

Home of Baha-Allah.
 Acca, Syria Nov 10th 1914

Dear friends!

Can I make this sorrowful world happier? If yes, I have a right to live in it. The people who walk therein are unhappy enough. What they need is the tonic of a smile and not a frown; the sunshine of joy and not the gloom of doleful regret; the brightness of a broader hope and not the darkness of cold disappointment; the assurance of a better future and not the misgivings of a dreary misery. At this time ~~and~~ hour no one is interested to hear the story of my life and as far as possible I must push my own sorrows and pains behind the scene and come forth with a courageous courtesy upon the stage of the world and lend a helping hand here ~~and~~ a cheerful word there. There is no time for retrospection and the work to be undertaken is awaiting us at this present moment. The world is wreathing in the grip of a deadly malady, we must find out the causes and administer the proper sort of treatment. The flowers of civilization must not be withered away, the ideals of humanity must not be dragged to the earth. The culture of centuries must not be obliterated. The edifice of justice and ~~righteousness~~ ^{rightness} must not be torn down; the beaming stars of international obligations and comity must not be darkened and the voices of good-fellowship and peace must not be hushed. A few over-ambitious persons who are stalking abroad under the ~~garb~~ ^{cloak} of the divine right of Kings and in the pomp and panoply of empires have stirred a deep racial antipathy between the nations of the world and are setting at large the savage brute in man. They do not heed the protest of the enlightened opinions of mankind and go on purposely weaving the webs of lies to catch the unwary. Under these peculiar circumstances there is nothing for the ~~too~~ average man to do but concentrate all his thought-vibrations on Peace and do not let these false ^{accusations} or the waves of modern barbarism influence his cosmopolitan spirit. The anthem of universal brotherhood is sweeter to the ears of the spiritually minded than the martial air of patriotism. The first is the cause of unity, while the latter is the means of dispersion. one is conducive to progress, the other the origin of ruin and slaughter.

When we got up from the table tonight the Master asked us to go into his room and stay awhile with him before going to bed. As I entered the room he was in good humor and rising from his divan came near me and smote on my left cheek, laughing and remarking at the same time that because I had a smooth face the slap did stick to it. One of the friends told him that practically all the Foreign schools are closed in Turkey owing to the disturbed conditions of the country. He said: "It will be a capital accomplishment if a school conducted on Bahai lines could be built. In the Bahai Movement a system of education is out-lined, ^{where} value is not for the present appreciated." He became silent but I was anxious to hear him speak on this system; so I ventured to ask what the plan is? He answered: "It will take a long time for me to explain it to you, besides the means for the establishment of such a school is not available." I said: "Never mind! if there is no means for its realization. If he would tell us just the cardinal idea of this plan, it will be put into practice in some future time. If he give expression to his thought, it is already half accomplished." He said: "The object of such a Bahai school will be the cultivation of the spiritual and intellectual instincts in the child by arranging a thorough program for his moral and scientific training. The teachers and professors will be spiritual and their idealism sublime and transcendent. Their sympathetic and artistic natures will be acute and most refined. Aside from the purely technical side of the program, which I do not need to dwell upon it for obvious reasons, there will be prepared a program spiritual in character, consisting of ethics, prayers, supplications and those divine, religiously-undenominational subjects which will tend to uplift the thought of the student towards his Maker and instill in his mind a glowing love for his fellow men. This spiritual program will be graded from the very simple lessons to the more complex subjects. In order to obtain satisfactory results the pupils must be taken in this school from the very beginning. Here the very foundation of their education must be laid on ^{the} solid rock of purity, cleanliness, sanitary observances and physical examinations. The teaching-rooms must be large

and airy and perfect sympathy and comradeship be established between the teachers and the pupils. Every little child will have a slate before him on his small desk. The teacher will stand up beside the black board facing the pupils. With chalk he will write the first letter of the Alphabet 'A'. All the children will follow the motion of his hand, and write on their slates 'A'. Then he will tell them aloud this 'A' and they should repeat it after him. In this manner they will study the writing and reading ^{of the alphabet} at the same time. The next step will be the simple combination of two or three letters until the children are well-grounded in them. Having learned the forms and ~~the~~ shapes of the letters the teacher will begin to teach them 'words'. For example he will write on the black board the Word 'God'. Immediately all the pupils should write it on their black boards. Then he will ask them ^{one} by one to see whether they can pronounce it. If there is anyone who does actually pronounce it correctly, he will praise and encourage him with 'Bravo', and 'Well done' etc, if not, he will pronounce it and ask them to do it after him. Then he will ask ^{them} what is 'God' in French? If they do not know he will write 'Dieu' on the black board and pronounce it for them. In the same manner he will ask them in one or two more languages. Then he will ~~ask~~ ^{write for} them the Word 'Prophet' and repeat the same questions. Then the words, for example, Christ, Come, from, Heaven, forming it afterwards into a sentence and translating the same into French, Persian or Esperanto etc. Books are not necessary at this stage of teaching. Oral instruction is the best. In this manner the child will learn in one year what he would have learned ordinarily in 3 or 4 years. The same program, with necessary modifications to ~~adapt~~ ^{suit} the developing brain of the child and the changing environment of the country — can be applied to the teaching of preliminary ^{mat} mathematics, history, Geography, physics etc. What I have said here is only the first incomplete chapter of the educational system in the Bahai Movement."

Speaking about the autocracy of the Censors in the chief European Capitals and how contradictory reports are sent to various parts of the world to cover the truth he said: "One hears nowadays so much about the high-handed ways of the Censors. With every opportunity they distort the truth, even the inhabitants of their own countries know very little of what is actually happening on the field of battle. Ninety nine percent of the cables we receive here are fabricated in the lies factories. Not only today truth is suffering at the hand of the Censors but it had been also whipped in the olden times. Once Persia was engaged in war with a foreign Power. After a severe battle her army was defeated but the military censor sent word to Persia that the royal army has achieved a great victory and the inhabitants ^{of every city} must celebrate the occasion by a National festival, illumination and pyrotechnics. In those days there were no cables to reveal the truth and the inhabitants prepared a grand jubilee. After a month or two, however, it became evident that the Persian Army has received a crushing defeat and naturally the people got to grumble. Right at the top of this came another "Official dispatch" that the invincible Persians have left nothing of the enemy and another nation-wide Fete of Thanksgiving must be celebrated. At first the people were skeptical and did not want to believe this last report but they were forced into conviction by other messages from the Headquarter. After the celebration they found out that the reverses of their army, this time, have been worse than the beginning. Thus they lost all faith in the declarations of their government and whenever afterwards an order was issued from the field that the nation must celebrate a Thanksgiving Fete for victories achieved over the enemy, they whispered to each other: 'This is another defeat.'

This morning all the trunks were sent to Abou-Senaw. The Master was out in the street till the camels started on their way. In the evening he had many guests from the official set of Acre. Part of the day he was out calling.