

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel Haifa Syria
April 23d 1915

Dear friends!

Another interesting portrait was added to the ever-increasing, ^{scattered} art gallery of the Beloved likenesses when this morning Hem Julius Rothschild, a German Artist, attached to the Jewish Technical Institute of Haifa placed his brush on the canvas and with a few deft strokes made the outlines of his head and face. He had asked for this privilege when he was in Acre and he called this morning with his ^{friend} amateur photographer, Eldodt to see whether the Master will consent. As it is his invariable custom never to disappoint anyone in these incidental matters he yielded to their request and our friend, ^{the} Artist worked over his canvas both in the morning and afternoon for about 2 hours. While this process was going on he conversed with them on the unity of religion, the fundamental oneness of humanity and the principles of Divine Civilization. In turn they related two stories for the Master to emphasize his points. Meanwhile two Sheiks entered the room and the talk was turned upon the doctrines and ideas of Sufism. He told them of their theories of 'Absorption', 'contemplation', 'renunciation' and 'extinction' and reviewed the history of the founding of the sect and the expansion of its mystic spirit in all parts of the earth. When the afternoon sitting was over Eldodt took two photographs of him amidst the flowers of the garden and then we took another ride in the landau and another distribution of money amongst the poor families of Christians and Mahammadans was effected. While in the carriage he spoke on severance: "When I was a young man I wished to be entirely free, devoting my time to the service of the Cause. My first intention was not to marry. Four times the means of marriage were brought about by my family and every time I refused their whole proposition. Finally the Blessed Perfection commanded me in the most emphatic manner that I must marry. For the sake of His sacred Command I accepted it, otherwise I longed for an untrammelled life of divine

liberty. How glorious it would be if man could live forever in an abstract
 atmosphere, free, sanctified, pure, unattached, like a disembodied spirit.
 In the evening he talked about the simple hospitality of Oriental
 Bahais and their lack of ostentatious display. He related several stories
 to illustrate this point. "As much as possible we must make our ^{lives}
 simple and reduce its accumulated complexities. Our necessary ^{wants}
 were originally very few but with the increasing tide of modern
 civilization, our ancestors and fathers have added to our load of super-
 ficial obligations. If we desire to emancipate ourselves and our children
 from this slavish custom, we must throw off these heavy burdens
 of external demands and live an independent, generous, liberal and
 beautiful life of democratic simplicity and poesy. When so
 many divergent elements enter into the composition of a single life,
 its natural consequence will be an antagonistic clash of interests. Therefore
 if by the Grace of God and your own effort, your life is simple, do not make
 it complicated, do not let it be entangled with outside matters, keep it
 always full of the fragrance of pure trust and unalloyed confidence; but
 if through some unavoidable causes it has become a tangled skein of
 intricacies, try your best to unloose the confused mass, get another
 hold of the silken thread of life and start again on the royal path
 of artless and frank simplicity. Let the furniture of your mind consist
 of the most precious ideals of this or any other age, let the walls
 of the galleries of your hearts be adorned with the costliest master
 thoughts of the poets and philosophers; illumine the halls of
 your souls with the electrical concepts of the wise and the sage;
 decorate the tables of your spirits with the flowers of the imagina-
 tions of the scientists and inventors; embellish the museum of your
 brains with the noble meditations and antique reflections of
 ancient thinkers; adorn the long vistas of your intellects with the
^{attributes of} knight hood and courage of the heroes of bygone centuries; beautify
 the gardens of your understanding with the sweet flowers
 of every clime and bedeck the dome of the palace of your ^{intel-}
 ligences with the glistening stars of spirituality."