

Bahai Nest

Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria

April 25th 1914

Dear friends!

This was a day of glorious sunshine and heavenly blessings; a day of divine companionship and calm spirituality; a day of roseate dreams and aspiring vision; a day of apparent tranquility and flowery ideals! During the day the Beloved walked now and then in the rose-garden admiring the infinite varieties of flowers and their riotous colors. The walls are a mass of red, white and yellow roses. The garden itself looks like a Cashmere shawl or a rich, ~~colorful~~ Persian rug. How he loves to walk along the fairy pathways of this garden, admiring the marvellous handicrafts of Nature, inhaling their fragrances and translating the same fragrance into his beatific discourses, which are no other than the ideal nosegays from the Paradise of Abha! In one of his walks before noon more than 30 Pilgrims and Truth-seekers stood most

95

reverently in his Presence. He was giving to them one of his philosophic talks on the perennial virtues and transient defects of the world of humanity when a copy of the Calcutta Magazine, "The Empress" of the current month was put into my hand. Opening it I saw an illustrated article on "the Bahai Movement of Persia, Its Universal Aspect," written by Mrs J. Stannard. My face was brightened with interest and I showed it to the Master. Portions of it were translated to him and he listened very attentively. "Praise be to God" he said ~~at last~~ "that Mrs Stannard is confirmed. She has created a whirl of interest in the Indian Press, at present a spiritual revolution is started by her. ~~The~~ ^{has started a} resurrection is set up. Bravo Mrs Stannard! She has ignited the Press of India with the luminous torch of guidance. I announce to her the glad-tiding that greater and more universal confirmations will descend upon her. The quiet motion of the spirit, the Urge of the Ineffable has encircled her. She is the embodiment of goodness. Day and night she is

96 striving. She is not thinking of her rest and comfort but she is engaged in the service of the oncoming Kingdom of Celestial Brotherhood. Truly I say she has no other wish save devoting her entire time to the service of the world of humanity."

The friends and the readers will be interested if I quote herein a few extracts from her recent letters as well as ^{articles}. She says:- "Calcutta or rather Bengal is the brain of India without doubt and the educational and religious Societies are numerous. At first I had great difficulties owing to finding no one free enough to help me.... Since ten days however things are much better and I see my road quite clear. I have made some most important acquaintances among religious notable people and Illustrated papers and Hindu Magazines will take all articles I want. I have reproduced Abdul Baha's picture in two of the most splendid Magazines..... Another great man, perhaps the greatest in India is the Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore. I sent him a letter of introduction from Sir Richard Stapsall of London

97

and he asked me to visit his school Colony in the country, some 8 hours from Calcutta. I had a most beautiful time. His institution is poetic in the extreme, situated in the heart of most beautiful country scenery. He is a genuine and beautiful picture in himself. You will know that he won the Nobel Prize for literature. All his money goes into this fine educational scheme of his. He is an intensely learned and spiritual soul and a good friend to the Bahai Movement. He much wished to meet Abdul Baha in America but was not able. On the next morning of my arrival he sent for me to attend the Divine Service held for the boys. This he conducts himself and gives them one of his beautiful, philosophic discourses. All the buildings of the schools are like thatched cottage bungalows under various trees and distributed over large areas of ground. I had a one room cottage to myself. Oh! the peace and the beauty of that place. I felt as if I had come into a spiritual oasis after the noise and heat of Calcutta. Well, that wonderful morning he conducted me to a place under the shade of a great spreading tree where all his students and staff

were seated on the ground. The poet himself took a front seat on the ground in front of the table at which I was to sit ^{and} speak. It was a charming picture in front of me. Then as simply and spiritually as possible I told them of the Bahai Movement, its sufferings and its teachings. I told them about Abdul Baha's visit to London straight from the prison of Acca and as he stood on the pulpit of the City Temple and realized the great Unity between East and West by his presence in that religious gathering. Also that the great privilege of meeting them (the spiritual friends and truth seekers) here in the Poets' beautiful home was a blessing accorded me from Almighty God to once bring greetings between East and West. It was a wonderful morning indeed! When I finished all flocked round me to see the portrait of Abdul Baha and the Poet himself asked if he might have one. He is a genius, truly under the shadow I feel of Baha-ollah. ~~And~~ Oh! I can just see the dear Master walking about that place if ever he comes to India he will love it. On my return from the "poets' corner." I was engaged

99

to lecture at an important place. I have now struck upon the best center for Bahai support and work. When I lectured some of the old philosophers - perhaps 20 - were seated on carpet round the pulpit. ~~in~~ the body of the hall was filled by some 300 student men; in the galleries were ladies behind Purdah. I gave a rousing speech, quoted Hindu words and some of Abdul Baha's talks but I took them through the whole thing from a little history to the final condition. Brahmo Hindus are all really Bahais in ideals, their various associations are founded by real saintly pioneer reformers and I look upon them all as inspired by the Bahai Light. They are working out our principles. That night a great power seemed helping me and I went on in a flow of proof and demonstration for an hour and half. They were almost wildly excited afterwards. The old men clamored for leaflets I have had printed and the interest was intense. I had a greatly loved religious philosopher in the chair and he asked me to come and give another talk next day.

answer questions Here as in Bombay people threw themselves on the literature and dozens of hands clamored to hold the portrait of Abdul Baka . . . There was an especially keen, old Chap who took and ran away with it . The temptation to have possession seems to seize some of them . I sent a student to him however the next day to have it back with the result with the result that the young man has begged me to put Abdul Baka's ^{picture} in a paper . It is extraordinary - but this happened in Bombay - a man tore it from my grasp in the crowd and fled away with it as a sort of precious jewel and I never got it back English speaking, Hindu religious reformers have seem quite astounded when they realize the great revelation of Baha-Allah to the world and how they for the last 50 years have been trying to work out, under difficulties, these very same ideas . They are realizing that indeed it is true ^{how} great is this New Cycle in that the world seems to be working out the same progress Well, there are many people here who will be most eager

to see Abdul Baha. I believe if only all can be arranged
the Master would have here hosts of followers. A very intelli-
gent Hindu Brahmin came to see me and said: India is
ready for some great man, a Leader. Once the Master comes
there will be a great spiritual revival. The women
are advancing and they would gladly take up these Teachings.
In another letter to the Beloved she writes ^{also} from Calcutta:-
"I have been very well occupied here and am now meeting
some of the leading societies and thinkers. All are in the
advanced groups getting very interested. The various
Societies of Brahma Samaj are the true Channels for the
Baha'i teachings. . . . Calcutta is a very learned and
busy center and therefore more difficult to impress than
Bombay. Since all are learned and religious we have
to preach love and unity as you did in the West, but
above all I show them the wonderful, practical
working side of Baha-Allah's eternal revelation; for
these laws must uplift countries and they are then
very much pleased. you will be greatly followed
and respected here, dear Lord. All are ^{saying} true

10²
Will he not come? We want a Leader, a Supreme Teacher
and if he comes we shall all know and feel his spirit. A
good Brahmin came to see me and he said; We are
under foolish rituals and dogmas which hamper our
growth and progress. If some one came whose ^{spirit}
we felt we would all turn to him. Now that they are
beginning to hear of my lectures my work is greatly
advancing. They are so afraid of getting caught
^{again} by religious priests and hidebound dogmas that I have
to show them first the great liberty of Conscience which
the Bahai faith establishes and how Baha-Allah
summons directs to God. There is a great new
spirit waiting to be caught into the unity... I am
talking to them on this and by travelling from one
place to another I connect societies. When
the end of this week comes I shall have lectured 4
or 5 times to societies and 2 to ladies. One Maha-
rani I have visited and the Maharani Asch Balar
wishes me to attend a Convention in Lucknow ^{next}
month. I am meeting this week for lecture

103

some leading religious people at a Society that opens their doors to all religions and make a study of all sacred scriptures. It is an admirable work and they are ^{summoning} a special meeting to hear of the Bahai Message.

I am sending to Bombay for some Bahai books and I will send two to their Library. Here again is another useful work to be done. We should present books to various Libraries and institutions But I cannot afford ~~to do this~~ all the time. If ~~some~~ Bahai friends would donate a gift book fund ~~to be~~ available ^{at} any time, Then when I see a real use I would present books here and there. (Those who desire to contribute towards this fund may ask for particulars from Mr Jos. H. Harman) This is the time to spread the literature. Every one asks leaflets and pamphlets and I can get them published here very cheaply."

Another letter from Calcutta says:— "Much work is to be done here - but I have all the channels cleared to be worked and the Bahai Movement will be fully established by the end of Congress times next

next year. I have lectured on and off all the time. At the city college at a big meeting ~~where~~ the great patriot Bipin Ch. Pal took the chair where I lectured to more than 300 people. He was deeply interested and wants me to write an article to be published in the Press. There is no end of Press work to be done here. Bengal and Madras are the two clever centers. I will lecture on Sunday night to the Theosophical Society. Group meetings for teaching at the Devadiga association about which I wrote you last week are needed and I shall hold one or two in the next few days. "

I have quoted enough of the letters to show you a glimpse of the fine work of this active sister of ours. Now let us turn for a few moments our attention to a number of Magazines containing articles and photographs. The February Number of "the New Reformer", edited by D. Gopaul Chetty 15 Venketroyan Lane, Sowcarpet, Madras carries an article of 7 pages from the pen of Mr George F. Andre on "some practical Aspects of the Bahai Teachings." On page 366 of the same copy

105
There is a detailed report of Mrs Stannard's address at the Karachi Conference, styled "What the Bahai says to the Theist." I am told that this New Reformer has been publishing every month something on the Bahai Revelation and thus putting the public in touch with these principles.

Another Magazine called "The Modern Review," edited by Ramananda Chatterjee with offices at 210-3-1, Cornwallis street, Calcutta publishes the report of the All India Theistic Conference, Karachi and illustrates it with the photograph of ~~some~~ of the Delegates in which are present Mrs Stannard, Mr Shirazi and Sayad Mostafa. Here again one finds an epitome of Mrs Stannard's lecture.

Another weekly Brahmo Samaj Magazine, "The Indian Messenger," edited by S. B. Samaj 211 Cornwallis street, Calcutta publishes interesting articles on the Cause in its two successive editions of March 22d and 29th 1912.

The "Hindoo Patriot," the oldest Indian Paper in its

weekly edition of January 26th 1914 publishes the Karachi
 photograph and a review of the Conference. In its issue
 of March 23, 1914, however, on the inside front page
 the Editor publishes the full photograph of Abdu'l
 Baha on the occasion of his first visit to the West, on the
 second page a large photograph taken in Chicago with five
 other Persians and on the third page Mrs Stanmonds
 picture herself. It contains also a detailed article on
 "The Bahai Movement of Persia, its rise and influence."
 The Empress, an Illustrated journal ^{April 1914} on page contains
 3 photographs and another graphic article on "the
 Bahai Movement of Persia, Its universal aspect."

The daily Jam-e Jamshed, a Zoroastrian paper published
 in Bombay dated, March 28th publishes a long article of
 14 full columns from the pen of Doctor E. C. Gesteiger,
 entitled "a Message to the Sons of Mazda
 Zoroastrian of Bombay" Another publication, called "The Lamp" prints the
 Beloved's Message to the Parsees as well as his full
 faced photograph.

The Indian Daily News of Calcutta also publishes

a most stirring, vivid ^{in one column and half} article, on "the Bahai Movement¹⁸⁷
of Persia, Its rise and Progress."

"The Brahm Apracharak" is also a Brahmo Samaj magazine but in Urdu language. This publication has printed for last two years in each edition translation of Abdul-Baha's addresses in Europe and America. There are numerous papers and magazines in vernacular languages which publish articles on the Bahai Cause but we cannot read them. Nevertheless they show in a clear and unmistakable manner how the Banner of the Cause of Baha-Allah is waving over all the regions of the world.

The President of Jain Lodge of Bombay, Mohanlal K. Shah has written a petition to the Beloved. I will quote herein an extract:— "Most reverend World Teacher! I have read the heart-stirring history of the Movement, studied the noble and sublime precepts of Bahais, and I am impressed very immensely to read and hear anything and everything of the Bahai Cause. O Master of the World! I do—

request you most entreatingly to come and preach the mission of Love, brotherhood, and Universal Peace to this divine land, which has ever been and ^{now} is ready to receive the message of Love from the mouth of the Masters that have appeared from time to time in different parts of the world at different periods of time."

The Beloved has revealed to him the following Tablet:-

"O thou masser of Reality! Whenever any object is endowed with capacity it will attract into itself divine Confirmations. Thou Considerest that when the earth obtains capacity the outflowing of the cloud of springtime transforms it into the most delectable paradise. The same law is applicable to all the earthly phenomena."

"For the last four years I have raised my voice and cried aloud in all the Assemblies and Churches of Europe and America and summoned mankind to the Divine Kingdom. The power of the Capacity of the Western nations attracted my hearts to them; otherwise it would have been impossible to take

109

this trip. Now I have returned exhausted and fatigued and hardly any power of ~~motion~~ is left in me to take this long voyage to India. But if the continent of India attains to extraordinary capacity, the Graces of the Merciful be spread and pure souls and radiant hearts be confirmed, then peradventure the capacity and the magnetic power may attract Abdul Baha to that illumined region with the light of reality: "

To Mr Hashmatullah an Indian Bahai student in Oxford he writes:—

"Thy letter of April 10th 1914 was perused. Whenever thou desirest thou hast permission to come to the Presence; so that from here thou mayst proceed to India. As regards my journey to India, it is not possible now. It shall possibly be realized some times in ^{the} future. But happy events are occurring in India. I hope that this trip of thine to India will bear fruit. "

Mr Gopaul Chetty, the Editor of the New Reformer receives the following Tablet:—

110 "O thou who art thirsty after the Water of Reality! The Editors of the Newspapers and magazines are in reality the guides of nations and the founders of the basis of the people's success and prosperity. However, before the publication of any fact they must investigate it most thoroughly, otherwise they will bring discredit and disgrace upon themselves for ever and ever; for such traces are not effaced, neither are they forgotten. Through the flight of ages and cycles they will be circulated more widely.

Many newspaper Editors do not follow a path of independent research and investigation. Although they know not one word about the Principles of His Holiness Baha-olלה they stain their pens with calumnies and write ^{contrary to} ~~opposite to~~ the truth. But ere long the reality will appear and for such editors there will remain eternal dishonor and everlasting ignominy.

Praise be to God that thou hast attained to the reality of the Cause of His Holiness Baha-olלה

and became informed with the mysteries of His Teachings.¹¹¹
I hope that thy perfunctory pen may become
the promulgator of the Principles of the Manifest
Light, so that the people of that country may
know how ~~that~~ ^{the} Refulgent Moon hath cast
His Resplendent Glory and Light upon the world
of creation, instituting such precepts which are
the spirit of this age and the Light of this Cycle."

In the afternoon the Beloved was again walking
in the rose-garden when Mr Sherazi passed by.
He called him to come in and immediately started
to speak about India:—"How many cults and
sects exist in India! The rays of the Sun of
Reality will unify them. Rest thou assured.
God willing when thou wilt return to India
thou wilt address large meetings and attract
many souls to the Kingdom of Akha! Each
one of these meetings shall constitute the
effulgence of the Orb of Truth. May
these meetings become centers of spirituality
and reformation." Then coming near to
him he did ~~smile~~ ^{smoke a pipe} twice on his face

112
and said: "Thou shalt be confirmed." Then he entered the house with happy smiles on his face. Before sunset he took a walk in the avenue leading to the green country and followed by Haji Mirza Haydar Ali. When he returned and observed all the believers waiting for him he said:- "Mirza Haydar Ali is a very young man. He took me this afternoon for a walk. He never gets tired."

In the evening all the pilgrims entered the drawing room and after a few minutes the Master appeared and the sun of contentment dawned from the horizon of every heart. The subject of his discourse was again India and the Confirmations of the Kingdom of Abha. I will translate the same in a future letter.

All the believers from India send you their heartfelt Bahai greeting. They wish to be remembered to you and ask me to beg you to pray that soon the Beloved may bless their country with his Presence.