

Bahai Nest

Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria

February 16th, 1914

Dear friends!

Nine Pilgrims arrived today, four men, four women and one boy, from Yazd, Mayreez, and Bombay. One of the Pilgrims has brought his daughter with him to enter the girls' College in Beirut where already more than half a dozen Bahai girls are studying. This is a distinct departure on the part of these Persians who are extremely reluctant to leave the beaten track as regards the education of the girls, and it would have been impossible a few years ago to make them feel the supreme importance of this fact were it not for the repeated commands of Abdul Baha. The girls are more than anxious to study and widen the scope of their opportunities, but they are so hedged in on all sides by petty social conventions and withering customs, and stinting restrictions, that it is very hard for an outsider to realize

2

the meaning and the import of each. A number of the progressive women put the whole blame on men, arguing with much earnestness that the men have ever been and are yet, the main cause of the backward condition of their sex. ^{in the Orient} They further state that the real era of woman's progress will commence in the East when the stubborn men will give up for all time to come their assumed superiority, offering to ^{women} ~~them~~ their own inalienable rights of social equality, so long withheld and willing to consort with them as their equals and partners in life. The women are fast revolting against their cramped and confined life. They long for broader fields of activity. They hate to sit around the house all day and do nothing but dress, attend to household duties and make the servants behave themselves. They love to come out and breathe the fresh air of true emancipation. They yearn to break into a thousand pieces the handcuffs of blind customs and the chains of social inequalities. I know nothing about it but I feel in my inmost heart that a silent

and portentous storm of revolution is brewing behind the harems of the East, and once it is set loose its force will be so irresistible and its velocity so sweeping that no power on earth can stand before it. In the course of conversation on this most interesting subject a friend told me: "I think the time is soon coming ^{when} the Eastern women must take into their own hands the cause of their rights and freedom. It may take, oh! such a long time before the men will come around and deal with this subject intelligently but the women ~~will~~ find a short-cut to it." For my part I wish to see all the Eastern girls well-educated and all their latent intellectual and spiritual forces budding out into perfect womanhood. Are they not your sisters as well as mine? The consummation devoutly to be wished is to ^{see} them untrammelled and free, soaring towards the heights of human and divine perfection and working with men, shoulder to shoulder in the upliftment of humanity to the plane of regeneration. The stage is set and the curtain will be

raised soon. Will you and I be among the actors¹¹
or the spectators? Time can only tell this. But no
matter what part is assigned to us at that particular
hour let us hope we will fulfill our duty faithfully
and single-mindedly.

While with the afternoon steamer nine Pilgrims
arrived with the morning steamer, first left for
Marv, Russia, via Constantinople. The Belows saw
them before their departure. While the tea ^{was} ~~was~~^{being}
and the eyes were ^{not} weeping the Master amongst
other things, spoke to them as follows:- "In those
ancient days Marv was a large and populous
city and I hope that in these latter days it may
reach to its former grandeur. The believers in
that city must not let chrystallization of feelings
be take place. They must associate with other
sects and be most kind towards all. The teaching
must be done in the spirit of amity and the
friends must speak in such a manner as to
attract the hearts and ^{not} to frighten them away.

Truly I say the believers in those parts are the essences of faith and the impersonations of sincerity. They have no other aim in their hearts and souls save ~~love~~ ^{love} towards the friends of the Merciful. My heart is very ^{much} attached to them. God shall undoubtedly confirm and assist them. I am most pleased with them. They have conducted themselves most nobly. They have been conducive to the honor of the Cause of God and the promotion of the word of God. In the Court of the Blessed Perfection they are most favored. May they be drawn nearer day by day unto the Kingdom of Akha, become more attracted, more enkindled, purer and holier. I will supplicate at the Threshold of Baha-Allah to protect and guard you under all circumstances."

When the newly-arrived Pilgrims were ushered into his holy Presence they thought they ^{had} at last attained to the Paradise. After welcoming them and demanding several questions about their journey he said:—

From the very beginning of the history of the Cause the city of Nayreez was moved and stirred by the Spirit of God. The believers in Nayreez are ^{either} the true pioneers or the children of the Martyrs. In ^{truly} reality in this Divine Path they have suffered every manner of persecution, ordeals, tests and martyrdom, and yet they stood firm and steadfast.

"Today the Confirmations of the Kingdom descend upon those souls who arise to teach the Cause of God. The gardener is proud of and pleased with that rose whose sweet fragrance is diffused all around, and whose ^{delicate} tender scent cheers and comforts the hearts. The teachers of the Cause are like unto open roses. They must disperse to all parts the delicate perfume of the principles of the divine Religion."

Amongst the new pilgrims is Hajj Mohammad Taher from Yazd. Thirty two years ago he had visited Acre, and during 9 months stay visited the Blessed Perfection. Now he returns to

¹⁴ to meet the Son. He has brought ~~along~~ ^{with} himself the manuscript of a large book written by himself containing the accounts of all the martyrs in Yazd from the appearance of the Bab up to a few years ago. The book will be presented to the Master. I have no doubt it is a most dramatic document and I hope to get it from the Beloved to read, and in case the time permits, to translate portions of the same.

In the afternoon I found the Master in the rose-garden talking with the son of the former Mufti and another gentleman. The talk was varied, humorous and lively. "A cheerful countenance lends consolation to the beholder" was one of the epigrammatic sayings of the Master. Another one was: "Every one in this world plays on his ^{own} pipe but we play on the pipe of God." Mirza Heydar Ali in the course of his narrative to Mr and Mrs Halback said: - "There are four holy books in this world. The first is this visible

Creation, nature or Universe. The second is Man. The third is the Manifestation of God and the fourth the sacred Bibles of the religions "

In the evening I was summoned into the Presence of the Beloved. Several calilegrams received from the various parts of the world were read to him and their answers were postponed till tomorrow.

A number of believers finding the pace of their patience boiling over have come over from Acca to refresh their hearts by meeting the Desire of all nations.

Kerbalai Emran who with two others left for Medina 10 days ago, returned tonight and the Master greeted them most enthusiastically and warmly. They have been to Medina to visit the Holy Tomb of the Prophet Mohamed. Thus the subject of the Beloved's talk tonight revolved around the basic idea that the Bábís do believe heartily in all the prophets of the past that they are ready to sacrifice their lives for any and all of them, that when the Blessed Perfection mentioned the very name of Christ all the listeners were moved by a great spiritual emotion.

Before the meeting Mr and Mrs Hallback visited him and he spoke about General Gordon and his expedition to Sudan. "He was impelled by humane and disinterested motives and there were many people who loved him."