

1898

12/8/1898(?) Luc Moore Gotsinger (Parsons B20 F28)*

To the Assembly in Chicago, GREETINGS!

We reached Haifa Thursday, December 8th, about 10:30 p.m., and were met by Dr. K. and two or three Babis. They all welcomed us heartily and conducted us to a coffee house where we were served with refreshments. An old man was there waiting for us and he, as I was afterwards informed, is the uncle of the Greatest Branch, and was sent by the latter to welcome us. Never have I seen a face more full of love and kindness. He saluted us and his countenance beamed with pleasure while he expressed himself as being so thankful upon our safe arrival. After drinking some tea, we went from this place to our hotel, several of the believers walking. The streets are very narrow and dark, so a man, the hotel keeper, walked ahead of us with a lantern to light the way. Our friends remained conversing with us at the hotel until after midnight, excepting the old gentleman, who did not accompany us, as it was late and he desired to leave early the next morning for Acca to report our arrival to the Greatest Branch - our Master!

We slept but little that night; our minds were occupied with the thoughts that perhaps tomorrow we shall see Him and kiss the hem of the blessed garment of our Lord. We arose early the next morning, our hearts eagerly expectant, but all day no word came.

In the evening we were invited to the house of Housyn Effendi (one of the Believers living in Acca), and upon our arrival he met us at the door, welcomed us, saying he was the bearer of good news to us. He had received a letter from Abbas Effendi that day stating He would be pleased to welcome us on the morrow and that His "heart longed to see the first American pilgrims." We went back to our hotel after spending a most delightful evening, our host and hostess taking great pains to make us happy, showing us every kindness and hospitality, often remarking that we must not consider ourselves guests, for their house was ours and everything they had at our disposal.

As you may imagine, sleep was out of the question that night. My husband and I were talking all the time and congratulating ourselves upon our great blessings and good fortune and counting the hours, which passed much too slowly, until the dawn of the morrow should come. We arose early, dressing ourselves with much care, feeling the best we had was not half good enough to wear upon this our first visit to the Holy City, and shortly after eight o'clock the carriage drove up and Dr. K., his daughter, my husband and myself started for the place of all places, the New Jerusalem, the Holy Abode of the Most High and the Dwelling Place of our Gracious Lord.

It is about five miles from Haifa to Acca the road close to the sea - indeed in the sea, for the horses were walking in the water and at times the waves dashed nearly to the top of the wheels. After riding for about a quarter of an hour we could see the City in the distance. It was a beautiful morning and as we looked we could but think of the description in the Bible, "a city all of gold beside the crystal sea." It was bathed in a flood of golden sunshine and the sea splashing up against its walls sparkled with splendor! We gradually approached nearer and nearer until at last we passed "the shed which serves as a coffee house outside the wall," and entered the city by its solitary gate and drove straight to the house of Abbas Effendi. We entered the garden, ascended one flight of stairs, and were shown into a hall, or reception room, where we removed our wraps, and were welcomed by the uncle who told us to pass into the next room. Dr. K. went ahead, and by the violent beating of my heart, I knew we were soon to behold the Blessed Face of the Prince of

the House of David, the King of the whole world. We reached the door and stopped --- before us, in the center of the room, stood a man clad in a long raiment, with a white turban upon his head; stretching out one hand to us, while his face, which I cannot describe, was lighted by a rare, sweet smile of joy and welcome! We stood thus for a moment, unable to move; then my heart gave a great throb, and, scarcely knowing what I was doing, I held out my arms, crying, "my Lord, my Lord!" and rushed to him, kneeling at his blessed feet, sobbing like a child. In an instant my husband was beside me, crying as only men can cry! He put his dear hands upon our bowed heads and said, in a voice that seemed to our ears like a strain of sweet music, "Welcome, welcome, my dear children, you are welcome; arise and be of good cheer." Then he sat down upon a low divan and we sat on one side almost facing him, Dr. K. and his daughter on the other side, and he began to talk to us. To my husband he said that he would prosper in his scientific work and God would bless him and enable him to do good in many directions; and as the vibrations of light emanating from the sun magnetize the earth, so should the Word of God magnetize the hearts and draw them from the west to mingle in love with the hearts in the east. He remained with us but a few moments (as his time is so fully occupied), when he arose, and again bidding us welcome, went into another room where he writes and meets those who come to him for help and counsel.

We were then taken into another room where we met the Greatest Holy Leaf (the Master's sister) and many other ladies. They welcomed us very graciously, the Holy Leaf taking Dr. K's daughter and myself in her arms and kissing us very tenderly on both cheeks. Then they made tea for us and showed us great kindness. We remained conversing with them until noon; then she took us by the hand and led us to the table, seating one on each side of her and serving us most bountifully with many varieties of food, which were very good indeed. After dinner we were served with coffee, the fragrance and flavor of which was most delicious. Then a servant brought us some sweet meats from the Greatest Branch and such a generous supply that I am going to bring them home that you may all taste.

In the afternoon they read Tablets aloud, and told us many interesting things connected with the early history of the Babis. So swiftly did the time pass that we were quite astonished when dinner was announced. They served a special meal for us, as they eat much later than we do, but so anxious was I to see my Lord again that I begged he would at least come into the room with us. ~~His request was not~~ ~~granted~~. He and sat at the table, seating me on his right and my husband on his left. I felt too happy to eat and sat with my eyes riveted upon his glorious face. He turned toward me and sweetly smiling said, "The Love of God burning in your heart is manifest upon your face and it gives us joy to look upon you." I then called his attention to St. Luke, 14th chapter and 15th verse, "Blessed is he who shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." He thereupon took up the loaf and brake it and gave each one of us a piece of the same. I have kept mine and am also going to bring it that you may see it. After the meal was over he left us and went out, as he had something to attend to, and did not return until about 11 o'clock. Then he came into the room where we were sitting (all of us rising as he entered and bowing low before him) and sat down and began talking to us in a low soft musical voice. My husband asked permission to sit nearer to him, which he granted and sat him down at his right; ~~but~~ I longed intensely to go nearer, but said nothing. After a moment he turned toward me, smiled and waved his hand that I also might come. I sat down at his blessed feet, while he took my hand, and looking down upon me tenderly as a loving father, he sat and conversed with us for nearly an hour. Then he arose,

bade us good night, blessing us, and we all retired. I couldn't sleep.

My heart was too full. I was too infinitely happy. I could only live

over and over again the precious moments I had spent in His presence and long to see Him once more. I fell into a sweet sleep just as morn was breaking, after which I awoke, feeling greatly refreshed, and arose, dressing myself, impatient to be among my friends and the holy people, for I felt each moment with them to be a great blessing indeed, and every word falling from their lips to be a precious gem. Miss K. and I went to the apartment of the Greatest Leaf, who kissed us and inquired if we had rested well. Then a servant brought us some nice fruit and each a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Greatest Branch, who had sent her to ask if we were well and comfortable.

During the day we were conducted to the special garden of the Manifestation, the one described in the prophecies thus: "The place of my throne is part on the water and part on the land, under a green tent that has neither ropes nor center pole to sustain it." And it is literally so, for this garden is on a small island, a river on each side of it, and there are two places built upon which the Manifestation used to sit, one in the east and one in the west of the garden, and these places are built in such a way that they are "part on the water and part on the land"; then two large trees, one in each end of the garden, their branches meeting in the center, form the green tent most perfectly. In this most beautiful spot we sat down upon the seats before His Throne, and were served with tea by those who accompanied us thither; also the gardener brought us fruits and flowers from the "Garden of our Glorious God" and they were delicious. In one part of this place is a small cottage where the Manifestation used sometimes to stay, and we were permitted to enter this also, to go into the room which He always occupied, kneel before the chair upon which He sat, and to kiss the place upon which the soles of His feet rested! The spiritual atmosphere of this place was overwhelming; our tears fell like rain over our faces, and some of the Believers with us cried aloud. Indeed, to enter this room is a great blessing. I have felt nearer to God since that day! On the chair was a wreath of flowers, and some beautiful cut roses placed there by the Greatest Branch, who commanded that they should be given to us (my husband, Dr. K., his daughter and myself); also four large oranges, which were on a table opposite as we left that most sacred place.

From here we were taken to the Tomb of the Manifestation, and you must excuse me if I do not enter into detail about this - I cannot find words to express myself. Suffice it to say that the Greatest Branch let me walk in His footsteps and led me by the hand into this sacred place, where I knelt down and begged of God to cleanse my heart from all impurity and kindle within it the fire of His Love. I also remembered there the Assembly in Chicago and begged God's blessing to be showered upon you. I will try to tell you more when I see you, but I cannot write it. After this visit we walked in the garden and our Lord, with His own blessed hands, picked flowers and leaves which He gave us to take to the faithful Believers in America.

That night he sat us all at the table and dismissed the servants, saying He would serve us Himself and He did so. He did not sit at the table with us, but waited upon us. At the conclusion of the meal He said, "I have served you tonight, that you may learn the lesson of ever serving your fellow creatures with love and kindness." He bade us good night and advised us all to rest early, so we went to bed and this night I had a long delicious sleep and rest.

The next morning He brought me a beautiful bunch of white narcissus and allowed me to kiss His blessed hand as He gave them to me! He sat down and drank tea with us, then arose and bade us adieu, as we were going back to Haifa that day and He had been called away. As we were quitting the city we saw Him standing ~~at~~ by the gate and He smiled at us as we passed. Then we turned by the road in the sea to Haifa, our hearts both happy and sorrowful, happy because we had seen Him and sorrowful because we were leaving Him.

O dear people, make firm your faith and belief for truly He is our Lord! It seems to me that no one could doubt should He smile upon them, and no one could turn from Him should He seek to confirm them. But this He will not do, as God has declared that each must seek to confirm himself and gave to each of ~~the~~ us the power of will for that purpose. I feel that these words are very weak and inadequate, but I assure you no one could describe this place and 'tis foolish to try - to know each must see for himself. Therefore, pray God earnestly that the blessing of coming here may soon be bestowed. There is no other place in the world worth seeing, and surely no other King is worthy of homage.

And now I send you all my love and pray God to bless you all now and forever. May your hearts all be united, and your souls become as one soul living in separate bodies. Thus you will resemble our Lord, and draw nearer unto God, & the loving Father of us all!

Your loving sister and co-worker in the Cause,

Lua Moore Cattinger.