

STORIES OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

From Despair to Hope

At some point during His stay in London, a man came to the door asking for the lady of the house. When Lady Blomfield asked if he wanted to see her, he responded, saying 'I have walked thirty miles for that purpose.' Lady Blomfield invited the man, who she described as 'an ordinary tramp', and gave him some refreshment. Then the man began his story:

'I was not always as you see me now, a disreputable, hopeless object. My father is a country rector, and I had the advantage of being at public school. Of the various causes which led me to my arrival at the Thames embankment as my only home, I need not speak to you.

'Last evening I had decided to put an end to my futile, hateful life, useless to God and man!

'Whilst taking what I had intended should be my last walk, I saw "a Face" in the window of a newspaper shop. I stood looking at the face as if rooted to the spot. He seemed to speak to me and call me to him!

'Let me see that paper, please,' I asked. It was the face of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'I read that he is here, in this house. I said to myself, "If there is in existence on earth that personage, I shall take up again the burden of my life."

'I set off on my quest. I have come here to find him. Tell me, is he here? Will he see me? Even me?'

Lady Blomfield assured the man: 'Of course he will see you. Come to Him,' then went and knocked on the Master's door. 'Abdu'l-Bahá opened the door Himself and went directly to the poor man as though He had been expecting him.

'Welcome! Most welcome! I am very much pleased that thou has come. Be seated.'

The pathetic man trembled and sank on to a low chair by the Master's feet, as though unable to utter a word.

The other guests, meanwhile, looked on wonderingly to see the attention transferred to the strange-looking new arrival, who seemed to be so overburdened with hopeless misery.

'Be happy! Be happy!' said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, holding one of the poor hands, stroking tenderly the dishevelled, bowed head.

Smiling that wonderful smile of loving compassion, the Master continued:

'Do not be filled with grief when humiliation overtaketh thee.'

'The bounty and power of God is without limit for each and every soul in the world.'

'Seek for spiritual joy and knowledge, then, though thou walk upon this earth, thou wilt be dwelling within the divine realm.' 'Though thou be poor, thou mayest be rich in the Kingdom of God.'

As 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to pour out His love and compassion, the man slowly brightened and, when he finally arose to leave, he had 'a new look ... on his face, a new erectness in his carriage, a firm purpose in his steps'. As he left, he told Lady Blomfield that he had found everything he had hoped for and now planned to go work in the fields until he had enough to start a small business. With that, he departed, saying finally, 'As He says "Poverty is unimportant, work is worship."

- Earl Redman, "Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst"