

Port Said, Egypt
Nov 14th 1913

Dear friends!

The apartment of Ahmad Yazdi is on the third floor and if I am not mistaken there are about 80 steps before one has arrived at his destination. All these steps and everything in the house is blessed by the feet and presence of the Beloved. Ahmad Yazdi's sister, a matronly, gentle, spiritual woman attends to all his need. How beautifully, he calls her "sister" as just as he is calling the "Greatest Holy Leaf." "Hamshereh" is the Persian sword for the sister. According to the Persian custom whenever I knock at the door she must get out of the way and hide herself in one of the rooms. Then I am permitted to enter the reception room. If by any chance or mere coincidence I happen to look at her I must either turn my head the other way or look down. The other night I was in the room with the Master and he called on her to take the pot wherein a small chicken was prepared for him and bring it in so that he may look at it whether it was arranged according to his direction. A long time passed and she did not come. Then the Master cried out: "Put a shawl on thy head and come in. Thou art a mother to Mirza Ahmad." Notwithstanding this, she came in, very shyly and I busied myself with looking at a paper and ^{did} not raised my eyes from it till she was out of the room. You may think this is very strange, but I assure you very few grumble over it. It is a custom held sacred for many ages and it may take sometimes yet before even it is modified.

This morning I called at the apartment more early than usual and the Master was not up yet, so I passed my time by talking with Murza Hadi, Murza Houssein, Ahmad Yazdi etc. These friends know almost all the pilgrims - Americans - who have come eastward for the last many years and they are always full of inquiries about them. They look upon America with an eye of wonder and amazement, ever anticipating to hear life-imparting news from that ^{far} region.

After awhile the door of his room was suddenly opened and he peered out lovingly and asking wonderingly "Are you here?". When he took his tea he asked me to go into his room and commenced to dictate many Tablets both to the Eastern and Western Bahais. His voice was weak and tremulous, his eyes were shut and the flow of divine revelation continued till noon. Then looking at his watch he said. "It is enough for today. I want to go today to the Mosque. It is Friday." Later on I found out that he carried with himself two pockets full of dinars and nickels - Pistres and half piastres - to distribute amongst the poor who always cluster at the entrance and wait patiently for alms. So that is why he wanted to go to Mosque. Friday prayer is one of the most firm columns in the religious structure of the Islamic world. It is incumbent upon every good Muslim to show himself in the Mosque on Friday. First he will meet his brothers in faith - rich and poor - on the same equal footing, associate with them in a spiritual manner and performs his invocations at the Throne of the Almighty.

The evening was a memorable one. It was truly a holy night taken out of the heavenly calendar. It was about 7 p.m. From four to seven I had a long walk with Doctor Getsinger. I was tired when I tread my feet toward the hotel. I passed by Ahmad Yazdi's apart. and something in me urged me to go up. I tried to argue and reason with it but it would not listen. "Hurry! Go up! Something great and spiritual is awaiting thee." the still small voice authoritatively commanded me. So I ascended the steps with new and strange emotions. When I entered, lo and behold all the pilgrims were sitting on the divan all around. The Master was in a deep, contemplative mood. The room was throbbing with spiritual vibrations as though filled with the pure atmosphere of the spring of divine revelation. Everybody was in deep and reverent silence. I looked well at the Countenance of the Master. He was ^{not} certainly ^{not} with us. His mind, his spirit were travelling in the Kingdom of Eternal Light, he was walking along the shady and cool avenues of the spiritual rose-garden. What a heavenly moment! Then little by little he opened his starry eyes. The rays of the Sun of Truth were irradiating from them. We all felt the electric power of his Spirit and were ready to receive his message. "Before my arrival in Denver I read in the newspaper that there was held in that city a great religious revival owing to the formal opening of a mammoth cathedral. When I arrived there I asked: 'What has been going on here?' 'A spectacular religious procession.' They answered. 'For what purpose?' 'Oh! Have you not heard? A magnificent cathedral was dedicated to the

worship of Christ.' 'Who dedicated it?' 'The honorable Cardinal and many prelates have come from the east to perform the official ceremonies.' 'What did they do.' 'The religious procession was so impressive, that 15000 men and women were moved by the spectacle and prostrated themselves right along the avenues and streets.' 'Indeed, I rejoined 'it must have been very wonderful, very awe-inspiring! I wish I was here to witness it, Oh! Oh! But I can recall of another religious procession held in Jerusalem about 2000 yrs ago. It was somewhat similar to this, ~~with~~ ^{but} just a few points of difference. In the religious revival of 2000 yrs ago His Holiness Christ wore on his head a crown of thorns; in this procession the Cardinal wore a tiara of gold and jewels. The clothes of His Holiness Christ were extremely simple and unassuming, but the robes of the Cardinal were made with costly materials and silks. The rod of His Holiness Christ was a piece of plain wood but the scepter of the Cardinal is studded with rubies and precious stones. The ~~music~~ of that revival was the sweet melody of the Supreme Concourse, but ~~the~~ ^{the} music of this cathedral was the worldly ^{the} choir and the strains of the organ. In that religious revival one was ridiculing, another sneering, this man scoffing, that woman reviling but in this procession 15000 people knelt on the ground. In that spiritual revival there was no blast and trumpet of publicity, in this gorgeous procession all tongues praised it and all the newspapers advertised it. That religious revival was upon the cross this one in the newly constructed cathedral with all due honors.

and respectability. That was a religious revival and this was also a ^{revival} religious one! But what a vast difference between the two! "Here the Master became so engrossed with the ecstasy of his subject that he was no longer addressing us. With a deep voice, full of emotions, with his eyes shining like two lamps in ^{the} darkness, with his hands making the most significant gestures he arose to the very highest altitude of inspiration, strange, fascinating, compelling, irresistible, all-powerful! "Ah! Ah! Ah!" his words burning into the very reality of our spirits." That was a great spiritual revival, incomparable in its beauty, far-reaching in its meaning, world-shaking in its purport and heavenly in its presentation. Its effect was for all eternity and its influence handed down to all posterity. All other revivals compared with that are child's plays! Look at the glorious Christ! Watch him, watch him, he is walking through the streets and Bazaars, erect, firm and unshakable. On his head there is a crown of thorns. He has no friends, no assistants and no one to take his side. All around him there is a huge rabble, boisterous, turbulent, vociferous, stormy. They are thirsty for his blood. On their lips there are nothing else but taunt, sneer, jeer and derision. On his back he is carrying his cross. Can you not imagine this immortal scene in your minds? Such was the incomparable procession of Christ! Ah! Ah! Ah! How luminous it was! How merciful it was! How godlike it was! How celestial it was! How divine it was!

"But this modern procession was good for those who desire show and theatrical effects! How lofty and noble was the word of Christ and how low and ignoble is the aim of these people! Ah me! Christ

raised the standard of spirituality but these people are fostering materiality." Then he grew silent and you could hear a pin drop. We were all transfixed, motionless and enveloped in the white clouds of his inspiration. He had carried us too far and we could not come back. We were wondering and thinking when he again raised his voice:—

X "Once there was a Mutasarref (governor) in Acre. He was acquainted with me. His name was Zeevar Tash. On the other hand the monks have a great and pretentious-looking monastery on Mount Carmel. It is much like the castle of a king. They have gathered within its walls all the means of comfort, luxury and worldly elegance. They live a life of ease, free from any worry and above the fluctuation of time. To them hard work and honest labor are unknown. Having immense sources of religious revenues they have grown extraordinarily rich. Now around this monastery there ^{were} large tracts of forests and meadows. Having no particular owner at the time, it belonged ~~then~~ naturally to the poor and destitute. They brought their flocks and cattle to graze ⁱⁿ the meadow and gathered pieces of wood and kindlings either to sell in the Bazaar for a few cents, ^{and} ^{or} to cook with ^{it} their simple food. One day the monks, like a thunder-bolt out of the blue sky, appeared on the scene, drove away men and cattle and claimed the land as their own. There was a very old ^{woman} who had ^{only} a cow. The grazing ground of the cow was the meadow, and in the evening and morning she would sell the milk and live on this income. She came to me with tears in her eyes, because her source of livelihood was stopped by these monks.

There was a poor man who roamed all day over the woods and gathered little pieces of kindling, and in the evening sold them for a few ^{cents} piastres to support his large family. He was also persecuted by the monks. The whole proposition was unjust and cruel. The French Government took naturally the part of the monks, and in the most high handed way tried to validate ~~their~~ unfair pretensions of the monks.

The inhabitants complained to the authority against the iniquitous dealings of the Monks. Then, Matsarref came to me and said, 'will you please come with me to the monastery and see what we can do?' Together we went. The Monks tried to bribe him but they could not succeed. He told them 'Have fear of God.' At last without reaching any conclusion we returned. Realizing that they failed in this their first move, they resorted to other means. They thought by giving a sumptuous dinner or banquet to Matsarref and his official family, they will put him under their own obligation and then he will be forced to protect them. Hence they went into this with great zest, issued the invitations and left no stone unturned to make the Banquet royal in proportion. On the night of ^{the} banquet Matsarref came to me, and insisted that I ^{would} accompany him. I said 'no! Why should I come? I am not invited.' He answered, 'it is impossible, I beg you to come with me.' I said: 'Very well! I will come but on the condition that you will give me the freedom of action. I cannot sit at the table.' He agreed on this and, ^{together} we went out. The monastery was decorated most lavishly, the lights were burning most brilliantly, and the Banquet Hall was embellished with the most delicate oriental arts and drapeary. The table

groaned under the loads of steaming dishes, delicious
 viands, and most ~~toothsome~~^{palatable} and savory food. There
 were all kinds of fruits and candies, and the table
 decoration ^{was} very beautiful. Motosarref and the officials
 sat on one side, and the monks took the seats on
 the opposite side. However, before they sat at the table,
 taking Motosarref aside, I expressed my ideas to him, that while Christ was
 in the utmost poverty and destitution, these monks
 who pretend to walk in his footsteps are fabulously
 wealthy, influential, and live in such a palatial
 residence. Notwithstanding this, they are not
 satisfied, and are aiming to usurp the lands which
 are the main source of the sustenance of many
 a shepherd and poor man.

I took my seat away from the merry-makers,
 near a window, and was watching the proceeding
 and waiting to see when will they turn up their
 card. Then lo! A man from amongst the monks
 arose from his seat. He was well-known for
 his eloquence and polished speech. He delivered
 a passionate and fiery speech, eulogizing the virtues
 of the monks. 'Your honor Motosarref!' he said at
 last 'you are well aware of the goodness of the hearts
 of these godlike men. They are kind and hospitable
 and they have built this monastery for no other
 purpose than to give a shelter to the weary
 traveller and sore-footed way-farer. They are
 indeed loved by God, for they have sacrificed every
 thing for the welfare of humanity.' Then Motosarref
 got up from his seat and asked the Orator: 'May I
 ask you one or two questions?' 'Indeed! your honor.
 I am at your service.' 'Very well. Will you tell
 me to whom these monks are related?' 'To
 Our Lord Jesus Christ. They are his disciples and

followers.' 'Well said. When Our Lord Jesus Christ lived upon this earth he did not have a palace like unto this. His home was the mountain and the wilderness. The lamps of his night were the stars of the heaven; his pillow was a piece of stone, his bed ~~was~~ the bare ground, and his food consisted of the grass. But these honorable monks whom you say are the disciples of Christ enjoy the comfort of this ~~imperial~~ palace, ~~they~~ enjoy honor and glory and are the possessors of much wealth. As regards to their food, praise be to God, we have had all a taste of it tonight, and have come to appreciate their gastronomic art. Not being contented with all these, they are outstretching the hands of usurpation to seize those tracts of land, which are the sources of the support and maintenance of the poor people of this town! Is not this tyrannical? Is not this despotic? Tell me, what right have they? How can they substantiate their claim? What relation between Christ and these men? How are they the disciples of Christ? What connection between the morality of Christ and the morality of these men?"

After a few seconds of silence ~~he~~ ^{the messenger} said:—"The standard is deeds. Look upon the deeds of the people. Standard is deeds. The deeds of every Bahai must be so high, so above the ~~present~~ ^{of the present age} criterion, that he may shine like unto a sun." For the third time he said with great emphasis: "Standard is deeds." Then he arose from his seat and bade the pilgrims adieu till tomorrow. As they were leaving the room his voice rang clear and strong,—"You are always with me. you are living in my heart, my mind and my spirit."