

Pleiades Sylvan Bauer

Alhammeh
Lake Tiberias Syria
May 15th 1914

Dear friends,

This is past midnight. The little picturesque valley is shrouded with the mantle of darkness; the murmur of the little, limpid creek comes to the ear as the soft music of a far off land; the fascination of the desert has taken hold of the spirit; the gentle Zephyr wafts through the branches of my green Bower and the millions of stars are sparkling and twinkling in the blue canopy of heaven. What a starlit night! Every star declares the majesty of the Lord, the Life of ~~eternity~~ ^{eternity}, beckoning the silent watcher to the height of glory, ~~leaving~~ ^{to leave} behind the petty questions of the world! ~~and while sitting on a boulder thinking, thinking for hours!~~ Oh! What a lovely place is this! I could not live here for five minutes were it not for the Presence of Our Lord! In the evenings I brood over my thoughts for hours - dreaming over the past years, the present days and the future opportunities. Our life in the desert ~~was~~ ^{is} quiet, silent, dream-like - as the flowing of a noble, broad river with no ripple on the surface or as the song of the bird of Paradise, a diapason of heavenly harmony, a sunlit anthem of the Kingdom of romance, a charming chapter

in the book of the life of the Beloved. His existence in the desert ^{was} a vivid picture of the lives of the Patriarchs, a heartening back to the beautiful, simple life of the prophets when the world was young and when the voice of God, the Lord of Israel was heard in the wilderness of Paran, Seir and Sinai. Glorious ^{was} every minute of it, a poem wrought in the rock of ages, an anthem sang by the nightingale of Truth! Probably such spiritual days, such natural-divine days, such bright, hopeful days will never return and if they return they will not be quite the same; far different will they be I am sure. Like the golden dreams of a saintly sleeper they will float in an azure atmosphere of emerald beauty, real and yet illusive. I will think of these sweet days and I hope you will think of them too. We will not forget the blessings we received and the life we lived. Day by day its significance will dawn upon us, its hidden beauty will be revealed unto us, and its unutterable delicacy will be unfolded to us. In the future, no doubt many people will come to this valley, because it is blessed by the Presence of Abdul Baha! Many stories will be current amongst the natives about the goodness and charity of the Beloved! Many memorials will be built up and the sacred spots will be shown with reverence

This is the last day of our pleasant sojourn in Alhammuh, made memorable by biblical events (see Joshua 13.5. Numbers 13.21) and still more memorable by the Presence of the Master and the members of the Holy Family. Tomorrow afternoon the Beloved, the Commander, Khosro and this servant will leave for Adassayah and then Lake Thierias. Our lively, busy camp will be brought down and the former spirit of desolation will be again settled over the place. To-day inclusive we have spent fifteen days in the desert. From two camps we have grown to 6 camps and 4 Areeshehs. Our number reached at times to 50 persons but never less than 30. This large number of people had to be fed and taken care of, which in itself was quite a difficult task were it not for the supervision of the Master.

My sylvan bower, my shady Arbor, green and flowery ^{in the beginning}, and hallowed by the daily Presence of the King of my heart has become dried and sere. The Oleander leaves are just as verdant as the first day but they are not fresh. Altogether the days were cool, except one or two warm spells. The green slope immediately ^{beyond} after the plain has turned into golden color, showing the waving rye and wheat, ready for the harvest. Long after midnight I am sitting in my mosquito net, ^{with} the light is burning outside, shedding a soft glow. Thousands of

of mosquitos are dancing around the lamp, small insects are being attracted by the light, but I am safe inside - writing this last letter.

On the whole the life of the Beloved in Al-Hammah was beautiful, a retrospective glimpse of which may give you a faint idea. The Master was up always before sunrise. Two or three days after our arrival the stationmaster presented two rooms on the second floor of the station to the Beloved and the holy mother. Thus although he was in the tent and Areeshehs all day he slept in the room by nights. After supplication and ^{proffering} prayers at the throne of the Almighty he would drink his tea or "Zoufa" or warmwater diluted with the extract of the rose, and then come down and join the commander in the Areeshehs or the tent. Walking majestically and ~~inspiring~~ he passed by the door of my Areesheh. Generally he would either come in or stop a few ^{moments} to inquire about my health and how I slept last night. From 7 to 10 a.m. he would speak either with the commander or the Arabs or the Turks. The range of the subjects was as you may well imagine ^{was} infinite and endless, always raised or keyed down to the level of the intelligence of the listeners. What he loved best

in the early mornings was to listen to the melodies of the variety
 of the songsters, filling the still air with their sweet warblings.
 Often he would bring his chair in front of ^{his} Areeshek and hearken
 to the choirs of the birds. Now and then he would manage
 to take a walk between 7 and 10, either alone, or the com-
 mander or some one else. The event of the day was always ^{the}
 arrival of ^{the} train from Haifa. When we heard the bell
 announcing the approaching arrival of the train, everyone
 ran out of his tent or Areeshek. The Master was always on
 the platform to welcome the new arrivals. Generally some
^{number} ~~one~~ came every day. People going to Damascus and Beirut,
 and knowing the Beloved ^{avail themselves of this opportunity and} would ^{come} down and talk
 with him till the train ^{almost} left. From ten to 12 he would
 either sit on the platform of the station, gathering around
 himself a number of Arabs or Turks, or come to his
 Areeshek and entertain the Commander and the
 guests with talks and stories. Lunch was served in
 Areeshek, after which he would go up to his room to
 get his nap. About 2 or 2.30 pm he came down
 refreshed and sat in the Eastern wing of the station,
 waiting for the train coming from Damascus. Mean-
 while the Arab children would come to him and he

would gave them money, fruits or candies. Of course the children were delighted with his Kindness to them. His affection toward them was always tender and winsome. And then little by little the Commander and others would join ^{him} and the Master talked and instructed them till five p.m. Meanwhile every one was served with tea and fruits. About this time the Master would call for Khosro to take ~~with him~~ the bath towels etc, and start for the hot spring. He took only two baths in the spring of "Jarab" near which an Areeshek was built especially for him to ^{undress} dress and dress. His other ^{10 or 12} baths were taken in the spring of "Magle". Immediately after ^{leaving} the large tank from the bottom of which the water boils up - globbular-like - on the right side of it - there is a round, rough room, the ceiling of which is covered with straw. Here is the public-bath - for those who prefer a little privacy to the flowing stream. From the tank the water runs into this room where there is a large reservoir. Here the water cools down a little. From ^{morning} till noon it is for men and from noon till sunset for women. After this room there is another reservoir over which a white tent was pitched. This belonged to the Master and here he took his baths. Haji Moh-

ammad, a good Bahai from Beirut would go in the morning, empty the reservoir, clean it and let fresh water flow in it. He stayed there all day, letting no one enter the tent to dirty the water and by the time the Master went in the afternoon the water ^{was} cooler. Before and after taking the bath he would sit on the veranda of the little store and speak with multitude of Arabs gathered here from "Hauran" and the interior of Syria, Arabia and Palestine. He always walked to the spring and on his return rode on a ^{low} red horse. When back, he generally went up to his room and rested for one hour or so. Then he came down and sitting ^{either} in front ^{or inside} of his Areeshek with the Commander and other officials he would speak to them now about the details of the Investigating Committee, now about divine principles, again illumining his remarks with humorous stories. Suppers were served on the ground in the moonlight and the Beloved and his guests sat around the cover. On such beautiful nights there was no need of any artificial light, but the moon with all its Eastern glory flooded the charming valley. Then coffee was served, roasted, pounded and prepared on the spot, beside the camp fire by our Arab servant, Mahmud. Thus we spent fifteen divine days in the companionship of the King of Kings. And now I must sleep. Good bye, dear friends!