

Home of Baha - Ollah

Acca Syria. Nov. 13th 1914

Dear friends!

Another censor story enlivened the conversation of the Master. It was drawn from the historical annals of Persia and worth relating: Nadir Shah was one of the great rulers of Persia and during his military career he conquered India and many other countries. He was a resourceful leader as well as a valiant warrior. Once he collected a huge army and marched against Bagdad. The governor of Bagdad hearing about the approach of the invading hosts and realizing the lack of the means of defense, sent his ministers to Nadir Shah with the message that he is ready to surrender the city and save much inevitable misery and bloodshed. Joyfully, the King of Persia accepted this unexpected offer of capitulation and issued a proclamation to his troops announcing the day of his triumphal entry into Bagdad. But here fate changed the established course of events and at <sup>the</sup> very time that the Army of Persia were unconsciously proceeding towards the <sup>ancient</sup> Capital of the Khalifs, Osman Pasha, the Turkish general, heading a large army appeared on the scene. With the unexpected appearance of such an efficient general and well-equipped army the governor of Bagdad thought it better to break his agreement with Nadir Shah and resist the foreign invasion. The result was the waging of a great battle on the plain of the old Babylon and the partial destruction of the Persian forces was a stern fact. Nadir Shah, in order to protect himself and the rest of his tired army from complete ruin, drew a plan of retreat and took refuge in the mountain passes of Feily. Winter was at hand; Persia was very far off, the roads were blocked with snow and bands of robbers and above all he could ill-afford to return to his capital without accomplishing a series of military victories. Hence he ordered his General to write a full report to his Minister of war of what exactly has happened and how the remains of the shattered army is passing in winter quarters waiting for reinforcements and ammunitions - so that after the arrival of these they may commence their offensive



attacks early in spring. The general, having the spirit and the pen of a modern censor went to his camp and prepared a most bombastic, eulogistic report about how Bagdad was surrendered, how the invincible army carried everything before it, how the Imperial forces defeated the forces of the enemy vastly superior to them in number, in strength and in preparation and how they are now serenely expecting more reinforcements and ammunitions to extend the limit of their military operations and subdue the rest of the country by the next spring. The report concluded "In the heat of battle each soldier displayed the fearlessness of a lion, and the ferocity of a leopard. His Imperial Majesty our beloved King manifested supreme courage and undaunted heroism in leading the royal guards from victory to victory." When this report was presented to Nadir Shah for perusal he sent for his general and rebuked him severely: - "What kind of foolish stuff is this piece of writing. It does not contain a word of truth. Why hast thou not written the naked facts as we have faced them these dark days? With such a glowing, false report, would they not be right in the assumption of the idea that we are well-nigh impregnable and not hurry towards us one single soldier? General, go and report in plain, ungarnished words that we are attacked, that thou understand, defeated and have retreated to these mountain fastnesses waiting for their immediate succor and aid". Therefore another report was prepared, including the instructions of the King and detailing the critical situation of the army and forwarded with a fleet-foot messenger to Persia. By the next spring ample reinforcements and ammunitions and provisions arrived, cheering and straightening the down-hearted army. Then like the tidal waves they rolled over Bagdad, defeated the Turkish forces and took possession of the country. The Persian army swept over a wide stretch of land and conquered many cities. When his work of conquest was complete then he called in his Censor-warrior-general, addressing him eulogically.



Now wield thy pen in describing the triumphs of the Persian arms; give rein to thy eloquent tongue and immortalize the feats of the Persian army with noble sentiments, poetic fervor and high-soaring words. Now is the time for the celebration of our immortal deeds. Strike while the iron is hot."

This morning I took tea in the Presence of the Beloved and was stimulated by his holy utterances of welcome and happy face. Later on Mirza Sayad Hossain arrived from Bahajee, Mirza Moner from Abou Senan and Abul Gaseem from the garden of Rezeram. The last mentioned believer comes everyday, always with a fresh, fragrant bouquet of flowers and a basket-full of mandarines or pomegranates. Such wonderful, big pomegranates I have seldom seen anywhere! Some of them are as large as a fair-sized watermelon! When the Beloved met these people and conversed with them, he went out and was away for an hour. Returning with the commissioner of Police, both of them entered the reception room and were there till about noon.

The Master asked Abul Gaseem to come up and lunch with him. He was eating very slowly and taking small morsels of bread. The Beloved joked with him. "Thou art like a Hercules. Thou must take mouthfuls like the head of a cat and not like a retiring, bashful bride. Where didst thou learn this nice etiquette in eating. Eat, eat, Look at Mirza Ahmad and see how he has attacked his dish and does not give a chance to anybody else." After the lunch Abul Gaseem told us that once he started from Arca for Bahajee. He was riding on his mule. With him he carried 15 loaves of bread and two or three pounds of Persian cake. When he arrived at his destination he found that he had eaten everything.

At three o'clock, the Beloved, as he descended the stairs told me to be ready to go to Bahajee to visit the Holy Tomb of Baha-Allah and pray for the war-stricken countries. He sat in the shop in the square and asked me to go to the stable and ask Isfandeyar to bring the carriage. After a few minutes we were all riding, and going out of the town. Near the guest house we alighted from the



carriage and walked towards the Tomb. Owing to the downpour of recent rain, the plain was partially green and delicate pink tulips pushing their sweet-scented heads out of the earth. In the Holy Shrine there was that Peace that passeth all understanding. With a very low, soft voice the Beloved chanted the visiting Tablet and then sat down on the floor, praying quietly. The upper windows were opened and several sparrows had found their way into the lovely garden. While we were immersed in a sea of silent prayer, these little birds were fluttering about our heads, flying from branch to branch and singing melodiously, joining their delightful music with the invisible chords of supplications playing upon the instruments of our hearts. Coming out of the Tomb the Beloved walked towards the tomb of the great Afnan and standing before it for a few minutes prayed reverently. On the way he told us that he has read in a local paper that the subjects of all those Powers who are at war with Turkey must go without delay to the police offices and register his names, address, occupation and other information required; otherwise the government will not be responsible for his safety. Then riding again in the carriage, the Master ordered Isfandiyar to go towards the garden of Reziwan. It was quite a long time that he has not been in the garden and I rejoiced in my heart. When we reached the garden Abul Gasem ran out to welcome him. At first he stood before the door of the room of Baha Ollah praying; then he sauntered all around the garden. There was such a profusion of rich multi-colored flowers and in this glorious sunset the Master walking amongst them made a heavenly picture. At one place he stopped and joked with the wife of the gardener; at another place turning to me he said: - "Look how the garden is beautiful. Abul Gasem has kept it up in excellent order. The Blessed Perfection is pleased with him. Then he plucked mandarines from the over-laden tree and gave me two with his own hands. 'Here is such a lovely spot for rest,' he said 'and I have no time nor the inclination to come and enjoy it. My only object in coming to this garden is to visit the Blessed Room of Baha-ollah.'" Then with Abul



Gasem he spoke about crysanthemum. The flowers of the kind produced here are very small but if he could get the seeds of the Japanese and American species he will be much rewarded on account of their grand size. Then he went and sat on a bench under the large mulberry trees, while the fountain was playing. Khosro served tea and the Master was happy in this quiet atmosphere. From here he walked to the garden of Ferdows to meet the Zoroastrian Bahai farmers. He inquired from them of the many kinds of vegetables they have under cultivation and after a quarter of an hour we were again in the carriage being driven towards the house. As we passed through the narrow streets of Acca there was a deadly silence, few people could be seen and one who had seen the lively appearance of the town a few months ago he would think it was more like a deserted place.

In the evening the Beloved came down into the reception room and gave a long, stirring talk on Universal Peace and the Power of the Word of God which I will translate somewhere else. Amongst other things he said: - "These nations love war, hatred, bloodshed, mutual hostilities and rancour. They think this is a sport. The art of slaughter is being cultivated with the utmost scrupulousness. It seems they prefer national and international suicide. They do not listen to the voices of Peace and conciliation. Is it not better to cultivate the art of good fellowship than animosity! Then the East and the West will rest in the cradle of prosperity and happiness, the world will be freed from the dreadful incubus of military autocracy, the angels of Peace will hover over the minds of men, blessing all mankind with the fruits of their prayers and the rays of the sun of democracy will illumine all hearts."

Then other men entered the room and the discussion became general, while the Master related a number of stories to relieve the strain of the war situation. Afterwards, Khosro lighted the lantern and the Beloved went out to call on the Motosarrafi and came back about midnight.