



was in the small basement room right underneath the Master's drawing-room together with 3 persons from Persia, and there we were, when unexpectedly the Master came in to visit us. He lovingly bade us welcome saying Marhaba! Marhaba! Welcome! Welcome! After a while, one of the Persian friends asked Abdu'l-Baha whether the hopes repeatedly claimed for in Europe's newspapers were well-founded, saying that the Versailles Treaty had put an end to the war for ever. Abdu'l-Baha had a smile, and replied no, since the Treaty of Versailles was containing the germs of the next war, and that that war would be so terrible that the 1914/18 war would seem like a child's play in comparison. In the course of days I saw the Master go down to the garden every morning to receive a nosegay of all colours from the gardener Ismail Aghe, and Abdu'l-Baha would give a flower to each one of the pilgrims standing in a line, bidding them Marhaba, Marhaba! We preciously kept these flowers in remembrance of our Master. Every evening at 8 o'clock there were meetings in the drawing-room where Abdu'l-Baha would talk to the friends about news received from the Baha'i world, and about questions of the hour. Every Sunday towards 4 o'clock the Master would call all the Baha'is -- pilgrims and residents -- together in the large middle room of the Shrine, on the Western side fronting the sea, where He would speak to the friends of various subjects, and where prayers would be chanted after which the Master would stand up and go towards the entry of the Tomb of the Bab, followed by all the friends present; there He would pour out rose water in the hands of each and then ask Shoghi Effendi to chant the Tablet of Visitation with his melodious voice, and that is how the Sunday afternoons would come to an end.

One evening on a meeting in the Master's drawing-room a high English official arrived. Abdu'l-Baha said to him "you see, I'm gathering all the friends here, with me, to protect them, and save them from spending all their evenings in the casinos".

One Sunday afternoon, during the gathering in the large middle hall of the Shrine of the Bab, Abdu'l-Baha declared to the friends present, pointing out with His finger at Haifa bay and Akka that He was seeing the bay full of ships loaded with pilgrims from all over the world, that the towns of Akka and Haifa would join together in one centre, that Mount Carmel will be covered with light, that crowds of pilgrims will walk up the steps leading to the Shrine of the Bab, and that even the kings will climb these steps, barefooted, carrying nosegays on their heads to come and render homage to His Highness the Bab.

On another day, all the pilgrims were taken to Bahji for the visit of Baha'u'llah's Sepulchre, and as usual, Abdu'l-Baha would water the friends' hands with rose water, and then in the midst of the crowd of pilgrims would chant Himself the Tablet of Visitation with His sonorous and captivating voice. What wonderful effect on the hearts and souls to see the Master before oneself, and to hear Him sing so wonderfully! One feels like being carried far away from this material level, and vibrate in a spiritual space! Besides, a very strong spirituality emanates from the surroundings of Bahji and of Mount Carmel, a phenomenon which is felt even by Non-Baha'is. I remember having

read an article by Maurice De Kobra describing his visit to Mount Carmel in 1928. That writer was impressed by the deeply spiritual atmosphere of Mount Carmel, and was unable to explain himself the reason of this.

During that pilgrimage I met late Dr. J. Esslemont who had been staying in the Holy Land for some months in order to have his famous book reviewed by the Master. For reasons of discretion he was wearing an oriental red fez. I also saw my uncle Dr. Zia Bagdadi who arrived from the United States at the beginning of December 1919, and Mrs. A. Parsons from Washington with her son Jeffrey. Dr. Zia who stayed with the Master in Haifa for 9 months wrote down from day to day the meaning/sense, not the text of Abdu'l-Baha's statements. Back in the United States in September 1920 he sorted out his notes and made two hand-written volumes of it in a very beautiful Arabic script. These books have never been printed since. When Dr. Zia died in 1937 in Georgia USA, his widow, my aunt, Zeenat Baghdadi, returned according to the beloved Guardian's instructions to the Middle East, came to visit us in Baghdad, and showed us the two hand-written books. I marvelled at all the accounts Abdu'l-Baha had given during nine months, most important questions, and a lot of very very amusing stories and anecdotes, for the Master liked very much to divert his guests and friends and make them laugh. I therefore immediately decided to copy these two books by hand, adding up to about 300 pages. After having done so, I returned the originals to my aunt Zeenat who now is a pioneer in Saida (Lebanon) half-way between Beyrouth and Akka. I had entrusted my family in Baghdad with my hand-written copies, since in the meantime living in Persia they had asked for them for the sake of reading them again. I believe they are with my sister Sarah Baghdadi, at present living in Baghdad. But owing to the persecutions which our community in Baghdad had to suffer, and to the confiscation of all the Baha'i literature since the beginning of 1973, and to the sentence end of 1973 and beginning of 1974 of 26 Baha'i persons for life imprisonment, 2 others for 15 years and 4 others for 10 years, and 12 persons sentenced to 500 Iraqi Dinars of fines, then released, after this terrible repression I fear these copies have been lost.

Among Abdu'l-Baha's statements noted by Dr. Zia re a future war there is this: My uncle asked the Master to confirm that it was correct that certain American Baha'is back from their pilgrimage in Haifa had told friends in the USA, attributing it to the Master, that there would be a terrible war which will destroy half of humanity. Is this correct? The reply was YES. Dr. Zia added in his notes: I was so terrified by the Master's reply who seeing the anguish of the friends present, changed the subject and turned to amusing stories. On another occasion, the Master said in reply to a question as whether there would be a war of religion that there will be an economic war but no religious war.

On October 28, 1974 the very spiritual friend Mr. David Ned Blackmer on a teaching trip in Tours, and made responsible by the NSA to tape record my memories had the kindness to do so, and except some slight alterations is about the same as the present written statement.

One day Abdu'l-Baha invited me with another friend to accompany Him in his afternoon walk. He slowly bent his steps to the German colony, and knocking at the door of a German family He asked after their health and said some encouraging words to them. A walk that took about one hour.

I may be excused if after 55 years I could not remember many things since with 19 years of age one picks up quite a lot of things, and I couldn't find my note book. In August 1923 I had the privilege of visiting our dear Guardian and the Holy Shrines at Bahji and on Mount Carmel.

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