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Bahai Nest. Mount Carmel

Haifa Syria

August 3^d 1914

Dear friends!

All over the city there is a great commotion; people are wild with excitement. A new imperial Trade has come from Constantinople that any and every man between the age of 18 and 45 must be enlisted in the army register and be ready to leave at a moment's notice. For the last few days we have heard that war is declared between Austria and Servia, that open hostilities have already commenced, that Austria has attacked Belgrade, that Russia has threatened Austria that unless she desists from further encroachment, she will be obliged to enter the conflict. England, Russia and France on one hand; Germany, Austria and Italy on the other are mobilizing all their military forces. The situation is very grave. Europe is entering one of its darkest crisis of its political life. It takes a lively imagination to picture the six great powers of Europe armed to the teeth, with more than 20 millions of soldiers, waiting the final commands of their superiors to jump into the battlefield and cut each other's throats! No one can conceive of a greater folly and a more stupendous sin against humanity.

Everybody thinks here that these war news are the first indication of Armageddon, the Universal war which will teach mankind as nothing else will do the barbarism of the present day civilization and the futility of all the pacifists movements. Europe is sitting on the crater of a world-shattering volcano which may burst forth at any moment. The Russian, French, and Austrian steamship companies have announced that their steamers will not touch the Port of Haifa for sometimes to come. Therefore instead of 10 to fifteen steamers a week there will be only one steamer a week - belonging to Khedivial Line. The small German Colony has sent away ^{one} hundred of its young men to protect the fatherland. Thus you see ^{that} the atmosphere of this little Syrian port is permeated with wars and rumours of wars.

When the new Trade was proclaimed that all the Turkish subjects must come under colors there was a real panic in Acca and Haifa. You saw groups of anxious men gathered in the corners of the streets talking excitedly about war. The women of Acca were so grief-stricken that they filled the air all night with their shrieks and lamentations. In a literal sense no one could sleep. The children of all the Persians who have lived

in Turkey for the last forty years and married Arab or Turkish women are under the law of Military Conscription. No one can ^{attempt} escaping ~~and~~ ^{no} steamer is leaving the port. Large, glaring, red Bulletins are hung in the streets of Haifa calling the "patriots" to arm. The upper part of these bills are engraved with the pictures of swords and cannons and the lower parts contains the call to arms. No one understands the situation and very few can guess what does Turkey mean to do with ^{all} these preparations. For the last few days the prices of all woodstuffs have gone up, from 10 to 40 per cents, especially naphtha, sugar, tea, and flour.

This evening the Beloved gave a stirring talk on the aforesaid news of war in Europe. All the friends were impressed with his words of truth and I will share them with you. He opened his address with these simple, dramatic words:—

"A resurrection is set up! The world is topsy-turvey! The wrong side of human character is up. A general mêlée of the civilized nations is in sight. A tremendous conflict is at hand. The world is at the threshold of a most tragic struggle. The evil forces of war are plotting against mankind. The dark waves of sinister motives and satanic passions are battling in the

breasts of men. The shafts of intrigues and diplomatic deceipts have blackened the sky of man's conscience. The Chancelleries of Europe have become the combustible store-houses of warlike thoughts. Menacing, hidden forces are brought upon the stage of spectacular play. Vast armies - millions of men - are being mobilized and centered at their frontiers. They are being prepared for the fearful Contest. The slightest friction will bring them into a terrific clash and then there will be a conflagration the like of which is not recorded in the past history of mankind.

While in America I spoke before many Peace Societies, Churches and Conventions and foretold the fearful consequences of armed peace in Europe. I said Europe is like unto an Arsenal and one tiny spark will cause a universal combustion. O men! Come ye together and as far as possible try to extinguish this world-raging fire; do your utmost to prevent the occurrence of this general conflict; make ye an effort so that this floodgate of human butchery may not be set loose. I found no one to listen to my advice. I searched but there were no hearing ears. I cried out at the top of my voice, I pleaded, I ^{enumerated} presented the evils of war but people were self-occupied, self-centred. And now

This is the result. They have witnessed, they ^{have} experienced in the past that war is conducive to the destruction of the foundation of the edifice of humanity, the cause of the devastation of the world of commerce, industry, arts and trade. The combatants the Conqueror and the Conquered - are both losers. Neither party gains any substantial profit. The two combatants are like unto two ships which collide against each other. One may sink to the bottom of the sea but the other will also carry away its injuries and shocks. Therefore the victor and the defeated fail to obtain any benefit. The utmost is this: Temporarily one country holds the territory of another. This is of a short duration. In the course of the life of that nation, a time will sooner or later come when the Conquered will become again the Conqueror. In the political history of France and Germany and their wars ~~these~~ ^{such} reverses of national fortunes have often occurred. It is very strange to see how "Illusion" has taken possession of the hearts of men, while "Reality" has no sway whatsoever. For example "Racial difference" is an "optical illusion"! It is a figment of imagination, yet how deep-seated and powerful is its influence! No one can deny the fact that mankind in toto are the progeny of Adam; that they are the offshoots of one

primal stock; yet the "optical Illusion" has so radically misrepresented the ^{plain} truth that they have divided and subdivided themselves into so many tribes and nations: This is German, the other is French, that is English, a fourth is Italian, a fifth is Austrian, a sixth is Russian etc etc. Although many intelligent men amongst them know that this racial difference is an optical Illusion yet they all confess their inability to stand firm before its uncanny, invisible power. The reality is that all mankind are from one progeny and belong to one family, but although this is the reality, it exercises no permanent influence upon the minds

So many wars have taken place! so many countries ^{are} devastated, so many cities ^{are} ruined and yet people are not satisfied with human butchery, are not satiated with carnage and bloodshed. Still the hearts are stiff and unfeeling! Still the souls are callous and cold, still the minds are dark and frigid, still the people are unsusceptible and unyielding, still they are in deep sleep! Oh! When will they ^{be} awakened? When will they become merciful? When will they practice the golden rule? This hatred and animosity destroys

the basis of the structure of humanity, while Love and
amity are conducive to the wellbeing and prosperity of man-
kind.

Today the people are thrown into the utmost consternation!
How many fathers have been lamenting and groaning last night
and how many mothers have been crying and weeping in
this town and Acca! They are thrown into such a panic,
they are so alarmed that no description can give an
adequate picture! Why this tyranny! Who has obliged them
to perpetrate these acts of savagery! The Kings and the
rulers, the politicians and the statesmen live in the utmost
ease in their palaces and ^{send} these innocent men ^{and peasants} who have
never seen each other ^{into} the battlefield to ~~tear~~ each
other to pieces with shells and cannon balls. The
armies are the pawns to be played with on the chessboard
of their ~~friends~~ ^{ambitions}! How cruel is this! How
pitiless is this! How ferocious is this! How brutal is this!
These so-called ^{leaders} of humanity are not willing to let even
one hair fall from their heads, they are cowards and
are sulking in darkness. Why do they send these thousands
and thousands of men to the field of carnage to be
mowed down ^{by each other} like the grass!

If a number of imaginary or real difficulties have arisen between Austria and Serbia, if they are ^{really} desinterested and are anxious to keep the balance of Powers and not disturb the Peace of Europe, why do they not go before the Court of Arbitration? The impartial members of that Court of Arbitral Justice will look into the nature of the claims of each party and after mature investigation decide which one is in the right. Were they ready to refer ^{all} their differences to such a Court, this war would have been abruited. The Universal Court of Arbitration is ^{the} only body that shall resolve all the disagreements and contentions that arise between the Nations of the world. Extraordinary exertion must be put forward by the civilized governments to organize such an influential, international Organization before which all ^{their} quarrels be arbitrated. What better plan can be conceived by man? What harm is there in this? The rulers, the Cabinet Ministers and the administrations of each country will find the utmost comfort and ease, enjoying the fruits of their labors.

If we reflect carefully we observe that since history has been written and the ^{deeds} ~~annals~~ of mankind

recorded and preserved, no one can point out a single instance that Peace, Love and Amity have been ruinous and harmful in their results: They have filled the world with joy and radiance and happiness. warring nations

More astonishing than all these matters is this: These ^{is} ^{that} believe the object of the religions of God is to be war and strife! This is the most preposterous idea that ever could man let enter ^{into} his mind! How negligent are the people! How thoughtless and inadvertent are they! It is as though there is not a single iota of love in the hearts of man, as though they have never heard the name of love, as though their hearts are the sepulchres of hatred and envy! Man is the most ferocious animal, yet does he accuse the wild beasts of the jungle with this quality.

The ferocious beasts kill other beasts but not one belonging to ~~the~~ ^{their} own species. They kill for ^{their} own food and sustenance. For example, ^{man} ~~they~~ say ^{the} wolf is ferocious! Oh! poor wolf! Wronged wolf! The wolf tears to pieces one sheep in order to keep its body and soul alive! If it does not kill the sheep it will die from hunger, because being a carnivorous ^{animal}, it can ^{not} eat grass.

* It is strange, passing strange, that notwithstanding all these violations
16 of Divine law thou art yet wantonly boasting and exalting thyself above
all mankind.

But ~~man~~ man, who considers himself lord of creation,
will become the cause of the total annihilation of a
million of his fellow-beings. The poor wolf is a very
incompetent tyro in comparison with this kind of man!
Then he will boast: 'I am a Conqueror, I am a hero,
I am a Victor, I am a superior general, I am a
field-Marshal, I am an Admiral!' Man! It is
better for thee to hide thy head under the earth!
Thou hast crimsoned the ground with the blood of thy
brothers! Thy hand is stained with their blood!
Thou hast slaughtered and butchered God's own
children! Thou hast destroyed the living temples
of the Spirit! Thou hast trampled under thy feet
the rights of men! Thou hast snuffed out the
burning lamps of life and truth! * ("above insert")

When the Beloved finished speaking the room
was throbbing with his spirit! There was a blind
singer from Egypt and he commenced chanting
a number of sacred songs. When we left the
holy Presence the spell of his powerful words
was still with us and I believe it will continue
to be with us as long as we live.