

Home of Baha Ollah
Acca Syria
January 1st 1915

Dear friends:-

The world has taken another step forward, many thinking people believe thousands steps backward, but whatever way we may think what is done is done and cannot be unmade. In many parts of the earth war has decimated the members of human family, leaving behind ruined homes and cheerless hearts. We hope the pages of the book of this year will not be as black as the pages of the book we have just closed. We hope ^{that} each Bahai will do his share in bringing about the era of good-fellowship and further the cause of celestial solidarity. Only our work will remain behind to remind the future generations whether we have been faithful to our trust and carried ^{out} our resolutions ^{from the realm of the mind} to the practical field of everyday living or joined the unthinking, prejudiced hordes.

In the beginning of this letter I wished to greet you with the customary salutation. I wish you a happy New year, but I thought by the time this letter reaches you it will be an old year and I hope a happy one. I trust you made many hard and natty resolutions and also made ^{a second set of} resolutions to carry out and live by the first set. In speaking about "resolutions" some one pounded on me with ^{the} most vigorous, ^{any} garnished, up-to-date Arabic slang language, the most part of which is "untranslatable." "Down your resolutions!" he said (I translate it in euphemistic English) "you are talking rubbish! Did the world ever become ^{any} better by the millions of resolutions which are offered annually ^{by} the mammon-loving, idol-worshipping humanity. Don't talk to me about resolutions. Many men make resolutions to give a 'square deal' to every fellow, provided they can hold the largest square. They make resolutions not to hate their neighbors and ^{these} in half an hour, the fiercest excuse will be resorted to to discharge their spleens and bitter demons against their own Kith and Kin. This whole business is a sorry farce, a travesty on the nobility of human nature, a caricature, a burlesque to trap the unwary and the innocent ones of the earth. I cannot and will not

believe in your annual crop of resolutions. They are all husks without any kernels. Fiddlesticks! Is the human nature like a rain coat that can be changed over night, the rogue becoming a saint in a few hours? Oh! Don't try to argue with me, I am unreasonable. Leave me alone. All that I hope is that your resolutions and your friends resolutions will amount to something by next year. You are so dogmatic on the subject. You believe that it will do a man a whole lot of good if he set before himself an exalted goal, a sublime ambition, a high aim and a noble ideal even if he is unable to actualize them either through his own mistakes or the mistakes of others over which he has ^{had} no control. Well, be it as it may, you have your own peculiar opinion, I am holding up my own peculiar opinion and we are the best of friends and we part with a genuine handshake with malice towards none and love for all. I must tell you also that last night I made no resolutions but an old saying knocked gently at the window of my mind. It was like a little frightened bird seeking warm shelter from the frosty cold outside. I opened ~~the~~ shutters and it flew in, singing sweetly all night and changing the dark, silent room into a luminous, verdant conservatory of harmonious notes. It was the "Love God, be good and try to do good" With this last ^{thought} he left me to my own musings and went away humming to himself in the mellow voice of the East the thought just expressed, so simple and yet so comprehensive, so universally applicable to all conditions of life.

As a newspaper's present I received one letter from Oakland, California, written by Miss Juanita Storch and addressed directly to Bahar Nest, Mount Carmel. Like a sweet song, sung by a songstress of the far West it has journeyed a long way, bringing on its back the message of Bahai Unity and friendship. How wonderful that I received it to-day! I do not know how it has reached Haifa but I know it was a most welcome guest from the Occident. I have already read it several times and I like to share with you its poetic, beautiful contents. It is the thought of a pure mind, the ideas of a sensitive heart, the outflowing of a transparent fountain and the words of an artist and a lover of Truth, a firm Bahai and an enthusiastic, rich nature. She writes in part:—

"As I sit in my little studio this evening I pause — with pen in hand — to think and then to write. Thoughts seem to always be surging through my mind, like the waves of a mighty ocean. I know not from where they come. Sometimes the waves dance with exhilaration and joy, sometimes they calm to mere ripples by the hand of aesthetic zephyrs, come from a golden coast of pleasure and then again the waves roll in their combat with the storms of the earth, but the heart — the heart that sails upon this unceasing sea of motion — rests assured. Though the bark be frail, the guiding hand of God is always strong. I pause; I look up. How wonderful is this Day of God! On the wall before me hangs a picture. My gaze rests upon it for an instant. It is named 'The Thinker.' A large, muscular and primitive man is sitting at the gates of hell. He is watching his progeny descend; it causes him to think. There is height and depth and power to the picture, but Oh! if we look with the inner sight to the walls of the earth, there we do see see hung to day pictures with a coloring more vivid than did ever the master-painters of the world conceive. A greater creation of forms than could ever a greater sculptor model and such an endless wealth of hidden meanings that only the Glorious God comprehends all! No painter can paint the pictures of the Celestial Paradise with the colors that time fades. No painter can match the color of the blood of the slaughtered and martyred save with that of his own; and no painter can unfold the hidden mysteries with only the medium of a camel's hair brush. No sculptor can model the form of Eternity from a lump of clay. No sculptor can model a formation of the Breath of the Holy Spirit from a solid substance. No sculptor can model the fountain head of life from lifeless matter. But he who models, he who paints and he who reveals the things in the Land of the Spirit, he is the one who has endless and eternal power! Oh how wonderful is the unity of the friends under the cooling shades of the Covenant! How thankful and happy they are, protected from the heat of the fire of hatred and animosity and how eagerly do they reach with outstretched hands to draw others into the same shelter. Truly they too, are consumed in a fire but it is the Fire of the Love of God which "giveth life to all things". It is the fire which melts all the hearts into one golden, universal heart which throbs and pulsates in the body of service"

I drank the tea ~~that~~ morning in the Presence of the Beloved. A few letters sent direct from America were translated to him. They did not contain any important news because they were not written by active Bahais. Hajji Sayed Javad arrived from Akbar Senan and because he was going to leave for Haifa this afternoon the Master asked me to write a general letter to all the Oriented Assemblies giving them the news of the Cause in the Holy Land. I immediately resorted to my room and by noon had written a letter of 8 pages in Persian containing a resume of the news, a few extracts from his latest utterances and the glad-tiding of his extremely good health. With a number of other believers we took our lunch with the Master and at 2 o'clock we were called in for tea. After giving him his last orders the letter was put into hands of Hajji Sayad Javad and he departed for Haifa to leave tomorrow morning for Port Said. His arrival amongst us at this time ^{did} put a good deal of cheer in the hearts and it was altogether a pleasant surprise.

One of the Loroastrian farmers was going to leave tonight for Assiah, Nogail and Tiberias and the Master sent more 40 pounds of Sugar and 8 French Napoleons for the believers who are living there for the present time.

We were in his Divine Presence for more than 2 hours and several believers came in during that time and received instructions, because from all appearances the conditions around here are coming to a critical juncture and the people are in a state of anxiety bordering to panic.

The Commissioner of Police entered the room and after drinking tea the Master went out with him to take a walk. While he was sitting outside near the door of the house an urgent message was brought from Akbar Senan and he wrote the answer with his own hand and sent with the messenger.

In the evening Motors and 6 other officials called and stayed till past midnight. I was not there to hear their conversations but the main topic of the discussion ~~from~~ these days is quite evident and need not going into its details and consequent agitation aroused among