

Bahai Nest, Mount Carmel

Haifa, Syria.

November 16th 1914

Dear friends!

Isn't that fine to be back on the Sacred Mount of God? and see it begemmed with delicate pink flowers and carpeted with tender, green, lovely leaves. Wouldn't you be happy if you had a sweet, little nest to fly to it now and then and rest and dwell in it during these tempestuous seasons? My nest a dear, precious thing and I value and love it very much. Before I left it I worked on the ground around it; every day I dug the soil for an hour and cleared it from the stones. I was thinking to do some gardening but now I am not sure about it, because I will be a bird of passage during this winter. The future is so uncertain and we do not know what is going to happen next day. Now that I have returned I find the ground all green, because during my absence several rains had descended, causing the transformation of nature and giving to it freshness and delicacy. It is so unnatural to see the Pilgrims' Home so quiet, it is so unlike other months. There is not a single Pilgrim; Aga Mohammad Hassan, the Keeper, is very disconsolate; we do not hear the stirring songs, the stories and the talks of the friends coming from the four corners of the earth. Even the Mountain longs for their presence and yearns ^{for} their association. Were it not for this dreadful war there would ^{have been} ~~now~~ many, many pilgrims, enjoying the beauty and charm of the Beloved's talks and conversations. As is the case the world is so much the looser and all mutual ties and connections with the outside world are broken. Only the recollections of those wonderful, never-to-be forgotten days are now and then brought back to the mind. Not that these days are not of the greatest significance in the history of the world, but I complain, because that spiritual relationship and heavenly atmosphere is for the present interrupted. Although the Beloved is feeling very well, yet this ^{excellent} news cannot be forwarded to the Bahai world through the regular channels. All the friends are anxious to receive the latest utterances and words of the Master but it is impossible to send a sealed envelop through the mail and moreover the writing must be either in French or German; Persian and English writings are not accepted.

It was probably two hours before the rising of the sun that Khosro called me to get up and be ready to leave Acrea in the company of the Beloved. As I had already arranged my things, ^{last night} I washed my face, dressed hurriedly and went down. After a few moments the Master joined us and as we were a little late we hurried to the station. Mirza Mohsen, Sayad Yahya, his son and Khosro were with us. I had to run ahead and ask the engineer to wait till Abbas Effendi arrives. No sooner he heard the name of the Master than he was willing even half an hour for the sake of "Our Lord." Finally he arrived and when we were all safely in the train pulled out of the station. It was still dark and the little crescent of the moon was just rising in the East. I stood out all the way and had a lovely, cool, quiet hour, watching all by myself the shifting clouds, the dazzling stars, the waving sea, singing by the music of the breezes and thinking of all the friends who at this early dawn were praying for the appearance of the Sun of Peace. The Master in turn was in his compartment surrounded by a number of eager officers who were drafted to go to ^{the} front. When the train entered the station of Haifa we were not surprised to hear that there will be only two train days in the week. In the beginning there were three trains starting from Haifa to Acrea and vice versa. When the war ^{was} declared they made it twice a day, a little later once a day and now twice in a week. This is also subject to change and the train service between Acrea and Haifa may ^{any day} come to an end.

At the station there were no one to greet us but Khosro ran to the bezaar and brought a carriage in which we were driven home. When we entered the rose-garden it was as though a new life permeated through all the flowers and I looked upon them with other eyes than my own. In an hour Haji Mirza Haydar Ali with other believers arrived and the Master came out and began to walk through the avenues of the garden. "How are you Haji? How are the friends? Are they all well?" While he was inquiring about the health of each he culled the sweet scented roses, holding them in his own hands. We were standing and as he passed by he gave one rose to each. When he stood before me he looked into my eyes and said: - "Don't be greedy, I have not enough for all." Everybody laughed over his jovial remark. Notwithstanding this he went back and brought one for me. Then he began

praising Esmael Aga for his indefatigable effort in spending such unremitting zeal in making possible this enchanting spot. "Esmael Aga" he said "is working day and night in this garden. In reality it is a beautiful garden. We are all indebted to him for his selfless endeavor. The signs of a person's work speak eloquently of his exertion and self-sacrifice. There is no need of introduction or explanation..... The Blessed Beauty loved roses very much. Mirza Ahmad! Look at that big, fragrant rose! Esmael Aga has planted it for thee! Behold how delicate and sweet it is!"

He started to speak about an interesting subject. I took out my notebook to write down his words. Looking towards me he said laughingly: "What art thou writing now. Art thou not satisfied with all that thou hast written? What dost thou do with them? No matter what I say thou art ready to make a note of it. Who has ordered thee to do this?" Saying this he approached and took the notebook out of my hand. He read several pages, ~~and~~ laughing aloud at my detailed description of a number of events. "Oh Oh! he writes everything, everything," he said, looking at the believers. Then he smote hard on my both cheeks. "This is thy reward!" The friends enjoyed it very much but the Master had not enough of it. He went right to Mirza Mohsen and smote on his cheeks, saying:- "Go and bring some sweets for these honorable guests. Dost thou ^{not} hear, go and bring something!" "You have given them flowers." Mirza Mohsen said. "Flowers are very nice and very agreeable but unfortunately they do not fill the stomach. We must entertain the guests with something more substantial than sweet flowers." With a gay and hilarious heart he walked towards the orangery and picked many mandarins and when he returned he was very happy in giving one to each. At this time the son of Sheik - or - Raiss came and the Beloved greeted him and inquired about his father who has arrived ^{from Damascus} a day before yesterday to meet him. Sheik - or - Raiss is a prince of royal blood, very learned, a late member of Persian Parliament, an orator of great eloquence, a poet, an author and well known throughout Persia and Turkey for his learning and erudition.

To Abbas Goli he said: "How is thy mother? Is she well? When

I come up and ask her whether she is pleased with you, I expect her to give a heartfelt, loud, affirmative answer." He told them that he will stay a few days and return to Acca, then he will come back and stay with them for a long time. This news made the friends very happy. Before going up to his room he looked at me: - "Meriza Ahmad! tell me! Art thou not very happy here? Look at this holy Mountain! How green! How spiritual it is! What a wonderful atmosphere! What exhilarating breeze! Oh it is the delectable paradise! it is the delectable paradise!" With these last words he entered the house.

I ^{was} called at twelve o'clock and took my dinner with the Lord of my heart. "Come ^{and} sit down. A nice dinner is prepared for thee. Thou hast become my shadow. Wherever I go thou art with me."

In the afternoon a tall Arab called on him. The Master was sitting in the garden. The man was simple and illiterate. Speaking about the present war he offered the following idea: "I believe there has never ^{been} such a war in the history of the world." The Master was amused, because the man did not know anything about history. "Hast thou read history?" he asked him laughingly. "Yes, indeed. I believe there are allusions to this great catastrophe even in the Koran," he answered. "Oh! how wonderful! Art thou a reader of the Koran too? Since when didst thou begin to read the Koran?" "Oh! I cannot read the holy book but I am a believer in God." "Very good. Most excellent. If thou shouldst continue in this path, in two or three years thou wilt also ^{study} the old and the new Testaments." "Perhaps, perhaps" he answered chuckling.

In the evening a number of officials and religious leaders of Haifa called on him and were glad to have "Our Master" in their ^{midst}. Later he came out again in the garden and in the darkness of the night he walked around for an hour. His was a majestic figure as he walked back and forth, while his luminous words like the ^{brilliant} stars shone through the darkness of materialism and war. Altogether it was a lovely day, the pleasant memory of which will be of better and happier days ahead of us.

It was late when I ^{was} ~~was~~ ^{at} the mountain and sat at the table of Agn ^{Mah}.