

MISCELLANEOUS.

A PROTEST FROM THE BAHAISTS.¹

To the Editor of The Open Court:

Permit me to congratulate you upon the professed aims of your learned periodical, and especially upon the excellent articles—with one exception—contained in the issue of August of last year.

The one article which among well-informed persons is liable to generate agitation, indignation and indeed deep sorrow and bitter mourning, is an article relative to the Bahai movement, written by a certain Mr. Richardson, because it is a monument of the blindest prejudice, and is so full of mutilations and perversions of facts that in itself it is not worth serious consideration and is unworthy of criticism.

It is most regrettable, but it was foreseen, that such and similar defamatory and calumnious articles should appear; but who would have anticipated that you, Doctor, a learned man and a professed advocate of liberal ideas, would desecrate the pages of your journal by permitting the blindest and most rabid fanaticism to hurl its poisoned shafts by means of it!

For the turbid sources from which the above-mentioned writer derived his "information" are easily discernible, and the expressed bias and manifest animosity of this Mr. Richardson can be easily seen.

If it were otherwise he would no doubt have consulted competent authorities and quoted their conclusions concerning the matter under consideration,—authorities such as the famous and celebrated savant, the brilliant investigator and most notable author, His Honor Mirza Fazl; the scholarly *Harvard Theological Review*; His Excellency Count Gobineau, late French ambassador at the Persian court; the well-known M. le Docteur Hippolyte Dreyfuss of Paris; the distinguished traveler in the Orient, His Honor Charles Mason Remey of Washington, D. C.; the great Professor Vambéry of Budapest,—not to speak of the learned Dr. Meyer, Rabbi of Temple Emmanuel, San Francisco, California; that revered man and renowned Christian scholar, Archdeacon Wilberforce of Westminster Abbey, London, England; the great

¹ We had been hoping that we might receive comments on Mr. R. P. Richardson's attack on Bahá'ism, published in August, 1915, from His Excellency, Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, the leader of the Bahá'ist movement in America. But as no reply has been forthcoming from Dr. Bagdadi, we publish herewith a communication from his secretary, Mr. Emile Tobler, who is very close to His Excellency, in which is voiced the Bahá'ist resentment at Mr. Richardson's criticism. We still hope, however, that His Excellency will see fit to give expression to his views before interest in the subject has waned.—Ed.

French encyclopaedia, the *Nouveau Larousse*; or the director of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition—an epochal affair of colossal dimensions and tremendous significance—who in April, 1915, awarded, in the name of the Exposition Committee, a medal of honor to the First International Bahai Congress, which held its sessions under the aegis of the government of the United States, as an integral part of the exposition at San Francisco, California, with words of highest eulogy and unstinted praise for the high humanitarianism and the idealism and practical benevolence of the Bahai cause.

Would it not have been more worthy of a man who makes pretensions to learning and philosophical qualities, and who above all others ought to be impartial, to have investigated sympathetically and to have judged justly instead of vilifying in the basest manner, and calumniating in the most shameful fashion a cause, namely, the purifying and ennobling teachings of The Glorious Lord, The Supreme Lawgiver, the Blessed Perfection, The Radiant Glory of God, The Most High, His Eternal Majesty, BAHÁ'O'LLAH; and His Unique Expositor, The Glorious Greatest Branch, The Center of The Covenant, His Holiness, ABDUL BAHÁ, The Servant of GOD and of all humanity,—about which that learned and liberal man, that profound thinker and logical writer, His Honor Herr Doctor Singer, Editor-in-Chief of the great daily newspaper, the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, and a well-known militant advocate of that which is ideal in tendency, and practicable as to application, expressed himself as follows: “These teachings are the pure, uncolored truth; it is to be hoped that humanity will accept them, since they are conducive to the advancement and felicity of mankind.”

And especially since Mr. Richardson intended to use as his vehicle and instrument a periodical entitled *The Open Court*, a journal edited by a literary gentleman, who nowadays, in a very special manner, asserts that he is a combatant against the domination of ignorance, of mendacity, of malicious calumny, of blind fanaticism.

No open court where justice truly reigns should permit itself to drag a person or a cause, solely upon the unsubstantiated assertions of unreliable witnesses, to the bench of accusation, and without even offering to the accused the slightest opportunity for defense make short process by entering sentence of condemnation.

It is astonishing! It is inexplicable how your Honor could be duped in such a shameful manner, and that your learned publication was misused in such a flagrant way, by spreading through its instrumentality such unheard-of and absolutely infamous insults to the “Pure, uncolored Truth”—the Bahai Cause!

The disseminations of such bold falsehoods, such absurd allegations, such disgusting insinuations and obscene allusions, such shameless perversions of firmly established and well-known facts, as are contained in the slanderous article written by Mr. Richardson, and published in the August, 1915, issue of *The Open Court* magazine, tend to confuse and poison even the minds of the better informed men and how much more so to inflame the blind passions of the multitude,—deluded followers, and to-be-pitied victims of blind guides and wolves in sheep's clothing!

Shall the swords of persecution be raised against the Bahais of this country also, even as they were raised against and fell upon the noble Bahais in Persia, where more than twenty thousand pure souls, men and women of

the highest intelligence, virtue and piety, and even little children, exhaled their dying breath under incredible tortures and fiendish cruelties, innocent victims of the most unjustified and brutal hatred! ALLAH AKBAR! ALLAHO ABHA! Thy Will be done!

The Bahais of this country (America) are also joyfully willing and ready to receive the crown of martyrdom in the Path of God, the Supremely Beloved, even as were and are their noble brothers and sisters in the Orient.

But must it just be that a learned man of the state which nurtured the illustrious Abraham Lincoln, the liberator of the black slaves, kindles the conflagration in the attempt to exterminate by the *ultima ratio* of the blind and ignorant, by verbal and written assaults, ultimately terminating in brute force, the adherents of the noblest liberalism, the highest idealism, the purest monotheism, the broadest humanitarianism, the most practical philanthropy?

The axiom says, "History repeats itself." And unquestionably your Honor knows that it was the philosophers of Rome who fought the pure teachings of Christianity with the most intense bitterness and rancorous animosity. But Christianity lived and they perished. Their work vanished with them and history has passed sentence upon them. *Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht!*

The cited axiom is applicable to-day; as it was valid yesterday, so it will be correct to-morrow. It links the events of two thousand years ago to modern events. It bids men pause and reflect. Be warned, O ye possessors of intelligence!

There is but one great difference. The drama of to-day moves with greater rapidity. The tragedy will soon be consummated, and then the all-surpassing Glory succeeds; and the generations of coming ages, standing on the ultimate summit of humanity's age-long goal, filled with knowledge, ornamented by wisdom, clothed with the garments of divine qualities and God-like attributes, shall remember, but with regret, those who were so unfortunate as to set themselves in opposition to the sacred cause of human progress, the Blessed Religion of BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH. "For," it will be said, "such men were inhuman, they were ignorant."

It is to be hoped that you, Honored Doctor, shall not continue to walk in the footsteps of the ignorant "philosophers" of pagan Rome, and their unhappy modern imitators.

His Honor, Mirza Abul Fazl, the great scholar and devoted servant of God, has written a treatise entitled *The Brilliant Proof*, in refutation of a number of false statements and unjust accusations written by a confrère and colleague of this astonishing Mr. Richardson. The same is obtainable right here in Chicago, as well as elsewhere.

His Excellency, Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, the one who was with BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH and now lives in Chicago, can no doubt be induced to write for publication in your journal, an article which may set into the right light the truth about the Bahai cause from the biographical, historical and doctrinal viewpoint.

Now it remains to be seen whether, after opening your pages to a scurrilous attack upon the Bahai cause, you will make as much reparation as is possible under the circumstances, by permitting the Bahais to use the same medium for the purpose of giving a temperate, courteous reply to the wanton

insults and the underhanded attack of Mr. Richardson, and a conclusive explanation of the matter in dispute. This would be the *amende honorable*.

EMILE TOBLER.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

“THE LIES OF THE ALLIES.”

Frank Koester is editing a new publication in periodical form (published by the Issues and Events Company, 21 Park Row, New York, price of single copies, 25 cents) under the title *Lies of the Allies*, the first installment of which (1914-1915) lies before us. It contains a number of articles and reproductions of head lines from prominent American dailies, such as the *Evening Sun*, *Evening Telegram*, *New York Journal*, *Evening Mail*, *Globe*, etc. The tendency of this publication is to expose the unfairness of our Anglo-American press toward Germany, and its subserviency to British interests. The news of the victories of the Allies appear almost comical at the present time, when we now know that they were positively untrue, for instance the Russian report in big capitals:

ON TO BERLIN, CRY OF ARMY OF THE CZAR.

After Crossing the Vistula Victorious Russians will go Straight to German Capital, Says Col. Osnobichin, Russian Military Attache, at Paris.—Story of German Retreat.

The *Evening Telegram* reads in big head lines:

PANIC IN GERMANY AS ALLIES ADVANCE.

and in another place we read that

VON KLUCK'S ARMY IS TAKEN.

A bit of Irish history is inserted, the story of Archbishop Plunket's martyr death. He died for the cause of his religion and country, according to a sentence pronounced under a law that is still upon the statute books, though now a dead letter.

In sentencing him the Lord Chief Justice of England said:

“The judgment which we give you is that which the law says and speaks. And therefore you must go from hence to the place from whence you came—that is, to Newgate, and from thence you shall be drawn through the city of London to Tyburn; there you shall be hanged by the neck, but cut down before you are dead, your bowels shall be taken out and burnt before your face, your head shall be cut off, and your body be divided into four quarters, to be disposed of as His Majesty pleases. And I pray God to have mercy on your soul.”

The author of the article comments upon the sentence as follows:

“That execution occurred some two hundred years ago, but within a century Robert Emmet was hanged and his head cut off and held up before the multitude.

“Edmund Burke, speaking of the penal laws intended for the extirpation of the Catholic faith, said:

“The most refined ingenuity of man could not contrive any plan or machinery better calculated to degrade humanity (not the Irish people merely, but