

Home of Baha - ollah

Acca, Syria

August 18th 1914

Dear friends!

Saadi, the philosopher-poet of Persia, who lived several hundred years ago, expresses the unity of mankind in a number of beautiful verses, the crude translation of which is as follows:-

"Mankind are the members of one body,

God has created them of the same substance;

When one member receives an injury,

All the other members suffer the pain.

Man! if thou dost not feel the sorrows and hardships of others;

Thou art not worthy to bear the name of man!"

Putting aside for the moment the question of European war and its baleful results in all the Eastern countries, let us turn for a few minutes our attention to Turkey and the country in which we live - Syria. It seems through some unaccountable reason, it has entered the minds of the Constantinople authorities that they must drill and muster a huge army in order to be

prepared for the emergency which might arise any hour or any day. I have alluded to this matter in some of my former letters that the Ottoman government is assembling soldiers with some ulterior motive. As soon as the news of European war was raised abroad she has added a hundred fold to her activity in this direction. For example an imperial decree is sent forth to all the Provinces of the Empire that all the men between the age of 20 and 45 are to be enlisted in the army and the government is spending all her energy in recruiting, instructing, drilling and disciplining a colossal army of between two to three million men. The chief points where these armies are being gathered with the greatest speed are Damascus, Yaman, Hejaz, Bagdad, Alep, etc. I am informed that Syria alone ^{must} contribute the staggering number of several hundred thousand men. Since the hour that Enver Pasha has become the Minister of War, because he has been trained and educated in Germany, German officers for the instruction of the Turkish Army have become numerous. The Press of the country extols German system to the sky and educates public opinion in favor of Germany. The strangest of all these proceedings is the

the issuance of a secret order on the part of the administrative authorities to all the Sheikhs and Imams that on every Friday noon in their public prayers in the Mosques of all Turkey, they must invoke God to give signal victory to the arm of Germany which instruction is regularly and scrupulously carried out. People are taught that if Germany is defeated Turkey will be placed in the most dangerous situation, that the life of Turkey depends upon the triumph of Germany. Let Germany be vanquished and then England, France and Russia will set calmly to the final partition of Turkey. The people are so Pro-German that it is risky to speak about the probable victories of other Powers; especially at this time that Germany has sold ^{them} two fine battleships, Goben and Brasslaw. The other day a delegation of several hundred women called at the English Embassy in Constantinople and protested most vigorously against the treatment meted them by His Britannic Majesty's Government in not transferring to them the two battleships which were designed and built for them in the British ^{Dock} yards. I believe the price has been already paid and at the outbreak of war England

refused to give them up. From the English Embassy to go to the German Legation and hold a warm demonstration in praise of that government. "Vive Germany! Long live Allemand!" were the shouting hurrahs. I have also heard from an authoritative source that a few days a German ship carried on her board much war materials, rifles, about 200 guns and balls and cartridges and were brought to shore in Beirut and immediately transferred on train to Damascus.

The air is full of wild conjectures and the poor inhabitants are distracted and confused. Some say that Turkey wants to fight with England and take back Egypt; others say she is waiting to give a hard blow to Russia as soon as she finds the first opportunity and sees Russia is weakened by internal revolutions and external defeat; still others state she is mustering these huge armies to go to the help of Germany in case of necessity and the semi-official version is, the protection of the nations' rights and the country's frontiers and shores. In any case ^{as the Bahais} ~~they~~ are commanded not to interfere in politics they are only praying for the establishment of good will and peace.

Early this morning I was called by the Beloved. When I presented myself in his room he wanted to have the translation of a number of Tablets he gave me yesterday. I hurried out and brought them to him. He surprised me by announcing that he is going to Haifa this morning and will be back in the evening. Some thing told me our stay in Acca is brought to an end. The Master then went out of the house all alone and after a few minutes Mirza Isoureddin arrived from Haifa. The Beloved had sent for him but he was already on his way to the latter town. We all felt very sorry but resigned. Monavver Khanom and another Bahai girl had come to join the Master but they found the house empty. The rest of the family was to the Holy Tomb in Balajee but I stayed at home. In the evening Shah-Karous, the keeper of the house went to the station to welcome back the Master but the train arrived and there was no Master. He returned crest-fallen. "He may come tomorrow morning or evening" they said. But I thought otherwise. We will wait and see.