



buds that were fresh enough to be given to the Master, when Mirza Mohammed Taki's message of love was told him. The Master wore them in his girdle all the rest of that day, and said that he always was happy when he thought of the loving heart of the Bahai who had given us the flowers.

When we woke on the morning of September first, the train was running through the desert country of southern Palestine. For mile after mile the rolling sand dunes stretched into the distance. Long lines of camels were passed; and occasionally acres of date-palms, loaded with green dates, showed where a little moisture was held in the sand below the dry surface. For hours we looked out of the window, watching with an intense fascination, those long miles of desert. Some one in our party that said she could quite understand why the children of Israel murmured in the wilderness, if that was the kind of country that they had to travel through! We wondered whether Joseph and Mary, and the infant Jesus, had traveled so hard a road when they went down into Egypt. But later, in Haifa, we were told that the tradition of the country says that they went to the port at the foot of Mt. Carmel, and from there continued their journey to Egypt by boat.

During the middle of the day, the train passed from the desert into the pasture land. That is as different from

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our green American meadows as one can imagine. The pastures are brown and dry, and we wondered how the many herds of goat and sheep that we saw could find enough food to keep them alive. We saw almost no cows, and in Haifa we found that it is very difficult to obtain milk; we did not see any butter while we were in Palestine. Instead of butter, a white, salty cheese made from goat's milk is served.

In the afternoon we rode through the beautiful valley near Joffa, with its thousands of fruit trees. The fields have to be irrigated, but when that is done they "blossom abundantly," and the trees are loaded with oranges and lemons, which were green at that season of the year. A little farther north is the valley of Sharon, and we tried to remember some of the beautiful words of the Old Testament with regard to that valley. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord and the excellency of our God."

The last part of the journey was very beautiful. The train ran close to the edge of the seashore, and we saw the sun drop down through fleecy clouds and sink in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. On the right a low range of hills rose,--rocky, and sparsely covered with vegetation. Beyond them appeared line after line of hills, until, far in the distance, high blue mountains towered in to the sky. We thought that they must be the Lebanons, and we wondered whether we should soon see the valley of Acca. After a time the lowest range of hills rose so close that all the others were blotted out. Cora

suggested that perhaps the termination of this range was Mt. Carmel, and so it proved to be, for suddenly we rounded a point of land, and Haifa appeared to the east, with Mt. Carmel above.

Haifa lies on a narrow plain at the foot of the mountain, but there are buildings scattered part way up the slope. A long white road traverses the length of the hill, and reaches the top near its western extremity. I looked for the Tomb of the Bab, but I am not sure whether I saw it then. The train runs through a considerable part of the town, before reaching the station, and our eyes were very eager in their search for the various places of which we had heard so much. Suddenly I remembered that we should now be able to see Acca across the bay, and hurrying to the other side of the car, I looked out--and across the water I glimpsed the city of the Lord, the "door of hope." We were so happy to be so near our journey's end,--we were so full of expectation, that it seemed as if the train would never reach the station. But at last we did pull up in front of it! Cora went out to look for a porter, and I was ready to pass baggage out of the window to her. But almost immediately a hand was reached in to shake mine, and we were welcomed by a young man, whom we later learned was Rouhi Effendi, one of the Master's grandsons. Soon a familiar figure appeared in the car, Fugeta, whom we had last seen in New York. He helped pass out bundles, and soon we were all on the platform with our numerous parcels and bags beside us. We shook hands with several young men, Bahais from the Master's household, and then we four American pilgrims were in the auto, with the driver, Rouhi Effendi, and some of our baggage. Said Effendi, who had just arrived from Alexandria, Fugeta, and the other friends waited for the car to return for them.

The car ran through several streets, going steadily upwards,--and I was too happy and too far from ordinary speech to be able to say a word. Suddenly we turned a corner, and after going less than a hundred yards the car stopped.

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I recognized the Pilgrim House, from the picture of it in *The Light of the World*. On the other side of the road was the wall of the Master's garden, and rising above it, the little room, like a watch-tower, in which the Master often stays.

During our ride from the station, Rouhi Effendi told us that the Master was staying was staying on the mountain for a few days, to rest from the many demands made on his time when he is in his house in the town. We would not see him until the next day. Perhaps we were disappointed for a moment, but here one knows that all that the Master does is wisely done. And next morning we were sure that it was well that we should have time to rest, and drink in the exquisite peace of the place, before meeting him.

At the door of the Pilgrim House we were met by two Americans, Mrs. Hoagg and Malcolm McGillavrey. Malcolm had been in Haifa a week, but Mrs. Hoagg had been there since early in the summer. She acted as hostess for the Pilgrim House; she showed us to our rooms,--one for Cora and me, another for

Mabel and Sylvia. Simple, clean, and filled with a faint fragrance as of incense, is our place of rest, the place the Master has provided for those who come from the West. Every hour I wonder more at the love and kindness which has so provided for our comfort! Whenever we sit down to a meal, I think, "This is the meal the Master has given us!" The material food has come now, but the spiritual food had reached us in America!

Fugeta cares for the house; he gets the breakfast; he serves the lunch, the food for which is brought over from the Master's house; he washes the dishes, he cleans the lamps, he is always busy in serving us. In the evening he helps wait on table, at dinner in the Master's house. The other boy who serves at dinner is Khosro, who came from Burmah when he was very young, to serve the Master.

After our arrival at the Pilgrim House we sat on the porch for a while. The night was beautiful,--a full moon, and yet the stars were very bright. At about half past seven, Mrs. Hoagg took us over to the Master's house to meet the ladies of the household. We entered a gate that is covered with a luxuriant growth of vines, and walked under an arbor to the entrance of the house. It was hard to believe that we were really there! We had seen pictures of the house often and it was so very like the pictures! (That is true of everything here. The pictures we have seen have been very good, I think, for one recognizes places and people immediately.)

We went up a rather long, broad flight of steps, turned to the left, and were in a high-ceilinged room of moderate size. There were many chairs and divans against the wall and at the end of the room was a big wicker chair which one knew at once was the Master's. Immediately the ladies came in they greeted us with the Greatest Name, they inquired about our health, our journey, about the believers in America. Rouhi Effendi translated for those who did not speak English. There were present the Holy Mother, the Greatest Holy Leaf, two of the daughters, Touba Khanoum and Rooha Khanoum; two or three young girls, granddaughters of the Master,--and Foad, the adorable four-year-old grandson, whose picture I had seen in Mr. Latimer's note-book.

The Holy Mother spoke about BAHÁ'ULLAH'S commands about education. The two daughters talked with us about the friends in America. Little Foad ran in and out on a very sturdy pair of legs. I cannot remember much of what was said. We knew that we were very welcome. We knew that we were at home as never before! I could not but try to realize that these were the women who had been for years prisoners in Acca, who had undergone unspeakable hardships

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--these women with smiling faces who welcomed us so cordially.

After a time, how long I cannot tell,--someone came and announced dinner. The ladies said "good night," for they do not come to the table where the men pilgrims are. We were taken out into a big, big room, which had a long table down the center. Many men came filing in and seated themselves. There were

probably twenty or thirty at the table. Later we learned that five religions, and six or seven nationalities were represented. Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Jews--were met in love and unity at the table of our Master. Egyptian, Persian, Arab, Burmese, Japanese, American, Parsee, Turk,--and perhaps other nationalities were infinitely happy because they had found the joy that passeth understanding,--because they were the guests of Abdul-Baha! One does not remember words here, but the atmosphere of joy and peace is unforgettable.

As we were leaving the house, Rouhi Effendi, who had just come down from the mountain, brought word that the Master would either come down, or send for us the next day.

At the Pilgrim House we sat out on the porch in the moonlight and talked until almost ten o'clock,--and then went to our rooms to pass our first night in the Holy Land! I slept peacefully, and the night was all the more beautiful because I woke several times for a few minutes of happy realization that we were at last in Haifa,--in the "land of heart's desire!"

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September 2, 1920

To waken in the Pilgrim House in Haifa is a very, very happy experience! From our west windows we could catch a glimpse of the Tomb of the Bab, and how eagerly we looked up at it, knowing that there the Master was dwelling; there was the memorial to the wonderful young herald of our Faith, the Supreme Bab.

Breakfast in the Pilgrim House comes at seven o'clock. It is a simple, friendly meal. The food consisted of tea, toast, poached eggs, honey and cheese. And the lovely companionship of the friends! There were the seven of us who slept in the House, and Said Effendi and Mirza Lotfullah always came in and had breakfast with us. Mirza Lotfullah came down from the mountain each morning bringing handfuls of jasmine blossoms from the garden of the Tomb, and these he strewed on the table. They were a lovely reminder of the spiritual fragrance of that spot!

After breakfast on that morning I was sitting in our room praying. Cora was writing at the table, the door into the living-room was open and the various sounds of the household drifted in to us. I was having a very happy time reading some of the prayers in the little prayer-book, and also in praying for the friends who were not there with us. I found myself bathed in a wonderful atmosphere of love and peace. It was like nothing I had ever experienced! It was not supernatural, in the sense of seeming queer or strange. It was simply an all-pervading peace and calm that seemed to fill my whole heart and spirit. I seemed to be at one with all the beauty and joy and light in the universe. Thus, I think, some ray of love from the Master's thought prepared me for meeting him that day.

At lunch Rouhi Effendi brought word that we were to go up to the Tomb at about

four in the afternoon, to see the Master! After lunch we all went and rested for an hour and a half. That is part of the day's program always. At three o'clock came tea, another invariable occurrence.

As the hour drew near when we were to go up the "Mountain of the Lord," to meet Abdul-Baha, I remembered one evening we had spent with

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Juliet Thompson not long before we had left New York. She had said with deep earnestness, "When you are in the Master's presence do not be self-conscious, if you can help it. Do not be afraid. There is nothing to fear. He is all love and kindness. Pray, pray, all the way on your journey, that your hearts may be freed from all self-consciousness. Go to him freely, gladly!"

I had tried to remember that, I had prayed for purity of heart that I might learn the lessons the Master will teach those who are ready to learn. And yet as we rode up the steep road toward the Tomb, there was a strange mixture of love and dread and longing in my heart. The way seemed very long! And yet it was very beautiful. We saw the valley of Acca, with the river Kishon winding through it down to the sea. Across the bay, Acca shone brightly in the afternoon sunlight,--that "White Spot," which so many, many pilgrims have sought because the Glory of God had lived there.

Finally we turned off from the main road, and the carriage drove down a steep incline toward the Mossafer Kaneh [musáfir-kháníh],--the Persian Hospice for men. There we alighted and Mrs. Hoagg led us along a wide path, which is bordered with cypress trees on one side and with fig trees on the other. We passed the house of the care-taker, with the little room on top where the Master sometimes sleeps when He is on the mountain, and walked around to the front of the Tomb.