

done this and thus the strength has come. 'Abdu'l-Bahá knows I have done my utmost. The test of the year is if the Message has been spread in China, it isn't a question of health or how much or how little work, but only if the Holy Spirit has poured over China, if some souls know 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He told us not to be concerned about the harvest.'"[4]

Miss Root was not wealthy; she supported herself on her travels by writing articles for newspapers magazines. While she was planning her trip to South America, the head of a newspaper syndicate based in New York met her at a fireside and asked her to sell him her articles from South America.[5]

She wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá of her intended trip to South America, and He answered her:

O thou enkindled with the fire of the love of God!

Your detailed letter dated November 7, 1918, was in these days received. The contents produced great joy, for they indicated a benevolent purpose, an untiring effort and an extended tour around the different parts of the globe. Today the promulgation of the ideal principles of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, which are manifestly recorded in the books, is the spirit of this age and the cause of the realization of assistance and confirmation. Assuredly whenever thou holdest fast to it, in whatever enterprise thou mayest engage, thou shalt find the doors of might and power flung open to thy face. My hope from the blessings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is that thou mayest forget rest and composure and like unto a swift-flying bird, mayest cover long distances and in whatever land thou tarriest thou mayest reproduce the melody of the Kingdom and engage in songs and music in the best of tunes....

As ears are awaiting the summons for Universal Peace, it is therefore advisable for thee to travel, in case comfortable journey is possible, to the different parts of the globe and roar like unto a lion the Kingdom of God. Wide-reaching consequences thou shalt witness and extraordinary confirmations shall be exhibited unto thee . . .

I very much desire that thou shouldst visit the Holy Land and thus to meet thee, but teaching stands above everything else and if thou deemest it advisable, engage thou in the spreading of it throughout the regions of the world.[6]

In another tablet, He wrote to her, "Thou art indeed serving in the path of God, art with all thy energy showing love to others, art raising the call of the Kingdom and art illumining the hearts of men."[7]

Martha Root set sail July 22, 1919 for South America. The cruise required two weeks, and she knew she must somehow in that time reach the other passengers. So she summoned up her courage and joined in the "sports contest" sponsored on the ship, admitting that "she didn't know very much about sports." She also donated one of the prizes (a farewell gift she had received from one of the Bahá'ís). "The next day being the first Sunday at sea," she reported, "Miss Root asked the captain's permission to speak in the evening on the Bahá'í

Cause. The purser put a large notice on the bulletin board. No person aboard had heard of the Bahá'í Movement. The men on the sports committee were the first ones to enter the music room; they helped to make it popular, and everyone invited everyone else." [8]

Martha Root proclaimed the Faith in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Panama, and Cuba — all without any knowledge of Spanish or Portuguese or any literature in those languages (none had been printed yet). She relied on sign language, showing her address on a slip of paper to policemen and street car conductors in Rio de Janeiro, pointing to Bahá'í articles in the newspaper files of a library there where she wanted to give books — or in what French she knew, giving the principles to newspaper editors in French so that they could print them in Spanish or Portuguese.

In Pernambuco, Brazil (now Recife), she was fortunate in finding an interpreter. Hearing that there was an American businesswoman staying at one of the hotels, she went there, only to find that the woman was the cousin of Lua Getsinger! (See Bahá'í News. December, 1971). The woman, Mrs. Vegas, took Martha Root to the five newspaper offices in town and interpreted for her there.

Miss Root was discouraged from going on to Bahia, Brazil (now Salvador, on the Bahia de Todos Santos — Bay of All Saints), because of reports of yellow fever there. It was feared that she might not be able to get out of quarantine to leave again. But she remembered 'Abdu'l-Bahá's injunction, "Visit ye especially Bahia, on the eastern shore of Brazil. Because in the past years this city was christened with the name of Bahia, there is no doubt that it has been through the inspiration of God."

So Martha Root went to the stateroom of her ship in perplexity and threw herself down on the bunk. She looked through the porthole and, seeing Jupiter shining brightly, steady in its course, she rose up and ordered her bags taken ashore. [9]

Later, newly made friends in Buenos Aires tried to dissuade her from crossing the Andes in wintertime, but she was determined to travel up the western coast of South America in order to reach Panama, of which the Master had said, "The teachings once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South."

Failing in their first effort, her friends plied her with "gifts of books, flowers, fruits, candy and lunches." Her hostess gave Martha her own heavy overcoat and long underwear, for, despite 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instructions that Martha travel "in case comfortable journey is possible" the only way across the Andes then was by mule. Read her own description:

The trip by mule-back over the "top of the world" . . . was thrilling enough for the most sensational. To pray the "Greatest Name" among these minarets of God was to glimpse the glory of the Eternal, Unknowable. The ancient trail led 10,400 feet above sea level. The people on mule back were infinitesimal specks

clinging to mighty terraces . . . they huddled on the edge of jagged peaks, frozen chasms, and stiffened mountain torrents, . . . , Fortunately the sun shone brightly, and the acute cold was not so terrible as all had expected.. ..

A detour through one dark tunnel took over an hour in stumbling, slipping blackness in which the frightened mules shied and fell. Miss Root, as her mule plunged downward into the mouth of the tunnel, gripped the pommel, threw her body far back, closed her eyes, and prayed the "Ya Alláh'u'l-Mustagháth" for all. Over and over again in that black uncertainty, the clear, vibrant voice of the Italian girl would ring down the line of mules: "Mademoiselle, are you all right?" ...

Later, out from the tunnel, when the procession came to precipitous downward slopes toward Chile, Miss Root could not even see the one inch margin that had been promised. . . . And so it was with great joy that she saw the men getting off their mules and walking farther in down the mountain side. She did the same for the mules would sometimes slip a yard in their perpendicular path and they were frightened too. Taking the guide's hand they made the descent together, and when they could not walk they could run! The warm sun had melted the crisp ice just enough that they could get a foothold. They stopped every few minutes to breathe as one's breath is very short in this altitude. Some fainted, some had "puna," which is bleeding of the nose and ears. Everything given Miss Root was passed along to those who needed it."

On the journey by ship, up the western coast of South America, Martha's supply of 500 booklets which she had brought with her gave out, and she began to hand out newspapers and magazines containing articles which she had had published. She was ill: "Grippe had to be the shadow to make one appreciate the sunshine, so the first few places are but memories of trying to get ashore to newspaper offices to explain the Bahá'í Message, then leaning against the friendly lamp posts for strength to drag one's self back to the boat."

She spent a week in Panama (see Bahá'í News, March, 1972). And on the ship out she recalled 'Abdu'l-Bahá's admonition to "roar like a lion" and again summoned up the courage to ask a ship's captain for permission to speak. Writing home about it, she said, "If anyone feels timid about asking opportunities to speak, let him remember that no day comes twice to any servant in the Cause." [15]

When Martha Root returned from South America, 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote her: "Thou art, in truth, a herald of the Kingdom and a harbinger of the Covenant. . . . Thou art truly self-sacrificing. Thou showest kindness unto all nations. Thou art sowing a seed that shall, in due time, give rise to thousands of harvests. Thou art planting a tree that shall eternally put forth leaves and blossoms and yield fruits, and whose shadow shall day by day grow in magnitude." [16]

He also wrote: "Praise be to God the Call of the Kingdom hath been received in South America and the seeds of Guidance have been sown in those cities and regions. Certainly the heat of the Sun of Reality, the rain of the Eternal

Bounty and the breeze of the love of God will make them germinate: have confidence." [17]

Martha Root "rested" from her nine-month trip by helping to edit the Star of the West and by travel-teaching in the United States and Mexico.

China-ward

Her second great journey was to China, responding to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eloquent appeal:

China, China, China-ward the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh must march. . . . Where is that holy, sanctified Bahá'í to become the teacher of China'. China has most great capability. The Chinese people are most simple-hearted and truth-seeking. The Bahá'í teacher of the Chinese people must first be imbued with their spirit, know their sacred literature, study their national customs and speak to them from their own standpoint and their own terminologies. He must entertain no thought of his own but ever think of their spiritual welfare. In China one can teach many souls and train and educate such divine personages that each one of them may become the bright candle of the world of humanity. Truly, I say, the Chinese are free from any deceit and hypocrisies and are prompted with ideal motives. Had I been feeling well I would have taken a journey to China myself! [18]

Martha Root felt compelled to try to carry the Message to all the places where Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá themselves could not go. From China she wrote:

If Christ could have lived and traveled, if Bahá'u'lláh could have been free to visit all countries, if 'Abdu'l-Bahá could have come to China and to Indo-China, how great would have been the results! Man, in his ignorance and blind prejudices, prevented Them, Now the only way the Most Great Peace can come is for Their faithful disciples — and the disciples of all the other world teachers — to take these universal Bahá'í principles for world peace and carry them to every land. [19]

Miss Root stopped first to visit Agnes Alexander and Ida Finch in Japan, where she gave twenty lectures. Then she spent six months in Peking studying the language and customs of the people, supporting herself by writing for a news syndicate and giving private English lessons. Shoghi Effendi sent her a cable her first week in China, saying, "'Abdu'l-Baha guiding you. Success assured. Shoghi." [20] After summering in Peking, Martha Root debated with herself whether to teach English in a university there, which would have given her more security financially, or to travel-teach. Finally she decided on the latter and received a cable of confirmation from Shoghi Effendi.

She traveled southward from Peking to Shanghai, visiting the cities between as she went. She was ill and unable to get out much when she first arrived in Shanghai, so she spent her time writing newspaper articles. Later, as the articles began to appear in the papers, she was able to get speaking engagements easily, so she felt that her illness had brought good results,

writing, "O, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has blessed every move and am so grateful today." That day, she wrote, nine newspapers were carrying Bahá'í articles, but she had neither time nor money to go out and buy them all — as some cost twenty cents a copy.[21]

In March, though ill with the flu (then called "the grippe"), she determined to make a teaching trip up river to Hangchow and Wuchang in the interior of China:

I arose about five to take the boat next morning from Nanking, waited in a cold rain for an hour for the ricksha, then waited seven hours for the boat in a place with nothing but a roof over, no sides. When the boat came it had no fires, no bed (we were supposed to take beds). There was only one foreigner, a Russian young man, aboard. I said I could not go, so ill, he said "try it," and I went. It rained every minute of the trip for those three days. When I reached Hangchow my arms were so numb I could not hold the fork or eat or write and my temperature would frighten any one not a Bahá'í. I went right to bed and stayed in bed two days, except getting up every little while to take exercises to conquer the numbness. I prayed 'Abdu'l-Bahá to heal me, and He did, and then wonderful things happened. The syndicate articles written in Peking and sent out by the Asiatic News Agency for whom I had worked last summer had penetrated this "heart of China." . . . One Esperantist to whom I had written came to call and said, "Your name is not a stranger to Wuchang," and he showed me the clipping from the Hankow papers of last summer about the Bahá'í Cause, and it had been much studied and underlined. He was a prepared soul and was my truest friend. He was teaching economics in National Commercial College of Wuchang, 250 students. I lectured there, and he arranged for me to speak in Wuchang University, 1600 students, and the President also sent out written invitations to the girls' Normal College and to the Y.M.C.A.[22]

By the time Martha Root left China she had taught in nineteen of the principal cities and in nearly a hundred Universities, colleges, and schools. She wrote back encouraging others to come, to correspond with Chinese, or to teach the Chinese in America, saying, "It is a favor and a bounty of God to have the privilege to do anything for China. I do not think one of you will ever come who will not love the Chinese people." [23]

She left China for Saigon and visited the newspaper, the library, and nineteen schools, societies or individuals in the short stay of five days. Stopping briefly again in China and Japan, she proceeded to Australia and New Zealand for a four-month teaching trip. There she traveled with Erne Baker, Katherine McLaughlin, and Gretta Lamprill, broadcasting from every large radio station and giving lectures — more than sixty of them in Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney — speaking two, three, four, and occasionally five times a day.[24] She stopped in South Africa and spent a month in Haifa before proceeding to Europe, scene of her most important endeavor.

Notes

1. Revised translation as found in *God Passes By*, p. 389.

2. Came to her daily" — Star of the West, vol. XI, p. 109 "first to arise"
— God Passes By, p. 386.
3. Star of the West, vol. XI, p. 115.
4. Letter, January 11 and 12, 1924.
5. Star of the West. vol. XI. p. 107.
6. Ibid., vol. X, pp. 29-30.
7. Ibid.. p. 234
- 8-15. Ibid, vol. XI, pp. 107-118 and 206-216. [I don't know why the footnote numbering is off here. (-J.W., 2013)]
16. Bahá'í World, vol. V, pp. 48-49.
17. Ibid.
18. Star of the West, vol. XIII, p. 185.
19. Ibid., vol. XV, p. 44.
20. Letter, May 13, 1923.
21. Ibid., January 11, 1924.
- 22 Ibid., March 19, 1924.
23. Star of the West, vol. V, p. 47.
24. Ibid., p. 374.

Part Two

published in Bahá'í News #497, August 1972, pp. 7-9

Presidents and Princes

Martha Root's "most momentous service" was performed during her first tour of Europe, in the four years from 1926 through 1929. There she visited at least fifteen countries (by present boundaries) and attended four annual Universal Esperanto Congresses, in Edinburgh, Danzig, Antwerp, and Budapest, as well as seven other international conferences and a session of the League of Nations. She had extensive lecture tours in Great Britain and in Germany, visiting twice every German university but two.

A great part of her time was spent in the Balkans, where she visited every country and where she had the first four of those eight successive interviews with Queen Marie of Rumania which Shoghi Effendi proclaimed as "the most outstanding feature of those memorable journeys." [25]

Martha Root presented Esslemont's Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era to Queen Marie at the palace in Bucharest, only to be recalled the next day for an audience in which she found out that the Queen had stayed up all night reading the book and accepted all.

"Blessed be the king," proclaims Bahá'u'lláh, "whose sovereignty hath withheld him not from his Sovereign, and who hath turned unto God with his heart. . . "[26] So far, Marie, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, alone among royalty, has had the courage and detachment to give homage to the Sovereign of the Age.

Shoghi Effendi stressed the importance of what Martha Root had done:

Of all the services rendered the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh by this star servant of His Faith, the most superb and by far the most momentous has been the almost instantaneous response evoked in Queen Marie of Rumania to the Message which that ardent and audacious pioneer had carried to her during one of the darkest moments of her life, an hour of bitter need, perplexity and sorrow. "It came," she herself in a letter had testified, "as all great messages come, at an hour of dire grief and inner conflict and distress, so the seed sank deeply." [27]

Queen Marie herself proclaimed the Cause through open letters to Canadian and American newspapers, writing in the Toronto Star:

... It is a wondrous Message that Bahá'u'lláh and his son 'Abdu'l-Bahá have given us. . . . Love, the mainspring of every energy, tolerance towards each other, desire of understanding each other, knowing each other, helping each other, forgiving each other.

It is Christ's Message taken up anew, in the same words almost, but adapted to the thousand years and more difference that lies between the year one and today. . .

... If ever the name of Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine.

... Seek them, and be the happier. [28]

The following year, Queen Marie's husband King Ferdinand died, and when Martha Root called, on her second interview, the queen and her daughter Princess Ileana had been reading Bahá'u'lláh's words in the *Íqán* about life after death. In subsequent interviews, Queen Marie gave Martha Root written appreciations, used as frontispieces for the Bahá'í World volumes, and a diamond and pearl brooch, now in the International Archives building in Haifa. Princess Ileana translated a Bahá'í pamphlet into Rumanian and saw to its printing.

Martha Root spoke of Queen Marie as being beautiful — as a queen should be. Indeed, in her articles she had nothing but kind words for everyone she met, writing with love and respect of the heads of state, professors and other notables whom she met in Europe and Asia.

President Masaryk, founder of Czechoslovakia, she described as "a psychologist of peace . . . born into this world to be a statesman." [29] Dr. Joseph

Kruszynski, president of Lublin University, who had visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a young priest and was the first to write of the Faith in Polish, she found, "a tall, handsome, scholarly, kindly, interesting man with eyes full of light." [30]

Their words, and those of others Martha met on this trip — Drs. Auguste Forel, Edmund Privat, and Charles Baudouin of Switzerland; Prince Paul and Princess Olga of Yugoslavia and Professor Bogdon Popovitch of that country; Dr. Ruzstem Vámbéry of Hungary; Eduard Benes, foreign minister and later president of Czechoslovakia; King Faisal of 'Iráq; notables of Turkey, Egypt, India, and Japan; Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, founder of modern China, and Dr. Y. S. Tsao, president of Tsing Hua University — can be found in the Bahá'í World. [31]

Small wonder that the noted people she interviewed with such interest and enthusiasm were able to speak appreciatively of the Bahá'í Faith; they had her for an example. Doris McKay, who knew her, wrote that, "Whoever you were, her loving interest was her introduction to you. There was no one, high or low, who had not felt that. . . . There was a quiet stateliness in her manner, an element of ceremony, 'Make every meeting an occasion,' she instructed me. 'Give something always, if only a flower, some candy or fruit, Pray that they will accept from you the Greater Gift.'" [32]

After her years in Europe, Martha Root took the long way home by way of Turkey; Egypt; a month in Haifa as a guest of Shoghi Effendi; Damascus; 'Iráq; five months in Iran, where she visited the friends and places of Bahá'í martyrdom; two and a half months in India and Burma; Malaya; China; Japan; and Hawaii. The National Spiritual Assembly of Iran wrote with appreciation of the effect of Martha Root's visit on the believers: "People who, as proved by history, looked down upon foreigners with enmity and bitterness, and considered association with them as contrary to religion, now, thanks to Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings, shed tears of joy at the sight of their American sister." That letter also remarked on "the eagerness with which friends rushed to meet her." [33] They took her to the tomb of the Varqas and the home of Táhirih, and she, in turn, recorded for the Western believers the beautiful story of the Varqá family in "White Roses of Persia" [34] and began work on her book of the life of Táhirih.

Martha spent a year in the United States, traveling from the Pacific to the Atlantic, lecturing daily as she went.

Europe Again

Then in January of 1932 Martha Root set sail for her second tour of Europe, staying there another four years. She spent three months in Geneva for the Disarmament Conference and the Extraordinary Session of the League of Nations, meeting personally the statesmen of over fifty nations.

After that she concentrated chiefly on Northern and Eastern Europe, where she placed articles in more than one hundred periodicals. Her efforts extended all the way to Latvia. She arranged for the publication of Bahá'u'lláh and

the New Era in Rumanian, Greek, and Finnish and of a booklet, "What Is the Bahá'í Movement?" in Rumanian, Finnish, and Icelandic. She spoke on the radio and once again had interviews with notables and royalty, including an audience with King Haakon of Norway. She attended Esperanto congresses again on this trip, often in the company of Lidja Zamenhof.

For the Bahá'ís of the West she wrote of her pilgrimage to Adrianople, a pilgrimage in which she searched for and found the houses Bahá'u'lláh had lived in and the people who had known Him. The American National Spiritual Assembly wrote:

With what tenderness our hearts follow her on her journey of October, 1933, to Adrianople, where the Blessed Perfection had "planted a seed under every stone." Through her we are welcomed by the Governor and Mayor. With her we kneel reverently in the Muradiyyih Mosque and sense "how far Bahá'u'lláh had come to meet our Western World!" Through her eyes, many times tear-dimmed in that city, we see the gentle Mustafa Big, who had been in the Presence of the Beloved and was able to tell us of His gardens, His house, His great generosity, and of the reverent esteem of His fellow citizens.[35]

The history of the Bahá'í Faith in Iceland, like that of so many countries, begins with Martha Root's lecture tour there (July to August of 1935). Martha told of being introduced on the street to a school principal who had read her article, "What is the Bahá'í Movement?" in the newspaper:

He invited us to come with him to his home to coffee, as is the delightful custom in Iceland. We went, and after a long conversation about the Bahá'í Teachings, just as we were about to go, he asked, "Tell me, do you believe in dreams?" The writer replied, "yes," that Bahá'u'lláh had said there may be many mysteries and wisdoms in dreams; even there are occasions where it may happen that one witnesses outwardly in the world of time exactly the thing he had seen in his dream.

"Well," said the host, "last night I dreamed that a bird came into this room, and resting on the sofa sang such a beautiful melody. I was so happy. This morning I said to myself, 'Who will come?' Then I met you in the street, you come with your friend Holmfridur to our house and you have taken the seat on the sofa where the bird came and sang the melody!" He was one of the great souls of Iceland.[36]

Martha Root was sent back to the United States in the middle of the following year by the Guardian. Her health was broken, and he told her to rest. She stayed two months with the Wilhelms, recuperating, then began lecturing across the United States, but with a lighter schedule than on the previous tour.

First, Finest Fruit of the Formative Age

Martha Root left San Francisco May 20, 1937, on her last earthly journey. She went first to Japan where she taught one month. She next landed in Shanghai, but the Japanese bombardment of that city made it too dangerous to stay. Her next stop was the Philippines, where an earthquake immediately after her

arrival destroyed in fire all the clothes she had brought. Three months of teaching in the Philippines were followed by a month in Ceylon.

Then in October, Martha arrived in India for a fifteen-month stay, where she lectured "from Bombay to Mandalay, and from Srinagar to Colombo." [37] Her lecture topics varied: "What Is Culture?" "How We May Work for Universal Peace," "New Solution of the Economic Problem," etc. But, she noted, "Every lecture in India has been a Bahá'í lecture whatever the subject, the theme is always one — the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith." [38]

She visited Rabindranath Tagore and met the Prime Minister of India. More than 200 newspaper articles appeared during her stay in India and Ceylon. She traveled through southern India in the company of Shirin Fozdar, who sang songs of Qurratu'l-'Ayn (Táhirih). In Rangoon she met with the Bahá'í children and gave them the first lesson in a Bahá'í class which the Rangoon Spiritual Assembly determined to continue in remembrance of her visit.

She spent three months in Karachi arranging for the publishing and printing of her book, *Tahirih the Pure, Iran's Greatest Woman*. Martha Root was inspired by the "heroic selflessness" of Tahirih, whom she described as "the first woman suffrage martyr" and as "to this day our living, thrilling teacher." [39]

"Sometimes I have asked myself," Martha Root had said, musing upon the life of Táhirih, "was Táhirih great enough instantly to say, 'O God, I give my life to establish this Faith among mankind!' or did she, too, need to be trained by the infinite God to long to give her life as a martyr to serve this new religion." [40]

At the end of Martha's journey through those areas which are now separated as India, Pakistan, and Burma, the National Spiritual Assembly secretary wrote: "Miss Martha Root has opened the whole of India to us, and it now devolves upon us to utilize these openings and produce the best of results." [41]

Her last lecture tour was through Australia and New Zealand. She was in poor health and weakened as she went along, but she continued determinedly, giving her last ounce of strength. Her report to the American Bahá'ís describes her teaching method. She said that she had had a few firesides, but:

... I could not do as much as I wished, because the program was so full; and when one is going to give a lecture it is important to study, concentrate, meditate. For example, the day I was to speak in the big Theater I kept with my subject all day; I read, I thought, and I sent my "mind" once through a lecture of 45 minutes; at 5 p.m. I jotted down an outline of five points. When I spoke that night, I did not look at the outline, and I did not say exactly what I had thought out in the day — we have to see our audience before we know what we are going to say! . . . We as Bahá'ís should prepare and be ready. Sometimes, I know, we cannot, because we are so interrupted, and then Bahá'u'lláh helps us just the same; tout we should study and know well all the teachings. [42]

She wrote her report when very ill, just the day before leaving Auckland. She

recalled in her letter the lecture she gave on "Scientific Proofs of Life After Death." "Perhaps I could never give it like that again," she wrote, "but it thrilled me. The Teachings, the proofs, are such a spiritual security. I think I love that lecture most of all. The hall was crowded, many stood, some even standing in the outer hall where they could hear but could not see. Many of them had lost loved ones, and they came to find truth and comfort." [43]

Despite her illness, she had loved being with the friends and ended her report: "And now that I am leaving, May 29th on the 'Mariposa,' it will be very difficult to say farewell, but, if not in New Zealand, we shall again do 'spiritual sky-larking* together in the Heavenly Realms.'" [44] As the Guardian testified:

. . . Neither age nor ill-health, neither the paucity of literature which hampered her early efforts, nor the meager resources which imposed an added burden on her labors, neither the extremities of the climates to which she was exposed, nor the political disturbances which she encountered in the course of her journeys, could damp the zeal or deflect the purpose of this spiritually dynamic and saintly woman. Single-handed and, on more than one occasion, in extremely perilous circumstances, she continued to call in clarion tones, men of diverse creeds, color and classes to the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, until, while in spite of a deadly and painful disease, the onslaught of which she endured with heroic fortitude, she hastened homeward to help in the recently launched Seven Year Plan, she was stricken down on her way, in far-off Honolulu. [45]

Two Bahá'ís on board the "Mariposa" took care of her and, when the ship reached Honolulu, took her to the home of a Bahá'í, where she spent her last months, passing away on September 28, 1939, at age 67, in that "symbolic spot, meeting place of East and West." [46] The Guardian wrote to the American believers, "The passing of dearest Martha and the circumstances of her severe and painful illness have brought profound sorrow, but I rejoice at the glory and joy that must be hers and which she fully deserves in the Abhá paradise." [47]

In a cable, he announced: "Posterity will establish her as the foremost Hand which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's will has raised up in first Bahá'í century. Present generation of her fellow-believers recognize her to be the first, finest fruit which the Formative Age of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has as yet produced." [48]

And in *God Passes By*, the Guardian's history of the first Bahá'í century, he describes the American Bahá'í community as "crowned with imperishable glory by these signal international services of Martha Root." [49] She had, he said, "outshone the feats accomplished" by any of the propagators of the Faith "in the course of an entire century" — thus his tribute:

To Martha Root, that archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing, must be awarded, if her manifold services and the supreme act of her life are

to be correctly appraised, the title of Leading Ambassadors of His Faith and Pride of Bahá'í teachers, whether men or women, in both the East and the West.”[50]

She was our sister Martha.

Notes

25. God Passes By, p. 387.
26. The Promised Day Is Come, pp. 32-33.
27. God Passes By, p. 389.
28. Bahá'í World, vol. II, p. 174.
29. Star of the West, vol. XIX, p. 198.
30. Bahá'í World, vol. V, p. 565.
31. Ibid., vol. IV, pp. 429-34; vol. V, articles beginning on pp. 322, 541, 563, and 609; and subsequent volumes.
32. Ibid., vol. VIII, p. 645.
33. Ibid., vol. III. p. 45.
34. Star of the West, vol. XXIII, pp. 71, 179, 226, and 255.
- 35-44, 47. Bahá'í World, vol. VIII, pp. 60-72, 643-648, 809-818, and 918-921.
45. God Passes By, p. 388.
46. Messages to America, p. 30.
48. Star of the West, p. 374.
49. God Passes By, p. 396.
50. Ibid, p. 386.

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History

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