

Ramleh, Egypt
Nov 23d, 1913

Dear friends!

Every one likes to hear the stories as related by the Beloved. Don't you? He told us this morning in his inimitable way the story of the matrimonial woes of one of the Bahai teachers who is now dead. It will do us good if we listen to him for a few minutes. While he was relating it he was laughing, in turn we laughed and no doubt you will also laugh before you have read it through:-

"We had a great teacher in the ^{Bahai} Cause by the name—. He lived a long life and up to his last breath he served the Cause most faithfully. His most important service in the Cause was to carry the Tablets of Baha-ollah to the believers of Persia and bring back to them their petitions. Thus he travelled back and forth between Persia and Acca, being for years the sole channel of correspondence between the ~~Beloved~~ ^{Bahai} Perfection and the friends. He was one of the most economical man of this age and lived in the most rigorous frugality and extreme simplicity. When he was a young man his friends were most anxious for him to get married but he stubbornly

ly refused their appeals. He was so afraid to take such a hazardous venture on the ground that he will have to meet some extra expenses. One day a wily match-maker went to him and asked him point blank: 'Why don't you get married? You are now at an age that you must ~~find~~^{buy} for yourself a nice wife and settle down.' 'Oh! I am so afraid to get married, for it shall surely entail upon ~~me~~ extra obligations and expenses.' 'Extra expenses? No indeed! You are certainly on the wrong track. You have made a miscalculation somewhere. I assure you that you will have no extra expenses.' 'How is that? I really can't believe on faith what you say.' 'All right! Now that you ^{are} a sort of skeptic on this subject, would you like me to demonstrate to you by arithmetic? I will consider it an honor if you could show me how this impossible thing is done.' 'Very well! Don't you have a house?' 'Yes.' 'When you are married your wife will live in it and you don't have to pay extra rent.' 'That's so.' 'Don't you have a furnished room?' 'Yes.' 'It is then very easy, share it with her.' 'That's true.' 'Do you not have a bed?' 'Yes.' 'Let her have half of it.' 'All right.' 'You will have however one small item of extra expense.

Now you are buying daily one loaf of bread, then you buy two, and considering your ability and energy I have no doubt you can work for an extra loaf without taxing your physical strength.' Well, this kind of reasoning led him into the trap and he began to look around for a suitable wife. He had not to wait long before partial disillusionment came over him as he had to buy a ring and a shawl for his fiancée and afterwards the preparations preceding the marriage made him more than ever feel the futility of ever relying on the advice of a friend on such an all-important matter. His nerves were almost shattered under the staggering expenses and he divined rightly that if he had to do all these things before marriage what should he afterwards! Still he clutched hopefully to the first frugal picture presented to him by his friend and trusted somehow it will come to pass. At last he was alone with his wife and before enjoying the sweet pleasure of her companionship and hardly a few days had passed than she got the idea that he must buy all the kitchen utensils, dishes, cups, saucers, spoons, beds, carpets and other things considered by her as essentials of housekeeping.

At first he grumbled and was churlish but she argued him into it and finding himself stripped of all moral resistance he went hesitantly into Bazaar and bought everything she demanded. By this time he was angry ^{with} his friend and upbraided himself in being such a foolish ^{man} as to ^{have} listened to him. Before she had time to think over his worries she fell sick and his mother-in-law was beside the bed of her beloved daughter. A doctor had to be called in, the medicines had to be bought and the poor man was groaning under the heavy load of expenses. There was no use and there was no one to sympathize with him. Finally she recovered from her illness and after a year to and behold there were three in the family! He could not believe in his senses. He rubbed his eyes but nevertheless it was true. What could he do? Everybody in his house made merry; even the mother was bright and happy over the newcomer. He knitted his brows and went out to drown his sorrows alone but curiously in his secret heart the bird of paternal joy was singing. Now he could not even trust himself. He did everything to minimize the expenses but no one ^{could} have it. His house was full of people, his mother-in-

law and all her relatives were there to congratulate him and fondle the "angel-baby" as they called it. He thought positively this will be the last indiscretion ^{but} before another year rolled by. God made the number of the family four, and then five, six, seven, eight nine — a troop of little humanity in the making. No sooner than he set his foot in the courtyard or in the evening returning from his business than the children flocked around him, diving into his ears their childish wishes with great noise and insistence. 'Papa! I want a pair of shoes!' 'Papa I want a hat!' 'Papa I want a doll!' 'Papa! I want candy!' 'Papa! I want a pony!' Their demands were very numerous but by that time he had learned how to be patient and long-suffering and how to humor each one of them. Often he would think of his friend and his argument of one loaf of bread and how simple he was to readily accept it. Then he would say to himself half aloud, 'if any young man ever comes to me for conjugal advice, I will show him such an object lesson as to never forget it in all his life.' " X

The rest of the day was spent by the Beloved in receiving and visiting the friends and speaking to them on many familiar subjects of the Cause.