

A gift from
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**A
PILGRIMAGE
TO HAIFA**



November 1919

**(Memories of a Young Girl
of 12 Years Old)**

by Bahiyyih Winckler

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There was a splash; the anchor had dropped; we had reached Haifa! Seven of us were standing on the top deck of the dirty old ship that we would be glad to leave, cockroaches and all. It was early, before breakfast, but we were excited to see Haifa where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was. I was twelve years old and was with my family, Ruth and Harry Randall. My younger brother, Bill, was sick and three years old and could not come with us at this time.

Soon, little boats came from the shore with men full of business such as seeing passports and asking how much money we had. We hurried them and ourselves and were finally led to the side of the ship where a thin looking rope ladder would take us to a small boat way below. We made it but it was scary. Mother started to fall but father caught her. It was lucky the sea was calm.

Dr Lotfullah Hakim was waiting for us with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's carriage. When the officials began to argue about our luggage he said we were 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guests and they stopped at once. As we drove past the town it looked strange, so many walls hiding buildings and the men wearing long white shirts that looked like father's nightgowns. We stopped to let a line of camels pass. They had square tin boxes strapped to their sides, containing a years supply of butter (I wouldn't like to taste that butter!).

We left town and began to climb upward, until the horses stopped before a wall with a large wrought iron gate. We looked thru the bars to see a sandy yard with a large stone house in the middle of it. We were to stay there twelve days. Suddenly it was as if a hand turned my face to the left. I saw the top of a small building showing above a wall. In the upper half of a window was the face of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was looking at us and yet into some distant place.

Without any action on my part I became close to Him. His eyes were radiant and they spoke of love and wisdom, but there was a look of patient sadness also. He did not speak or move. I looked beyond Him and there was a large circle of soft pink with a white center, the edges of the circle gray with sparkles of gold. It was very beautiful and I became aware that it was telling me something about the Master, how wonderful He was, but I did not understand.

Then I was wrapped in a feeling of love towards the Master that flooded my heart. As suddenly as this happened, it was over. Later, after I had thought about such an unusual incident, I decided it

was a gift from the Master. One that was beyond measure, that would remain with me forever. It was a gift in two ways: one, that the Master's great station was beyond comprehension, and second, that I could be close to Him if I loved Him.

Our new home proved to be spacious for all of us. Fugita had gone to the household of the Master where he longed to be. There was Arthur Hathaway, Albert Vail, George Latimer and our family. Doctor Esselmont occupied one room because he was ill and writing a book about the Faith. We stood by his door and greeted him. He looked tired but kind.

Shoghi Effendi was 10 years older than I. He came to greet us and to say that the Master would be coming very soon, and there He was in the doorway! I caught my breath but He smiled and welcomed us with enthusiasm. He shook our hands and made us feel that He was really glad that we had come. We all sat down when He did.

He asked us about our trip. No one told Him about the terrible storm in the Mediterranean. The old ship, which was not used anymore, was brought back into service to carry troops during the war. It groaned and shook when the huge waves crashed down upon us. The captain said it was the worst storm he had ever been in. We were a little frightened, but perhaps the Master knew this and protected us.

'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of President Wilson and it was interesting because father looks so much like him. When we entered one of the Consulates in Europe on our way to Haifa, the staff arose thinking it was the

President traveling incognito.

The Master left us after awhile saying that He had many letters to write and an important guest was coming for lunch. The meal was brought from the Master's house and consisted of soup, fish, pilaf and kabob. There was lots to eat and we were hungry. After lunch I went to my room to open my steamer trunk. People at home wanted us to take pictures so I took out my Brownie Box camera and lots of film.

In the afternoon a Colonel and Mrs Allison and a Mr Denham came from the ship asking if they could see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My family talked about the Faith to everyone on the ship. Father had asked Shoghi Effendi if it was all right. Later we were all invited to the Master's house. As we entered the gate I saw the little building up against the wall. Shoghi Effendi said it was a place where the Master could be alone and rest. The Master's house is large with a big central room with doors leading to other parts of the house.

Also in the afternoon we went to a gathering at the Shrine of the Báb. Mother and I were sad because the ladies of the Master's household could not be seen by strange men, not even in Holy Places. It is a Muslim rule.

There were many people including Persians on pilgrimage. The Shrine has more than one room and the Master led us to a door where we all took off our shoes. There was a big pile of them and I wondered if any were ever stolen or if owners took the wrong shoes by mistake. I stood by the Master's side and as each person entered the room, the Master put rose

water in their hands. He had a very small bottle and I watched. There was always enough, even for me at the end. How could it be? Maybe it was a miracle. In this room there was chanting but I could not understand the words.

Then we took turns going to the entrance of a second room where the body of the Báb lies below floor level. A beautiful rug covers the Spot. We only went to the entrance which was covered with flowers and knelt and bowed our heads. I wondered why some men were weeping. My father said it was a very special and important time for peoples' hearts.



First Day

There were many experiences in even one day. When we reached home after visiting the Shrine mother showed me two things. One was the toilet. A small building the size of a clothes closet was near the house. Inside, it had a wooden shelf with a hole in the middle. That is where we sat, over the hole! I was afraid that something underneath would bite me.

The second was the lighting in the bedrooms. There was a drinking glass $\frac{2}{3}$ full of water. On top of this was a thin layer of oil, and on top of that was a little round piece of stiff pink paper with about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wick pushed partly thru the middle hole of the paper. It lighted my room enough to get ready for

bed. I was told it burns a long time... a gallant little wick!

Then it was dinner with the Master. Mother and I put on our best dresses. Dinner was at 7:30 and we were on time. Father was never late to anything. He said the Master was the same, unless there was a reason, "I was never allowed one."

'Abdu'l-Bahá placed each person at the table. Mother at the head, father and George part way down, and Shoghi Effendi and Dr Hakim at the bottom because they were taking notes of all that the Master said. He placed me on His left side. That was to be my place all during our visit.

Sitting across from me was what the Master called a Sheik. I was fascinated because I had read about such men. I wondered if he had tents filled with silk pillows and women lying on them. Fugita came in carrying large plates of pilaf and other things. The pilaf had dainty pieces of meat and vegetables mixed into the rice, and on top, pine nuts.

The Master talked a great deal but never lost sight of anyone's plate, and when empty He would arise from His chair and, still talking, fill the plate. He did this to father twice and I knew he was struggling to eat it all, but no one would leave even a speck. When the Master was silent no one spoke. There was a loving respect that one could feel. Shoghi Effendi did the interpreting as the Master spoke and he did not seem to have time to eat very much.

When dinner was finished the Master arose and

went to a wash basin by His bedroom door, washed His hands and beard and then said goodnight. As He went through the door I felt lonely. Everyone else arose and went on their way home.



Day Two

The next morning bagpipes woke me up. A division of the British Army was stationed on Mt. Carmel. They used bagpipes instead of bugles. They were loud enough to wake everyone up. Father came in having walked up to the Shrine of the Báb and back. He said we did not come here to sleep. I thought, spiritual people, but not me!

At seven thirty a maid came in with a large cup of black coffee for father. He was astonished. Who could know what his custom was in the mornings? The dear Master, of course! We were learning that He knew us better than we knew ourselves. Breakfast consisted of tea, served in tiny glasses so hot that one couldn't hold them at first, eggs, cheese and bread. The bread was the size of a large pancake and when cut open was hollow and food could be put inside like a sandwich.

Shoghi Effendi and Dr Lotfullah arrived after breakfast to begin the translation into English of the talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Father and George Latimer helped. They made every effort to be accurate, talking

about this word or that. When they had finished Shoghi Effendi took the papers to the Master for His approval.

Sometimes the Master corrected a word or two, but seldom according to Shoghi Effendi. The Master always spoke to me in English and did so with others when he wished to.

Luncheons continued to be brought to us from the Master's house. Shoghi Effendi and Lotfullah were always with us and sometimes Dr. Esselmont. The wonderful surprise was that this day the Master came saying that He would be with us every day. Shoghi Effendi assured us that this was a great honor because He seldom had time to do this. The big table with the white cloth was made beautiful when the Master took fragrant jasmine blossoms from a large handkerchief in his pocket and tossed them into the center of the table.

The Master was always so happy even when one day He was terribly tired, having had only four hours sleep and no breakfast. We became like a family, feeling free to laugh and ask questions (but always with respect).

Mother spoke of the death of Sandy Kinney and the Master said He would send a message. I asked for a message for Howey Kinney who was my best friend. The Master spoke at once, "Although thy brother has ascended to the Abha Kingdom and has not remained long in this world, My hope is that on behalf of thy brother thou mayst strive on behalf of thy parents."

The Master had an inexhaustible supply of

stories. His facial expressions and tone of voice made a story seem real. The little dog story I liked best, so here it is as I remember it. According to the Master:

We were at Akka when Kamel Pasha became Prime Minister. His brother became governor of Acca. In Turkey the brother of the prime minister could do whatever he wished. One day he came with a carriage and we went out together. On the way I noticed that he had a hunting outfit and he had four or five large hunting dogs. A gazelle was sighted. These dogs chased after it. One of the Bahá'ís had a small dog, an Arab Bahá'í. He also had come. These five dogs of the governor did not catch anything. This little dog caught a large gazelle.

The governor became ashamed. When the dogs returned he began to beat them. He said, "What can I do? The Bahá'ís are assisted. These five dogs of mine could catch nothing, but this little dog did." He dismounted and took the little dog in his arms and kissed it. He told the owner of the dog that he would not give it back to him.

'Abdu'l-Bahá told us about all kinds of things, even a potato, my favorite food. He said that sixty years ago they introduced the potato into Persia. There was so much superstition that they used to say that whoever eats it becomes an infidel. No one would eat it except those who took it with wine. There was so much prejudice. Now see what Baha'u'lláh has done. Now we are all gathered around one table, filled with love!

Yesterday when the Master first came to see us I

had a strange feeling in my body and when He left, the feeling left. I thought perhaps it was due to excitement. But it comes whenever I am with Him. I have tried to describe it to myself and perhaps it's like a very mild electric current might feel like. It does not hurt but makes me feel uneasy.

Mother and I were invited to have tea with the Master's family this afternoon. Tea was served in the room opposite the front door of the Master's home. There was the Greatest Holy Leaf (the Master's sister), His wife and their four daughters, one of whom spoke English, named Munavvar. She became Mother's close friend.

They greeted us with love and were eager to hear news of America. The Master sat with us for awhile. He reads the newspapers, but He talks with us just the same. I remember when His little grandson, Foad, rushed in to say that his pet donkey had a fever and would the Master please pray for him. They left together to see the animal. There were meetings before dinner with the Master, pilgrims, guests and people from various places in the world. They show respect and love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Some come for the first time yet the Master knows them and speaks as if they were friends. Sometimes I forget how wonderful the Master is because He is so natural, and yet we are but shadows compared to Him.



Day Three

When Shoghi Effendi came this morning, he said that the Master would give us each a private interview.

Mother's would be this morning. I was a little afraid to have mine for fear I would cry or say something silly. To be alone with the Master would not be an ordinary experience. Mother said I could go with her, so we hurried along. It was pouring rain. He greeted us in His loving way by putting both hands to His forehead. He took us to the meeting room (Reception), seated us, and then sat down opposite us. I called it the "meeting room."

Mother had lots to say. She had brought messages from people in the States. She also wanted to know about herself. Her biggest question was whether the Master would like father and herself to build a Western Pilgrim House - where Bahá'ís from the West could stay when they were on pilgrimage. The Master smiled and said, "Very good, very good."

Then it was my turn. I stood up and asked (I heard this coming out of my mouth, with surprise), "What can I do to serve the Faith?" There was silence for a few minutes and then I heard, "Study, study, STUDY." When the Master wanted to emphasize something He would repeat it three times, His voice getting louder and louder.

I told about Ella Roberts who was publishing a little magazine for Bahá'í children. Would the Master please give it a name. He replied, "The Magazine of

the Children of the Kingdom' - I will send a Tablet."

At luncheon the Master turned to me saying, "Your name is Bahiyyih. It means light and there must be something to make the light." He had a twinkle in His eyes and a big smile.

I loved the name at once, it had a soft musical sound. My name, Margaret, had a harsh sound and I had never liked it. Later, I learned the name Bahiyyih was the name of the sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Greatest Holy Leaf. My brother received the name Bahá'í, in a Tablet to father. What a blessing for us both — and what a challenge! I'm sure the Master heard my heart saying thank you.

Luncheon that day was especially fun. The Master encouraged Fugita to try and teach him to eat rice with chopsticks. We all laughed, even the Master. Fugita for many years had longed to be able to come to Haifa and be of service in the Master's home. Father had seen him in Naples, stranded because ships were scarce. Father arranged for him to come with us.

The Master teased me about food the entire visit. He would ask if I liked something that was being served. If I said, "A little," He would usually say, "I know what you are thinking." And the next day for me we would have chicken and potatoes, and it tasted good! Another time we had a delicious sweet that looked like pink shredded wheat, only it was very brittle. It was a real treat. He was so kind and thoughtful.

When the Master left it was raining. Mother

handed Him an umbrella as He started down the front steps. It was a cold rain and mother was worried he might catch a chill. He did not seem concerned and handed the umbrella to Shoghi Effendi. The Master is not really like we are. He can control Nature, even raindrops and a storm like He did when He was in the United States.

Mother likes being with the ladies. They talk about what is going on in the Faith because the ladies hear very little news. They also talk about marriage, children and sometimes cooking. I seldom stay after tea. I now enjoy the little glasses of hot sweet tea.

Since it was still raining I went down to our house. Dr Esselmont was sitting in a chair in his room so we talked together. He said the Master was helping him a lot with his book — helping him clarify things.

I told Esselmont about a dream I had. For years I heard believers talking about their dreams, all of them remarkable according to them. I wanted to have a dream that I could talk about, but it never happened. Then one night — I was so excited — it happened. I was with Jesus. As people came to see Him He gave each one a pearl. They were about the size of a grapefruit, round and white, wrapped in veils of soft color. They looked so pretty. The people bowed as they accepted a pearl. Jesus was happy. I was happy too! You see I always enjoyed stories about Jesus, especially the one about the five loaves and two fish. I was glad my special dream was about Him.

Before dinner we went to the evening meeting. This night non-Bahá'ís asked questions rather than

listening to what 'Abdu'l-Bahá might have wanted to say.



Day Four

I decided to go down to the end of the yard to see who our neighbors were. I was about to start when a message came from the Master asking me not to go because His enemies lived there. I was grateful He had stopped me, but how did He know? I had not told anyone. Living here under the protection of a loving Master is a gift never, never to forget.

Mother and I went shopping in town. She bought rosaries to take back to friends. She had heard that if one wanted to count the Greatest Name ninety-five times with a rosary it helped one's concentration. At noon the Master talked a long time. Our desert was a dish of fresh dates. I tasted them in Cairo and decided never to eat them again, or yogurt (mást). When I made up my mind about something I seldom changed. That was why I was naughty lots of times — at least that is what I was told.

The Master put two dates on a little plate in front of me and explained that they helped the digestion and gave heat to the body. Then He arose from the table and left us. We always went to the door to watch Him walk home. Then I looked at the dining room table and again it had been cleared and I was thankful, the dates were gone. But in a corner of the

room was the little plate and it had the two dates on it.

I stood on one foot and then the other. Must I eat those dates? Every reason why not came into my mind. I discovered one date was a little rotten, so of course it would not be necessary to eat that one. But something also kept saying to me, the Master told you to, "The Master never asks you to do something unless it is for your own good." After about ten minutes I ate both dates. I felt heroic, wise and relieved.

There was much activity at tea time. Mother took my dresses for the ladies to copy the patterns. Many Bahá'í women came and went. The Master's wife is going away but she has four daughters who will help take care of things. But I have noticed that it is to the Greatest Holy Leaf whom everyone turns to for help and advice. She is gentle and loving, but strong too.

After tea I wandered into the garden that surrounds part of the Master's house. An old man called Haydar Alí was sitting on a bench in the sun. I asked the young man sitting next to him what Mr Alí had done for the Faith. He asked the question and the answer was, "I have not done as much as an ant would do for the Faith of God." The young man had fire in his eyes and I realized that I should not have asked such a thing. Shoghi Effendi was in the garden. He had a grapefruit in his hand. I asked if I could take his picture and he said yes. Shoghi Effendi was completely devoted to his grandfather and was always helpful and kind to me.

At dinner there was another old man whom the

Master cares for. This man could not move his arm to lift a spoon to his mouth. The Master gently helps him while He talks and watches peoples' plates. This man was one of the four Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Baha'u'lláh, Ibn-i-Asdaq. He had also done wonderful work for the Faith. During dinner the Master turned to me saying, "Yogurt is very good." He turned to Fugita and asked him to get some for me. He returned at once saying there was none and should he go next door? The Master said, "No that is not necessary."

Then He looked at me with such a kind look. This is what had happened to me. When the Master said yogurt, I reacted in only one way — instant obedience. I did not remember that I had decided never to even smell it again. The Master had shown me in a way I could understand what obedience means. When God speaks through His chosen channels, His Teachers, do not question it for your own good and happiness. This was yet another gift from the Master that I had needed. It was a basic lesson for a lifetime.



Day Five


It is still raining. I guess we are going to have a wet pilgrimage. Shoghi Effendi said we would go to Akka on the first clear day. The Master came to see Dr Esselmont because he is not well. He stood in his doorway quite awhile. He said He was sorry He could not stay with us but would

come for lunch. At lunch He told more stories about Christ and the Jews. He never said unkind things.

In the afternoon I helped the ladies clean wheat. There are great bags of it and we pulled it towards us little by little, looking for the little stones that cause trouble. We sat around a large round table. When we finished sorting I walked around in the house because it was still raining. I saw a door partly open down a little hallway. I was quiet but the Greatest Holy Leaf heard me and asked me to come in. She was on her bed and I was sorry to have disturbed her, but she smiled and got up to show me some interesting pictures and things that she had. She spoke little English but her eyes are what talked. Her face looked dreadfully tired but her eyes were like the Master's, so alive and expressive. She is not like the other ladies.

She is apart, like the Master. It was a joy to be with her. I loved her. She gave me a Persian pen box before I left. Mother often sits beside her afternoons because she also feels something special.

A few days before we left the Greatest Holy Leaf also gave us a piece of "rock candy" that Baha'u'lláh used to give those in the Ridvan Garden. It was the last piece she had! It looked like crystal.




Day Six

It was a very cold day but the rain stopped. Mother went to bed with a hot water bottle. Aziz Yazdi came to see me. He is about my age. His family live in Haifa. Imagine living near the Master all the time. I enjoyed his visit.

We had brought a small trunk full of gifts, and father asked if the Master would accept them. He said that because we wanted so much to give them it would be acceptable. When lunch was finished the trunk was opened. To our horror the yellow package of bug powder mother had put in had broken. It took some time to clean the powder off everything. There were typewriters and watches for both men and women. The Master was given a beautiful watch that fit in His pocket. Shoghi Effendi liked the typewriter. There were three lengths of a special wool material for coats for the Master. It was soft as a bunnies ear. Mother took these to the Greatest Holy Leaf to be made up as the Master wished. He said He had one coat and did not need others. The Greatest Holy Leaf asked Him to accept the material as it would be rude not to. A coat was made and He wore it for us to see. The next day father was walking out the front door when he saw a poor man walking down the street with the coat on!

There were seventeen for dinner. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed tired and He answered questions rather than to give a talk. He went to His room without even saying goodnight and we knew He was exhausted.



Day Seven

The bagpipes awakened me and for once I was glad because Shoghi Effendi came early to say it was clear and we could go to Acca. We had finished breakfast by seven forty five and went to the street. The Master was there making all the arrangements. There were eleven of us going: our group, Shoghi Effendi, Dr Lotfullah, Fugita, Dr Suliman Rifat, Esfandiar, the faithful coachman and the Master's devoted servant, and Khosrar, a young Hindu boy. The Master seated us, and He saw that our luncheon was safely packed. There were two carriages with three horses each. The Master wished us a happy day and we were off!

We went up the mountain a little then turned left going along a road that soon dropped down to the sea. This was the best road to Acca and there were caravans and groups of loaded donkeys slowly moving along. He stopped to rest the horses once, and stretch our legs. Then Esfandiar took us around in the back of Acca because the streets were narrow. We approached the back of a huge fortress (now called the barracks) where Bahá'u'lláh, His family and followers were imprisoned for two years. It was a dreadful looking place.

We left the carriage and walked along a path towards the entrance of the barracks. We crossed a flimsy bridge covering two deep moats — they used to be filled with water, and were deep. I noticed an odd pile of earth beside the path and dug at it with a stick. It proved to be an old cannon ball. Dr Lotfullah

Hakim knows a lot about history and he said it must date back to about 1799 when Napoleon tried to take the fortress. I wanted to keep it but father said "No!"

We entered the courtyard where Baha'u'llah used to walk for exercise. While there a very old man, Aga Hossein, came. Shoghi Effendi had sent for him as he was the only living survivor of those terrible days, with the exception of the Master and Bahiyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf. As we saw each room he told us about what had happened.

One was where the Master made soup. We saw the first room Baha'u'lláh had slept in, and the second one was up a steep flight of stairs. There was no furniture, not even a bed or chair. It seemed impossible that Baha'u'lláh could be treated that way. We also saw the room where the Purest Branch, Mirza Mihdi, had fallen through the skylight. It was sad to be in such a place. The old man had made those awful days vivid - he seemed to live them over again.

We left the barracks and met the carriages to be taken to the Ridvan Garden. I remember something the Greatest Holy Leaf had told us. She had said they were marvelously happy in the barracks because they had not been separated from Baha'u'lláh. The Garden is surrounded by a stream, like an island. I would call it a brook. We crossed a short bridge and entered a place of flowers and fruit. It was November and yet the Garden looked so fresh and happy.

The gardener came to talk to us. He pointed out special plants, some of which had been carried all the way from Persia by pilgrims, some of whom had

walked. He went to the mulberry trees with the bench underneath where Baha'u'lláh used to sit sometimes resting, and other times dictating important Tablets.

The table was set up near the trees and we enjoyed a delicious pilaf. The desert was fruit from the Garden: oranges, dates, lemons, pomegranates and watermelon. It was truly a very special garden. The little fountain near where we were sitting was not working. I wanted to see it flowing because it would be like the days when Baha'u'lláh was there.

The gardener took us to a corner of the property where a fence enclosed a round dirt track. A donkey was standing there. The donkey when, blindfolded, would walk round and round the track and the water would begin to flow (the donkey wouldn't walk until it was blindfolded). The fountain came alive, making a soft sound. How cool it must have been sitting beside the fountain on a hot day. It was selfish of me to ask but it was so lovely and we all enjoyed it.

After lunch we were taken to the little building where Baha'u'lláh used to rest and have tea. It had not changed. His room was up a short flight of stairs and underneath was where the gardener lived. In this Garden one feels close to Him perhaps because He loved it.

Then we were off to the Mansion of Bahji. On the way they stopped to show us the little house that was partly in ruins where the Master for many years had welcomed the pilgrims. There was still a little garden there. A short way from Bahji we left the carriages and walked. I ran ahead and saw a little

donkey standing in the metal door. There was also a long green snake moving among some rocks - I didn't like that. When we walked to the left of Bahji to a small building where the Master stayed when He visited the Shrine of Bahá'u'llah. They were invited by the caretakers to have tea and entered a little room that was partly open to a small courtyard where flowers grew. Bahji' was the last place where Bahá'u'lláh had lived. It is in Acca. We were now going to enter the Shrine, for Bahá'ís the holiest spot on earth!

First we went through a small garden that the Master had made, and then through a large door. We took off our shoes. Shoghi Effendi gave us rose water for our faces, then we stepped inside a large room with a small garden in the center. It was raised above the floor level and had a glass roof over it. The floor was covered with a beautiful Persian rug. After a few minutes of silent prayer Shoghi Effendi chanted the Tablet of Visitation, a special prayer to be said at the Shrine. It was so spiritual.

Then we entered the small room where the body of Bahá'u'lláh had been placed below floor level. It was in the middle of the room with a magnificent rug over it. We stood silently. I could not even think. I just felt great peace and power, as if Nature also stood still in that room. We stepped down from the room with a feeling of reverence.

We went back to the carriages -- the day in this most holy part of the world was over. I knew it would live with me forever and ever. We went back by way of the sea and this time the waves splashed up on the

wheels of the carriages. Then we saw the Master standing at our gate waiting to welcome us back. "Have you had a happy day?" He asked, "Rest now until the evening meeting." He knew our hearts were full to the brim. The evening was long. Three times dinner was announced but the Master had left us so we just sat. I thought I was approaching starvation. Then we heard voices. The Master was coming in with Colonel and Mrs Allison saying He had been waiting for them (they had not said they were coming). Dinner was very late and it was good to finally get into bed. What a day! My little light comforted me.



Day Eight

It was a lovely day. I went for a walk up the mountain. I kept thinking that perhaps one of the Prophets had walked along this same path. Mt. Carmel is a fascinating place because it seems to have been a center for spiritual thought. There are a few wild flowers, but not enough for mother to dry. She wanted to take some back home with her.

After luncheon the Master patiently waited while we took lots of pictures. He also arranged a group picture. Dr Esselmont was well enough to be with us — he is such a dear person. In the afternoon we all went to the Shrine of the Báb. A carriage took some of us up over the awful rocky road. Father had gone up earlier as he had a private talk with the

Master. 'Abdu'l-Bahá came after a few minutes and stood looking at the sea. He told us that someday the drive to Acca and the Holy Shrine would be beautiful with orange groves. A great breakwater would be built to form a harbor and ships from all over the world would come. The Shrine of the Báb would be lighted and would be a landmark for ships and planes. Then He turned to the Shrine and stood by the door of the large room. I stood by Him as He gave everyone a little rose water. It was the same story - the little bottle that never got empty. It was more than I could understand. We went to the room where the Báb's body lies. Shoghi Effendi chanted the Tablet of Visitation. There is something in the Shrines that one's heart responds to. Then the carriage was waiting to take us down the hill.

At dinner the Master spoke about airplanes, how they would get bigger and bigger and faster and faster.



Day Nine

It was another clear day. We had so much rain but no one seemed to mind or even talk about it. Our house continues to be very cold. I feel sorry for Dr Esselmont. The Master came again early in the morning to talk with him. The luncheons were our happiest times because the Master was so jolly. I kept thinking about this because we have grown so close to Him. I asked Him which city

He liked best in the United States and He said, "Washington, Chicago, San Francisco." Then He paused again and said, "San Francisco." So, the city in the West had won.

After lunch Shoghi Effendi brought us a brass charcoal burner. It took the chill off our big room. Mother wanted to buy one to take home because it is so nice to look at and the heat is pleasant.

We went to see the ladies a bit earlier. Mother is sad about leaving them. She has asked the Greatest Holy Leaf to tell her how to bake the rice that is so delicious. The Master came for tea and mother spoke of the attractive brass heater that gives such a comfortable heat. The Master said he did not like the furnace heat we had in America because it was heavy and dull. He said that ventilation was important and He had to open windows. They talked a lot about this subject.

Colonel and Mrs Allison came again for the evening meeting and dinner. Mother says they are deeply interested in the Faith. The dinner hour brought us something that we had not seen before. The Master spoke on martyrdom and He became radiant. His face shone, His voice was loud and powerful, and we could hardly eat. It seemed as if everything must be shaking, even the atoms. He said that he longed to be martyred for the Faith, but doesn't He have that everyday? Shoghi Effendi has told us about what the Master suffers, especially from enemies.



Day Ten

It was raining again. At noon time it came down in sheets but the Master came for lunch just the same. He sits with us not as a wise man who can accomplish anything but as someone who is part of our lives. I think about this every day because I do not understand lots of things. The little current is still with me when He comes near. Also, He never seems to leave us — I mean in spirit. Whatever I do each day it is as if He is by my side. The family talks about things like this. Maybe one day I will realize more than now, when I am older.

The Master was in the tearoom reading a newspaper when Mrs Allison, mother and I arrived. His welcome is always so warm. He did not stay long so mother asked the Greatest Holy Leaf if she would tell us about some of her experiences with Bahá'u'llah. I stayed. I loved history. She talked a long time, telling about things that were sad and cruel. I will never forget one thing she told us. The second night in the barracks in Acca when they had no comfort and little food, they got to laughing. Bahá'u'llah came to the door telling them to be quiet because the jailers would think they were crazy.

After tea time mother received a lovely Persian headdress from Munavvar. Mother in turn gave her what she had admired, her long necklace of amber beads.

There was more interesting history at dinner. The Master said that this is the ground where the

Prophets had walked. They dwelt here to give the glad tidings that a day would come when the tent of the Lord would be pitched here. Bahá'u'llah had pitched His tent near where the Shrine of the Báb was placed. Jesus used to walk across Mt. Carmel to Haifa and Nazareth. Mohammed came once when He was eleven years old and again when He was twenty eight.

After dinner, as the Master was leaving He said, "These meals have been very happy. They are the Lord's supper because the wish and purpose has been concerning the affairs of God."



Day Eleven

This morning the Greatest Holy Leaf sent us each a gift by Shoghi Effendi. He said we must guess what it was and handed us each a small envelope. We thought, but could not guess correctly. In each envelope was a tiny piece of the blood of Bahá'u'lláh. No one knew what to say. I felt sort of numb, I could not grasp having such a thing. We were all silent. It was the most precious gift in the world (how do you say thank you?).

I wondered where I could put mine. Mother said hers must go into a solid gold box. This gift did not leave my mind, my thoughts, for a long time. When we went for tea mother asked the Greatest Holy Leaf about it. She said it was a custom in Persia in the Spring to draw a certain amount of blood from the forearm of a person as it was considered to be healthy.

The blood of Bahá'u'llah was drawn at that time and put in a vase. There it became congealed. We could not comprehend that we had such a gift, that it was real. I prayed about it and finally put it away in my trunk.

After all the spiritual excitement the Greatest Holy Leaf told us that she would show us how to cook the rice. We went to a little room where there was a charcoal fire burning. The rice is washed and then put in boiling salt water until it is just soft enough to break (about four or five minutes). It is then strained and some butter is put in the pot and browned a little. The rice is slowly put in with a sprinkling of spices and the tiny pieces of meat. On top of this is placed two large pieces of butter and then the cover is replaced. This is put on a slow charcoal fire, and ashes and more charcoal are placed on top. It remains this way for three quarters of an hour.

While this was being cooked, the Greatest Holy Leaf said it was strange that I came to find out how to cook when 'Abdu'l-Bahá's own daughters did not know how. Munavvar laughed and said she could not cook it, but knew just how it should be done.

Later in the afternoon the Master told us our ship had come and we must leave tomorrow. He had told father several days ago that He would like us to go to Germany and several other places. Now that was all changed and father was to go directly home, that "things would not be to his liking there."



Day Twelve


Our last day. The Master came early for lunch and asked us to join Him in Dr Esselmont's room. He spoke of His great love for us and that we must go back with our hearts full of love to give to others. Lunch was short. Mother and I said goodbye to the ladies and mother wept. Then the Master called us again, shook our hands and gave us loving messages. We all felt that it was hard to part.

We went back in the pouring rain to get our luggage and the Master called father to Him once again. Father came back weeping only to tell us that he had been alone with the Master and He was so wonderful.

The Persian believers came in the rain to wave us goodbye. Shoghi Effendi, Dr Lotfulla Hakim and Fugita joined us in the carriage and even went in the little boat to the ship.

Then we were in the outside world again. The people at the dock and on the ship seemed so lifeless and dull. The world seemed cold.

I had left the heart of the world.



Bahiyih Winckler was born in 1907 to Ruth and Harry Randall, early American believers in the Faith of Baha'u'llah.

Ruth Randall was the first to become a Baha'i, and it was the Master himself who brought Harry into the Faith in 1912. The Randalls were well known in New England social and financial circles. Harry was the president of the Boston-Maine Railroad, and it was the Randalls who bought the Green Acre property in Eliot, Maine, as a place of worship, study and fellowship for the New England Baha'is.

Inspired by the powerful words and supreme example of the Master (so lovingly recorded in this diary of 1919), Bahiyih did indeed grow into a bright "light" among the handmaidens of His Cause, a tireless servant for the Faith. In 1953, under the direction of the Guardian, Bahiyih assumed a pioneering post in Durban, South Africa, working and sharing the teachings of Baha'u'llah with the black population for over 40 years. She now lives in Sabie, Transval, South Africa, and, as a young girl of 88 years, continues to teach.