

Bahai Nest. Mount Carmel
Haifa Syria

August 28th 1914

Dear friends!

Our dear brother Badi Bushrui, being a college graduate must have some ideas concerning the present ^{universal} was in Europe. I have asked him to write down his thoughts and the following interesting, intelligent article is the result:

"What is the business of life? This is a question which arises in the mind of every intelligent, truth-seeking man. Different answers are formulated, depending of course, upon the person's point of view. The biological answer, which is an idea common amongst a class of men is reproduction and perpetuation of life. In the life of any organism, the one prominent idea is to reproduce one like unto itself and try to perpetuate it. With this fundamental idea of life the question of Right comes in. You have as much right to live and reproduce as any other individual and hence the introduction of codes of laws into human Society.

In accordance with the Spencerian principles of evolution there is a constant movement from the simple homogeneous state of life towards the more

complex heterogeneous one. May not the same line of reasoning be true in the case of nations in so far as it is the sum-total of the individual units which enter into its structure. This being true, then, nations as well as individuals are perfectly right in their attempt to reproduce and perpetuate themselves. This is the basis of struggle between two nations. One nation under the pretext of being handicapped by the other, sharpens its claws and springs at the other nation, believing that thus their grievances are redressed. The European war of today is said to be justified on the same grounds. Austria is in danger of being wiped away from the map of Europe if Serbia become a dominant power; then every nerve and sinew is strained to check the progress of Serbia. Alliance, Entente, political, racial and religious prejudices begin to work and other European nations are drawn into this seething imbroglio; thus that Continent becomes nothing but a heated blast-furnace of fire.

The leaders of the 20th Century seem to have lost their power of self-control, the many

conclusive arguments showing the futility of war are set aside; the many lasting impressions of Peace Societies and Conferences are suddenly blurred in their minds and many a man in perfect earnestness advocates war as the solver of the sundry problems of today.

"^{My} Forgetting is sometimes one of the conditions of a good memory and very often is the cause of the utter destruction of the organism. It is perfectly wise to forget past failures and start afresh for a better career of life. but it is absolutely detrimental to social structure to obliterate from our minds ^{the impressions of} our past deeds which have had a helpful influence upon the world of humanity. Our whole life is based on our experiences. We always follow that which is, directly or indirectly pleasing to us and avoid that which is disagreeable. Now it seems to me that we have experimented on war in the laboratory of the world of humanity for well-nigh many thousands years and we have had every reason to believe that cutting each other's throats is the poorest way to reproduce and perpetuate one's kind. We have had enough experience in this line of activity. Why should we not then put to test for a time the Principles

of Arbitration and Peace. Is it not high-time for it? We glory in this, that we belong to the 20th Century, we have given up traditions, set aside the appeal to authority and we test things as they are through our power of observation and thus give up the old garment of imitation. Notwithstanding these sounding phrases we are as yet slaves of imitations; we emphasize the more the Great Illusion and in our narrow-minded attitude begin to divide the human race into different races, nationalities and colors and in this way bring about a house of contention.

"Let us turn to life and observe the effect of war within our very gates; means of communication are stopped, all the banks closed, business suspended, Commerce is at a standstill, the foundation of public confidence overthrown and young men are called for Military service. I believe the effect of this war is felt very much more in this part of the world than in other ^{now-combattant} regions. If you pay a house to house visit in this town of Haifa you will find women wailing, shrieking,

and lamenting. If you have courage enough you ask the reason ^{the presence of} for all these miseries. The answer is sure to be that their fathers, brothers, husbands ~~are~~ taken off by force to the military field; that the means of their livelihood is cut short; that famine is set in and worse than all there is no security of life and property. The clash of arms and the roars of cannons are heard from the far distance and no one can be assured whether he is going to see his relatives ^{alive} who are taken away from him. Can we call this a mode of living the life? The birds of the air and the beasts of the fields are far better off than human beings. What are the factors, then, which will ultimately bring about peace, security and tranquility?

"The factors which help the Cause of Universal Peace must be such as to change the universal nature of man; then there must be some sort of conversion, otherwise no sovereign result can be expected. Spiritual element must form a part of every man's life and how can that be brought about? Through Education, both the spiritual and material. By education I do not wholly mean the prescribed curriculum of the school or the

Academic course of a college but rather the "preparation of a man for complete living." This kind of Education, I am persuaded cannot be acquired unless a man give his attention to the training of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual sides of life. In colleges and Universities the spiritual aspect of education is neglected and therefore the students are deficient and incomplete in so far as the true standard of education is concerned.

His Holiness Baha-Allah, has provided through His Principles and Teachings, the best methods for the acquisition of the virtues of the world of humanity. Universal Peace can then be realized when nations and individuals take to heart these world-wide Principles and through their application the true position of man in the universe, is to a certain extent understood. It would be perceived then that he is a part of a great structural cosmos in whom the manifestation of the Universal Energy is shining forth and therefore man being so noble who will attempt to take his life and have him a lifeless corpse.

The Baha'is pray that God may so fill the world with His Glory that the roaring of cannons and the clashing of arms never more be heard."

In the afternoon the Master came out of his room, we followed him to the Holy Tomb, he chanted the visiting Tablet and returned to his room without speaking. For the next few days he will rest and may address now and then the friends briefly.