

57
Home of Abdul Baha:
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria
December 19th 1914.

Dear friends!

Hurrah! We are back in civilization, on the beloved Mount Carmel, in the busy bazaars of Haifa and in the streets and lanes of a military looking town. When our carriage entered Haifa, everything seemed to my eyes very novel and interesting because I have been living such a sequestered and private life during the past two or three months. It was as though I had arrived in New York or Chicago, London or Paris. Indeed to a person who has lived all the year round in Akko Sann, Haifa is a great emporium, a large, populous city with "broad" avenues and "boulevards". The few carriages still standing in different squares are the automobiles and taxicabs and the German element of the community add to the appearance of the town a European aspect. I never appreciated before its "greatness". The tourists who pass through the semi-European towns have not a true conception of the typically Eastern life, of a life entirely unshackled from the fetters of Western civilization, a life free as the passing breeze, cool as the refreshing water, noble as the spiritual station of man, innocent as a new-born babe, beautiful as the smiling face of a pure, lovely woman and inspiring as the soaring songs of a skylark.

At 2.15 P.M. we left Akko in the carriage and started our never-to-be-forgotten drive along the horseshoe beach. The sea was smooth and the weather was bright and clear, very transparent. "Since my arrival last year" the Master said "I have not been driving along this shore, because the train service was so much more comfortable. Now we have returned to our original way of travelling I judge by the traces of the wheels on the sand there is ^{already} quite a regular schedule established." On the way we saw detachments of soldiers with their officers going this way or that and many of them stopped and saluted the Beloved. He made inquiries about the health of each, how they spend their time, how long have they been in the service and how much salaries they receive. He promised one of them to speak to the Commander about his pitiable condition and how he has been maltreated by his higher officers. Then we proceeded on our drive till we reached companies of fishermen who have cast into the sea their wide-spreading large nets. Some of them were pulling out the cords but the net

was still far into the sea; the net of another company could be seen, drawing near
and near towards the shore, while a third company catching their fishes were on
the eve of departure. When we reached the second company the Master asked Is-
fandayan to stop the carriage so that he may watch the fishermen doings.
When the net was at last brought out of the water and turned upside down one
heart was touched to look upon a great mass of palpitating, quivering little
fishes. There were actually thousands and while their hearts were going
pit-a-pit, the days of Christ and his fishermen disciples came to my mind and
I conveyed this identity of scene to the Beloved. My simple few words gave
him the ground to deliver ^{unconsciously} quite a remarkable talk while the carriage was
slowly driving on the pearly strand: - "His Holiness Christ on account of the
association of his disciples called them the fishes of men but the Blessed Perfec-
tion designated the Bahais as the vivifiers of the world. Today this world is
like unto a waving, moving, tumultuous sea. The Bahais are practised sailors
and trained fishermen who with the net of the Love of God and the
strength of the Word of God ~~and~~ deliver the poor fishes from the whirlpool
of destruction and bring them to the haven of salvation. Although the
fishes of this sea, ~~the~~ once thrown out of the water die, but the fishes of
humanity when rising out of the sea of darkness, passion and lust
are immediately transformed into sweet-singing nightingales soaring
in the pure atmosphere of Holiness, breaking out into charming melodies
and giving joy to many hearts. The fishes of the sea of nature are blind,
deaf and mute; when they enter in the ocean of God they become seeing,
hearing and eloquent. The Bahais are displaying great effort and man-
ifesting far-reaching magnanimity. The Confirmation of the Blessed
Beauty is their net, Unity and Concord is their bait, attraction and kindly
meekness is their trap, service and self-sacrifice is their reliance. They
cast their net into this great, turbulent sea and day by day are deliv-
ering new fishes. What delightful service is this to the world of human-
ity! What fruitful exertion is this in the universe of God! What noble
striving is this in the path of the Kingdom! What heavenly privilege is this
in the promulgation of Truth! What divine splendor in the illumination
of the souls of mankind! The apostles of His Holiness Christ were very

53

religious, very faithful, very spiritual and severed from ought else ^{save God}. They were inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and endeavored with heart and soul in the diffusion of the lights of the Kingdom of the Father. They strove in the progress of the souls and their characterization with the qualities of loyalty and faithfulness and whole-hearted sincerity. They were fishing by day and by night. They had no rest nor did they sought after any comfort. The Baha'is must walk in their footsteps, imitate themselves with their endurance and learn their patience and their long-suffering. Let them not lose their courage in the face of any difficulties. Let them be the fishers of the sea of spirituality. Let them sail on the ocean of the world of humanity the swift-moving vessels of assurance and certainty. Let them save the ^{half-furnished} fishes from the sea of doubt and hesitation and instruct them in the teachings and principles of God."

When we reached Home, the Beloved went right into his own room and ordered his carriage to be ready after half-an-hour to call on Zakki Bey who was staying in the Hotel Carmel. Zakki Bey is now at the head of an army Corps of about thirty-six thousand soldiers and one of the ablest commanders of the rehabilitated Turkish Army. After awhile the Master came down and walked into the room of Ismail Aga to speak with the friends, especially Hajji Mirza Haydar Ali. While he was thus engaged they brought him the word that the Commander is already here and when he came out of the room he saw his laughing, boyish face out of the window of the reception hall. "I could not wait any longer and hearing that you have arrived I came immediately," the Military chief said. While the Master turned about to enter the house he came ^{out} ~~about~~ out of the reception room and they met each other on the broad stairways. He was in a most reverent attitude but full of joy to look into the face of 'Abdul Baha. He kissed his hand and the Beloved kissed his two red cheeks and hand in hand both of them entered the house.

About one hour passed and then the Commander came out and riding in the Master's carriage went to the Hotel. There we were called into his presence. When he inquired about the health of each he said:- "These are trying days for all of us and they are becoming worse

daily. To arrange and plan the means of safety for the believers in these parts has been one of the most difficult tasks but praise be to God it has been quite accomplished. I am kept travelling between Aden, Senan, Balah, Acca and Haifa. My heart is engaged with the friends in these places. I wish to be with all of them but it is impossible to be in four places at the same time. Acca is like my home. My heart is at ease there. Rest ye assured that God will extricate us out of all these complications. We have been attacked a hundred thousand times by the religious and the nations but He has protected us."

A few copies of the Brilliant Proofs translated into the German language and awaiting my arrival in Haifa were shown him. He was delighted with this work especially at this time. "The Brilliant Proofs is an instructive, short and comprehensive pamphlet. This is the invisible hand that is working. This book is very satisfactory to all the inquirers. The proofs advanced therein are irrefutable. . . . Many of our German believers are in the war and I have prayed to Our Lord to protect and guard them through His Grace and Bestowals; we have just heard that Counsel Schwarz has fallen from his horse and broken one of his feet but later advice tells us that he has been treated in a hospital. We hope that he will not have to go to war. Counsel Schwarz is a fine person, a sterling character. In fact all the believers in Germany are unshakably imbued with the Graces of God. The Schwarz family are especially devoted to the Cause of all the friends. They are truly Bahais and even in these harassing days teach the Cause amongst the soldiers in the hospitals. Francine Schwarz has become a red cross nurse and is most active in caring for the sick and the wounded."

When I awoke this morning in Aden Senan I did not know at all that I was going to be taken by the Master. I thought I will be left behind this time - so I walked for more than one hour in front of the house of Sherk Saleh to find out when he came down. But Khassro brought me the cheerful news that I must be ready. After a few minutes he came and entered the room to bid "adieu" to the friends. A few Turkish newspapers had been just received, - so he took up one of them and

55

read aloud a bombastic editorial on the march of the Turkish army towards the rich country of the Pharaohs and how with swords in hands they are ready to fill the Canal with their own bodies in the path of their Islamic religion and the freedom of that country from the claws of the perfidious Alliance. For the sake of Mohamadanism they were willing to give up their lives happily and would not be satisfied ~~that~~ they plant their tents on the Pyramids. The Editor also thought that the spirit of Jihad is markedly apparent in the army and moves the hearts of hundreds of millions of Mohammedans. It was all very amusing. I wondered how much of this article was inspired by the higher authorities and how much of it penned by the Editor.

Then the Beloved arose from his seat and after a few words of farewell he asked them not to follow him and he hoped that he will be back again as soon as his work was finished. A strong wind was blowing and not with standing he walked on foot. When we reached the carriage ^{and} the Believer who was going to be taken with us had not arrived. The ^{other} Believer became a little impatient "Why hasn't he come yet?" he asked. "A person must be rapid in motion and not slow and tortoise-like. You see I take always Khassro and Mirza Ahmed with me, because they move rapidly and have not attachment to anything. When a soul is serious and quick in attending to all his duties, his station is great in the Kingdom of Abha. There are so many people who let the opportunity slip from their hands on account of the slowness of their minds and feet. Train yourselves to be always in time no matter where you are. Be punctual." By this time our friend arrived and we all took our seats in the Carriage and started towards Acca. After two hours we were again in the sweet home of the Divine Manifestation. We rested for awhile, took our lunch in the Presence of the Imam and at 2.15 P. M. we left the Home for the Mountain of God. It was all very beautiful. The memory will preserve the minute details of these days that cannot be put on paper. The personal element of the story must be felt and seen. Then the enjoyment will be perfect.

28