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Home of Baha-O'llah.
Acca. Syria March 12. 1915

Dear friends!

Today a black army of locusts flew over Acca and its green plain and the people were alarmed with the sight of these unwelcome guests whose omnivorous appetite leaves nothing verdant in sight and their appearance is always the ominous herald of the destruction of harvest and the general prevalence of famine. But in the evening we were informed the sirocco has swept them into the sea and at least for the present the minds are set at ease. When we entered the room of the Beloved this morning he addressed us in a serious mood:- "Did you see the numerous army of locusts searching after food? They wreak a greater havoc upon humanity than the results of war, but they will do nothing of the kind here. Their sojourn will be ^{but} of short duration. For the last several years the province of Fars - Persia, has been locust-ridden and the outcome has been a dearth of food materials and the slow starvation and poverty of the people. The Bedouins of the wilderness love the locusts. They catch them, strike off their wings and lower appendages, dry them in the hot blazing sun and then pulverize them into a kind of flour with which they bake bread. Thus when the locusts find their way into the desert, the Arabs are rejoiced and celebrate that day as a feast, while in other parts of the world they keep it as a day of mourning."

Yesterday a christian seamstress, by the name Jameelah passed away from this life. She was our neighbor and for the last many years had worked in the blessed household. She was lame but a fine girl, taking care of her mother, sister, brother and others, ^{thru} her needle. Half an hour before her death the Beloved called at her bed and looked into her pale, pallid face. She opened her eyes and smiled. Once her spirit was out of her frail body than her relatives filled the house with cries and screams. For hours they were weeping, rending their breasts and beating on their faces. Only utter exhaustion brought them back to a little ^{calmness}.

This morning her funeral service was performed by the priest and in the afternoon the Marter with several other Christians went to her house to offer their condolences.

Yesterday noon a French warship hove~~d~~ into sight and entered the Harbor of Haifa. A boat was lowered into the water with ten soldiers. The boat neared the landing-place, dashed here and there as though to make sure of its environments, and returned to the ship, satisfied with her examination.

Daily we are informed that the combined fleet of England and France are keeping up the vigorous bombardment of Dardanelles, each day hurling at the Gorts from 700 to 1000 balls.

It is stated the Smyrna is also bombarded with 570 balls, a detachment of 60 soldiers landed but were compelled to retreat with the loss of forty men.

It is also rumored that a regiment of 1000 soldiers have been disembarked at Alexandretta to go into the interior and cut the ^{only} road communicating between Constantinople and Syria and that a Russian army has crossed Bulgarian territory and laid siege ^{upon} ~~at~~ Adrianople.

Yesterday and today the ragged volunteer army of Acca have been given guns and have been practicing in the trenches, dug in front of the sea and behind the ruined walls of ^{old} giant fortifications. Right in front of my window they have dug a long trench in which I see stationed about 20 soldiers. They have placed their rifles over the embankment and are smoking their pipes and chatting together. They are all the boys of the town and have never heard the panic-creating sound of a gun. Even their defensive system is most childish! The sober and thinking members of the community realize the utter futility of these puppet preparations. They are sorely agitated at the sight of lawlessness, tyranny and oppression and long for a better order of things. We are all praying for the cessation of hostility and the establishment of former peaceful relations.

In the evening the Master summoned us into his presence and before speaking asked Aga Abdor-Rasoul to chant a commune. Afterwards he said: "All the efforts of these people in this or other direction are like unto the vanishing traceries made on the mirror-like surface of water. In comparison to eternity they do not endure even for a second. When the gardener plants a non-fruit-bearing tree, even should he take care of it for years, it shall not produce fruits. When man desires to undertake some great or small work, he must look into its ultimate end, through the light of common sense and the experiences of mankind and see whether its results will be commensurate to the troubles and whether its outcome will redound to his honor. If he is satisfied with his searching examination he may undertake it by all means. Man must not follow the dictate of his passion and lust but always be engaged in that which is honorable and enduring. All these people are ill, still, they are not thinking of their own health. They are giving a free reign to their desire and are not curbing their inordinant carnality. They are not willing to abide by the advice of the physician, but are trying to break his prescribed regimen. They fly away from him and refuse to touch his medicine. The result is what you are witnessing today: the constitutional health of mankind is completely broken down and they are in the throes of a deadly agony. In their fear of death they have used every treatment but the divine treatment, they have quaffed from every cup except the celestial Cup and they have helped themselves to every kind of food ~~save~~ the heavenly Food which has ^{been} sent down from the Presence of their Lord. How heedless are they! How negligent are they! How inadvertent are they!"

He became silent and in the midst of this magnetic stillness the door of the room was opened and the commander, his aid-de-camp, the Captain and lieutenant and two other officers entered. We retired from the Presence of the Lord and these men of war kept company with the Prince of Peace.