



A Great Harvest of Results

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MARTHA WASHINGTON AND SEVEN Founding Fathers gazed down from their niches upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as he swept through their white, marble-cladded domain at about 7:30 p.m. on Friday, April 26, 1912. Three sheaves of wheat, a plow, a sailing ship, and an eagle had been emblazoned on a shield at his feet, and set into the center of the pink marble floor on a medallion twenty-four inches wide. The words *SEAL OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA* ringed its circumference in bronze.

The Pennsylvania Foyer was the main entrance to Memorial Continental Hall, the brand new national headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution. It stood in Classical Revival style on 17th Street, NW, between C and D Streets, in the old neighborhood of Foggy Bottom just north of the National Mall. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was about to deliver his final public speech in the nation’s capital in Continental Hall’s main auditorium, at 8 p.m., to the single largest audience he had yet addressed in America. The audience overflowed into the balconies.

White American eagles with outstretched wings perched above the three levels of box seats on either side of the stage. On this night, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would share the podium with Samuel Gompers, the President of the American Federation of Labor. Gompers made a plea for the women of the working classes. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the *Washington Star* reported, drew a parallel between the advancement of women in the West and in the East. He cited the hall they stood in, which had been built by the women of the D. A. R., as an example of the progress of womankind in the Western hemisphere.

The meeting had been organized by the Orient-Occident Unity, a DC organization dedicated to building bonds of friendship between East and West. On his first night in Washington, last Saturday, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had delivered the keynote address at their conference in the Carnegie Library on Massachusetts Avenue. That evening he had called for a “reciprocal alliance” between the United States of America and the nation of Persia—which we now call Iran.

“For the Americans,” he said, “there could be no better industrial outlet and market than the virgin commercial soil of Persia. The mineral wealth of Persia is

still latent and untouched. It is my hope that the great American democracy may be instrumental in developing these hidden resources and that a bond of perfect amity and unity may be established between the American republic and the government of Persia.”

“It is, therefore, hoped that the American and Persian nations may be conjoined and united in reciprocal love. May they become one race endowed with the same susceptibilities. May these bonds of amity and accord be firmly established.”

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FOOTNOTE / ENDNOTE:

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