

Nature's studio
Ahan Senan, Acca, Syria
December 17th 1914

Dear friends!

The spiritual romance of life is an ever present reality during these quiet hours of my days. Real they are indeed, still they are wrapped up with an atmosphere of unreality, illusiveness and sunlight fantasy. I bathe all day in the open air, the warm rays of the sun and the blowing of gentle breezes I enjoy a mental and physical aeration, thanks to the delightful weather and Raddi Effendi's school. This is about two o'clock in the afternoon, I am in my natural Bower, ~~and~~ my roof is the azure heaven, my chair is an immense boulder, the zephyrs ^{drifting} through the air-passages of the trees, the birds are sweetly singing and my thoughts are engaged with you. To say that I wish all of you were here is my ^{dearest} ~~inmost wish~~ but I am sure in the future many of you will come to this sacred spot, because Our Lord is spending a number of his days ^{here} with peace and contentment. The earth trodden by his blessed feet is and will be the Holy ground and how privileged are we to be allowed to live so near this Divine Threshold! He likes the weather of Ahan Senan and sleeps much better. At present he enjoys good health and before noon and before sunset he takes long walks through the country, the hills and the valleys, followed by Arabs and believers. Yesterday we walked behind him and when we reached the top of a hill overlooking towards the West, the glorious sun tinging the whole horizon with its imperial colors was setting in the marmonial sea. For five minutes the Master stood erect looking to the West and watching the glowing heaven crimsoned with yellow and orange hues. He made such an impressive picture, silently contemplating the inner, mystic meaning of sunset and observing its constantly changing delicate shades. "What a superb, Kingly sunset!" he said. "One is never satisfied ^{enough} to look at it." And he continued his walk down the slope of the hill. In the evening the subject of his talk was the rising and the setting of the Sun of Reality from the different dawnings ^{of various} places and how different generations are needed from knowing the manifestation of God because the Sun has appeared from a different Zodiacal sign and the same Spirit has become incarnate in another Person and at another period.

This morning while I was absorbed in reading a book, I raised my head and gazed towards the sea. Goodness! what did I see? Was I mistaken? Could this be another optical illusion? But no! I could see them plainly - two warships - coming from the North. Others had seen them also and small telescopes were brought into use. Yes, no one was mistaken. Nearer and nearer they came. One went direct towards Haifa and another entered the bay of Acca. Slowly and cautiously she made a circuit of the bay and returned by the same way she entered and disappeared in the north, the other vanished in the south. When the lieutenants came from Acca they brought the startling news that the ship of war approaching the Bay sent up three aeroplanes, one flying over Acca and two going towards Haifa. This was then the first aerial invasion of these parts. The people could see the men in the aeroplanes making observations to see whether there are any preparations for defense. Finding just what they wanted they flew back to their ship and went away, no doubt to report the results of their investigations. They told us ^{that} each aeroplanes carried four passengers. The inhabitants were scared, for the possibility of an aerial attack had not entered into their minds. In case English and French steamers come again to these ports, I do not believe they will meet with any resistance. Bearing future developments they will have a peaceful occupation, for Turkey is withdrawing all her troops from these parts and concentrating all her military forces in Syria to the attack on Egypt. Thinking that if they are successful in their occupation of the land of Pharaohs, they can easily drive away all foreigners from these shores. In two weeks a Great Turkish army will be on their march towards Egypt by the way of Acreh - the Arabian Sahara. ~~It~~ It is known in responsible quarters that practically all the commanding, higher officers are ^{German} hence it looks more like Germany fighting against England than Turkey. After months of feverish preparations the stage is set and the actors, although had shown themselves in skirmishes here and there, are on the eve of a great struggle. In the present we are anxious spectators but who knows what will become of us in case the burning flames should rise high and higher. Under all circumstances we are praising the Lord of mankind.

This morning we were rejoiced to look into the face of Our Beloved. He came down from his room into the reception hall and welcomed all the friends with smiles and greetings. He asked Khosro to bring tea for our Arab visitors and then one of the believers asked him how much longer we are liable to stay in Abu Saman. "We may return" he answered "about the first month of the spring. We hope that by that time everything will be settled to the best advantage of the people. The affairs of all the friends are stopped, their stores are almost shut and it will be ruinous if they continued to stay here longer than that date."

After entertaining and speaking with the Arabs he went out to take a walk with Sheikh Saleh both in the forenoon and afternoon.

In the evening we had another long spiritual feast, the Master leading in the conversation and uplifting and illuminating the minds and the hearts with a wide range of interesting subjects. He related also several stories about the former Motasarrifs of Acca and his dealings with them. Then he talked about Christ and his teachings of non-resistance in contrast with what the Christians committed against each other in the middle ages. The founder of Christianity prayed for those who crucified him on the cross but his followers went through the barbaric cruelties of the Inquisition, the wholesale slaughter of the crusaders and the murder of humanity in this day. In one hand they have carried and are carrying the bible and in the other hand the gun and the sword. Thus the principles of Christ are the least practiced by the Christians; only his name is on their lips. They worship the lord of mammon, greed and cupidity and claim to be the followers of the simple, gentle Nazarene. They have drawn the sword of destruction against mankind and they count themselves as the most civilized nations. Were there Faith in the hearts of these men they would have acted otherwise. There is not the love of humanity but they have unlocked the loam of plague and afflictions to torment and distress the world. They have set back the wheels of progress and brought forward the series of pestilence and death. They have unleashed the dogs of war and upset the settled order of civilization. It is said by some one: 'This scourge was sleep, curse be upon those who awakened it'. It was about 10 P. M. that he went up to eat his supper and rest peacefully for another night.