

# Abdu'l-Bahá's Travels to the West

Thonon-les-Bains and Geneva

22 August-1 September 1911

Travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 2

# The start of travels to the West

After 40 years as a prisoner of the Turkish Sultan in the penal colony of Akka in what is now Israel, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, was finally able to travel to the West in 1911.



On 'Abdu'l-Bahá's travels, He often commented on the greenness of the region and mentioned how much Bahá'u'lláh had enjoyed such scenes. He would ask the driver to stop, and the rest of the party stood and waited as He viewed the area.

# Seeing God in nature

*And whensoever thou dost gaze upon creation all entire, and dost observe the very atoms thereof, thou wilt note that the rays of the Sun of Truth are shed upon all things and shining within them, and telling of that Day-Star's splendours, Its mysteries, and the spreading of Its lights.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selection from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, 19)*

# Seeing God in nature

*Look thou upon the trees, upon the blossoms and fruits, even upon the stones. Here too wilt thou behold the Sun's rays shed upon them, clearly visible within them, and manifested by them.*

*(‘Abdu’l-Baha, Selection from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, 19)*

# The start of travels to the West

After landing in Marseille, 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to the Hotel du Parc in Thonon-les-Bains on the shores of Lake Geneva on 22 August 1911. He was accompanied by Hippolyte and Laura Dreyfus-Barney and Juliet Thompson.

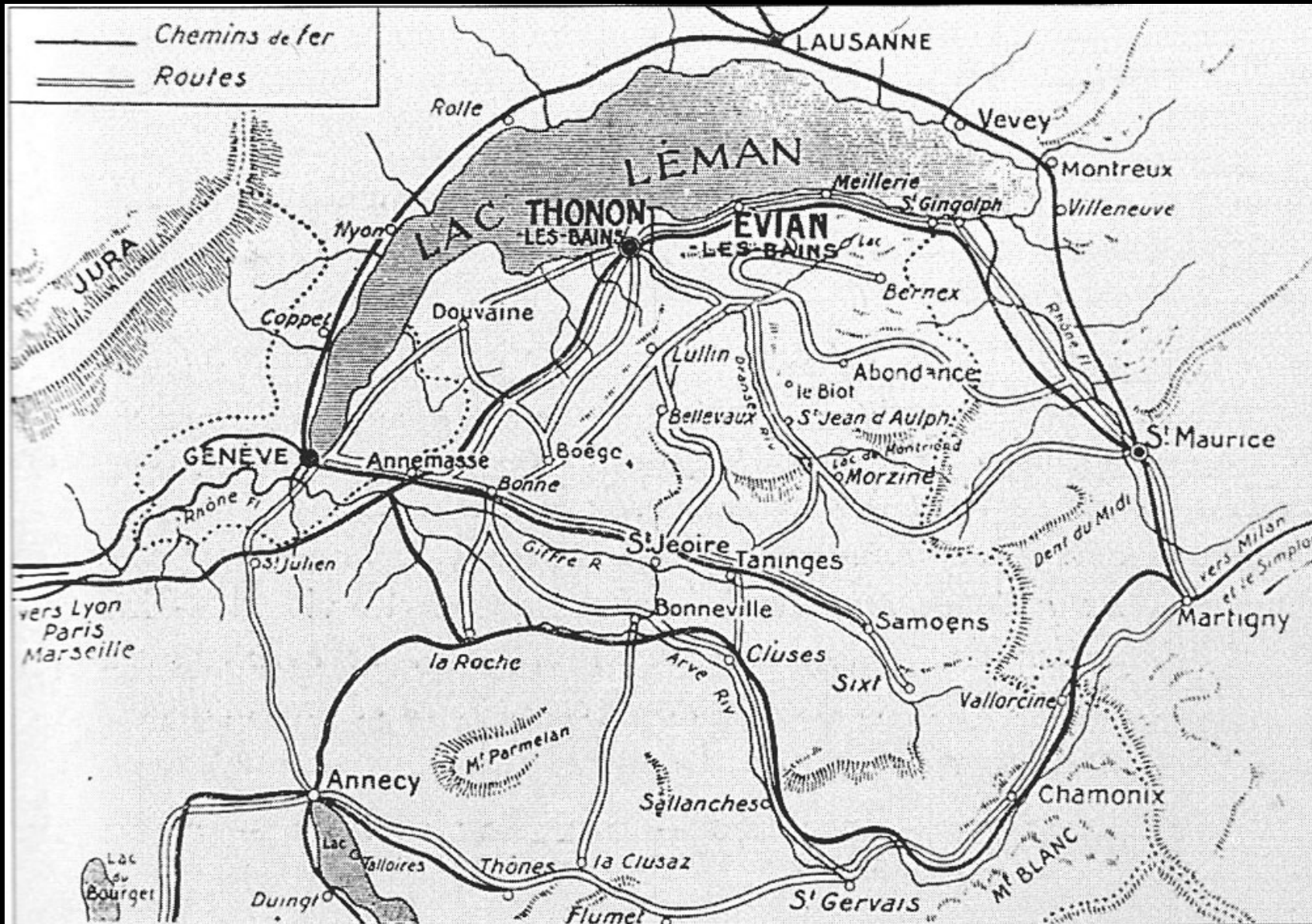


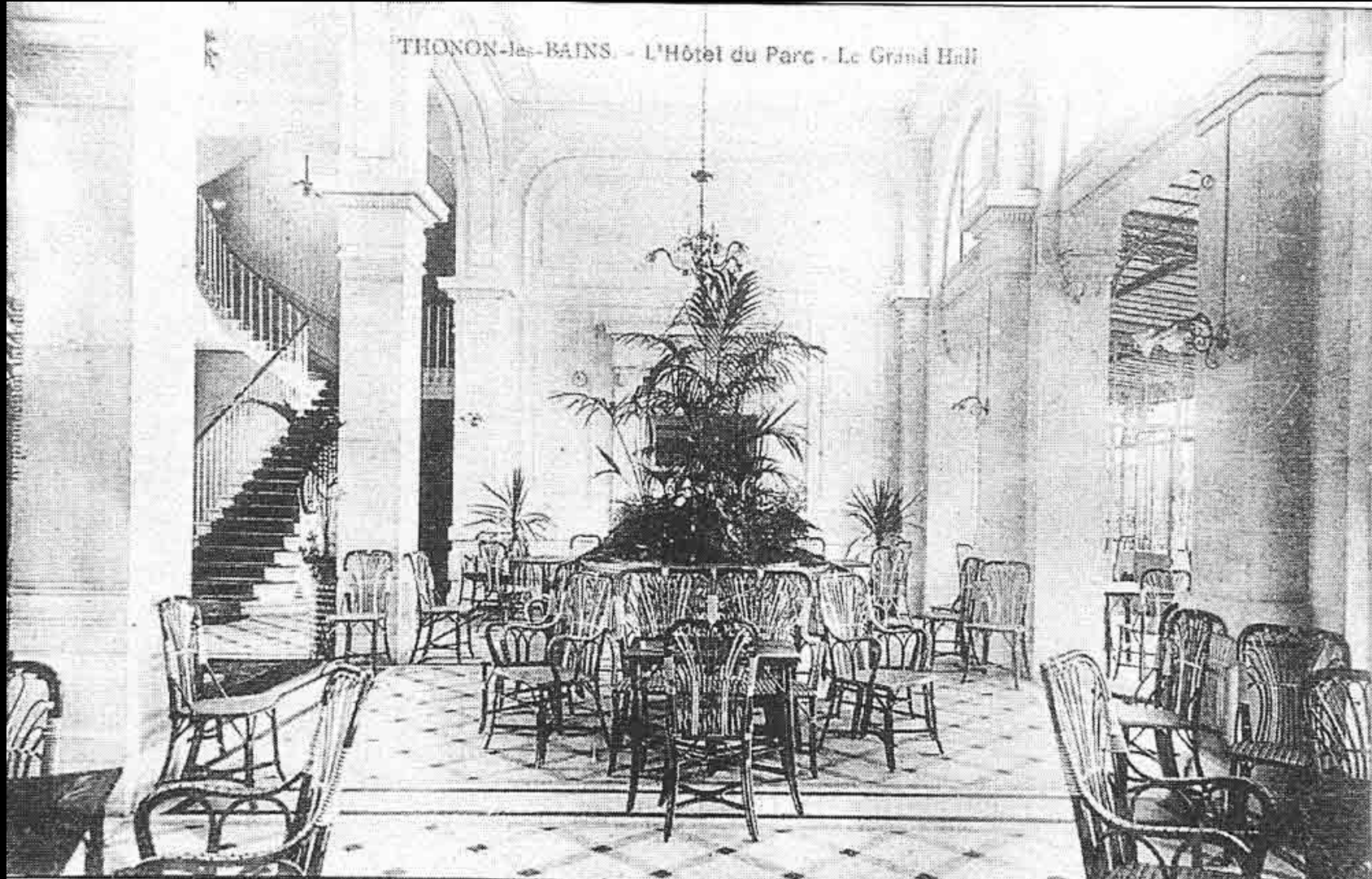
Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains, France



Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains, France

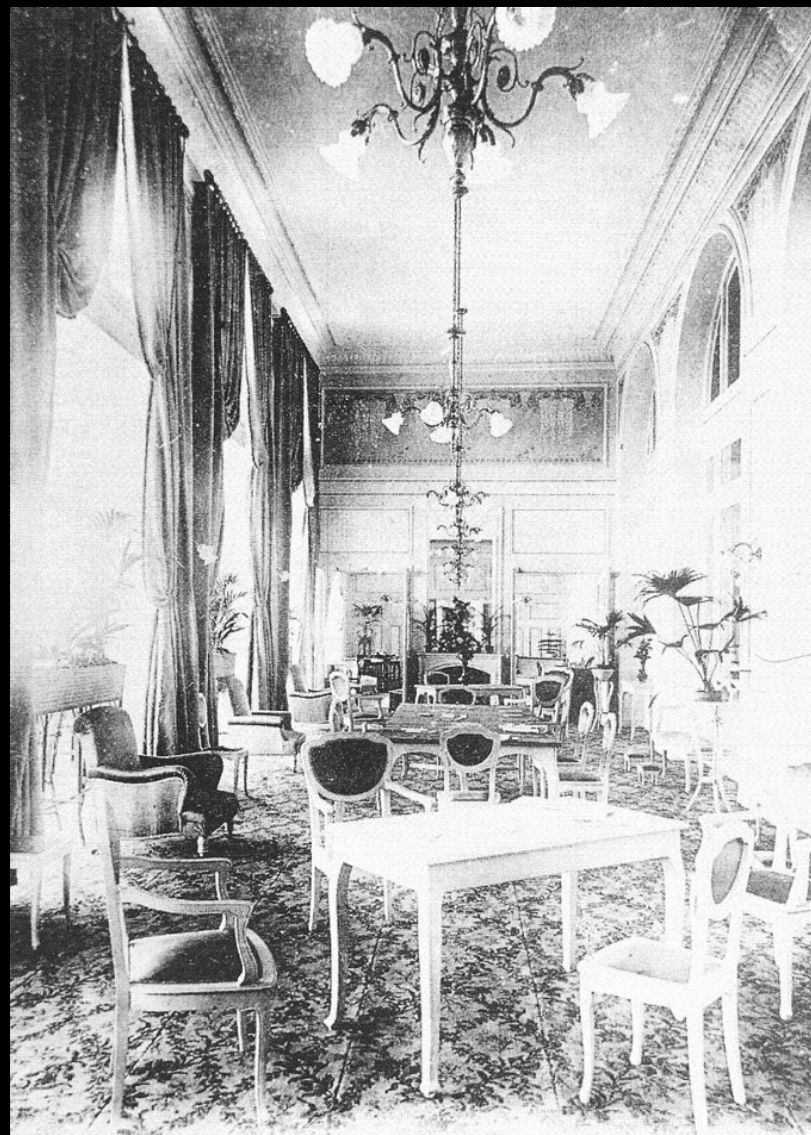






Great Hall, Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains

Grand Salon  
Hotel du Parc  
Thonon-les-Bains

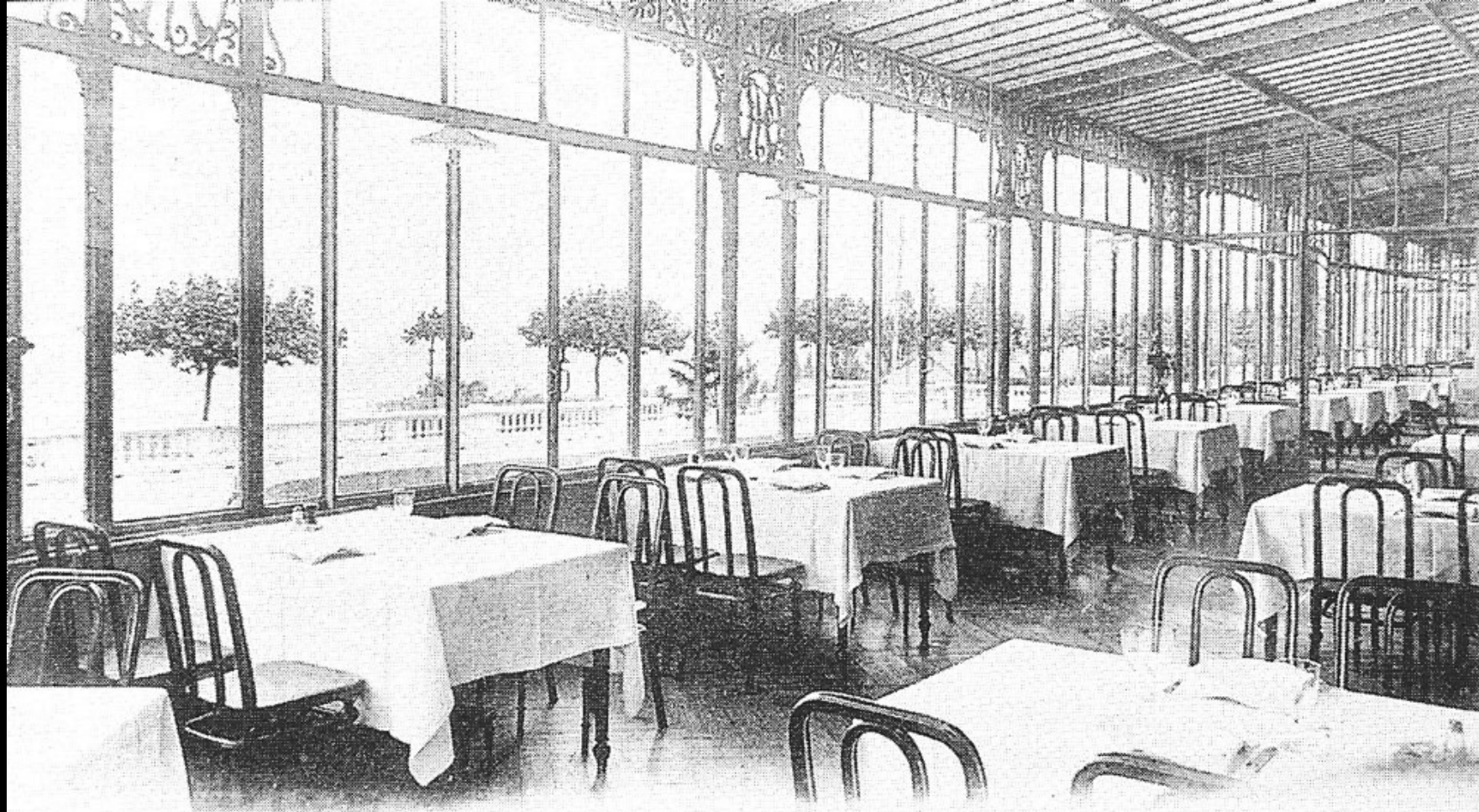


THONON-les-BAINS. - L'Hôtel du Parc. - Le Grand Salon rose

THONON-LES-BAINS. - L'Hôtel du Parc  
La Salle à manger



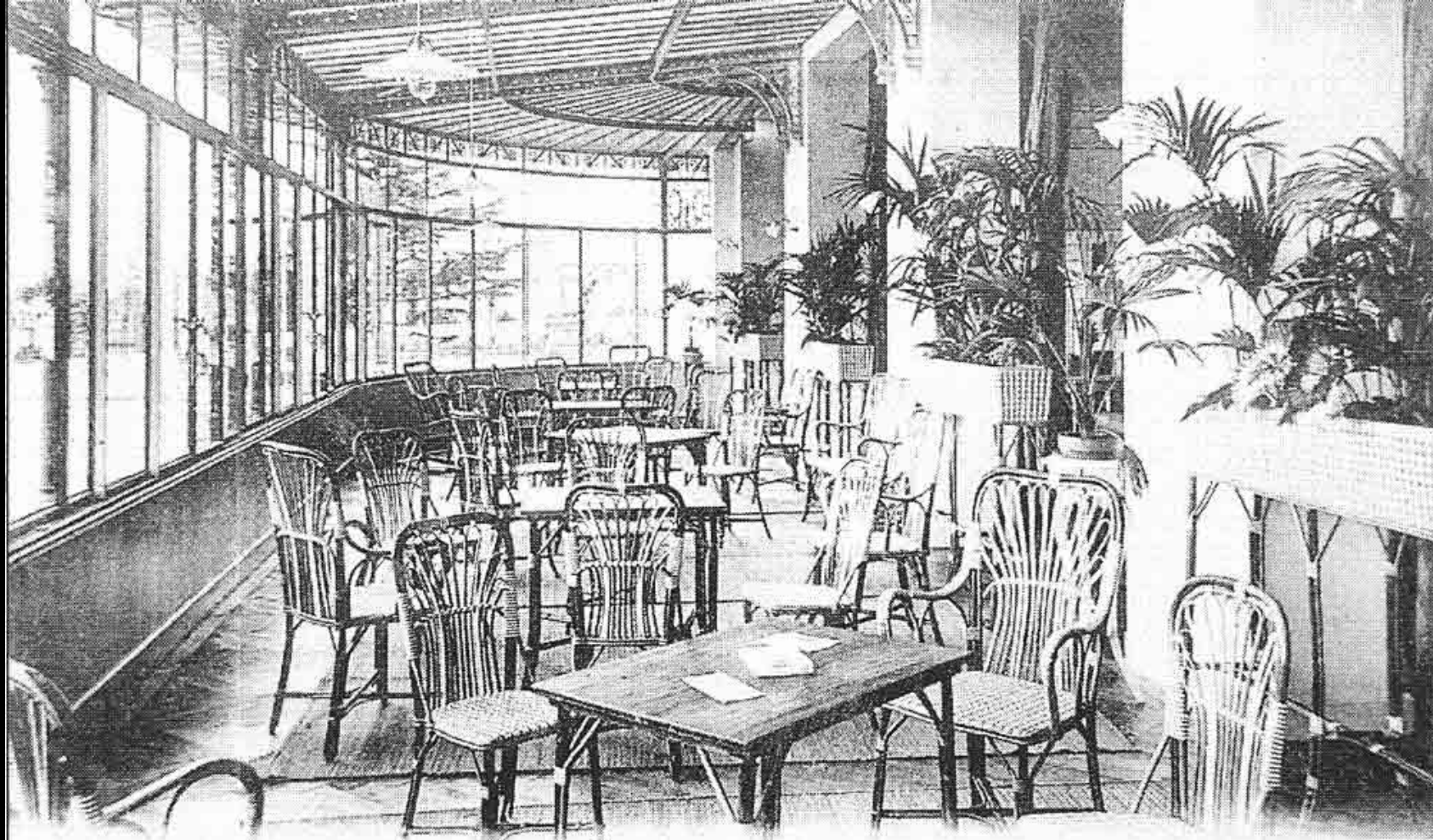
Dining Room, Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains



THONON-les-BAINS. - L'Hôtel du Parc - La Véranda (côté de la Salle à manger)

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Dining Veranda, Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains



THONON-les-BAINS. - L'Hôtel du Parc - La Verandah (côté Salon rose)

Reproduction interdite

*R. L. Savoy*

# Veranda, Hotel du Parc, Thonon-les-Bains



Residence du Parc, Thonons-les-Bains, France, as it is today

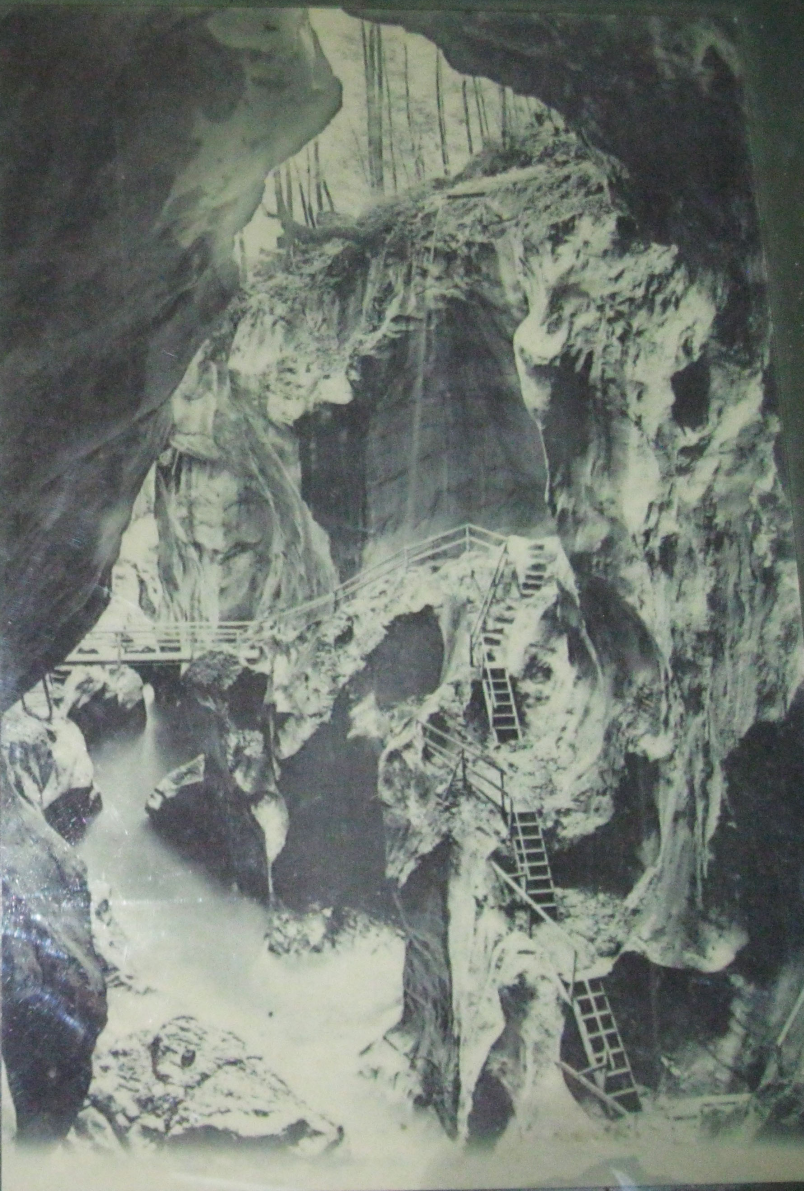
# Gorges du Pont du Diable

While in Thonon, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went with some of the Bahá'í friends on an excursion in the mountains behind Thonon to visit the gorges of the Devil's Bridge, so called because in the Middle Ages, villagers who slipped off the precarious path while trying to cross the natural bridge were said to have been seized by the Devil.



# Gorges du Pont du Diable

The Drance River has cut a deep narrow gorge in the calcareous rock, and a large block of stone that has fallen from the valley wall across the gorge forms a natural bridge. The spectacular sight has been a tourist attraction since the 19th century, when wooden walkways and stairs were constructed to make the gorge accessible. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was drawn to this place of spectacular natural beauty.



Gorges of the  
Devil's Bridge  
in 1900



*Les installations en 1900*

**THE  
DIARY OF  
JULIET  
THOMPSON**

With preface by Marzieh Gail

Juliet  
Thompson  
recorded  
the visit  
in her diary



# Description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit

Juliet Thompson described the visit.

“He turned and walked into the forest, followed by Laura, Hippolyte, and me. Hippolyte had told Him of ‘the Devil’s Bridge’ deeper down in the forest, a place celebrated for its beauty, and the Master wanted to see it. His excitement over beauty is wonderful to watch and perfectly heartrendering when you think of His long, long life in prison.”



< 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Path to the >  
Devil's Bridge



# Description of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit

“He – *our Lord* – led us to the Devil’s Bridge! I can see Him now, just ahead of us, the white robe, the black ‘abá, the white turban, the beautiful sway of His walk among the trees....

The sunlight through the trees made their leaves translucent, but even against that green glassiness, the Master’s clear profile shone, like a lighted alabaster lamp.”



Gorges of the Devil's Bridge



# Gorges of the Devil's Bridge







The Devil's Bridge



Gorges  
of the  
Devil's  
Bridge



...'Abdu'l-Bahá and His companions strolled around the beautiful grounds, surrounded by towering mountains.... As they came out and looked at the river and mountains, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said “*May God have mercy on the tyrants who kept the Blessed Beauty in prison for forty years. Such scenes were loved by Him.*”



# ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and nature

“Driving home, we came to the most spectacular waterfall, foaming down a black precipice. The Master peremptorily stopped the car and with a sort of excitement got out of it; then walked to the very edge of the precipice... rapt Face delighting in some secret way in the beauty of the waterfall.”

# ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and nature

“During the whole drive He was always discovering lovely things and with vivid animation pointing them out to us: the bright green of the fields and hills, the neat villages, a spire rising from a cluster of Swiss houses, or from some lonely spot on a mountain. A tiny village high among the peaks, caught His eye.” *(Diary of Juliet Thompson, pp. 174-177)*

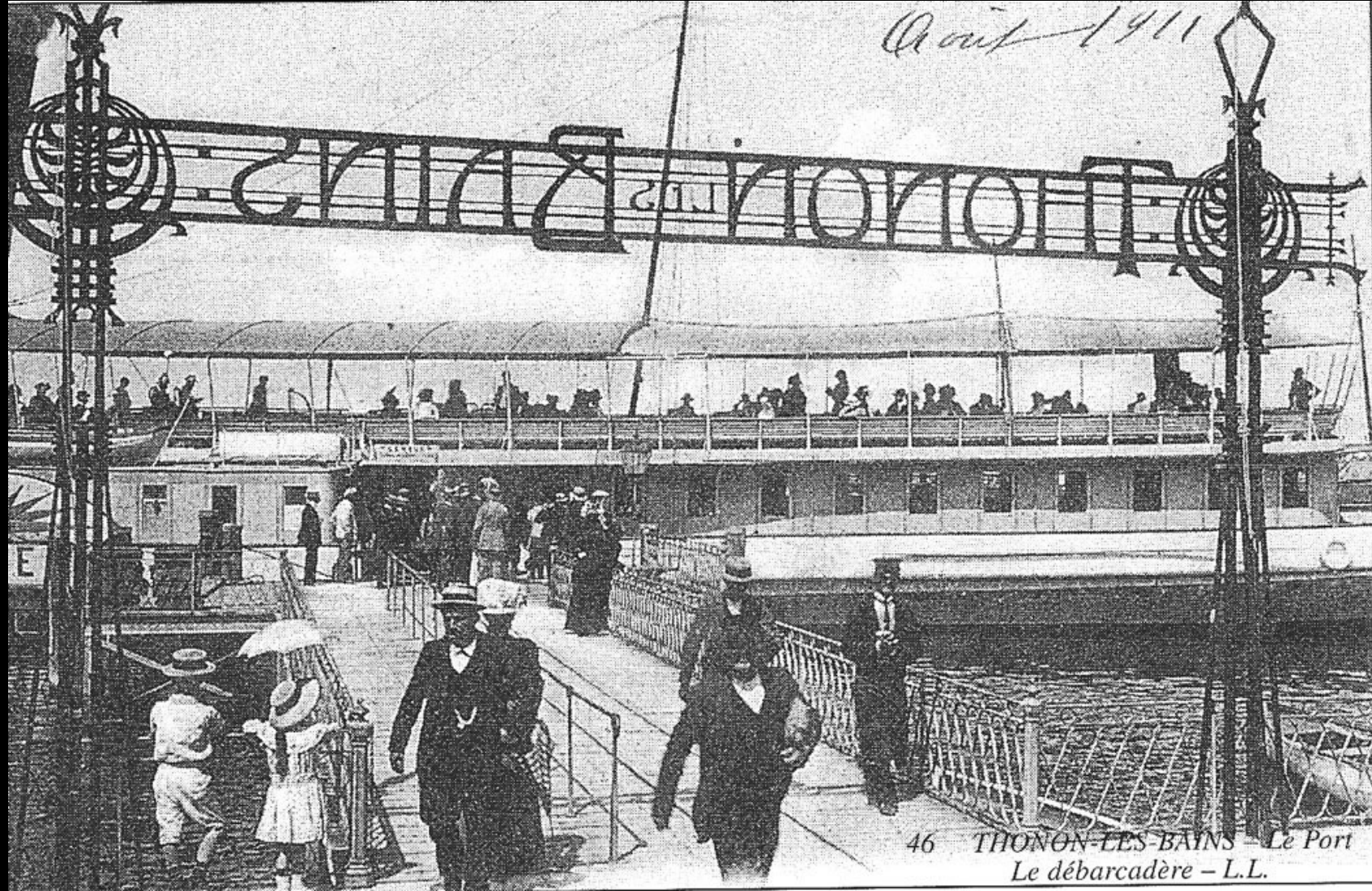
# ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and nature

“*How can the people there stand the winter? It must,*’ He said with the tenderest sympathy, *‘be too severely cold for them.’*”

*(Diary of Juliet Thompson, pp. 174-177)*

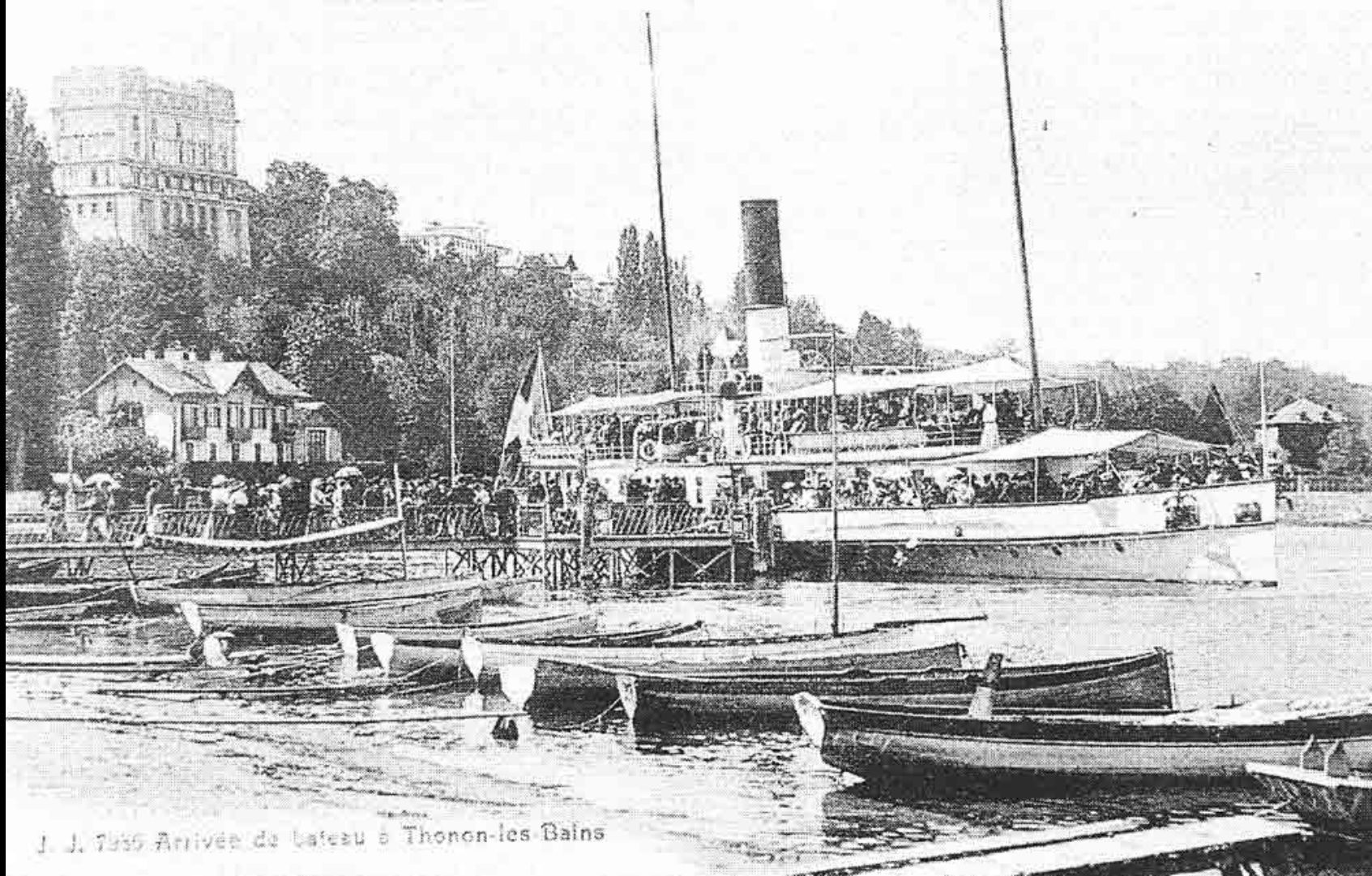
# Visits to Switzerland

'Abdu'l-Bahá made an excursion across the lake to Vevey in Switzerland to meet some early Bahá'ís, stopped in Geneva at the Hotel de la Paix on 31 August and then traveled to London, arriving on 4 September.



The dock, Thonon-les-Bains, France





J. J. 1885 Arrivée du bateau à Thonon-les Bains

Thonon-les-Bains, boat to Vevey

43. THONON-les-BAINS (Hte-Savoie) — Le lac et l'Hôtel du Parc - P.L.



Thonon-les-Bains, France



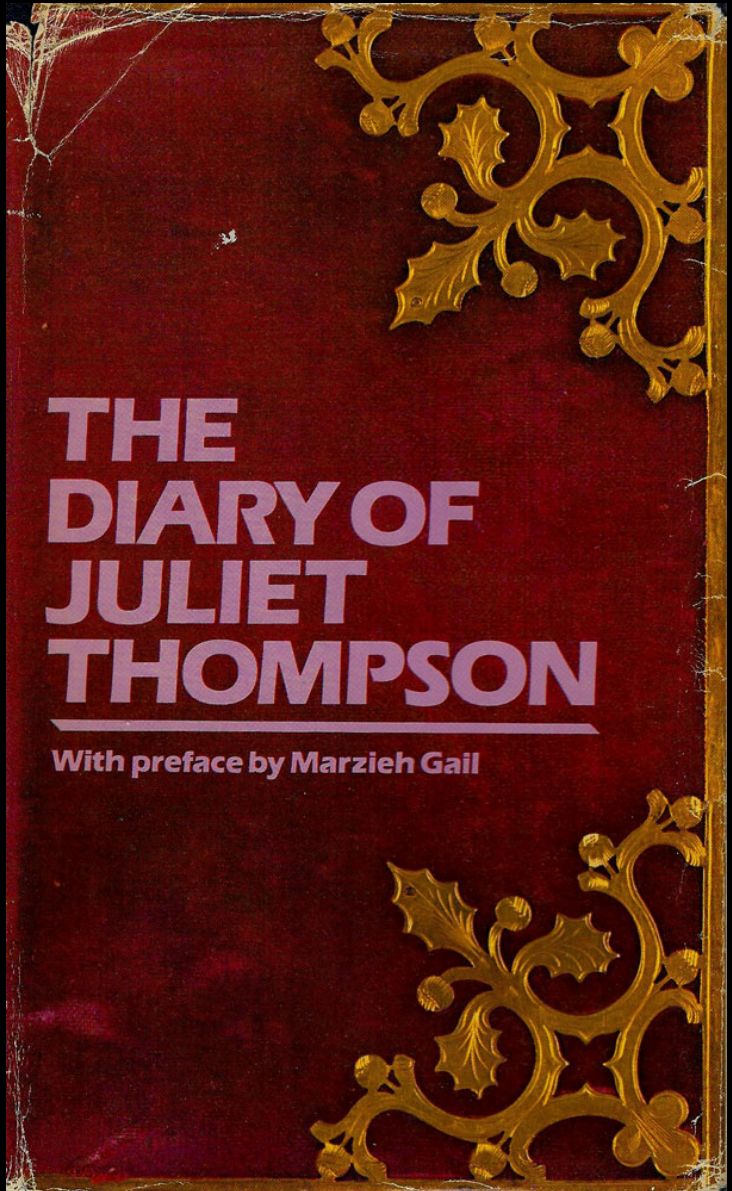
## 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Their Midst

Earl Redman

# Sources

Visit to the Devil's Bridge  
on the centenary of  
'Abdul-Bahá's visit  
in 2011

<http://yabaha.net/dahl/travel/t2011/Gorges.html>



## THE DIARY OF JULIET THOMPSON

With preface by Marzieh Gail