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Bahai Nest. Mount Carmel

Haifa, Syria

July 23d 1914

Dear friends!

It is 10 pm. I have just been walking on the porch of my little nest. In their shining tongues the stars were singing the glory of the Lord and declaring the majesty of the Maker of the heavens and the earth. The air was impregnated with the soft tones and delightful undertones of the music of Silence. The Muses filled the mind with the sweet messages of the still small voice and the conscience became the court of brilliant unattained longings. The mountain and the sea, the sand and the rocks, the trees and ^{the} plants ^{whispered} ^{to the heart} the ideals of their beauty, simplicity and attraction. Nature seemed alive with the life of the spirit - intoxicated with the overflowing cup of the celestial nectar, because the "Desire of all nations" is inspiring the souls of men with lofty ideals and world-conquering thoughts. The mountain was ^{so} quiet, so still, and withal there was such perfect communion ^{between} all the organisms of nature that a trained ear could hear ^{all} their inarticulate sounds. I thought I am standing between two seas of silence, one more significant than the other.

This was the 4th of July throughout all Turkey. In other word on this day the Young Turks wrested away the imperial authority from the cruel autocrat Abdul Hamid, drove him down from the throne, banished him from the capital and established the Constitution and Parliament. For this reason this was a national holiday and the spirit of merriment was abroad. Government offices were closed and almost all the stores were shut. In the evening the principal buildings were illuminated and the streets were filled with joyous crowds - Christians and Moslems and Jews congratulating each other with patriotic fervor and devotion. While I was walking on my porch I saw occasional rockets shooting skyward, bursting out into many colors and flower-shaped forms. To the Bahais also this a good day, because the doors of prison were opened before the face of Abdu'l Baha and thus he was enabled to go out into the world and spread the Message of Love and Peace. Without this declaration of freedom Our Beloved might have never left Acre and the lovers of humanity would have been deprived of looking into his face and listening to his holy words.

This morning the Beloved sent Shougi Effendi after me and in no time I was standing in his presence. His every movement of his body evinced health and joy and sound reasoning and a contagious optimism as regards the future of the Cause in the world and its invincible victory over the hearts of men. He was sitting on the sofa. "Come and sit down," he said "How art thou? Speak to me. What news hast thou?" I told him of the lukewarm attitude of a number of clergymen in London discountenancing the idea of a Conference between the various Christian or Anglican sects. He said: "For the time being the proposed delegates to such a Conference must lay aside the discussion of dogmas and Apostles' Creeds. The question of the Validity of the Creed and the inviolable authority of Dogmas is a secondary problem. One sect may hold fast to the Apostles Creeds as the final Will of God to man, adhering dogmatically that the door of further revelation and light is definitely closed before the face of mankind. Another sect may assert just as assuredly but with more reason and logic, the right of liberal interpretation according to the ever-evolving and progressive conscience of man. The growing and heated discussion between these two religious camps holding such

extreme views will no doubt lead to acrimony and asperity and produce no results. How much more useful it would be if the essential doctrines of Christianity were taken up and discussed, especially those principles which would harmonize the different scattered forces, welding them together - thus they may be pressed into intimate and permanent union." He spoke along these lines in detail, pointing to the Cardinal doctrines of the Church as ^{entirely} misunderstood by ministers, priests and layman alike, - such as the Creeds of Confession, Transubstantiation, Immaculate Conception, Resurrection, Atonement, Ascension and Miracles. "If the Churches" he said "are anxious to win the souls back to Christ they must interpret these 'seven great mysteries' of Christianity according to science and reason - otherwise no liberal-minded person will ever accept the old, hide-bound interpretations." At this juncture an Arab ^{entered} the room and the Beloved switched off his talk to a full description of the origin of difference ^{between} the Oriental and Occidental churches - designated as Catholics and Orthodox, the subsequent Crusader's wars which lasted 200 years and the

final capture of Constantinople by Mohamad II the Conqueror.

The hour struck twelve and the Arab Caller got up from his seat to bid good-bye to the Master. Altogether I was in his blessed Presence for more than two hours, picking up the pearls of truth from the sea-shore of his explanation.

As ~~tomorrow~~ will be the first day of the month of Ramazan - the Mohamaden fasting, the Master paid a few official calls this afternoon. When he returned, driven in his landau all the believers were in the garden to greet him. He walked through the garden and entered the house between two lines of the reverently-bowing disciples. After a few minutes we were all called into his Presence. Noticing that Haji Mirza Haydar Ali is not amongst the believers he inquired about him. Referring to him he said: "In reality he has spent all his powers in the Path of the Cause of God. How wonderful it is, if man dedicated his life to the Blessed Cause! Instead of spending his precious hours in the gratification of his worldly desires and wishes which have no permanent value and outcome, he may devote them to the spread of the Cause of God. This will glorify his station in both worlds. Consider the ^{records} of those souls who have

consecrated their lives to the Cause of God; who have been as strangers to all the personal desires, wishes, hopes, aims and purposes save servitude at the holy Threshold and thralldom at the Court of the Blessed Perfection! They are the embodiments of pure spirituality, illumination, enkindlement, severance, attraction and detachment! These souls are conducive to the enlightenment of the nations. These sanctified personages bestow spirituality to the children of man; quicken the hearts, embody the perfections of the world of humanity; project and make manifest in their lives divine virtues and entirely reform the world of mankind " For half an hour he went on, then, speaking about the hardships, ^{and} sufferings of the Bab and Baha-Ollah, contrasting them with the lives of the former Manifestations of God. Having described their arrival in the Penal town of Acre and the Blessed Perfection's incarceration in the Military Barracks he continued: - " Having then realized how these holy, spiritual, luminous Manifestations sacrificed their lives, teaching us with deeds and not words, instructing us with supreme morals and ethics, directing us through

unparalleled examples of trials and ordeals, afflictions and persecutions and counselling us with peerless advice and countless revelations — then if we have one grain of loyalty — how can we stand by idle and do not rush toward the arena of self-sacrifice! why should we not renounce everything! how can we ease our consciences by accepting comfort and tranquility! why should we not give up life itself and why should we not with whole-hearted enthusiasm to serve these Blessed Personages and diffuse far and wide the fragrances of their Teachings.

Therefore we must strive, we must make great effort in order to be confirmed with the pure servitude of these Manifestations. If we are deprived of the sea, let us not deprive ourselves of the drop. The servitude of these Holy Manifestations is like unto the sun and we are like unto atoms. Just as the atoms are made manifest in the light of the sun, similarly we are made manifest in the servitude of the Divine Messengers of God. The appearance of the atom depends upon the light of the sun, otherwise by itself and in itself it has no existence"