

'ABDUL-BAHÁ IN EGYPT

A Compilation of Eyewitnesses

Part 1: excerpts from
Bahai News, later titled *Star of the West*

(Part 2, excerpts from *Abdul Baha in Egypt*, not included)

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The following items were going to be included in this compilation,
but were not provided to bahai-library.com before Rabbani's passing.

The are online at bahai-library.com/sohrab_abdulbaha_egypt

Extracts from *Abdu'l-Bahá in Egypt*:

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Port Said, July 2, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 3, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 4, 1913
Port Said, July 3, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 4, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 5, 1913
Port Said, July 4, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 5, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 6, 1913
Port Said, July 5, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 6, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 7, 1913
Port Said, July 6, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 7, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 8, 1913
Port Said, July 7, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 8, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 9, 1913
Port Said, July 8, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 9, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 10, 1913
Port Said, July 9, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 10, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 11, 1913
Port Said, July 10, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 11, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 12, 1913
Port Said, July 11, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 12, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 13, 1913
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Port Said, July 13, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 14, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 15, 1913
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Port Said, July 15, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 16, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 17, 1913
Port Said, July 16, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 17, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 18, 1913
Port Said, July 17, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 18, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 19, 1913
Port Said, July 18, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 19, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 20, 1913
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Port Said, July 20, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 21, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 22, 1913
Port Said, July 21, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 22, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 23, 1913
Port Said, July 22, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 23, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 24, 1913
Port Said, July 23, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 24, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 25, 1913
Port Said, July 24, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 25, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 26, 1913
Port Said, July 25, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 26, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 27, 1913
Ramleh, July 26, 1913	Ramleh, Aug. 27, 1913	Ramleh, Sept. 28, 1913
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Editor's Foreword

Introduction

It was Bahá'u'lláh Who from Edirne in the mid 1860s encouraged several Bahá'í merchants to settle in Alexandria and Cairo, thus opening Egypt to His Faith. Among this group were Hájí Báqir and Siyyid Husayn, two natives of Kashan, who took up residence in Egypt.¹ Bahá'u'lláh also sent Hájí Mullá 'Alí Tabrízí, Hájí Muhammad Yazdí and Mírzá Haydar-'Alí Isfahání to that region and they lived in Mansuriyya, where they converted a number of people, including Hájí Abú'l-Qásim Shírází.² In 1888, at the instigation of the Iranian Consulate, the Khedive Ismá'íl Pasha deported Isfahání to Sudan.³ However, other Bahá'í merchants from Iran arrived and by early 1890s a sizeable Bahá'í community was flourishing in several towns, including Port Said, which were led by Áqá Mírzá Áqá Núri'd-Dín and Mírzá Hasan Khurásání.⁴

The arrival in 1894 of Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl Gulpáygání (1844-1914), a renowned scholar who had converted to the Bahá'í Faith after receiving training as a Muslim seminarian, reinforced the Bahá'í community in Egypt. He started lecturing at Al-Azhar University and soon a large circle of students surrounded him. He taught philosophy, logic, history, dialectical theology (kalam), Qur'an commentary, and geography. He gained the trust of some of his Sunni students and soon was able to win many of them to the Faith.⁵ This first influx of native Egyptian intellectuals into the religion gives evidence both of the appeal of the Bahá'í teachings for this group and the persuasiveness of Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl himself.

In 1896, an assassin, who was a disciple of Jamálu'd-Dín Afghání, killed Nasiri'd-Dín Shah. Both in Iran and among Iranian expatriates, many blamed the Bábís for this incident (few Iranians at that time, or even at the present, made any distinction between Bábís and Bahá'ís). Until official word came from Iran through the Consulate that the Bahá'ís were not involved, a number of Shi'at Iranian expatriates were calling for a retaliatory massacre of the Bahá'ís in Egypt. It was during this period that at a gathering in the Iranian Consulate, Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl openly declared himself to be a Bahá'í. He had by this time established contacts with the Egyptian

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 176.

² E.G. Browne, *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion*, p. 33.

³ Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, *Bihjatu's-Sudúr* (Bombay: Parsi Press, 1912); partial English trans. by A.Q. Faizi, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts*, (Los Angeles: Kalimat Press, 1980).

⁴ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chap 3.

⁵ Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Afnán, *Memories of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, chap 3.

press. When news reports containing charges that the Bábís were behind the Shah's assassination began to circulate, Ya'qub Sarruf and Farís Nimr asked Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl for an article on the Bábí and Bahá'í movements for their secular-minded journal, *al-Muqtataf*. Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl complied, and as such brought the history and teachings of the Faith to the attention of intellectuals throughout the Arab world.

During this period, a number of early treatises were published in Cairo, including: an Arabic polemical history of the Bábís by Mírzá Muhammad-Mihdí Khán, the *Za'ímu'd-Dawlih*, was printed in Cairo in 1903⁶; numerous titles in Persian, including collection of Tablets, prayers and poetries of Bahá'u'lláh, His *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, *The Seven Valleys*, *The Four Valleys*; three volumes of *Makátíb* [Letters] 'Abdu'l-Bahá; Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl's *Kitáb Fará'id*, *Dawra'l-Bahiyyih*, and *Hujaju'l-Bahiyyih*; and Hájj Mírzá Haydar-'Alí's *Dalá'ilu'l-'Irfán*. Publications in Arabic included Bahá'u'lláh's *Ishtárqát*, *Tajallíát*, *Tarázát*, and *Kalamát*. Myron H. Phelps completed his work, *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi*, when in Cairo in March 1903.

In addition, starting 1899, Egypt had become a transit point for Western Bahá'ís coming to and from the Holy Land for their visit to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, and attaining the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Against this backdrop, we find 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit to Egypt. The years following Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension, brought intense pressure on 'Abdu'l-Bahá instigated by his unfaithful half-brothers. For the first five years, He tried to conceal the actions of Mírzá 'Alí-Muhammad and other siblings in undermining His authority and bringing about divisions, but their own deeds finally brought their rebellion into open. They continued with their constant harassments and machinations against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but the latter pressed ahead with developments both within the Holy Land and elsewhere. In Haifa, 'Abdu'l-Bahá supervised the construction of the Shrine of the Báb and establishment of a larger Bahá'í community in Haifa, which also included His own residence and family. In 1904 in Iran, He encouraged the immediate reconstruction of the House of the Báb in Shiraz, to the same design that it was during the time of the Báb. He continued to guide the ever-expanding Bahá'í community of 'Ishqabad and under His directions, the first *Mashriqu'l-Adhkar* was raised there. In the United States, land was purchased and dedicated for the first Temple in the West. Bahá'í communities were established in a number of towns in Europe and the North America. And all during this time, 'Abdu'l-Bahá endured the

⁶ *Miftáhu Bábí'l-Abwab* [The Key to the Gate of Gates]. Supposedly this was a dispassionate account of the Bábís and Bahá'ís, but in fact a distortion of truth, and in effect, as attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, intended to arouse passions against the Bahá'ís.

investigation of two Commissions of Inquiry sent from Istanbul to ‘Akká as result of Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí’s lies that he was spreading through local officials. The second Commission’s visit, resulted in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s confinement in the city of ‘Akká.

But, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has described it, “God’s cannon roared” and the Commission was withdrawn and His imprisonment ended. Soon after that, as result of Revolution of the Young Turks, all political prisoners are pardoned, including ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

On hearing that he was free, His first act was to visit the Shrine of His Father since during the years of His incarceration, He had been denied the opportunity to visit that Shrine and this weighed heavily upon Him. No sooner was He at liberty to visit Bahjí than He resumed the task which He had so diligently pursued in days past, namely, carrying water for the gardens to that Sacred Spot every Friday and Sunday.

But now He was sixty-five years old, and His health was failing due to years of hardships which He had endured. Resident Bahá’ís and pilgrim begged ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to spare Himself physically difficult tasks, but He thought it was important for Him to continue with all His services.

Subsequent to the entombment of the remains of the Báb on Mount Carmel, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá transferred His residence to Haifa, where a house was built for Him. Soon He ceased to set foot within the city gates of ‘Akká.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s health continued to decline. Sorrows and tribulations pressed hard upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and weakened His frame and made Him a prey to various ailments, which at times were severe. Physicians advised Him that He ought to seek a change of air, and leave the region. “But subsequent events demonstrated the fact that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, when He did this, was not just embarking on a journey to improve His health in a different setting, or to prevent its further deterioration. He was indeed taking the first step to reach the world of the West and deliver, in person, the Message of His Father. There was another purpose evident in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey. Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí and his partisans were now thoroughly discredited. In the absence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from the Holy Land the violators would have the field entirely to themselves, but their utter inability to make any move to impair the unity of the Bahá’ís would set the final seal on their downfall. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá particularly stressed this fact in a Tablet addressed at the time to a Bahá’í of Iskandarun (Alexandretta).”⁷

‘Abdu’l-Baha stayed in Port Said for nearly a month. Once again, without previous announcement He took a ship, first intending to go to Europe, but it became obvious that the state of His health did not permit

⁷ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant*, p. 133.

the strenuous journey. Instead He disembarked at Alexandria. Here a complete change occurred and all the work of last two decades began to pay off. Egyptian Journalists, who had until then shown open hostility, began to ask for meetings with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and significantly changed their tone and often wrote in terms of high praise. Shaykh ‘Alí-Yúsuf, the editor of the Arabic paper, al-Mu’ayyad, had previously made harsh attacks on the Bahá’ís, urging that they be severely constrained. He visited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and in the October 16 issue of his paper he published an article under the heading, “Al-Mírzá ‘Abbás Effendi.” “These are the opening lines of that remarkable article: ‘His Eminence Mírzá ‘Abbás Effendi, the learned and erudite Head of the Bahá’ís in ‘Akká and the Centre of authority for Bahá’ís throughout the world, has reached the shores of Alexandria.’ At first, related the writer, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed in the Victoria Hotel, but after a few days moved to a rented house. Then he went on to say:

He is a venerable person, dignified, possessed of profound knowledge, deeply versed in theology, master of the history of Islam, and of its denominations and developments . . . whosoever has consorted with Him has seen in Him a man exceedingly well-informed, Whose speech is captivating, Who attracts minds and souls, dedicated to belief in the oneness of mankind . . . His teaching and guidance revolve round the axis of relinquishing prejudices: religious, racial, patriotic.”⁸

Other newspaper editors visited him and had the same remarkable transformation. This period of stay in Alexandria also coincided with the month of Muharram, which is observed with great fervor, recalling the tragedies befallen on Imam Husayn. ‘Abdu’l-Baha participated in these observances and contributed to holding of commemorative meetings on His behalf and to feeding the poor.

Early in May, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá moved to Cairo and took residence nearby in Zaytun. As His stay in Egypt lengthened, newspapers showed increasing friendliness. In Cairo, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was able to meet with many liberal Islamic thinkers and win their support. During this stay, He also renewed His friendship with Muhammad ‘Abduh, who had met Him in Beirut during the 1880s. The two had subsequently maintained a correspondence on the subject of Islamic reform. On his return to Egypt, ‘Abduh was appointed Grand Mufti and became a leading professor at Al-Azhar University. He extended a particularly warm welcome to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Many other notables, including many clerics, administrators, parliamentarians,

⁸ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant*, pp. 136-37.

intellectuals, journalists, politicians, foreign dignitaries, and Arabs, Turks and Persians, sought His presence as well and were deeply impressed by His vision. The poor and the deprived also had access to Him and left satisfied.

His visit to Egypt a complete success, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá turned His attention to Europe. On August 11, 1911, He boarded S.S. Corsica bound for Marseilles, France.

Over the course of the next two years, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited many major Bahá’í communities in Europe and North America – a story that is told in great depth in other available sources.⁹

After completing His journeys, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá returned to Egypt at the end of June 1913 and stayed until early October of that year. During these two stays, He became quite well known and influential — as evidenced by extensive press coverage in Egypt of his funeral in 1921. For Bahá’ís around the world, the extended visits of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gives Egypt a special significance.

Comments on the Present Volume

There is a large body of materials on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s stay in Egypt during 1910-11 and 1913, and much more to be gathered. The present volume is only a small step in making some of these materials more accessible to students of history.

The first section provides a series of extracts from *Bahai News*, which was renamed *Star of the West*. These are all from the 1910-11 period. Since these extracts used a system of transliteration no longer current (often making the names difficult to recognize), all the eastern names were

⁹ There are several volumes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talks in Europe, most important being *Paris Talks* and *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*. Most of His talks in North America were collected as a single book titled *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Though much has been written on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visits to America, little has been published about His travels in Europe, except such short accounts as “‘Abdu’l-Bahá Meeting with Two Prominent Iranians”, or pilgrim’s notes such as *The Diary of Juliet Thompson*. The most complete study of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to North America, Allan L. Ward’s *Two Hundred Thirty-Nine Days: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Journey in America*, and a detailed chronicle of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s trip is provided in Mírzá Mahmúd Zarfání’s, *Mahmud’s Diary*, vol. 1. Hasan Balyuzi’s *‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant*, chapters 12-18, also provides a summary. Other sources include: *Memoirs* by Thornton Chase and Juanita Storch about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to North America, describing the impact he had on Bahá’ís, (*World Order*, 25.1 (Fall, 1993)); *The Diary of Juliet Thompson* also includes a wealth of information about his visits to America, especially pages 223-395, and some of his time in Europe, especially pages 147-222; Agnes Parsons’ *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in America: Agnes Parsons’ Diary*, and the biography of Lua Getsinger, *Lua Getsinger: Herald of the Covenant*, also cover much of the same ground.

edited to make them consistent with transliteration presently used in Bahá'í publications. Several footnotes were added.

The second section [not included; see http://bahai-library.com/sohrab_abdulbaha_egypt -J.W.] provides a detailed description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's activities during the summer of 1913. The source used here was *Abdul Baha in Egypt* by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab (New York: J. H. Sears & Company, Inc., 1929). This publication was approved by the Publishing Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, and the author's dedication read, "There records of the perfect life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are dedicated to His ever-present spirit." The *Foreword* to 1929 printing stated:

Around the great figures of the Prophets in all ages have been woven stories and records, often in the remote past clouded by myth and allegory, which nevertheless, constitute a witness to the light.

In this age when the influence of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá is universally felt and their writings are being studied and translated into many languages, this intimate diary record should meet with wide response.

Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab served for more than eight years as one of the private secretaries and interpreters of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; he accompanied him on his journey throughout the West in 1912 and was with him during the World War. In this diary he has vividly portrayed certain aspects and events in, the daily life and surroundings of the "Master" not found elsewhere, thus adding a document of human interest and appeal to the ever expanding literature written around the Bahá'í Cause.

Through his great love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab has given us a glimpse into that divine life of servitude and sacrifice, whose imperishable traces are written in the history of this age.

The diary notes of the author were arranged chronologically and a Preface was provided in the same volume (1929 printing) which stated:

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás, a Persian, to whom millions turned as the prophet of International Peace and Brotherhood and who was hailed both in the East and in the West as the teacher of Love and Goodwill among mankind, was one of the outstanding spiritual figures of the 19th and 20th centuries.

His were inspired words, and men of all ranks obeyed him and carried his precepts in their lives, because they realized that here lived among them a godman—as 2000 years ago there lived another godman in the midst of another people and another race. To the students of the origin and growth of religions, the lives of the founders of those religions have been the sources of the most fruitful and searching studies, and here in the 20th century, we saw with our own eyes a man who embodied in his life and practiced in his daily association with his fellowmen, the highest ideals of truth and beauty; laying the foundation of a Universal Faith to which an ever increasing number of people from every religion, and no religion have subscribed with unflinching loyalty.

Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, also a Persian, lived and traveled with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá throughout America, Europe, Egypt and Palestine. As his secretary and interpreter, from 1912 to 1919 he was with him during eventful years which included the World War. Thus he became a close observer of the events that transpired around this great teacher of Universal Ideals and recorded daily his most salient remarks, talks and utterances. Besides this, he translated into English thousands of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “Tablets” or letters to his followers, scattered in all parts of the Western hemisphere.

Thus the Diary, kept by Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, during those eight years, is no other than a compendium of Bahá’í Ideals, principles, events and stories, interspersed with general reflections and descriptions of the countries through which they traveled. It is a treasury of hopeful things for the sore-footed traveler along the path of spiritual search.

When the Diary was being written, the Manuscript was regularly mailed to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph H. Hannen of Washington, D.C., who faithfully made typewritten copies and forwarded them to all the Bahá’í Centers throughout the world.

In this manner, for years, extracts and quotations have been circulated and published in all the Bahá’í literature and books from what has become popularly known as “Ahmad’s Diary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.”

At different times in the past years, efforts have been made to publish the Diary in its entirety—so that it may become available not only to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s followers and admirers, but to students of religions and philosophy as well; but the psychological hour had not yet arrived. Praise be to God, these obstacles are at last removed and God in His mysterious way has provided the

means through the instrumentality of “The New History Foundation”—so that the Diary may be given to the world in a series of uniform volumes.

The present book covers a period of three months—from July 1st to September 30th, 1913. It is hoped that the second volume will be ready for publication at an early date and so, with the help of God, from time to time various volumes will be given out until the whole series is complete.

In the course of writing the Diary, the author often refers to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás as the “Master” or the “Beloved.” This title was one of the many given to him by his Father, Bahá’u’lláh, the founder of the Bahá’í Movement. “Aga” is the Persian word for the “Master” or “Lord” and by this title, he was known to all the Bahá’ís, up to the year 1892, when Bahá’u’lláh departed from this life and then, he took to himself the name of “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”—the Servant of God. But to the people outside the Bahá’í community, he was ever known as “‘Abbás Effendi.”

The author in presenting this Diary to the world in its original form written some twenty years ago hopes that the reader will be able to conjure a picture of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s life and ministrations among the early adherents of the Bahá’í Movement.

In preparing *Abdul Baha in Egypt* for inclusion in this volume, great care was exercised in ensuring authenticity. However, it was felt that a light editing would make the text more accessible:

1. Several misspellings or punctuation errors corrected.
2. Transliteration of Persian names were brought in line with current method used in Bahá’í publications.
3. Ever five pages, the original page number from 1929 printing is given in angle bracket, thus <5>.
4. Subtitles at the beginning of each day’s entry have been removed as they contributed no extra information.
5. Several footnotes were added to facilitate identification of individuals or provide a fuller context.

Ahang Rabbani
Houston, Texas
November 2007

Excerpts from *Bahai News*

The *Bahai News* of the Bahá'ís of the United States began its life on March 21, 1910. Later it was named *Star of the West*.

***Bahai News*, vol. 1, Chicago (October 16, 1910) Ilm, No. 12**

First of a series of special news items pertaining to the tour of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Portion of a letter from Mr. Sydney Sprague to Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham.

Mount Carmel, August 29, 1910.

Dear Sister in the Holy Cause:

I have a very big piece of news to tell you. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has left this Holy Spot for the first time in forty-two years, and has gone to Egypt. Think of the vast significance and importance of this step! By it many prophecies of the sacred Scriptures are fulfilled. The Light and Life of 'Akká has departed and we feel as though we were now left in obscurity while Egypt is illumined, and that ancient country which has seen the prophets Joseph and Moses and even the infant Christ is now to see the Consummation of all the prophets. Will it appreciate and realize this Bounty? Everyone was astounded to hear of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure, for no one knew until the very last minute that he had any idea of leaving. The afternoon of the day he left, he came to Mírzá Asadu'lláh's¹⁰ home to see us and sat with us awhile beside a new well that has just been finished and said that he had come to taste the water. We did not realize that it was a good-bye visit. Then he took a carriage and went up the hill to the Holy Tomb (of the Báb). That night, as usual, the believers gathered before the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to receive that blessing, which every day is ours, of being in his presence, but we waited in vain,

¹⁰ A reference to Mírzá Asadu'lláh Isfahání, who was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother-in-law and had been entrusted with the conveyance of the remains of the Báb from Iran to the Holy Land. Later he followed his son, Dr. Amín Faríd, in rebellion against 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

for one of the sons-in-law came and told us that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had take the Khedivial steamer for Port Said. We could hardly believe it was true, so great was this news. Think how happy we must be that after forty-two years in this cage, the Divine Bird has spread His wings and in perfect freedom flown away.¹¹

The same issue includes the following:

SPECIAL.—Word has been received from Port Said that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has sailed from that port on a steamer for an unknown destination.

***Bahai News*, Vol. 1, Chicago (November 4, 1910) Qudrat, No. 13**

Egypt

Port Said.—‘Abdu’l-Bahá is in Alexandria and enjoying his sojourn in Egypt most heartily. Mírzá Ahmad Yazdí, just returning from Europe, has received permission to go to Alexandria and meet him.

***Bahai News*, Vol. 1, Chicago (November 23, 1910) Qawl, No. 14**

Second in a series of special news items pertaining to the sojourn of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Egypt.

“Out of Egypt have I called my son.”

To those who are familiar with the sacred prophecies and the history of the Bahá’í (Glorious) Revelation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s “going down into Egypt,” after forty years’ confinement in the Holy Land—in the prison town of ‘Akká, near the foot of Mt. Carmel—is an event fraught with wonderful and tremendous

¹¹ The author of this letter, Sydney Sprague, was married to the daughter of Mírzá Asadu’lláh and had been one of the early pioneer teachers. His book, *A Year With the Bahais in India and Burma*, was published in London in 1908. Sprague rendered valuable help in the running of the Bahá’í Tarbiyat School in Tehran.

significance; for it is, undoubtedly, that event whereby the Word of God, as uttered by the Prophet Hosea (11:1), finds its complete fulfillment—although foreshadowed in the sojourn of the infant Jesus in that land nearly two thousand years ago (St. Matt. 2:15).

It is an event that has stirred the Bahá'ís everywhere, for when it became known that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had departed for that ancient country of Joseph, there swept over the Bahá'í world a mighty spirit of activity. It is an event that will, doubtless, soon command the serious attention of the Jewish and Christian world (especially those who await the coming of the Son "in the glory of his Father"), as it has already commanded the attention of the Mohammedan world; for, at present, the Egyptian newspapers—the most influential in the Mohammedan world today—are divided into two camps: some praising 'Abdu'l-Bahá's work; others trying to stop the floodgate of his irresistible influence.

Moamid, a paper respected by all the Islamic world, says: "Although he ('Abdu'l-Bahá) has lived the greater part of his life in 'Akká, Syria, yet there are millions of people—in Persia, India, Europe and America—who follow him and respect him to the point of worship and adoration. Whosoever associates with him, finds him a man who has information upon all subjects of human interest; his words are eloquent and attract the hearts, and enkindle the souls. His teachings and conversation revolve around the center of the greatest of the world's problems: To remove entirely, religious, racial and patriotic prejudices and lays the foundation of a brotherhood and unity that will last throughout the ages and eternity."

Such is the statement of the leading newspaper printed in Arabic, while the editor of an influential Persian newspaper printed in Cairo writes in a personal letter that he was summoned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to his presence, and although a few weeks before, he wrote and published an article against the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, he accepted the invitation and left Cairo for Alexandria. He met 'Abdu'l-Bahá and became a changed man. He went a stranger and an avowed antagonist; he returned a friend, and will write an article in favor of the Cause. He writes: "Indeed, I was very much benefited in meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Arabic newspapers are now anxiously waiting to read my comment upon the matter. You shall read my paper No. 20 and believe you will

prize it very highly. There is no doubt that some people will slander and accuse me of being bought, but I do not care. I have seen the Truth, and I will write the truth, no matter what may happen.”

Many others, who have been the enemies of the Cause, have gone, either through curiosity or honest investigation, to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—the Servant of God and man—and have returned with the Glory of Truth in their faces.

What is the key to this irresistible spiritual power that thus opens the locked doors of the hearts of men? Those who are familiar with his Teachings, answer that it is his practice of them. He says: *“Be ye kind to the human world as be ye compassionate to the race of man. Deal with the stranger as you deal with the friends. Be ye gentle toward the outsiders as you are toward the beloved ones. Know ye the enemy as the friend. Look upon the satan as upon the angel and receive the unjust with the utmost love like unto a faithful one.”*

Truly, as of old, great miracles are transpiring on the banks of the river Nile, and the ancient land of the Pharaohs!

The following also appeared in the same issue:

News from the Orient.

Egypt

Port Said.—News of the progress of the Cause in Persian, India, Turkey, Arabia and the West, is received weekly and forwarded to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Alexandria. Pilgrims arriving from various parts of the world go to Alexandria. Thus, for the present, the eyes of all the Bahá’ís are turned toward that city, seeking enlightenment, wisdom and divine love.

***Bahai News*, Vol. 1, Chicago (December 12, 1910) Masa’il, No. 15**

Third of a series of special news items pertinent to the sojourn of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Egypt.

Special to the *Bahai News*:

You have asked for an account of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure to the land of Egypt. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not inform anyone that he was going to leave Haifa. The day he left he visited the Holy Tomb of the Báb on Mt. Carmel, and when he came down from the mountain of the Lord, he went direct to the steamer. This was the first anyone knew about the matter. Within two days he summoned to his presence, Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín¹², Shoghi Effendi, Khusraw¹³, and this servant. The only persons who accompanied ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Egypt were Mírzá Munír Zayn and ‘Abdu’l-Husayn, one of the pilgrims who was leaving at that time. When Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín arrived in Port Said, his brother Mírzá Munír returned to Haifa.

For nearly one month ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remained in Port Said and the friends of God came from Cairo, in turn, to visit him. One day he called me to accompany him when taking a walk in the streets of the city. He said: “Do you realize now the meaning of my statement when I was telling the friends that there was a wisdom in my indisposition?” I answered, “Yes, I do remember very well.” He continued, “Well, the wisdom was that I must always move according to the requirements of the Cause. Whatever the Cause requires for its promulgation, I will not delay in its accomplishment for one moment! Now, the Cause did require that I travel to these parts, and had I divulged my intention at that time, many difficulties would have arisen.”

The day that he left for Alexandria he did not mention the matter to anyone; nor did this servant know the time of his departure. However, when I heard that he had left, I hurried to the steamer and there met him with two pilgrims from ‘Ishqabad. He said: “Tell the friends, how, under severe circumstances of bodily weakness, I have accepted the hardships of traveling to promote the Word of God, to spread the Cause of God and to diffuse the Fragrances of God! I have left behind friends, relatives, and home for the sake of the Cause!” By this he meant that the believers of God must follow in his footsteps and illumine the East and the West with the lights of knowledge, peace, and brotherhood.

¹² Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín Zayn was a son of Zaynu’l-Muqarrabin, who had been an apostle of Bahá’u’lláh and had transcribed many of His Tablets. Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín served as a secretary to both ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and later to Shoghi Effendi.

¹³ Khusraw was an attendant of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá of Burmese origin.

While in Alexandria many mooted persons, formerly enemies of the Cause for years have met him and after being in his presence are changed entirely. Also, distinguished editors of Arabic and Persian newspapers, such as *Moaid* and *Tchehre Neina*, have talked with him and afterward wrote and published columns of praise and commendation on his Teachings and greatness. Thus the newspapers have given great publicity to the Movement. In regard to the *Moaid* article, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says: “A clipping from the newspaper of *Moaid*, which is the first newspaper of Egypt and its editor well known throughout the world for his learning, is enclosed. Formerly, this person, through the instigation of some influential resident Persians, wrote many articles against the Cause and called the Bahá’ís infidels. But when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived in this country, with one interview he was completely changed and contradicted all his former articles with this one. This is the type of the just man!”

There is no doubt that this trip is fraught with wonderful results for the Cause and many people will become awakened. In one of these interviews ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated he may go to Cairo and pass the remainder of the winter in that city. The Egyptian winter weather is ideal, temperate and agrees with him. Since he has arrived in Egypt his health is much improved, and should he decide to go to America it will not be before the springtime.

With great love and greeting to all the friends in the West,
I am always

Your co-worker in the Cause,
[Siyyid] Asadu’lláh Qumí¹⁴

Bahai News, Vol. 1, Chicago (January 19, 1911) Sultan, No. 17

Fourth of a series of special news items pertaining to the sojourn of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Egypt.

A Call to the American Bahá’ís
From Muhammad Yazdí

¹⁴ He was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s attendant during His journey to the West.

Praise be to God! that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has left the gloomy city of imprisonment for the freedom of the world. His only aim is to teach and raise the Standard of the Cause. When he was under the surveillance of the authorities in ‘Akká and confined to a limited prison life, he created the spirit of happiness and joy in every heart, and never complained, neither did he show distress or sadness on account of that imprisonment. When freedom was proclaimed in Turkey, a constitution declared, the prisoners set free, and a new era of brotherhood and good fellowship ushered in among the various sects, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while happy for the freedom of the people, longed for his own imprisonment. His opinion was that under all circumstances he ought to serve the world of humanity, and while living in ‘Akká he served it effectively, even though a prisoner; but being freed, nothing was left for him to do in ‘Akká, and, like a bird released from its cage, he soared to other climes and countries.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in all the divine characteristics is intensely human and keenly alive to the joys and sorrows of existence. There is no one who feels more acutely the sufferings of humanity than he and no one loves his fellow-men more than he. Here, in Alexandria, he lives exactly like other men; he goes into the stores, into the mosques, into the prisons. He converses just as kindly and amiably with the humblest man in the street as with the highest in the land. His matchless and magnetic kindness attracts all, whether ignorant or wise, rich or poor; he is no respecter of persons and in some instances, after a half-hour’s conversation, his bitterest enemy has become his staunchest friend.

His coming to Egypt has added great enthusiasm and zeal to the hearts of the friends. He has uplifted them from a state of comparative oblivion to a world-wide celebrity. He is no more a possible myth or a fable; he is there, standing “powerful, mighty, and supreme!” The sun of his presence radiates the light of love and compassion; people see him, feel the wonderful influence of his presence, talk with him, walk with him as did the men of old walking with Jesus of Nazareth along the shores of Galilee. They can no longer doubt him and his Teachings.

When he first arrived in Egypt, a great cry and clamor was raised by the representatives of the people (the newspapers). All were expressing opinions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. No one could form a just and impartial view of him. Facts were exaggerated and

misrepresentations abounded in every paper. One writer expressed the opinion that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá hates all religions, that his followers throughout the world are very few, and that his teachings are destructive to the well-being and prosperity of human society.

Such were the conditions when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with his might and his glory, his meekness and humility, entered the land of Pharaoh. But lo! after a short time the clouds of misrepresentation were dispelled and the light of reality shone forth with great splendor. So much so, that at present there is not one dissenting voice in the land of Egypt about the greatness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Muqaddam, one of the most influential Arabic newspapers, in a long article of November 28, 1910, comes out valiantly and defends in most eloquent terms the Teachings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Not being satisfied with this, the editor quotes from the Book of Aqdas wherein Bahá’u’lláh commands all despotic rulers to lay aside their absolutism and accept the constitution and establish in their kingdoms the Houses of Justice. He even upbraids in the strongest terms the other newspaper writers, calling attention to the responsibilities and duties of their positions—that is, to mirror forth facts and realities and not falsehoods and accusations. He says that every writer has been reveling in a riotous feast of exaggeration and derision; that they have gone beyond the limit of politeness and courtesy, which attributes differentiate man from beast. Now, if we compare such articles with what first appeared concerning ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we will find them as different as day from night.

Some people have expressed anxieties and fears because of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s possible visit to America; they think that the newspapers will write sensational articles and ridicule the Cause. Such people are very short-sighted. They have not realized deeply, or superficially, the force of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence. Neither have they dreamed of the magnetic influence of his Highness (rather his Kindness, ah, me!). He is a man whose very appearance will solve all the perplexed anxieties of the visionaries of disaster. We as Bahá’ís have nothing to be afraid of. We are the spiritual physicians of the world; we are the torch-bearers of the ideal civilization; we are the teachers of the Kingdom of Abhá. Should we be afraid to receive the One who is the source of all our inspiration and all our light; America must raise a gladsome voice of spiritual beatitude, spread a heavenly

banquet, and be prepared, for “he shall come as a thief in the night.” Future historians will record the coming of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to America as a great and momentous event. Broaden your vision and look into the future, when the nations of America shall celebrate, from one end of the continent to the other, the anniversary of the day when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá set foot upon “the land of the brave and the free!” Future generations will sing in anthems and songs the resplendent glory of such a day. Children will be taught to respect and love that day. America is on the threshold of a great spiritual awakening, and it must arise to fulfill the responsibilities of such a wonderful and glowing promise. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written to you in several Tablets that he will come as soon as the friends in that country are united as bands of steel or a golden chain of life. Now it depends upon you. You must show to the world that you are united, that you are worthy to receive him in your midst. Let not this opportunity slip from your grasp. Arise, work, band together, and remove the difficulties from his path. This day is not for fretting and discontentment, nor imagining the possibility of ridicule by the masses. Have you not faith in him? Has he not grappled with and solved the greatest problems for the past sixty years! Has he not conversed with the wisest men of the age? Again we say, prepare the way for his coming! Let not your minds be troubled with outside questions. He is able to change the ridicule into praise, the enmity into friendship and the derision into exaltation. When he arrived in Alexandria we were not prepared to receive him. There is no need of preparing houses and establishments for his reception; the probability is that he will take a place for himself when he arrives. The first thing that he did when he arrived in Alexandria was to take a house, and all the friends from far and near flocked around him. He does not want your houses and palaces, but your hearts. Prepare your hearts, purify your hearts, cleanse your hearts, the he may find a place therein!

The life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is simple; his attitude is humble; his needs are very few. You think that if he should come to America you must have a house prepared and surround him with luxuries of modern civilization. Far from it! With love, unity, and harmony, shining like stars of heaven in your midst, a little cottage is greater than the imperial palace of kings. All through his life his sole purpose and aim has been to spread the fragrances of God, to serve the Kingdom of Abhá, and to sacrifice himself for the good of the world. He has done all

these; nay, rather, his services to man cannot be measured by any criterion. His life, like unto a tempestuous sea, is ever in motion, casting pearls of significance and truth upon its shore. Humanity owes to him a debt that can never be paid with money or gratitude. Notwithstanding all he has done for the world, hearken to what he says in a recent Tablet:

The invisible hand has opened the doors, and wisdom requires that 'Abdu'l-Bahá hasten to the country of Egypt; for he is infinitely ashamed and chagrined that he has not yet been assisted in servitude. Perchance, through traveling in this land, he may be assisted in the future to some small service. Now we are living in the country of Canaan and are supplicating day and night at the Threshold of Mercifulness and beg confirmation and assistance for the friends of God, so that all of us may participate and become partners in the servitude of the Holy Threshold and be aided in accomplishing one service.

(Signed) Muhammad Yazdí

The following appeared in the same issue:

From Sydney Sprague.

At present, I am in Alexandria with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who has given me the many supplications from America to translate; also Mrs. Ford's new book, *The Oriental Rose*, which I am translating with Mírzá Mahmúd of India. The book is finely written and ought to be of great help in attracting people to the Cause. I notice Mrs. Ford gives the number of oriental Bahá'ís as twelve millions. A movement which is growing every day cannot have statistics. No one knows how many there are, and to make a statement that there are many millions only opens us to criticism. If we are asked the number of Bahá'ís in the world, is it not better to reply that it is impossible to know, and that we care much more about the quality of the believers than the quantity? This is the policy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the following incident will show:

Two nights ago, an American journalist, Mr. William Ellis, representing The Continent, came especially to Alexandria to interview 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was my privilege to be the translator on this occasion. One of the first questions Mr. Ellis asked was: "How many followers have you?" The answer was: "We have no statistics and we do not consider these things important. It is the quality of the believers we care for. If a few were characterized with the attributes of God and live according to the divine Teachings, it is praiseworthy. Five diamonds are worth more than five million stones." Again the journalist asked: "Have you not many followers in America?" "I have a few friends in different cities who love me," was the reply. "Is it not true that half of Persia is Bahá'í?" persisted the journalist. "No; it is not," replied 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "but many there who are not Bahá'ís, are influenced by our Teachings." "Are there not many followers in the Turkish Empire?" "No," and again 'Abdu'l-Bahá reiterated the non-importance of numbers. The journalist seemed very much taken aback. He evidently expected 'Abdu'l-Bahá to boast of a large following. What an example 'Abdu'l-Bahá has set us!

Then Mr. Ellis asked briefly: "What are the Teachings of the Bahá'í Revelation and in what does it differ from other religions?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "While all the other religions are hating and denouncing each other, the Bahá'ís are the friends of all religions and the lovers of all peoples, and their aim is to unite and harmonize all." There were many other questions which drew forth wonderful, illuminating explanations from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I have not the time to write them now, but be on the lookout for an account of this interview in The Continent. Mr. Ellis is on his way to Persia to write articles about that country, so he may write of the Cause there.

There are two interesting English persons here, a Mr. and Mrs. Atwood, at one time prominent spiritualists in London. As Mr. Atwood is slightly paralyzed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to see them, much to their great joy. They are now eager to serve the Cause.

There are pilgrims here from Persia, Russia, India and England, and every night we meet in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house and our cups are filled to overflowing. His health is good. When Mr. Ellis asked him if he was benefited by the change of air, he replied: "Certainly, one who has been a prisoner for forty years must be benefited to breathe another air." I thought to myself, can we Bahá'ís realize what those forty years mean? The

Christians think so much of the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness and observe a penitential season to commemorate this; but forty years for every day a year!

(signed) Sydney Sprague

The following also appeared in the same issue:

News from the Orient

Egypt.

Port Said.—Many pilgrims from different parts of the world are arriving and leaving here for Alexandria to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Letters received here from various parts give glowing descriptions of the progress and advancement of the Cause everywhere.

Bahai News, Vol. 1, Chicago (February 7, 1911), No. 18

A Wonderful Movement in the East.

A visit to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Alexandria.

To most of us the world consists of modern Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia, and since the Russo Japanese war, in a lesser degree, Japan. Our daily newspapers keep us informed, more or less accurately, of social, political, and religious movements that occur within those lands, but of the rest of the world we are for the most part ignorant. In this there is a danger that we may fail to read the signs of the times, not because we are necessarily lacking in wisdom, but because we do not behold the signs. The Bahá'í movement is a good illustration of this. Not one Englishman in a thousand has heard of this religious and social uprising in the East, yet its adherents are estimated to number millions, and its power and influence are growing: week by week! In order that our readers may be informed about this remarkable outpouring of the divine spirit, a representative of The Christian Commonwealth recently called

upon Mr. Wellesley Tudor Pole, who has just returned from the East, where he has been studying the movement at first hand.

“How did you come to be interested in the Bahá’í movement?” he said.

“I first heard of the movement when on a visit to Constantinople prior to the Turkish revolution in 1908, and I was very much impressed by the fact that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could exert such an influence from within prison walls. When I returned to London I found that very little was known of the movement, and I determined to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, known to the outside world by the name of ‘Abbás Effendi, on the first available opportunity and discover for myself the secret of his power.”

“And it is most extraordinary,” Mr. Pole continued, “that so little should be known of this movement in England. There are said to be between two and three million Bahá’ís at least in Persia alone, and many more in India, the Middle East, America, France, Russia, and elsewhere. There is no religious freedom in Persia; if there were it would be found that very great numbers of men would declare themselves disciples. No less than thirty thousand men and women in Persia alone are reported to have sacrificed everything for the movement. I met an old Persian Bahá’í in Alexandria his name was Shaykh Muhammad who joined the movement when he was a young man, and he was publicly flogged and all his property was taken from him. He and his whole household were sent out into the mountains in the heart of winter without food or money. Many times he has been imprisoned, and it has been a miracle how he has escaped with his life. In many towns and villages he has been stoned and brutally treated. Hundreds of men and women have proved themselves ready to endure such treatment, to leave home and country, for the sake of their great ideal.”

“What is the ideal which has inspired such heroism?”

“The fundamental principle of what has come to be called the Bahá’í Revelation is a belief in the underlying unity of religions and peoples. It stands for the harmony of all spiritual truths and all faiths, for international peace and goodwill. It asserts the equality of the sexes, the duty of everyone to serve the community, and the duty of the community to give opportunity for such service. It desires a social order where the brotherhood of man shall be expressed in all the relationships of life, and where the community shall be responsible for the sick,

the aged, the infirm, and all who cannot obtain their own livelihood.”

“What gave birth to this movement?”

“It arose in 1844, when a young Persian, Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad, went about Eastern Europe prophesying that a great teacher would follow him. He called himself the Báb (the Gate) and stood as the John the Baptist of the new movement. He affirmed that the coming teacher would not only fulfill the prophecies of the Qur’an, but also of the sacred scriptures of the Hindu and Hebrew peoples. Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad was bitterly persecuted, and finally shot in 1850. By this time the movement had spread all over Persia, and in the early fifties Bahá’u’lláh, the son of a noble Persian family, came forward and proclaimed himself the teacher who had been promised.”

“Bahá’u’lláh, by the way, had never met the Báb. In 1863, by an arrangement between the Persian and Turkish Governments, spurred on by the mullás, who were alarmed by the spread of the new teaching, Bahá’u’lláh and his family were first sent to Constantinople, then banished to Adrianople, and finally, in 1868, exiled to ‘Akká, a fortified Turkish town on the Syrian coast, where Bahá’u’lláh was kept in more or less close confinement until his death, at the age of seventy five, in 1892. At times he was treated in the most brutal way chained to other men by the neck and subjected to torture. In spite of the imprisonment of the leader, the movement spread with tremendous rapidity throughout the Middle East. Pilgrims came from India and other distant parts to receive the blessing of Bahá’u’lláh at the prison bars.”

“What happened when he died?”

“He left a book of laws and many other works, and instructed his followers to look to his eldest son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to carry on his work and to expound his writings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which means the ‘Servant of God,’ was kept in prison at ‘Akká until the time of the Turkish Revolution in 1908, when, along with all political prisoners, he was released. He went to live near Haifa, close to Mt. Carmel, but about two months ago he started on a journey, and is now in Egypt. That is a bare outline of the progress of the movement, but it gives no idea of the extraordinary power that lies behind it.”

“Did you meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on your recent visit to the East?”

“Yes, I met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá near Alexandria, where he was staying with some of his followers. Let me try to give you a word picture of him. He is sixty five years of age, of medium height and of commanding presence; he has long silver gray beard and hair, blue grey eyes, a fine forehead, a wonderful carriage, and a sweet but powerful voice. He was dressed when I saw him, in cream white robes and a white Persian headdress. You feel at once that here is a master of men and a marvelous spiritual personality. He seemed to me to focus in a truly divine manner the spiritual ideal of the coming age. When one has come in contact with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s power, or rather the power behind him, one has no doubt that this movement will vitally affect the religious and social evolution of the whole world. At his table I met pilgrims who had come to receive his blessing from many parts of the world, and representing almost every faith the world knows. Jews, Mohammedans Hindus, Zoroastrians and Christians sat around one table, all holding this one great belief that God has again sent one of his messengers to earth, and that the great call that was focused in Bahá’u’lláh is the call for the unity of nations, the brotherhood of man, the peace of the whole world, and the realization of those fundamental truths that lie behind all faiths. Bahá’u’lláh did not say to the Christian, ‘Come out of your religious order,’ nor did he say to the Mohammedan ‘Turn your back on your faith.’ He said to every man, ‘Go and live out your faith in unity and brotherhood with all mankind, and thus show that behind all expressions of religion there is one religion and one God.’”

The following appeared in the same issue:

Extracts from a letter from Mr. Wellesley Tudor Pole to *Bahai News*:

You may be interested in hearing of my recent visit to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at Ramleh, near Alexandria. I spent nine days at Alexandria and Cairo during the second half of November, 1910. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s health had very greatly improved since his arrival from Port Said. He was looking strong and vigorous in every way. He

spoke much of the work in America, to which he undoubtedly is giving considerable thought. He also spoke a good deal about the work that is going forward in different European centers as well as in London, and he expects great things from England during the coming year. It may interest you to know, however, that the Bahá'í Movement is beginning to take a more serious hold on public attention in this country, and that during the next few weeks a number of meetings are to be held in London, Bristol and in the North, which are likely to produce far reaching results. A Bahá'í paper is to be read at the Universal Races Congress in London next July.

Yours faithfully,

[Major] Wellesley Tudor Pole.

Bahai News, Vol. 1, Chicago (March 2, 1911), No. 19

Fifth of a series of special news items pertaining to the sojourn of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Egypt.

Special. Word has been received from Cairo, dated February 21, that 'Abdu'l-Bahá will not journey to America this year.

The following article concerning 'Abdu'l-Bahá, ('Abbás Effendi) appeared in the January 19th issue of El-Ahram (The Pyramids) an Arabic newspaper printed in Cairo:

'Abbás Effendi the Leader of the Bahá'ís.

Statements Regarding His Morals and Religion.

Continually, the greatness of the Leader of the Bahá'ís, 'Abbás Effendi, is the topic of conversation, among the men of affairs and statesmen. The wise men of Alexandria and the nobility of that city are paying him great respect and homage. Lately he has received many letters from his numerous followers in the United States, requesting him to travel to those parts so that they may meet him. They have prepared a great house in New York in accord with his station and position amongst them.

However, it is probable that he will not respond to their invitation, on account of the remoteness of the country and the length of the trip.

We have received a letter from the celebrated scholar, Shawkry Effendi, who has just arrived from Syria, in which he praises 'Abbás Effendi, explains his religion and produces certain arguments in his favor.

He says: "The wisdom of 'Abbás Effendi, our respected guest, descends from a family which was noble in lineage and descent in the Kingdom of Persia. He is the son of the 'Dweller of Paradise, Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Movement, and he is the successor of his Father. In regard to his morality and character, he is the pattern of dignity and perfection. He is gracious, generous, noble minded, philanthropic, charitable and full of benevolence. He is very kind to the poor and patient to the indigent. He does not make any difference between the followers of any religion, whether they be Christians, Jews, Mohammedans or Brahmans. To him all are the same; he looks upon them as part of the same family of humanity and not their particular religion. The aim of his movement is the unity of religions in the world and their equality among the children of men. He thinks that the differences of religions are impeding the progress of the world and he believes that the removal of these differences will benefit mankind."

"This religion has spread greatly and is carried to Europe and America so much so that today the number of Bahá'ís has reached the number of fifteen million, men, women and children included. Many of these Bahá'ís are in New York, Chicago and India, Persia, Egypt and Syria, and it is continually growing and spreading."

"The Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh is in 'Akká, called Bahjí and every year the Bahá'ís come from all parts of the world to visit it."

"Twice I have called upon 'Abbás Effendi while in Ramleh and have seen the poor and indigent gathered around his house waiting for him to come out and when he appears, they beg alms and he gives to them. This is just a short sketch of his generous qualities and I confess my inability to do it justice. His physical appearance is medium size, white hair, penetrating eyes, smiling face and wonderful countenance, courteous, and his manner, simplicity itself, disliking any ostentation and show. He is a wise

man, a philosopher and his knowledge of the Turkish, Persian and Arabic is unsurpassed.”

“He knows the history of nations and understands the causes of their rise and fall.”

“He is sixty years old and on account of certain nervous ailments he has come to Egypt for change of air. He personally reads all the articles and letters sent him from all parts of the world, and answers the most important of them in his Persian handwriting which is famous for its beauty. Many of the great men of this country and delegates from other nations have met him and he gives a personal interview to each one of them. No one has visited him without leaving him impressed by his presence and praising his qualities and wondering at his magnanimity and his astonishing mind.”

“Concerning the reports of his leaving ‘Akká and the statement that he is against the Constitution, this was without foundation and the proof of this is his endeavor to unite the religions in the world and establish equality among nations. If such were his qualities, working against religions and constitution, and on the other hand trying to bring union and harmony amongst them, how can we reconcile the two? This is indeed far from him, for he is a man who advocated the Constitution from the very beginning and before the Turkish people received their Constitution. But the real object of his coming to Egypt is for the change of air and his physical condition. This is the real truth we are proclaiming at the top of our voice and if there is any virtue in it, it requires no praise or blame.”

This is what our correspondent writes and we thought it advisable to quote it as we received it.

Bahai News, Vol. 2, Chicago (April 28, 1911), No. 3

Egypt

Alexandria.—A daily newspaper, The Valley of the Nile, in its issue of March 22nd presents a full page concerning the life and teachings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It is a noteworthy fact that all the prominent people of Egypt are beginning to feel his spiritual

presence and call upon him to receive instruction. The news of the looking forward of the American Bahá'ís to the coming of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to that country has reached here and it is hoped that all the friends may attain to this blessing and that the Center of the Covenant may travel to the West. Not only are the American Bahá'ís anxious to have 'Abdu'l-Bahá in their midst, but the friends of every country are supplicating him to visit them. Now that he is free the believers are not satisfied with Tablets as Messages, but they long to have him personally.

Star of the West, Vol. 2, Chicago (September 8, 1911), No. 10

Impressions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá while in Ramleh.

By Mr. Louis G. Gregory.

I am asked by the *Star of the West* for impressions gathered during a recent pilgrimage to 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Ramleh and the Holy City. Now I can respond but briefly; but later I hope that a full account may be given to the friends of the Cause of all the valuable lessons received from the Perfect Man.

It is the will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that all the friends should be united and happy in the light of the Kingdom. On one occasion Bahá'u'lláh said, "Heaven is happiness and peace. Hell is the hearts of those who deny and oppose." Today the happiness and peace of the Glory of God (Bahá'u'lláh) are reflected in the clear Mirror of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thus by meeting him one meets all the Prophets and Manifestations of cycles and ages past. It is difficult for one to realize at the time, or for a long time afterwards, the true honor of such a meeting. To one who realizes even faintly who this Servant of God is and what powers he represents, such a meeting is high above all honors of earth. But no soul can give adequate testimony of what 'Abdu'l-Bahá may be to any other soul. With mental and spiritual horizon more or less limited, each pilgrim discerns according to his capacity the Majesty and Power that radiate from the Center of God's Covenant.

At Ramleh, ‘Abbás Effendi* might at times be seen walking about the streets. Oft times he would ride upon the electric tramway, making change and paying his fare in the most democratic fashion. His reception room was open to believers and non believers alike. Upon a visit to some unfortunates one day I asked if they knew him. “O yes,” they responded, “he has been in this house.” Thus in one way or another, thousands of Persians had opportunity to see ‘Abbás Effendi; but among these how few perceived ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Viewed with the outer eye, he is about the medium height, with symmetrical features. His lineaments indicate meekness and gentleness, as well as power and strength. His color is about that of parchment. His hands are shapely, with the nails well manicured. His forehead is high and well rounded. His nose is slightly aquiline; his eyes light blue and penetrating; his hair is silvery, and long enough to touch the shoulders; his beard is white. His dress was the Oriental robes, graceful in their simplicity. On his head rested a light tar bush, surrounded by a white, turban. His voice is powerful, but capable of producing infinite pathos and tenderness. His carriage is erect and altogether so majestic and beautiful that it is passing strange that anyone seeing him would not be moved to say: “This truly is the King of men!”

On the rational plane his wisdom is incomparable. During the time of my visit, persons were present from different parts of the world. But people of acquired learning are but as children to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. They were reverent in their attitude toward him and one of them, an Oxford man, praised his wisdom with much enthusiasm. They sought his advice and found it of the highest value in application to life.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá has the power to make his friends very happy. What music and harmony, joy and peace, may enter into the lives of those who attain this meeting! He has a balm for every wound and feeds hungry souls with the Manna of his Perfect Love. One of the friends at Cairo, a noted worker in the Cause, exclaimed, “If I could only see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá once a week!” At ‘Akká and Haifa were to be found those who had spent most of their lives with him. But they were all longing for his Presence. Among the letters received by him at Ramleh was one from the

* The name by which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is known among those not believers.

daughter of a king, expressing as her utmost desire a visit at the threshold of his door. This is the Power of the Spirit.

Thus the friends of the Cause may catch a glimpse of what is in store for them if he visits America. Nor should we spare any pains or hesitate at any sacrifices to ensure his coming. The Reality of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the supreme joy of the Kingdom, is found by promoting that which tends to unity and harmony among the friends of God and the whole human family. “Son of Man: Lift up thy heart with delight, that thou mayest be prepared to meet Me and to mirror forth My Beauty.”

The following appeared in the same issue:

News Items

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, after staying nearly three months in Cairo—during which time he was interviewed by many prominent people—returned again to Ramleh, the delightful suburb of Alexandria in July. He was accompanied by Mírzá Asadu’lláh, Mírzá Munír, Mírzá Mahmúd and Áqá Khursraw. On August 11th, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá departed for Europe; arriving first in Marseilles, France.