

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel Haifa, Syria
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Dear friends!

Almost every day the Beloved of our hearts gives long talks to Doctor Hahelollah, preparing him for his work in Persia. He expects him to accomplish many enduring services and guide many souls to the Cause of God. His arrival in Persia will gladden the hearts of all the Bahais as he carries with him the happy news of the good health of the Lord and his oral words, addressed daily to the friends. He kept a regular diary in Persian and preserved all the utterances of the Lord of Hosts. Today he sent for him and in the course of an interesting talk he said: "Rest thou assured in the Bestowals of the almighty. His Confirmations shall descend upon thee uninterruptedly. Under all circumstances the assistance of the Angels of the Kingdom shall encircle thee. Do thou live and conduct thyself in accord with my instructions and then thou shalt see the glorious results. Today only those believers who are engaged in the promotion of the Cause of God are confirmed. Every soul, without exception, must strive according to his knowledge and ability in the diffusion of the Fragrances of the divine Religion. Unquestionably the undertaking of the most difficult and arduous matter is fraught with insurmountable obstacles and hindrances and therefore nothing must discourage and discourage us. Fatigue and depression must not overtake us. I am assured that thou shalt gain many victories, serving the Cause of thy Lord with unrelenting zeal and faithfulness. Be thou confident. Rest thou assured. Now that the doors are closed and we are unable to move or stir, travel thou with the help of God, meet the friends and convey to them my love and affection. Be thou attracted with the fragrance of God, rejoiced by the Glad-tidings of God and spread the message of Peace and reconciliation; thus thou mayst scatter pure seeds in the virgin soil of the hearts. Thou must turn thy face toward thy Maker and beseech Him to shower upon thee His blessings and protect thee from all evils. This is necessary and while thou art away I will pray for thee, so that thou mayst reach thy destination."

The internal conditions ^{of Syria} are becoming worse daily and the military authorities are perpetrating unheard of cruelties. The old inhabitants are forced to take arms, and regiment after regiment are ^{being} dispatched to Constantinople for the defense of Dardanelle. No excuses are heeded and thousands of families are actually starving and going hungry. The government measures are so oppressive that those who have not felt their deadly weight cannot realize them. The other day a butcher cut his five fingers in order to be exempted from ^{military} service; another man made himself blind, a third took some doses of poisonous medicine and his stomach was swollen. They inflict these injuries upon themselves not because they are coward but because they feel. There is a last cause and their urgent duties are at home by their shelterless families. A few days ago 1500 men were huddled together in one small inn, waiting to be transported to the scene of war. For two days they were kept there without even a loaf of bread. They ~~did~~ neither fed them nor let them go out to buy ~~the~~ food nor permitted the baker to enter the place and sell them bread. At last they became so desperate ^{that} they rent the air with their cries and agonies. Hungry, half-clothed they were pushed aboard the train and sent away to fight for a selfish government whose policy is so devoid of all humanity. On the other hand it is asserted on all sides that since the beginning of hostilities last October there has been more ^{than} forty thousand desertions in the army and last week four hundred deserted their camp near Shafa - Amer ^{only} two hours from Arca. The Agence Ottomane gives out the rather perplexing news that the council of the dominant party in Constantinople is divided and its members have declared war against each other. Their differences have so beclouded their minds and reason that a Cabinet minister is killed and other officials are threatened. The inoculation of the serum of this dipteria of disunion is however ascribed to the English spies whom they believe are living in the Sublime Porte and are bribing the members of the Committee of Union and Progress to weaken their force and cleave their rank. It is indeed most strange that instead of showing a united front at this critical hour of their national existence they are so short-sighted as to break their pledge of mutual union and divide their own party.

The signs of discontent and desparation are becoming so prevalent that we have already witnessed the ominous manifestations of a general uprising and revolution. The inhabitants of Habbus have arisen against the government, killed the Commander of the army and shot at their governor. They are now in a state of rebellion against the constituted authorities and their example may sooner or later be followed by other cities. The government is doing ~~its~~ utmost to suppress the news but the unwarranted extortions and cruelties are goading the people of all parts to frantic desperation. Those who are taken for military service are divided into three classes. The able-bodied young men are rushed to Constantinople those who are between the age of forty and fifty are sent to the Arabian desert between Syria and Egypt for the construction of the railroad which they hope to be finished in a few months. It is said that more than fifteen thousand people are working daily. The old men - the third class - must carry arms to defend their homes in case a foreign army is landed on these coasts. They are also being sent out to kill the maggots of the locusts which have grown quite large and are still in the "jumping" stage. News ~~are being~~ ^{is} received from the different parts of the country that notwithstanding all the precautions taken in destroying their eggs, the children of the locusts are more numerous than their parents and now they are taking further steps in their destruction before they assume their mature shapes.

We are now told to believe that the Turks have given up for the present all further ideas of attacking Egypt and for this reason they are withdrawing the remnant of their scattered army from Beir-Sab and other places and forwarded to Dardanelle. From all appearances it seems they are concentrating all their available forces in that point. It is said that about forty thousand camels ~~were~~ perished in the Egyptian Campaign.

Here in Haifa the people have become extremely poor and are in want of ~~the~~ daily bread. Yesterday a woman came to the Master and was weeping because her four children had nothing to eat for two days and they were obliged to satisfy their hunger by eating the

skin of oranges picked up in the street. Another woman was furious in her earnest entreaty, for her children were on the verge of starvation. "Effendi" she cried bitterly "I don't mind if I die from hunger but I cannot ^{and will not stand} stand by and see my children dead from lack of food. My husband, my father and my brothers are all taken to the war and I am left all alone. I have no protector, no one to take care of me and my children, so I have come to you." A third Jewish woman ~~did~~ cast herself from the roof and was killed immediately, because she was ashamed to beg ~~charity~~ for the sustenance of her three children. A man killed himself by plunging a dagger into his own heart. The American Consul for the last few days has been distributing several hundred pounds of wheat among the destitute families but the destitution is so widespread that less than one tenth of the needy people have received the benefit of this generous act. I suppose this ^{has been} a contribution from the United States, for the Consul himself is not ~~known~~ ^{reminded} by such generous deeds. The Treasurer of the Ottoman Bank told me that he will devote his salary of one month to the alleviation of the needy and starving people.

A new military law is promulgated that all the foreigners must take their passports to the Commissioner of Police, so that he may identify them. For this reason the Beloved told the Persian Bahais to go to the Consul and those who have not passports, demand ~~for~~ the same. I am one of those careless persons who never bothered myself about such useless documents of identification but it seems they are becoming quite useful in these days, - thus ~~I am~~ for the first time in my life I am tagged and ticketed. Notwithstanding this, the law provides ⁱⁿ a clause that if the present war does not come to an end within 3 months and if the government deems it necessary, the foreigners must be enlisted in the army, - so, unless this law is ^{abrogated} or the war finished before three months I may have to shoulder the rifle and go out to defend Turkey against the invaders. There is ^{no} alternative and that is: I may live myself for about fifty Turkish Pounds. But firstly, I do not think I am worth this much and secondly I am not clever enough to break through a bank and procure this sum, ^{newspaper} because there is no ^{newspaper} to the battle.