bit of land, build a tiny hut upon it in which to live, then I shall grow violets for the market. As He says 'Poverty is unimportant, work is worship.' I need not say 'thank you,' need I? Farewell." The man had gone.

#### **Those from Afar; Lunch Tables**

Certain of those who thronged to see the Master, having travelled from far countries, were naturally anxious to spend every possible moment with Him, Whose deeds and words appealed to them as ever-filled with grace and love. Therefore it came about that day after day, whilst the Master was teaching, the luncheon gong would sound, and those who remained would be invited to sit at food with Him. We grew to expect that there would be nineteen guests at table, so often did this number recur.

These were much-prized times; 'Abdu'l-Baha would continue the interrupted discourse, or tell some anecdote, often humorous, meanwhile frequently serving the guests with His own hands, offering sweets, or choosing various fruits to distribute to the friends.

#### **Shrivelled Apple from Ishqabad**

The following touching incident took place one day when we were seated at table with the Master.

A Persian friend arrived who had passed through 'Ishqabad. He presented a cotton handkerchief to 'Abdu'l-Baha, Who untied it, and saw therein a piece of dry black bread, and a shrivelled apple.

The friend exclaimed: "A poor Baha'i workman came to me: 'I hear thou goest into the presence of our Beloved. Nothing have I to send, but this my dinner. I pray thee offer it to Him with my loving devotion.'"

'Abdu'l-Baha spread the poor handkerchief before Him, leaving His own luncheon untasted. He ate of the workman's dinner, broke pieces off the bread, and handed them to the assembled guests, saying: "Eat with me of this gift of humble love."

#### **Leading Guests to the Table**

Of the guests who remained to lunch or dinner, the Master would often hold out His hand to the humblest or most diffident, lead them into the dining-room, seat him or her at His right hand, smile and talk until all embarrassment had passed away, and the guest felt as though all uneasiness had changed into the atmosphere of a calm and happy home.

#### **Two Ladies from Scotland and the Reporter**

Every detail of one evening remains in the memory of those who were present.

Two ladies had written from Scotland asking if it were possible that 'Abdu'l-Baha would spare them one evening.

They accepted my invitation to dinner. Having come straight from the train, and

reverently introduced Him. Then, seeming to gather strength, He arose, and with voice and manner of joyous animation, and eyes aglow, He paced the platform with a vigorous trend, and spoke with words of great power.

#### *Message to the Theosophists*

The following is a message to the Theosophists, who received Him with so much enthusiasm during His stay in Scotland:

"Give my most friendly greetings to all the Theosophists. You have risen to help humanity because you are freeing yourselves from superstition and you are casting ignorance far from your minds. You wish the welfare of mankind, and this object is a mighty one. Every man that in this day rises to save his brothers is nearing the threshold of God, for all the Manifestations and Prophets of God have striven to bring about unity among men, and they have worked for harmony.

"The foundation of the Divine teaching is this unity and harmony. Moses strove for unity among men; the Christ did all to promote this understanding, and Muhammad proclaimed the necessity of this union. The Buddha also worked for the same great goal. The Gospel, the Qur'an, and all Holy Writings are the basis for this unity. The foundation of the religions of God is one; the faith of God is one: to bring between men love and understanding. Baha'u'llah has renewed the teachings of the Prophets and of the Manifestations, and has again proclaimed the Oneness of the foundation upon which the religion of God is established.

"He is bringing together different nations, and He has been able to unite antagonistic sects. The spirit of Baha'u'llah is bringing all the members, and all the organs of the body of humanity, to a complete understanding. As you are members of this body of humanity striving to bring about the accomplishment of this great aim, I pray God to assist you."

#### **The Last Morning**

The last morning came. The secretaries and several friends were ready to start for the train.

'Abdu'l-Baha sat calmly writing. We reminded Him that the hour to leave for the train was at hand. He looked up, saying:

"There are things of more importance than trains," and He continued to write.

Suddenly in breathless haste a man came in, carrying in his hand a beautiful garland of fragrant white flowers. Bowing low before the Master, he said:

"In the name of the disciples of Zoroaster, The Pure One, I hail Thee as the 'Promised Shah Bahram!'"

Then the man, for a sign, garlanded 'Abdu'l-Baha, and proceeded to anoint each and all of the amazed friends who were present with precious oil, which had the odour of fresh roses.

This brief but impressive ceremony concluded, 'Abdu'l-Baha, having carefully divested Himself of the garland, departed for the train.

The Master then put His hand on her shoulder and spoke to her the very words of the Message, which had been written down in her Bible many months before. "It is my message," she said, trembling.

'Abdu'l-Baha looked at us with a smile, full of loving pity, as though at children, who were surprised at some unusual token of their father's power and love.

#### **All are His Children away from Haifa**

One day, whilst I was driving with Mrs. Cropper and the Master, she said: "Master, are you not longing to be back at Haifa with your beloved family?" He smiled and said:

"I wish you to understand that you are both as truly my dear daughters, as beloved by me, as are those of whom you speak."

Our hearts thrilled with joy and awe as He spoke. "How can we serve to be even a little worthy of so high an honour?"

#### **Seeking the Kingdom through Unity**

"Will this misery-laden world ever attain happiness?" a visitor asked one day. The Master replied:

"It is nearly two thousand years since His holiness the Lord Christ taught this prayer to His people: 'Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.' Thinkest thou that He would have commanded thee to pray for that which would never come? That prayer is also a prophecy."

"'Abdu'l-Baha, when will the Kingdom come? How soon will His Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven?"

"It depends on how intensely you, each and every one of you, serve day and night. Ye are all torches that I have lighted with mine own hands. Go forth, light others till all the separate waiting servants are linked together in a great Unity.

"Those who are working alone are like ants, but when they are united they will become as eagles.

"Those who work singly are as drops, but, when united, they will become a vast river carrying the cleansing water of life into the barren desert places of the world. Before the power of its rushing flood, neither misery, nor sorrow, nor any grief will be able to stand. Be united! It is rather dangerous to be an isolated drop. It might be spilled or blown away."

#### **Scotland**

In Scotland 'Abdu'l-Baha gave several public talks, emphasizing different aspects of the Baha'i Teaching. One very definite impression received from that visit was of His power to refresh Himself from some spiritual source when His strength had been overtaxed.

'Abdu'l-Baha had spoken to a large group in the afternoon, and when He mounted the platform in the evening, before a packed hall, He looked very tired. He remained seated in silence for a few moments, after Mr. Graham Pole had

being about to return the same night, every moment was precious.

The Master received them with His warm, simple welcome, and they spontaneously, rather than consciously, made more reverent curtsies than if in the presence of the ordinary great personages of the earth.

Everybody was feeling elated at the prospect of a wonderful evening, unmarred by the presence of any but the most intimate and the most comprehending of the friends.

Not more than half an hour had passed, when, to our consternation, a persistent person pushed past the servitors, and strode into our midst. Seating himself, and lighting a cigarette without invitation, he proceeded to say that he intended writing an article for some paper about 'Abdu'l-Baha, superciliously asking for "Some telling points, don't you know." He talked without a pause in a far from polite manner.

We were speechless and aghast at the intrusion of this insufferable and altogether unpleasant bore, spoiling our golden hour!

Presently 'Abdu'l-Baha rose and, making a sign to the man to follow Him, went to His own private room.

We looked at one another. The bore had gone, yes, but alas! so also had the Master!

"Can nothing be done?" Being the hostess, I was perturbed and perplexed. Then I went to the door of the audience room, and said to the secretary: "Will you kindly say to 'Abdu'l-Baha that the ladies with whom the appointment had been made are awaiting His pleasure."

I returned to the guests and we awaited the result.

Almost immediately we heard steps approaching along the corridor. They came across the hall to the door. The sound of kind farewell words reached us. Then the closing of the door, and the Beloved came back.

"Oh, Master!" we said.

Pausing near the door, He looked at us each in turn, with a look of deep, grave meaning.

"You were making that poor man uncomfortable, so strongly desiring his absence; I took him away to make him feel happy."

Truly 'Abdu'l-Baha's thoughts and ways were far removed from ours!

#### **Pleasure at Laughter; Men Doing Chores**

His desire that everyone should be happy showed itself in many ways. "Are you well? Are you happy?" He always asked.

One day the sound of peals of laughter came from the direction of the kitchen. The Master went quickly to the cheery party.

"I am very much pleased that you are so happy. Tell me, why are you laughing?"

It appeared that the Persian servant had remarked "In the East women wear veils and do all the work," to which our English housekeeper had replied: "In the West women don't wear veils, and take good care that the men do at least some of the work. You had better get on with cleaning that silver."

The Master was delighted, laughed heartily, and gave each of them a small gold coin, "for being happy."

#### **Lord Mayor of London; British Justice and a Pasha Imprisoned**

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor of London, 'Abdu'l-Baha paid him a visit at the Mansion House, and was greatly pleased with the interview, in the course of which many subjects were discussed; the freedom and happiness of the people; the efforts made to improve social conditions; prisons and prisoners. When the Lord Mayor told Him how people were working to improve the treatment of these poor creatures in prison, and to secure help for them when they were released, the Master said:

"It is well with a country when the magistrates are as fathers to the people.

"There is a great spiritual light in London, and the ideal of justice is strong in the hearts of the people.

"I am always pleased to remember an instance of this sense of justice, which so amazed the Eastern people of the place.

"A certain Pasha, having most unjustly and cruelly beaten one of his servants, was arrested and brought before that just man who represented Britain. To the intense surprise of the Pasha, he himself was sentenced to a term of imprisonment, and told that he richly deserved the punishment. He could not think it possible that so great a person as himself could be sent to prison, and offered a large bribe for his release. This was sternly refused. A much larger sum was offered with the same result, and the unjust lord was compelled to accept the punishment awarded him for his cruelty to his servant.

"The news of this incident, being noised abroad, did much to show the Eastern people that British justice is in reality the same for the rich and for the poor, and therefore worthy of all respect."

The Lord Mayor remarked that he was delighted to hear so pleasing a story of British administration in the East. "Sometimes, alas! there are adverse criticisms," he added.

#### **Newspaper Photographers**

During the early days of 'Abdu'l-Baha's visits to London, may were the attempts to photograph Him. Men with cameras waited round the door, watching for an opportunity. On one occasion I expostulated with them: "Do you think it very courteous to insist on photographing a guest from a distant country against His will?"

"No, Madam," was the reply, "but if others succeed and I fail, my chief will think me a fool."

but to me He is always clothed in a sacred light."

"But," she persisted, "there must be miracles. Many miracles, are there not?"

"Yes, of course. But 'Abdu'l-Baha says:

"Miracles have frequently obscured the Teachings which the Divine Messenger has brought. The Message is the real miracle. The phenomenal miracles are unimportant, and prove nothing to anybody but the witnesses thereof, and even they will very often explain them away! Therefore miracles have no value in the teaching of religion."

"Yes, I understand," she answered, "but when a dear friend was being carried to the operating room to undergo a serious operation, 'Abdu'l-Baha seemed to walk before her, smiling encouragement, and stayed whilst the doctors did their work. The dreaded ordeal was overpast, and she who had been despaired of, even by the doctors, recovered most unexpectedly. Are you not surprised?"

"No, for this reason; on the day she left London, to join her mother, that lady's daughter came to implore 'Abdu'l-Baha to 'bear in mind the critical hour of the operation, and to come to her mother's help.' I am of course not surprised that He granted her request."

Another friend said: "At that gathering which I attended, the radiant light emanating from 'Abdu'l-Baha spread over the whole hall. It looked like showers of golden drops, which fell upon every person in the assemblage."

We who observed and pondered these things grew to take the unprecedented happenings as a part of the whole, not with surprise, but rather with thankfulness that such things could be.

#### **The Message from Afar**

A woman had grown to love 'Abdu'l-Baha. She had, however, not yet seen Him. She wrote imploring Him to help her, and, if possible, to send her a sign for her comfort, as she was in very great distress of mind. One day shortly afterwards she went to the Baha'i friend who had told her of the great Educator: "You have a message for me? she said.

"Yes, I have it; it is this: I seemed to hear 'Abdu'l-Baha's voice at the early hour of dawn this morning. This is what I heard:

"Tell her that walking from henceforth in the Celestial Garden she will evermore be bathed in the sunlight of God. No future occurrences will have power to really hurt, for the Protection surrounding her will so shield her that no evil will have any possibility of penetrating through her armour. In this armour there will be no flaw."

This message she wrote down at the time on the fly-leaf of her Bible (in April 1912, at Bex in the Valley of the Rhone).

The following December, during the second visit of 'Abdu'l-Baha to London, this lady came to see Him. He talked to her of happy, pleasant things, smiling His welcome. When she rose to leave, I said: "Master! She is so very unhappy!"

### **Oxford with Dr and Mrs Cheyne**

The visit to Oxford was one of notable interest. The meeting between 'Abdu'l-Baha and the dear, revered higher critic, Dr. T. K. Cheyne, was fraught with pathos. It seemed almost too intimate to describe, and our very hearts were touched, as we looked on, and realized something of the sacred emotions of that day.

'Abdu'l-Baha embraced the Doctor with loving grace, and praised his courageous steadfastness in his life's work, always striving against increasing weakness, and lessening bodily health. Through those veiling clouds the light of the mind and spirit shone with a radiant persistence. The beautiful loving care of the devoted wife for her gifted, invalid husband touched the heart of 'Abdu'l-Baha. With tears in His kind eyes He spoke of them to Mrs. Thornburgh-Cropper and myself on our way back to London:

"She is an angelic woman, an example to all in her unselfish love. Yes, she is a perfect woman. An angel."

This lady was Elizabeth Gibson Cheyne, the very specially gifted poetess.

### **Abdu'l-Baha Runs Up Stairs**

One day after a meeting when, as usual, many people had crowded round Him, 'Abdu'l-Baha arrived home very tired. We were sad at heart that He should be so fatigued, and bewailed the many steps to be ascended to the flat. Suddenly, to our amazement, the Master ran up the stairs to the top very quickly without stopping.

He looked down at us as we walked up after Him, saying with a bright smile, from which all traces of fatigue had vanished:

"You are all very old! I am very young!"

Seeing me full of wonder, 'Abdu'l-Baha said: "Through the power of Baha'u'llah all things can be done. I have just used that power."

That was the only time we had ever seen Him use that power for Himself, and I feel that He did so then to cheer and comfort us, as we were really sad concerning His fatigue.

Might it not also have been to show us an example of the great Reserve of Divine Force always available for those of us who are working in various ways in the "Path of the Love of God and of Mankind." A celestial strength which reinforces us when our human strength fails.

### **Halos and Light; Miracles; Abdu'l-Baha at an Operation**

Many were the "Signs" spoken of by those friends gifted with the clairvoyant sense.

"I have just seen a great light, as a halo shining round the Master's head! Wonderful! Wonderful!"

"Have you not seen it yourself?" said one of these friends.

I replied, "In the sense you mean, no. I am not gifted with a constant clairvoyance,

When I told this to 'Abdu'l-Baha, He laughed heartily and said: "If the photographs must be, it would be better to have good ones. Those in that paper are very bad indeed."

Thereupon he consented with His unfailing, smiling grace, to be photographed. "To please the friends," he said. "But to have a picture of oneself is to emphasize the personality, which is merely the lamp, and is quite unimportant. The light burning within the lamp has the only real significance."

He signed a photograph, writing His name on the white part of his turban. "My name is my crown," said 'Abdu'l-Baha—"Servant of God, the Most Glorious."

### **Meetings at Friends' Homes**

'Abdu'l-Baha often went to the houses of the friends, where again others were invited to meet Him, so that many were the meetings other than at His "English home" which took place.

### **Mrs Cropper and Miss Rosenberg; the Auto**

Mrs. Thornburgh Cropper placed her charming motor-car at His service. It was always ready, in the early morning, at any hour of the day, or late hour of the evening.

It was especially touching to see Mrs. Thornburgh Cropper and Miss Ethel Rosenberg, who had visited Him in the prison fortress of 'Akka, and who had been the first to bring the Message to London, coming day after day, as though transported with gratitude that He was not free to give His Message to those who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, who were not content that the grand Christian ideals should continue to be "words only," but that they should be translated into action, to the healing of the woes of the world.

### **Love of Children**

For us, every day was filled with joyous interest and marvelling, where simple happenings became spiritual events. One day we were invited to accompany the Master to East Sheen, where a number of friends were gathered, invited by Mr. and Mrs. Jenner. Their three small children clambered on to His knee, clung round His neck, and remained as quiet as wee mice whilst the Master spoke, He meanwhile stroking the hair of the tiny ones and saying:

"Blessed are the children, of whom His Holiness Christ said: 'Of such are the Kingdom of Heaven.' Children have no worldly ambitions. Their hearts are pure. We must become like children, crowning our heads with the crown of severance (from all material things of the earth); purifying our hearts, that we may see God in His Great Manifestations, and obey the laws brought to us by those, His Messengers."

### *Nature and Light*

After we had enjoyed the hospitality of the parents of those sweet children, the Master, always loving trees and pastures, went into Richmond Park, where He

watched a race on ponies between some boys and a girl. When the latter won, He clapped His hands, crying out "Bravo! Bravo!"

On the way back the evening light was waning as we crossed the Serpentine bridge. Rows of shining lamps beneath the trees, stretching as far as our eyes could see into the distance, made that part of London into a glowing fairyland.

*Prison Times*

"I am very much pleased with this scene. Light is good, most good. There was much darkness in the prison at 'Akka, said the Master.

Our hearts were sad as we thought on those sombre years within that dismal fortress, where the only light was in the indomitable spirit of the Master Himself! When we said "We are glad, oh! so full of gladness that you are free," He said: "Freedom is not a matter of place, but of condition. I was happy in that prison, for those days were passed in the path of service.

"To me prison was freedom.

Troubles are a rest to me.

Death is life.

To be despised is honour.

Therefore was I full of happiness all through that prison time.

When one is released from the prison of self, that is indeed freedom! For self is the greatest prison.

When this release takes place, one can never be imprisoned. Unless one accepts dire \*vicissitudes, not with dull resignation, but with radiant acquiescence, one cannot attain this freedom."

#### **Clifton**

Those of us who were included in the kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Tudor-Pole to accompany 'Abdu'l-Baha on His visit to the Clifton Guest House, Clifton, will forever remember the wonderful three days under that hospitable roof. Many of their friends and neighbours were invited to meet the Eastern guest Who had suffered long years of persecution "in the path of God."

This visit has already been described in our host's own words in 'Abdu'l-Baha in London, and we shall always be grateful that we were privileged to share in the sunshine of those days.

#### **Friend Who Gave Abdu'l-Baha a Rest in Chelsea**

One refreshing evening was spent at the house of a friend in Chelsea, who had steadfastly refused to invite anybody to meet 'Abdu'l-Baha. "He shall have one quiet, restful evening without being surrounded by people. Besides, we really want to have Him to ourselves," she said.

So our hostess, her sister, and little niece made the Master very happy. He was delighted to watch the lighted boats passing up and down the river Thames. Our hostess was a real musician, and an authoress. 'Abdu'l-Baha said to her:

"All Art is a gift of the Holy Spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the Light of the Sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures. These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose, when showing forth the praise of God."

#### **Reception by Sir Richard and Lady Stapley; Riding on the Car Roof**

A reception was given by Sr. Richard and Lady Stapley in honour of 'Abdu'l-Baha. A picturesque and symbolic decoration was that of a large iced cake with flights of snow-white doves radiating from it. One of these doves was given by the Master to each guest as a souvenir of the Eastern Harbinger of Peace. Who spoke earnestly to us of the duty of each one of those assembled to work, body and soul and spirit, for the Most Great Peace.

"When a thought of war enters your mind, suppress it, and plant in its stead a positive thought of peace. These thoughts, vital and dynamic, will affect the minds of all with whom you come into contact, and like doves of peace, will grow and increase till they spread over all the land."

The devotion of the Master's followers was wonderful, and sometimes took embarrassing ways of showing itself.

As we were starting to the entertainment, one of those who dearly loved 'Abdu'l-Baha, Siyyid Asadu'llah, followed Him. Finding the car full of invited guests, he sprang on to the roof, and arrived with us! When we were announced, the host and hostess hid their surprise, and welcomed the faithful friend.

At a sign, an extra seat was placed at the table for him, who refused to be separated from his Master.

Knowing nothing, and caring less, for conventionalities, he spent a happy evening in the presence of the Beloved One.

#### **Refused Money but Accepted Small Tokens; Red Slippers**

'Abdu'l-Baha did not accept gifts of money, but a handkerchief, a box of bon-bons, baskets of fruit, and lovely flowers gave Him great pleasure. These were constantly brought to His "English home." These offerings of love gained His smiling thanks, and were quickly distributed among the friends.

One day a pair of soft, red-leather slippers, folded into a little case, were offered to Him by the daughters of the hostess. These were soon given to a Persian prince, who, no doubt, treasured them always as the gift of the Master.

#### **Congregational Church Spell-Bound**

The pastor of a Congregational church in the east end of London invited the Master to give an address one Sunday evening. The congregation seemed spell-bound by the power which spread like an atmosphere from another, higher world.