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Home of Baha-Ollah
Acre. Syria
January 4th 1915

Dear friends!

According to the dispatches of Press Bureau we are informed that Turkey has achieved victory somewhere around Batoum in Caucasus; and Ardahan, a town or a fortification with one or two more places are wrested away from Russia. The announcement of this news brought about the occasion for the display of the national spirit, the closing of all the shops, the formation of a parade and the childish manifestation of dancing and mimicry. This ridiculous parade of a few hundred ~~old~~ men and boys through the streets of Acre coincided with the arrival of Abdul Aziz Tcharvouch, a patriot orator, a member of the Committee of Union and Progress who has been sent from Constantinople to boost up the administration and defend the policy of the Military Party who have plunged the country into the slough of war and probable national suicide. This man has been in Beirut and was received with much enthusiasm and demonstration. I believe he is going to make a tour throughout Syria and deliver lectures on the subject of war. I wonder whether he is going to tarry long in Acre, for of all the places in the world here is the most desolate and ^{far} away from the regular haunts of men. Were this spot not the birthplace of the Bahai principles and were not the Beloved living in this Home, I know I would not have stayed here more than a few hours. The inhabitants lack activity and initiative and are just like so many lifeless corpses. For 47 years Abdul Baha has lived amongst them and except in rare instances they have not become illumined spiritually. They are carnally-minded and are ^{more} after the mess of pottage than the emanations of cosmic consciousness. Their fanaticism knows no bound and their ignorance is measureless. Their prejudices are without number and their dislike for the members of other religions most pronounced; even their women are inoculated with this virus, for today while the parade was wending its sorry way through one of the dark, narrow streets I heard a number of women crying aloud: "O God! Curse the fathers and mothers of all those who are not Mahomedans!" Poor things! They are ignorant and do not understand.

This morning with Haji Ali I entered the room of the Beloved and his joyous welcome acted on our spirits as a strong stimulant. Haji Ali knows a great deal about the early history of the movement and whenever a chance is presented he asks the Master questions about those early days and he makes instructive comments, ^{the translations of} which properly belong to a historical treatise rather ^{than} to a Diary, chronicling the outlines of daily happenings and incidents. After half an hour talk concerning the events of the time of the Bab and their subsequent developments, we came out of the Sacred Presence and all during the day I could hear the voice of the Master speaking and walking on the balcony above my room. A few believers arrived from Abou Senan in the afternoon and had an interview ^{with} the object of their heart. They are anxious to have the Master in their midst but I believe they have to wait still a few more days before he is ready to pay them another visit. If the weather happens to be fair and ideal, Abou Senan is most charming and one could hardly find a more quiet place, for the bird of Love hovers on the summits of its verdant hills and the echoes of the songs of Love are heard in the verdant and cool hollows of its green valleys. During my short stays there, I felt this delicious infatuation, especially ^{during} my last stay, as I spent almost all the hours of the day in my "Master's studio" and gained new experiences which I hope will be continued.

When this evening we gained an entrance into the Presence of the King of Kings he was reclining on the Divan and talking with some of the friends who have been already there, about the "people's parade" as witnessed this afternoon. "These childish demonstrations are most shallow in their motives, because they are based on the conquest of the earth which in itself is not permanent. For the Conquest of today may turn into the defeat of tomorrow and a fall at this time may lead to a rise at another time. The final fortune of war, cannot however be decided by a few desultory so-called victories. During the Russo-Turkish war about 40 years ago, it was ^{announced} one day that Russia is defeated. This news created a furor amongst the inhabitants of Acca and on that very evening illuminated all the streets and Bazaars. Next morning it was gravely and grievously given out that the Turkish Commander has been made a prisoner by the Russian Army and they are on their march to Constantinople. The same ^{thing}

happened three ^{or four} years ago during the Turkish-Italian war in Tripoli. One day they joyously proclaimed that all the Italian soldiers are routed and driven away from Tripoli. This occasioned a very pompous parade and festivity for 24 hours but again the truth broke out and it was Turkey that was licked..... all these victories and defeats are ephemeral and shall pass away. Our triumphs which are of a spiritual character are eternal and everlasting. When Halakou Khan, the great Tartar Conqueror entered Bagdad, he ordered his men to look over the records and the books of the financial department of the Abbaside Khalifs - so that the revenues of his newly-acquired dominion may be based upon a firm foundation and all those who have not payed their annual taxes may be ^{so} taxed according to law. While they were searching through the books they came across two items of Taxation and expenditure that gave them much food for thought. Under one of the days of the month [12 Safar] it was recorded that Jafer Bar-makki has payed ~~one~~ hundred thousand Dinars ^{as} taxes, ^{and} right beside the above account, another small item was inserted two days afterwards that half Derham [five cents] was expended on old clothes and naphtha with which to burn the body of the same man..... Another time Tamer-lane, after a trying battle defeated Bayazeed, the ^{then} Sultan of Turkey. Thousands of Turkish soldiers were taken as prisoners and in the mêlée and confusion of the final contest Bayazeed himself fell a prisoner in the hands of the equery men. They dragged him into their tent and ordered him to sit in a corner. When supper was served they did not even look at him but ~~once~~ they had their fill they threw a few crumbs and morsels in a bucket and placed before their prisoner. While Bayazeed was thinking over his sad misfortune, a hound entered the tent and took the bucket in its mouth and ran away. When he saw that even these few morsels were carried away by the hungry hound he burst out into ~~a~~ laughter. The equery men were surprised to see him laugh so heartily and pressed him to tell them the Cause. 'Well my friends' he said still laughing 'I am laughing at my own situation. Last night at this time one thousand servants entered my imperial tent with as many trays on their heads, containing my

supper and hundreds of officers sat around my haunts to like but to my even the few crumbs you were kind enough to give me was snatched away by your omnivorous hound." When they found out that their prisoner was no other than the Turkish Monarch they immediately notified Tamerline and he was taken to the tent of his Conqueror with royal honor.

Tamerline ordered him be seated and take part in the festivity of the night. Bayazet was however taciturn, sullen and mournful. "Why art thou not happy, my royal friend?" asked Tamerline. "Why?" he answered sulkily. "It is self-evident. I am ruined, my empire is collapsed, my army is shattered and myself a prisoner in the hand of my Conqueror! How can I be jubilant when I see God has visited with such dreadful doom!" "Let me tell you one thing" replied Tamerline humorously. "Let your soul rest assured that God does not value the sovereignty of this world as much as one ^{of the} wings of the mosquito - otherwise ~~He would~~ not have made a lame good for nothing man like me [Tamerline was lame] and a one-eyed good for nothing fellow like thyself [Bayazet was also one-eyed] the Kings of the earth and ~~the~~ ruler over ~~the~~ millions of men. Therefore, console thyself."

The Beloved continued his talk and related many more anecdotes showing the impermanency of all worldly conquests and the grandeur and permanency of the spiritual triumphs. Then he asked one of the friends to chant the supplications of the Blessed Beauty. While he was chanting an old Arab with white beard entered the room and the Master told him to be seated next to him. When reading was over he said: "This old man [his name I found later is Haji Ebrahim] is one of my earliest friends in Acca. When we were brought to this penal colony as ^{exiles} he was a young man and was a tailor. The first day I passed through the Bazaar, although other shopkeepers jeered and scoffed at me, he arose from his seat, smiled and saluted me. From that time on we have continued to be good friends. He is an excellent man and has a pure heart." Then the Beloved talked with him in Arabic and brought to his mind the reminiscences of those days. The old man was very happy. "Yes, yes, My Lord remembers everything. It is not the attribute of forgetfulness" he exclaimed with melting, tearful eyes.