

Home of Abdul Baha.
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
May 31st 1915

Dear friends!

Last night in the course of his conversation the Beloved referred to our departure for Haifa and I was glad to know that we will be out of the depressing, dejecting and sickening atmosphere of Acca. Save the companionship of Abdul Baha and the holy remembrances attached to the home of his heavenly father, nowadays nothing is left in this desolate town to cheer one's heart and uplift one's aspiration. The sooner one is out of such a soul-burdening environment the better it is. Hence it was with a feeling of relief that Badi Effendi and myself and two other Bahais hired a carriage at one P.M. and started for Haifa. Because the greatest holy Leaf and two other members of the blessed family were going to be with him he sent us ahead with the promise that he will come tomorrow. The two warships appeared again this morning and anchored in front of Haifa. About noon one of them approached the harbor and started to bombard the warehouse petroleum and a village by the name Hartieh, two hours from Haifa, the headquarter of the army. She threw about 25 shots and then ceased. The bombardment was going on in Haifa while the poor inhabitants of Acca were panic-stricken, fearing that the same victuals of shots and shells might be served to them. Notwithstanding this we started on our way and were meanwhile watching the movements of ships. We had covered more than half way when all of a sudden the bigger warship steered its course and anchored right in front of the German Colony. In a minute the reverberating sound of the gun filled our ears and the white smoke covered the slope of Mount Carmel. At first we were startled and worried ourselves for the safety of the believers, because the smoke arose from the vicinity of the home of the Beloved. As the bombardment continued we observed the balls were aimed at one spot and that spot we guessed to be no other than the German Consulate. Fifteen missiles were thrown

but their terrific sound was ^{more} than deafening! The carriage driver was so afraid that he thought it would be safer if he retired behind the sandhills and thus a temporary protection secured.

Our brother Badi Effendi has written his impression of this significant day and I would like to quote herein his article:-

"It is indeed a most radical change to hear the roaring of cannons within the Centre of the Canopy of Universal Peace! Ever since the dawn of history some religious significance has been associated with Mount Carmel. Its peaceful and calm atmosphere attracted the attention of seers and prophets. Through the play of the forces of nature, winds and storms, lightning and thunder they received messages from on High. The pure hearts detached from worldly passions and appetites heard the still small voice of the Lord of Hosts whispering into their ears. Its very atmosphere is full of spiritual inspiration and its starry heaven affords ample material for one's meditation. Hearts were lifted up to God in prayer and heavenly teachings were received for the betterment of humanity. The Glory of Carmel became an actual fact by the arrival of Baha Ollah who raised His tent on its summit and proclaimed to the world the establishment of Universal Peace. On this day instead of hearing that still small voice, sweeter than any music of human voice, we do not hear except the roaring of cannons, the ~~bursting~~ of bombs and the falling of missiles and shot from the air. The home of spirituality and blessedness is visited by the noise and confusion of hatred and malice. Men instead of looking up to heaven to receive the blessings of God turn their eyes in awe and consternation lest any bomb fall from the aeroplanes or the warships of the enemies. Is this the only calamity? Countless billions of locusts are besetting Syria and every green herb or vegetable is eaten up, transforming Edenic gardens into ^{waste} barren; the pressure of military service and its requirements drags down the people to complete ruin, starvation is read in the eyes of poor people and destruction and death is the common lot of humanity.

"Is there no Gracious God to help men in this terrible predicament or is this the fulfillment of the words, the wages of sin is death? The Voice of God is as strong today as it was thousand years ago but the ears are deafened by prejudices and do not hear. The world is really in need of divine principles and teachings. The reason why these things happen is because the world of humanity is surfeited with materialism, that mankind has entirely neglected the spiritual basis of life. According to the natural laws of growth if we fail to nourish any part of our life we are sure to find it atrophied and deficient in carrying out its function. Therefore the first and foremost duty of man is to nourish the moral side of his life; failing to do so, he has killed his life of spirit and that surely leads to the destruction of the whole being, just as in some diseases of the eyes if one is affected the other will surely meet the same fate.

"In the morning an aeroplane was sent up to scout the outlying ^{districts} and three bombs were thrown down to destroy telegraphic lines and as a result two persons were killed. We were still in Acca that the petroleum storehouse was bombarded and on our way near Haifa we witnessed the destruction of the German Consulate by the unerring marksmanship of the warship's gunner.

"The Master's house being very near the Consulate, the governor had sent word that it seemed wiser and safer for the members of the family to move somewhere else. Therefore in a precipitate manner they ^{with the exception of Mrs. Redaigar who remained in the house with the children} had left everything, taking refuge in the Holy Tomb and the Pilgrims Home. Many natives also, both men and women had availed themselves of this rare opportunity. Hence in an actual manner, the Temple of the Lord had become a refuge and a shelter for the oppressed ^{and} the weak ones."

When we reached Haifa we found all the shops were closed and the streets guarded by soldiers. Near the German Consulate hundreds of men and women had gathered to see the wreck. We ascended the mountain and were glad to find all the friends safe and sound. The people had been much afraid.