

# A MESSAGE FROM ABDUL BAHÁ, HEAD OF THE BAHÁIS

## The Time Has Come, He Says, for Humanity to Hoist the Standard of the Oneness of the Human World, So That Dogmatic Formulas and Superstitions May End.

WITHIN the last week there has come to New York an old man, with a worn and beautiful face, who wears a long, brown gown and a white turban, and speaks the strange-sounding guttural language of Persia. On the pier he was welcomed by hundreds of people, for he is Abdul Baha, or "The Servant of God," the head of the Baháist movement, and he is known to tens of thousands of followers all over the world as the "Master."

For forty years he has been in prison, and his father, the former head of the Baháists, died in prison. Their offense was indeed great, for they taught a doctrine against which no autocratic power could stand. They preached the love of God and the brotherhood of man and for this the Persian Government exiled and the Turkish Government imprisoned them.

Four years ago, in July, 1908, the young Turks came into the control of the Government and a constitution was given to the country. Then the prison doors opened for Abdul Baha and he found himself free. He had gone into the prison a boy; he left it an old man.

He had not complained and indeed, for some years it had been made easy for him by the affection of his jailers and the gradual perception, by the Government, of the fact that a man who teaches the common brotherhood of all humanity may not be personally violent; but none the less he rejoiced in his freedom. With the passing of the years his followers had grown rapidly and he had a wish to see them, especially those who lived in foreign countries.

Although he was old and had not for more than forty years gone beyond the city of Acre, in Syria, he was attracted by the thought of seeing the big world. The Baháists believe above all things in education and in broadening the mind by contact with all nations and races, so it was eminently consistent for Abdul Baha to go first to London and then to come to America to see the many disciples in this country.

The Baháist movement is not yet seventy years old and has grown amazingly. It has suffered persecutions which may be equalled but can hardly be surpassed by the martyrdoms of the early Christians.

A young Persian, who called himself the Bab or the "Gate," arose in 1844 and began to preach a doctrine of spirituality. He rated the Mohammedan Priests, and declared that the truth of religion had been so encumbered with ceremonies and dogmas that there must be radical and immediate reforms. In a few years he had won many followers, and the Government became alarmed. Great persecutions were begun, and during the years, in which the Bab preached there were perhaps 30,000 martyrs. Soon he himself fell a victim to the official hatred and was hanged against a wall and shot.

Some years after his death the leadership of the Baháists fell on a Persian of great wealth and high rank. He received

the name of Baha Ullah, (Glory of God,) and in the early '60s he revived the persecuted faith and gathered together its scattered followers. The movement, which had seemed to be on the verge of collapse, suddenly became more vigorous than ever.

His property was promptly confiscated, and he was exiled. To be rid of his wealth was a satisfaction to Baha Ullah—"Praise be to God," he cried, "I am now free"—but the exile entailed great hardships.

He went with his family to Bagdad, where he taught what seemed to the mind of the Government, pernicious doctrines. "The army of the Baháist dispensation," he said, "is the love of God; its victory is the ecstasy of the knowledge of God; its battle is that of truth; its warfare is against selfishness; its patience is its reserve; its entire meekness is its conquering power and its love for all is a glory for ever more." It was too much for any autocracy. He was summoned to Constantinople and then sent to the prison at Acre.

In his prison Baha Ullah wrote a book of laws which govern his followers and he simplified the teachings of the Baháists and made the movement universal rather than Persian and Mohammedan. Despite his sufferings, which were great at the beginning of his confinement, he accomplished a vast deal of work and later on when his jailers had learned to love and trust him he received friends from time to time and was able to spread his teachings in that manner.

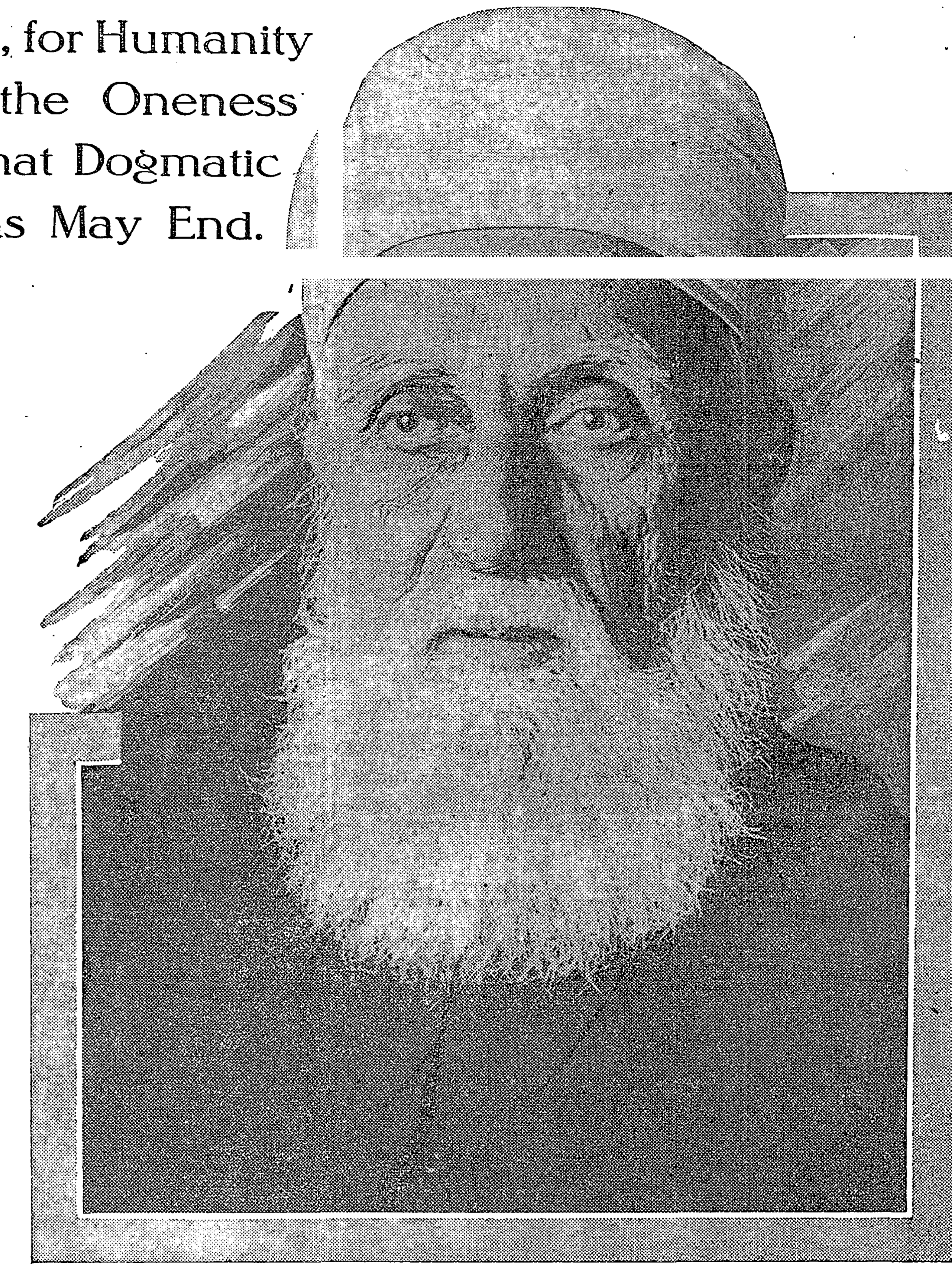
In 1892 he died, and his son, Abbas Effendi now known as Abdul Baha, the Servant of God, took his place as leader. There is no tradition that the leadership should pass from father to son; there is indeed no priesthood among the Baháists. It was the spirituality of Abdul Baha which made him the person best suited to interpret the movement to the world.

Like his father he teaches that the love of God and man are the only things that count. To be a Baháist one does not have to give up his religion in which one has been born. A Christian remains a Christian, a Mohammedan remains a Mohammedan, a Buddhist is still a Buddhist. Only they emphasize not the doctrines of their faiths but the spirit. An they are all brothers to one another.

To do away with prejudices—this is the lesson Abdul Baha preaches. Prejudices of nationality, of race, of religion all these are hindrances to the love of God and of man, and we must forget them. Up to the present perhaps as many as 50,000 persons have died for this belief.

Needless to say Abdul Baha is a much occupied man, and it was not easy to secure an appointment with him. He is not exclusive in his ideas by any manner of means. In his house at Acre all men and women are welcome at all times, but he has to be shielded a little by his friends that he may not overexert himself in his desire to make all the world welcome.

The reception room in his apartment



Abdul Baha, Head of the Baháist Movement.

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was filled with flowers. There was not long to wait, for Abdul Baha is prompt and business like. In two minutes a young Persian opened a door and asked the reporter to enter.

A rather small man with a white beard and the kindest and gentlest face in the world held out a hand. In his brown habit he was extraordinarily picturesque, but one did not think long of that, for he

smiled a charming smile and, walking before and holding his visitor's hand, he led her to a chair. Then he seated himself in another chair, facing her, and spoke in Persian to the younger man, who interpreted.

"He says," said the interpreter, "that you are welcome, most welcome." The reporter said she was grateful to Abdul Baha for receiving her. To this,

when translated, the Master said, politely, that he, also, was most happy at the meeting. The reporter had been told that she need not ask a question to begin the conversation, but that Abdul Baha would speak, so after the exchange of courtesies, she kept silent while the old man, who has spent his life in a Turkish prison, looked at her with the interest one feels in a new specimen of humanity.

Then he began to speak in short sentences, without waiting for replies. The interpreter translated them in perfect English.

"Praise be to God, the women of America are progressive. Every day they are making more and more progress. I hope that they will be the peers of men. They should progress equally with men."

"This is according to the institution of Baha Ullah, that there should not be a difference between men and women."

"In the kingdom of the animals there is male and female, but they are equals. In the vegetable kingdom also there is male and female, but one is the equal of the other. So should it be with mankind. In idealism women are the superiors of men in kindness and in gentleness, but they are now their inferiors in intellectuality. This should not be."

"Women should progress intellectually until they stand side by side with men."

"The women of America are progressing toward this, and they will attain it, for it is just. Women shall indeed be the equals and the companions of men."

The words delivered in this fashion, in short epigrams, took one mile and miles away from New York. Outside the window was Broadway; under the building the subway; downstairs was all the paraphernalia of a big hotel, but all these things were far less real than the picture the old teacher called up. The only things that seemed near were the mountains of Carmel, so near the Village of Nazareth, and the fields where the lilies grow more beautiful than Solomon in his glory.

The strangeness of it all, the manner of speaking, the curious language, the unfamiliar dress might well have made the listener awkward and ill at ease, but one does not feel awkward with Abdul Baha. The reporter had wondered just how to address him, but that seemed a foolish matter now. It really made no difference what you did or what you said, this kind old teacher would know that you meant well.

When he had spoken his words in the cause of women Abdul Baha paused and inquired graciously if the visitor wished to ask a question.

"Ask him," ventured the reporter, "for a message to Americans. Tell him that a great newspaper sent me, and that many thousands will read what he says."

When this was translated to him the Teacher's face lighted up with the charming smile. He was evidently pleased and interested that a big newspaper should have sent a woman—so, at least, the smile seemed to signify.

With some gestures and with his bright eyes now on his interpreter and now on his visitor, he began again to speak in short sentences.

"Praise be to God, the dark ages have passed."

"A new age of great brilliancy has been ushered in. The minds of men have developed. Man has made discoveries in the mysteries of nature. The great capabilities of the human world have become manifest. The susceptibilities of the heart have become more acute."

"The time has arrived for the world of humanity to hoist the standard of the oneness of the human world, so that solidarity and unity may connect all the nations of the world, so that dogmatic formulas and superstitions may end, so that the essential reality underlying all the religions founded by all the prophets may be revealed."

"That reality is one. It is the love of God. It is the progress of the world. It is the oneness of humanity."

"It is the bond which can unite all the human race."

"It is the attainment of the benefits of the most great peace; it is the discarding of warfare."

"It is progressiveness; it is the undertaking of colossal tasks in life; it is the oneness of public opinion."

"Therefore strive, oh ye people, and put forth your efforts that this reality may overcome the lesser forces in life, that this king of reality may alone rule all humanity."

"Thus may the world of mankind be reformed."

"Thus may a new Springtime be ushered in and a fresh spirit may resurrect man. The individuals of humanity, like refreshed plants, shall put forth leaves and shall blossom and fructify so that the face of the earth shall become the long promised and delectable paradise, so that the great bestowal—the supreme virtues of man—shall glisten over the face of the earth."

"Then shall the world of existence have attained maturity."

"This is my message."

He ceased speaking. There had been no pause in the little sermon, one sentence had followed as fast as the reporter could write them down, though he was always careful not to speak too rapidly for her convenience. It had been for one so busy a long interview, and the reporter rose.

The master of the Baháists rose, too, with all his benevolent and fatherly heart in his kind eyes. He gave a little but very humorous laugh and patted his visitor on the shoulder, speaking to the interpreter, who smiled, too.

"He says," translated the interpreter, "that he is pleased with you."

Then, obeying a gesture, he took a rose from a vase and brought it to his master. Abdul Baha put it in the reporter's hand and gave his parting blessing.

"May the divine spirit help you to do great works in the world," he said gently. In a minute the door had closed and the reporter stepped from Palestine to the conventional hotel sitting room. The interpreter was beside her.

"Is he not a kind man?" he asked, all his face aglow with affection for his master. "He is the kindest man in the world."

"Indeed, yes."

"You travel with him?"

"Yes, I interpret for him. I am his nephew."

An American Baháist came up. His fashion of putting his devotion was somewhat in contrast to the Oriental way of speaking that had prevailed in the apartment, but it bore witness to the love the master inspires.

"For that man," he said, "I'd jump head first from a fifteenth-story window."

So it is with everybody who has come in contact with Abdul Baha. In Acre he is loved by rich and poor, by Mohammedan and Christian, by men of all races. He takes literally the Scriptural injunction to give his goods to the poor, for he has rarely more than the clothes he wears, and the gifts he receives from his disciples all over the world soon find their way to those who, he thinks, need them most.

A faith that is lived must grow, and Baháism spreads in India, in Africa, in Persia, in England and France, and in the United States. It is not easy to give up prejudices, but Baháists who have done so find that they are considerably happier without them.

"I used to wash my hands after shaking hands with a Christian," said a Mohammedan Baháist. "Now I want to shake hands with all the world."

## AMONG BEST-SELLER ART MODELS

### A Unique Colony of Men and Women Who Pose for Up-to-Date Novels.

WHEN looking at the illustrations in many of the best sellers of the day the New Yorker—and, for that matter, others, too—does not think of the models who posed for the heroes and heroines. They are interested in the story itself, and perhaps in the writer. But although these are, of course, the two main features, there yet remains another—the illustrations. By far the greater number of the heroes in the up-to-date novels are posed for by members of the colony of models in New York. This is true also of magazine heroes and heroines.

The New York colony includes some of the more noteworthy originals for the most important heroines of the day. Sometimes a model will pose for the heroine of two different novels in a season. Of course, the results are different, for the medium may be. One artist may have been confined to pen and ink, while another can work in oils. Besides, no two artists have the same limitations. Often a model will be a blonde in one book and a brunette in another. Because a model has dark hair is no reason why she can pose only for brunette characters.

Some of those who pose and have posed for many recent heroines include Miss Day Gilmore, Miss Alice Nelson, Miss La Badie, Miss Leone Claudos, Miss Katherine Clements, Miss Beatrice Dyburgh, and Miss Justine Johnstone. In a number of cases one model has posed both for the heroine and the villainess in one volume. But the members of the art colony are not immortalized in fiction alone. There is yet another and a more permanent, as well as a more highly artistic side, to the model's career, and that is being represented in famous linettes, frescoes, or pictures.

One of the world's most famous models is a member of the New York colony. Art students and painters here and abroad all know Antonio Corsi, the model in question. Corsi is the undisputed leader of the colony. He has not posed for Sargent, the late Edwin S. Abbey, Burne-Jones, William M. Chase, and dozens of the prominent painters of this country and Europe? Isn't his face immortalized in Sargent's "Hosea" in the Boston Library?

It was Corsi, too, who posed for other figures in the group of prophets in the library there, also for most of the characters in the Holy Grail frescoes by Abbey.

It was while he was posing for the English artist Burne-Jones that Corsi held what he claims to be the longest pose on record. He held it—a most difficult one—for three hours without a rest. The regular time for a pose in an art school or on an ordinary occasion is twenty-five minutes. Such periods are followed by a rest of five minutes before another pose is taken.

Corsi, who is a bit of an egotist because of his pre-eminence in the art model world, shows his chest when he tells of his record pose. On the street he looks

like a shaggy-haired Oriental. People turn and look at him because of his deep-set, piercing eyes. He is a man of medium stature and well proportioned. There isn't a student in an art school in New York who is not glad when Corsi poses, for he holds a pose unflinchingly.

And what is the pay for being immortalized in novels, in pictures, and in frescoes? Fabulous prices are myths. The regular art model gets 50 cents an hour for his work.

There may be instances where artists with more than the ordinary amount of this world's goods allotted to them have paid a higher price, but 50 cents is the standard, and there appears to be at present no definite move to raise it.

Some models in the schools will pose in the life class in the morning, and in the illustration class in the afternoon. And often such models will pose for a portrait class in the evening. How hard it is to hold a pose for twenty-five minutes can be determined if the reader will take out his watch and try to remain in one position for that length of time. Ten minutes will seem like an age.

One of the grievances of art models has to do with the forgetfulness of artists. In an art school the twenty-five-minute rule is strictly adhered to, but sometimes in a private studio the artist will become so enamored of his work and the progress he is making that he will forget to tell the model to rest.

Such a story is told by one woman model of the New York colony. While posing for a well-known artist the latter became so excited over his work that he let the model pose for fifty minutes.

She might have been posing yet if she had not suddenly determined to rest. Apologies were profusely made, but it had been a severe strain on the model.

The model colony is not without its humorists, conscious and otherwise, as was exemplified by one man model, who used to pose before the different men's life classes in the art schools of the metropolis. He was known as Sam.

Sam certainly was a kicker. He kicked until he became humorous. Sam's one belief was that he had all the lines of Michael Angelo's "David" in Florence. No one else ever recognized the close resemblance, though.

One blustery December day, while Sam was posing before a men's life class, he complained of being cold. At that time the room in which he posed was heated by a coal stove. It was red hot and all the students were in their shirt sleeves and perspiring. But Sam said he felt chilly.

When the first pose came to an end Sam hugged the fire with a robe thrown about his shoulders. Then he went to

the dressing room for a minute. The monitor of the class called time, and in walked Sam and took his pose on the stand before the class. As he tossed off his robe there was disclosed a blue flannel shirt, which reached down to Sam's knees. In this accoutrement he announced to the class that he was willing to pose.

There was a roar of laughter from the men as Sam proceeded to strike his attitude with the blue flannel shirt still on. It was ridiculous, but Sam was in earnest.

Only when the room was baking hot did Sam consent to take off his shirt.

The next day the students got even with him. While a chair in the room was still sticky from a fresh coat of varnish powdered charcoal was dusted on to its surface.

Temporarily Sam's pose was changed so he could use the chair. He never made any more kicks in that art class. Maybe Sam hasn't removed all the charcoal and varnish yet from himself.

One of the most picturesque figures in the model colony is an old woman 75 years old. She poses in the illustration and portrait classes, and nearly always as a "grandma" type. Recently her face has been emblazoned on the Subway and elevated station billboard in advertisements. Advertising, by the way, is another field in which a number of art models are now finding another source of employment. They appear as illustrations in dental and other "ads" in fashion supplements, etc.

But the old model who poses as "grandma" must not be skipped over so lightly. She imagines herself, as does Antonio Corsi, a real art critic. Her association with so many artists has made her master of a certain superficial knowledge of art criticism. She has seen how easily her portrait has grown under the accurate touch of an experienced painter and how difficult it often has been for the student. During the rest periods she often goes about among the students looking at their sketches and voicing her opinion of the many likenesses of herself.

Corsi and a few other models say they have a sympathetic interest in the pictures for which they pose. But most models do not.