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THE TWIN HOUSES IN 'AKKÁ

(Below we print an excerpt from a letter written from Haifa by Lotfullah Hakim, who is a member of the International Bahá'í Council. It concerns the two houses in 'Akká inhabited by Bahá'u'lláh and the Master before the Blessed Beauty left that prison city for Mazra'ih and Bahjí, and by the Master thereafter. The account has been edited, at Dr. Hakim's request, before publication.)

I would now like to tell you a little about the two houses of Bahá'u'lláh at 'Akká. These two houses are historically very important in the Bahá'í world. When we know a little about their history and some of the events with which they were connected during the lifetime of the Blessed Beauty and the Master, we realise their importance.

These houses are old and very large. Bahá'u'lláh and His family occupied the top storey of each. After having been confined in barracks for two years, He moved from house to house, eventually settling in these two houses, which are known as the Eastern House and the Western House. First He and His family lived in the house on the eastern side and in His room in this house, now known as the Master's Room, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed. Later Bahá'u'lláh moved to the Western House.

While living in these two houses, some difficulties arose between His followers and those of Azal, and some of the Azalis in 'Akká were killed. Bahá'u'lláh knew nothing about it, but He and the Master were called to the Governorate and interrogated. He was kept in a room for 24 hours and the Master ('Abdu'l-Bahá) was chained in a dungeon for about two days. At last They were found absolutely innocent and were allowed to return to the house, but with guards and in strict confinement.

Very many other events happened while They were living in these houses. It was from these that Bahá'u'lláh sent out His most important Tablets addressed to the kings and rulers, to the Pope and to other important personages in the world. It was also here that the Master was married.

Should I go on writing on different historical events that have happened in these two houses, I will never be able to finish this letter. At any rate, the Western House where Bahá'u'lláh was living has a balcony. His room and balcony faced the sea. For nine years

Bahá'u'lláh lived in this place and did not see any verdure or green until once He said that He had not been out and seen verdure or green all that time. This gave the Master a clue. There was a Pasha who lived in 'Akká and showed great enmity to Bahá'u'lláh. He had a mansion at Mazra'ih, some few miles from 'Akká. The Master went to him and said: 'Why don't you live in your mansion?' He replied: 'I am ill and cannot live there alone. It is too far away from town.' 'Then in that case,' the Master said, 'rent it to us.' After some persuasion he agreed, and the Master rented it for a period. Then the Master prepared a carriage and when everything was arranged, He went to Bahá'u'lláh and told Him that a beautiful place, the mansion at Mazra'ih had been prepared, and that a carriage was ready to come to take them to live there. Bahá'u'lláh said: 'I am a prisoner here.'

The Master asked Him on three different occasions and each time received the same answer, so He did not insist any more. But He went to a certain noble man in 'Akká who was a very daring man, and although a great friend of Bahá'u'lláh, was not a Bahá'í. He said to this man: 'Go to Bahá'u'lláh and beg that He should come out. Do not leave Him until you get His consent.' The man went to Bahá'u'lláh and said: 'My Lord, a lovely mansion is prepared for you. Everything is ready; why don't you go and live there?' 'I am a prisoner,' Bahá'u'lláh replied. But the man answered: 'No one can imprison you. You must come out.' He begged and insisted so much that at last Bahá'u'lláh consented. He told the Master and the next day Bahá'u'lláh and the Master drove out through the gates of 'Akká in a carriage. The guards were standing at the gates, but said nothing.

The Blessed Beauty stayed for a few days in the garden of Ridván, then came back to 'Akká. After a little while He went to Mazra'ih, where He stayed for over two years, and then He went to live in Bahjí until He passed away.

I was writing about the two 'Akká houses. While Bahá'u'lláh was living at Bahjí with His sons and others, the Master, with His wife and sister (the Greatest Holy Leaf) were living in 'Akká in the Western House. Every day the Master used to visit His Father. Then came Bahá'u'lláh's ascension. Muḥammad-'Alí and his brothers rose up against the Master and did not obey Bahá'u'lláh's Will. They

began to intrigue and cause all kinds of trouble. For five years the Master tried His best to help them recognise the truth, but they refused to do so and broke Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. He was living in 'Akká with His sister while they were enjoying themselves at the Mansion in Bahjí. He did His best for five years with no effect, so He was obliged to sever the connection.

At this time He was always very depressed. After He had left His brothers to go their own way, the first party of American pilgrims came to Him in 'Akká; His life changed, so to speak, and He became happy. But every time He went to visit Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine at Bahjí, the Covenant-Breakers would laugh at Him and mock Him from the balcony of the Mansion. They began a continuous intrigue with the Government against the Master, until at last the Committee of Investigation came to 'Akká; the Master was kept in close confinement and His life was in great danger. You know the history of this episode very well and there is no need for me to give an account of it.

After all this had happened, the Master came to live in Haifa. The houses in 'Akká began gradually to go to ruin. Some of the friends were living in the lower storey of the houses, and the upper storeys were empty. Our beloved Guardian had the upper storeys of the two houses where Bahá'u'lláh, the Master and the family used to live, restored and repaired. Lately he has prepared all kinds of furniture, historical pictures, etc., and furnished the two houses. Electric light has been introduced into both, except for the rooms of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master. These have been left absolutely intact, with the same old furniture and beds of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master as they had before.

For three days (February 28th, March 1st and 2nd) the Guardian and I went early in the morning to 'Akká and came back late at night. We had several of the friends from Bahjí and Mazra'ih there helping. The Guardian would arrange what to put in each room and how and where to put it. There are a good number of books—the Bahá'í World, volumes of the 'New Era' in different languages, etc.—in the main hall and the office. There are beds and carpets in the rooms. In the central hall, a very nice model of the Temple at Chicago is on the table . . .

Now the two houses are ready for the friends to visit and for tourists to see, just as the Mansions of Bahjí and Mazra'ih are. In fact, the rooms are so arranged with beds that in future pilgrims will stay there comfortably for one or more nights and enjoy the wonderful atmosphere of the place.

The Bahá'í World (continued)

cultural level of the Eskimos and their lack of educational facilities. The Committee suggests that Welfare Teachers would have the best opportunity for real service.

JAPAN. Agnes Alexander is again serving the Faith in Japan and she has had the privilege of speaking about it to people of capacity. In Kyoto, Miss Alexander met the blind believer, Mr. Torii, for the first time in thirteen years, and through him made a number of new and interesting contacts.

HAIFA. Miss Jessie and Miss Ethel Revell have gone to Haifa at the request of the Guardian to assist in the work of the Bahá'í World Centre.

THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

UNITED STATES. A Bahá'í feature appeared in the December 11th, 1950, issue of 'Life' magazine, which reaches an estimated 60,000,000 readers. It carried a picture of the Master and gave some words of Bahá'u'lláh.

EUROPE. The European Teaching Committee reports the number of declared believers under the second Seven Year Plan in the ten goal countries of Europe to be 327 up to January 1st, 1951. Preparations are in progress for the fourth European Teaching Conference and Summer School which are to take place in Rome from August 31st to September 10th. Florence and Naples both have more than nine believers and hope to form their Spiritual Assemblies this Ridván.

SCANDINAVIA We very much regret that it was erroneously reported in the March issue of *Bahá'í Journal* that the pioneers to Norway, Sweden and Denmark were leaving. This is not so. At present there are four pioneers in these three countries. American pioneers will be maintained in all the Goal Countries of the American Seven Year Plan until the Guardian himself feels that they can be withdrawn.

GERMANY. Regional meetings were held at Württemberg, Baden, Hesse and Esslingen to bring to the Bahá'ís the living spirit of the Copenhagen Teaching Conference, the Esslingen Summer School, the Youth Summer School and the spirit and aim of the Guardian's letter of June, 1950. Mrs. Bertha Matthiesen of the United States has made a teaching trip including Innsbruck, Salzburg and Vienna, and in January was teaching in Munich.

FINLAND. Miss Elsa Vento, Finnish born Toronto Bahá'í is carrying on the work with the 'active, responsive' group, and Miss Kruka is in constant correspondence with them. The Faith has received fine publicity in Helsinki, one paper offering to print whatever is sent them on the subject.

CANADA. In reviewing their achievements in their Five Year Plan to establish fifteen new assemblies and to settle thirty-five new localities by April, 1953, they find that apart from some initial successes there is still much to be done. They have now a National Teaching Committee which 'takes up this staggering responsibility with the utmost faith and confidence'—responsibility for a task 'which no committee could achieve without absolute reliance on the unfailing assistance of Bahá'u'lláh and the knowledge that the entire body of believers in Canada is ready and waiting to do its part.'

British Columbia sends out the first issue of its Teaching Committee Bulletin, whose object is 'to keep before us all the needs and progress of our first real test as Canadian Bahá'ís, the Guardian's Plan for us over the span of our first five years as a full-fledged national unit.'

The Eskimo Committee had several conversations with the Chief of Eskimo Affairs, Arctic Division, Northwest Territories Administration, and with the Inspector of Schools for the Northwest Territories, and has submitted a most interesting report on the

(Continued in preceding column)

FROM THE GUARDIAN

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the
British Isles,
c/o Mr. John Ferraby, Secretary.

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letters of June 19th, June 22nd, July 18th, July 21st, July 26th, August 17th, August 29th, August 30th, September 6th, September 8th, September 27th (2 letters), October 3rd (2 letters), October 5th, October 17th, October 26th, October 30th (2 letters), October 31st, November 13th, November 24th (2 letters), December 10th, December 22nd, 1950, and January 2nd, January 25th and February 2nd, 20th, 1951, together with enclosures as well as photographs, have been received, and our beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf. (A postscript dated March 18th adds: 'Your letters (two) dated March 8th have also been received with enclosures.')"

He regrets that, due to pressure of work, he is not able to write more frequently, but feels that the cable communications between himself and your assembly attend to the essential work in between letters . . .

Regarding your question about the communication with the King, as mentioned in Minutes 292 and 344, he feels that both contemplated approaches should be dropped for the present. By undertaking such action we call attention to ourselves in a very conspicuous manner, and investigation of who the senders are of such petitions would only expose the weakness of our numbers and detract from the prestige which the Cause is slowly beginning to acquire in the eyes of the world.

He thanks you very much for the map, showing the British Bahá'í Community at the end of the Six Year Plan. He has placed it on a wall of the Mansion of Bahjí, where visitors and believers can enjoy it. It certainly marks the scene of one of the most historic victories of the Faith.

In regard to the question of the African campaign, the Guardian is immensely pleased with the way your assembly and the special committee you have appointed, have seized this project and are vigorously prosecuting it. He admires the evidences of careful planning and staunch determination which all the data regarding this important campaign, which you have forwarded to him, bear witness to.

He was very happy to receive the Chinyanza pamphlets which you sent to him, and also likes very much the 'Africa News' which the Committee is getting out and which is so alive with plans and news.

He is also delighted to see that the Persian National Assembly is vigorously co-operating with your Assembly and facilitating settlement of some devoted Persian pioneer there who no doubt will be of great help to the work . . .

He feels that, although it is preferable that the three pioneers to each virgin country should be in one town or at least as near each other as possible, it should not be considered the essential point at this juncture.

The most important thing of all is to get the pioneers out there and established if possible in some self-supporting work. Once this has been done, the work within the country itself can be gradually organised

and plans made to consolidate it in a more practical manner.

He used the word 'tribes' loosely to mean the peoples of Africa and not necessarily individuals still living under tribal system.

The Guardian does not feel that it is necessary to specify any particular prayer to be said for the Africa work. The main thing is that the Bahá'ís should pray for its success.

He approves of your getting out the edition of the 'New Era' which you now have in the press; but feels very strongly that any future editions should strictly conform to the 1937 American edition, in order to preserve uniformity in this very important Bahá'í publication.

Regarding your question about military service, the Guardian sees no reason why the Bahá'í in question should not bring a test case, and press the matter. It is now, since he has become a follower of Bahá'u'lláh, against his conscience to kill his fellow-men; and he should have the right to explain his position and ask to be exempted from combatant service. During the hearing of such cases the Bahá'ís should make it absolutely clear that we do not fear being placed in danger, and are not asking to be given a safe berth in hours of national crisis—quite the contrary—any dangerous service the Bahá'ís can render their fellow-men during the agonies of war, they should be anxious to accept.

The work that the British Bahá'ís are accomplishing is very dear to his heart; and he wishes your Assembly to constantly encourage the friends (as of course they are doing) to go on with all phases of their Bahá'í work and maintain the tempo they achieved during the past few years. They have distinguished themselves so much that now their fellow Bahá'ís in other lands expect them to lead the way in new fields, and to continue being the pace setters for at least the British Empire, if not other countries as well! Success brings burdens; and the British Bahá'ís who were so miraculously successful at the last moment of their Six Year Plan, now find themselves in the sometimes difficult position of being a cynosure for all eyes.

He assures you, one and all, of his loving prayers for the work you are so faithfully carrying out on behalf of the believers in the British Isles.

With Bahá'í Greetings,

R. RABBANI.

P.S.—I wish to call your attention to certain things in 'Principles of Bahá'í Administration' which has just reached the Guardian; although the material is good, he feels that the complete lack of quotation marks is very misleading. His own words, the words of his various secretaries, even the words of Bahá'u'lláh Himself, are all lumped together as one text. This is not only not reverent in the case of Bahá'u'lláh's words, but misleading. Although the secretaries of the Guardian convey his thoughts and instructions and these messages are authoritative, their words are in no sense the same as his, their style certainly not the same, and their authority less, for they use their own terms and not his exact words in conveying his messages. He feels that in any future edition this fault should be

remedied, any quotations from Bahá'u'lláh or the Master plainly attributed to them, and the words of the Guardian clearly differentiated from those of his secretaries.

Dear and valued Co-workers,

The magnificent spirit of devotion and the initiative and resourcefulness demonstrated in recent months by a triumphant community, in its eagerness to launch, ahead of the appointed time, the enterprise destined to carry the fame of its members and establish its outposts as far afield as the African continent, merit the highest praise. By their organising ability, by their zeal in enlisting the collaboration of their sister communities in the African, the American and Asiatic continents for the effective prosecution of this epoch-making enterprise; by the tenacity, sagacity and fidelity which they have displayed in the course of its opening phase; by their utter consecration and their complete reliance on the One Who watches over their destiny, they have set an example worthy of emulation by the members of Bahá'í Communities in both the East and the West.

The despatch of the first pioneer to Tanganyika, signalling the inauguration of the African campaign, following so closely upon the successful termination of the Six Year Plan, will be recognised by posterity as the initial move in an undertaking designed to supplement and enrich the record of signal collective services rendered by the members of this community within the confines and throughout the length and breadth of its homeland. On it, however great the support it will receive from its sister communities in the days to come, will devolve the chief responsibility of guiding the destinies, of supplying the motive power, and of contributing to the resources of a crusade which, for the first time in Bahá'í history involves the collaboration, and affects the fortunes, of no less than four National Assemblies, in both hemispheres and within four continents of the globe.

On the success of this enterprise, unprecedented in its scope and unique in its character and immense in its spiritual potentialities, must depend the initiation, at a later period in the Formative Age of the Faith, of undertakings embracing, within their range all national assemblies functioning throughout the Bahá'í world, undertakings constituting in themselves a prelude to the launching of world-wide enterprises destined to be embarked upon, in future epochs of that same Age, by the Universal House of Justice, that will symbolise the unity and co-ordinate and unify the activities of these National Assemblies.

Indeed the birth of this African enterprise, in the opening decade of the second Bahá'í century, coinciding as it does with the formation of the International Bahá'í Council, should be acclaimed as an event of peculiar significance in the evolution of our beloved Faith. Both events will, no doubt, be hailed by posterity as simultaneous and compelling evidences of the irresistible unfoldment of a divinely appointed Administrative Order and of the development, on an international scale, of its subsidiary agencies, heralding the establishment of the Supreme Legislative body designed to crown the Administrative Edifice now being laboriously erected by the privileged builders of

a Divine Order, whose features have been delineated by the Centre of the Covenant in His Will and Testament, whose fundamental laws have been revealed by the Founder of our Faith in His Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and whose advent has been foreshadowed by the Herald of the Bahá'í Dispensation in the Bayán, His most weighty Book.

To be singled out as the chief agency in the prosecution of a task of such dimensions, such significance, and the harbinger of events so glorious, is indeed at once an inestimable blessing and a staggering responsibility with which the British Bahá'í Community, emerging triumphantly in rapid succession from the ordeal of a world war and the struggles involved in the prosecution of a historic Plan, has been honoured at so critical and challenging an hour in the fortunes of mankind.

To labour assiduously for the despatch, in the coming year marking the official opening of the Two Year Plan, of pioneers to the chosen Territories of the African continent; to ensure that its three sister national assemblies will steadily reinforce its work through financial assistance as well as through the increase in the number of pioneers; to expedite the translation, publication and dissemination of Bahá'í literature in the three selected languages throughout these Territories; to enlarge the scope of the contacts established with representatives of the African peoples and with institutions designed to foster their interests; to cultivate cordial relations with and secure the goodwill and support of the civil authorities in the goal countries where the pioneers will reside; to maintain steady correspondence with, fan the zeal, seek the counsel and secure the assistance of the budding and scattered communities in the North, the South and the Heart of that vast but promising and slowly awakening continent; to prepare for the eventual convocation, under its own auspices and following the example set, and the procedure adopted, by its sister American Assembly on the European Continent, of the First African Teaching Conference, representative of both the white and black races, constituting an epoch-making landmark in the evolution of the Faith among the African races and possibly synchronising with the centenary celebrations of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission, and adding another victor's crown to the laurels already won by the British followers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in their own homeland — these stand out as the paramount and inescapable duties confronting the British National Spiritual Assembly as it stands on the threshold of a new and glorious epoch in British Bahá'í history.

Though the prospect of this new venture is indeed enthralling, though it demands careful planning, the allocation of substantial sums for its prosecution and the exertion of strenuous efforts for its systematic development, the prizes so laboriously won at home must under no circumstances be jeopardised. The twofold obligation of preserving the status of the newly fledged assemblies in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland and of propagating the Faith among the people dwelling in the British Isles through active teaching and the wide circulation of Bahá'í literature must be faithfully discharged. The necessary foundation for the proclamation of the Faith, at a later stage

in the development of the British Bahá'í community, amidst the British people and in the very heart of the British Empire must be carefully laid. Whatever measures will facilitate the future recognition of the Faith by the civil authorities in the localities where its followers reside and eventually by the central government in Westminster, must, within the means at their disposal, and however tentatively, be adopted.

Then and only then will this Community, carrying out faithfully the twofold duty incumbent upon it, both at home and abroad, be vouchsafed by Bahá'u'lláh the full measure of His grace which will enable it to traverse, speedily and successfully, the present stage in its evolution, and acquire still greater potentialities for the revelation of a still brighter aspect of its mission designed to illuminate with the light of Divine Guidance and in the course of the Formative and Golden Ages of the Faith all the Dependencies of the British Crown, and erect the administrative structure within these Territories, of an Order, incomparably mightier and more enduring than any which that Crown has ever established.

SHOGHI

The Most Sacred Enterprise

'(On) occasion (of) celebration (of) Naw-Rúz Festival announce (to) followers (of) Faith (of) Bahá'u'lláh East (and) West, through National Assemblies, completion (of) excavation (for) foundation (for) eight piers designed (to) support (the) mighty dome (of the) Báb's Sepulchre, as well as momentous decision (to) place hundred thirty thousand dollar contract (for the) stone work (of) both cylinder (and) dome. Approaching Centenary (of the) birth (of the) prophetic Mission (of the) Founder (of the) Faith, (the) virtual consummation (of the) fifty year project culminating (in the) termination (of the) interior ornamentation (of the) Mother Temple (of the) West, (the) risks involved and delay owing (to the) threatening international situation, the necessity (to) insure increasing support (to) reinforce (the) newly-forged ties (with the) civil authorities (of the) recently emerged State (in the) Holy Land through (the) formation (of the) International Bahá'í Council, (the) considerable saving effected through signature (to the) contract (for the) entire stonework required (to) erect (the) superstructure (of the) edifice, impel me (to) take (the) major step (in the) development (of the) swiftly progressing, irresistibly advancing enterprise transcending (in) sacredness any collective undertaking launched (in the) course (of the) history (of the) hundred year old Faith. (I am) moved (to) renew (my) fervent plea addressed (to) all National (and) local Assemblies (and) believers (in) all continents (of the) globe (to) arise (and) determinedly gird up (their) loins (to) contribute, through curtailment (of) budgets, adequate appropriations (from) national (and) local funds, as well as direct sustained individual donations, (to) insure uninterrupted financial support, however great (the) sacrifices involved, however heavy (the) burdens, however distracting (the) successive crises (of the) present critical hour. Austerity period previously affecting (the) fortunes (of the) American Bahá'í community unavoidably prolonged (and) now extended (to) embrace (the) entire Bahá'í world in recognition

(of the) pressing needs (and) paramount importance (of the) glorious international task. Urge followers (of the) Most Great Name (to) demonstrate (a) still nobler spirit (of) self-abnegation (in the) course (of the) swiftly diminishing interval separating us (from the) hundredth anniversary (of the) birth (of the) Mission (of the) Author (of the) Revelation, commemorating (the) Centenary (of the) blood bath constituting (the) most tragic episode (in) Bahá'í history associated (with the) martyrdom (of the) immortal Tahirih, (the) subjection (of) Bahá'u'lláh (to the) rigours (of the) Síyáh-Chál (in) Tihrán (and the) barbarous execution (of) unnumbered heroes (and) saints (of the) Apostolic Age (of the) Bahá'í Dispensation.' (Received by the N.S.A. of the United States, March 21st, 1951.)

International Endowments

'Announce (to) friends (of) East (and) West (the) following: furnishing Mazraeh, completion (of) restoration (of) historic house (of) Bahá'u'lláh (in) Acre, scene (of) prolonged afflictions sustained (by) Founder (of) Faith, as well as supreme crisis suffered (by) 'Abdu'l-Bahá (at) hands (of) Covenant-breakers. Greatly enhanced international endowments (in) Holy Land in twin cities (of) Acre (and) Haifa, now include twin Holy Shrines situated (on) plain (of) Acre (and) slope (of) Mount Carmel; twin mansions (of) Bahjí (and) Mazraeh; twin historic houses inhabited (by) Bahá'u'lláh (and) 'Abdu'l-Bahá; twin international archives adjoining (the) Báb's Sepulchre (and the) resting place (of the) Greatest Holy Leaf; twin pilgrim houses, constructed (for) Oriental (and) Occidental pilgrims, twin gardens (of) Ridwan (and) Firdaws, associated (with the) memory (of the) Author (of the) Bahá'í Dispensation.

'Greatly welcome assistance (of the) newly-formed International Council, particularly its President, Mason Remey, and (its) Vice-President, Amelia Collins, through contact (with) authorities designed (to) spread (the) fame, consolidate (the) foundations (and) widen (the) scope (of) influence emanating (from the) twin spiritual administrative World Centres permanently fixed (in the) Holy Land constituting (the) midmost heart (of the) entire planet.' (To the N.S.A. of the United States, March 2nd, 1951.)

TO AN INDIVIDUAL

'You have voiced the same suffering, the sign of the same mystery, as has been voiced by almost all those who have been called upon to serve God. Even the Prophets of God, we know, suffered agony when the Spirit of God descended on Them and commanded Them to arise and preach. Look at Moses saying 'I am a stutterer!' Look at Muḥammad rolled in His rug in agony! The Guardian himself suffered terribly when he learned *he* was the one who had been made Guardian.

'So you see your sense of inadequacy, your realisation of your own unworthiness, is not unique at all. Many, from the Highest to the humblest, have had it. Now the wisdom of it is this: it is such seemingly weak instruments that demonstrate that God is the Power achieving the victories and not men . . . ' (Through his secretary, January 11th, 1951.)

TO RAYMOND ANDERSON

'There are two kinds of Bahá'ís, one might say: those whose religion is Bahá'í and those who live for the Faith. Needless to say if we can belong to the latter category, if we can be in the vanguard of heroes, martyrs and saints, it is more praiseworthy in the sight of God.' (Through his secretary, April 16th, 1951; published in the American *Bahá'í News*, No. 241, for March, 1951.)

TO FRANCES BENEDICT STEWART

'The greatest need it seems everywhere inside the Cause is to impress upon the friends the need for love among them. There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the community. But individuals towards each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual.' (Through his secretary, October 5th, 1950; published in the American *Bahá'í News*, No. 241, for March, 1951.)

Shrine of the Bab Fund

Arthur Norton, the Treasurer of this Fund, reports that £400 has so far been transferred to the Guardian. The letter accompanying his receipt is printed in this issue of 'Bahá'í Journal'. The total amount so far contributed to the Fund is £475 16s. 1d.

TO THE TREASURER, BAB'S SHRINE FUND

March 10th, 1951.

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letter of February 21st has been received, and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf, and to forward you the enclosed receipt.

He was much touched by this very generous contribution from the British Bahá'í Community toward the construction of the Shrine of the Báb; and wishes you to assure the friends that their joining in this historic enterprise, he feels sure, will only add to the spiritual beauty and dignity of this Holy Tomb, so dear to all our hearts.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

R. RABBANI.

Correction

The letter from the Guardian to Harry Andersen, published on page 2 of *Bahá'í Journal*, No. 85, for January, 1951, was wrongly said to have been dated December 21st, 1950. The correct date is December 21st, 1948.

FOR MEDITATION

By the righteousness of God! Idle fancies have debarred men from the Horizon of Certitude, and vain imaginings withheld them from the Choice Sealed Wine. In truth I say, and for the sake of God I declare: This Servant, this Wronged One, is abashed to claim for Himself any existence whatever, how much more those exalted grades of being! Every man of discernment, while walking upon the earth, feebleth indeed abashed, inasmuch as he is fully aware that the thing which is the source of his prosperity, his wealth, his might, his exaltation, his advancement and power is, as ordained by God, the very earth which is trodden beneath the feet of all men. There can be no doubt that whoever is cognisant of this truth, is cleansed and sanctified from all pride, arrogance and vainglory. Whatever hath been said hath come from God. Unto this, He, verily, hath borne, and beareth now, witness, and He, in truth, is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

THE NATIONAL FUND

Below is listed the number of times each Local Assembly has contributed to the National Fund in the period April 21st, 1950 to March 10th, 1951.

Belfast	2	Leeds	1
Birmingham	8	Liverpool	5
Blackburn	3	London	6
Blackpool	3	Manchester	5
Bournemouth	0	Newcastle	1
Bradford	0	Northampton	3
Brighton	8	Nottingham	10
Bristol	0	Norwich	13
Cardiff	4	Oxford	5
Dublin	3	Sheffield	5
Edinburgh	0	Stockport	2
Glasgow	4	Torquay	4

BAHÁ'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust Committee is preparing material for a new general introductory pamphlet on the Faith to take the place of the current 'Bahá'í Faith' pamphlet when stocks are exhausted. They would greatly appreciate any comments or suggestions which members of the Community may care to make, so that the new pamphlet may profit from the teaching experience of the whole community. Please send your suggestions to the Manager, John Ferraby, 49 Sandbourne Avenue, London, S.W.19.

Weddings

Lily Ahy and Iraj Ayman in London on January 2nd, Isobel Locke and Hassan Sabri in Wheatley, Oxfordshire, on April 7th, and Hushang Assassi in London on April 7th.

'THE MOST MERITORIOUS OF ALL DEEDS'

'THE ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE'

On Christmas Day, 1938, the beloved Guardian addressed a letter to the American and Canadian believers, of such weight, challenge and importance that it has become a handbook for all those who long to serve the Cause and witness its inevitable triumph. Published as 'The Advent of Divine Justice', it reached the American believers at a time when the world was about to be embroiled in a second great conflict, and when the first Teaching Plan of the Bahá'í world needed just that impetus, that vision, to arouse the spirit necessary for victory.

To-day, as the world appears to be facing a similar, but even more catastrophic situation, every believer in the world, in whatever teaching plan he may be serving, may well address himself to this sea full of gems of guidance, inspiration and exhortation.

To us in Britain, about to embark upon our greatest task yet—the Africa Campaign—and at the same time develop those infant institutions—the 19 new assemblies—into strong bastions of the Cause ready to launch out into conquest of the hearts of all our fellow-citizens, one passage in particular seems to be the most challenging.

'To teach the Cause of God, to proclaim its truths, to defend its interests, to demonstrate, by words as well as by deeds, its indispensability, its potency, and universality, should at no time be regarded as the exclusive concern or sole privilege of Bahá'í administrative institutions, be they assemblies or committees. All must participate, however humble their origin, however limited their experience, however restricted their means, however deficient their education, however pressing their cares and preoccupations, however unfavourable the environment in which they live. "God", Bahá'u'lláh, Himself, has unmistakably revealed, "hath prescribed unto every one the duty of teaching His Cause".'

THE PERSONAL TEACHING CAMPAIGN

Since the National Assembly meeting of August, 1950, the 'Home Front' aspect of the 'Three Tiered Programme' has been gradually evolving. Teaching Conference appreciated its importance and at the time of writing, 21 out of the 24 Assemblies have warmly welcomed the launching of its most recent development—the Personal Teaching Campaign.

Members of the Consolidation Committee, or the Committee's 'briefed' representatives have consulted with these Assemblies, and the reports so far have shown a grand and exciting response. From only half-a-dozen communities have we had full details, but yet we have on record more than 30 different personal goals adopted by individual believers—alive as they are to the Guardian's words, 'All must participate...'. These personal goals include such things as bringing one new person to every meeting; making two new contacts every week; delivering a specially written and printed pamphlet in the door of every house in a certain street and following it up with a personal visit a few days later to discuss it; recording passages of Bahá'í Scripture set to music for use at Gramophone Recitals, etc.; handing out 19 pamphlets or 'Principle' Cards

every 19 days; drawing up and displaying a new poster each week; having printed in the newspaper, once per week, a selection from the Guardian's brief summary of the Faith which is contained in the diary; making personal calls on all people on the 'contacts' list; displaying each week in the office the quotation from the world's Scriptures contained in the diary, and many more.

Even those who went to consult with the Assemblies found themselves becoming more and more excited with the goals adopted, and the thrilling feeling that all over Britain, the believers were renewing their determination to spread the Message, were setting themselves tasks to accomplish no matter how small they were at first, and, above all, were finding an ever-increasing love, unity and happiness in their community life. One non-Committee representative wrote, '... We went through your check-lists point by point after I had passed them out to each member. The Community seemed to me very united, happy and healthy, and I am grateful to the Committee for the opportunity of consulting them. I feel it did me far more good than it did them ...'

'UNLOOSE YOUR TONGUES'

'What is it then,' one might ask, 'that is so stimulating in this campaign?' Many answers might be given, but it seems as though there are a few really important factors. For instance, the setting of personal goals of any kind is stimulating, how much more so when it is to serve His Cause?

Secondly, we in Britain have tended to overlook somewhat the obligation to teach, forgetting perhaps that just as daily prayer, fasting, attendance at 19-Day Feasts, are commanded by Bahá'u'lláh, so also is teaching. 'This is the day in which to speak. It is incumbent upon the people of Bahá to strive with the utmost patience and forbearance, to guide the peoples of the world to the Most Great Horizon.'

Moreover, that unity in teaching in a community not only confirms and deepens the believers themselves and solves their community problems, but acts as a magnet to others. The individual effort may be no more than addressing, stamping and posting one 'Principle' Card per day, but it means that everyone is fulfilling in some measure what the Guardian refers to as a 'vital spiritual obligation.'

Yet another important factor is the growing awareness of the requirements of 'this present hour,' and of the rapidly approaching cataclysm which '... will cause the limbs of mankind to quake ...'. For surely, it is the Bahá'ís the world over who, alone, have in their grasp the opportunity to mitigate the pain of this transitional period, '... but for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened ...'. And will not the peoples of the world, after the catastrophe, have the perfect right to condemn us for not telling them of the Faith whilst there was a chance, if we do not give of our utmost now?

Yes, there can be no possible doubt whatever, as to our duty when we again turn to our Scriptures.

'Unloose your tongues, and proclaim unceasingly His Cause. This shall be better for you than all the

treasures of the past and of the future, if ye be of them that comprehend this truth . . . This is indeed what profiteth you in this world, and in that which is to come.'

And yet again,

'Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.'

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE



Our first pioneer to Africa, Claire Gung, shaking hands with the Chairman of the Africa Committee, Mr. H. F. Backwell, before leaving Liverpool Street Station to board the boat for Africa

European Teaching Conference

The European Teaching Conference and Summer School is being held this year in Rome from August 31st to September 10th. Further information may be obtained from the European office of the European Teaching Committee of the United States by writing to Miss Honor Kempton, 37 Quai Wilson, Geneva, Switzerland. The period of the Conference and Summer School is longer this year than last at the request of the Guardian.

London Bahá'í Meetings

It has been requested that the times of the regular teaching meetings at the London Bahá'í Centre be announced in 'Bahá'í Journal'. These are held each Thursday evening at 7.30 p.m. at 103 Earls Court Road, London, W.8.

Changes of Address

Birmingham Secretary: Miss E. Eastgate, 26 Hampton Road, Birchfields, Birmingham 6.

Blackpool Secretary: Mrs. Prudence Lowe, 6 Mansfield Road W., Blackpool.

THE AFRICA PROJECT

AFRICA

The first two pioneers in Africa are now well established there and hope to celebrate part at least of Ridván together in Dar es Salaam. Both will greatly welcome letters, for they are over 2,000 miles from the nearest Bahá'í Community, and many thousands of miles from their home communities. Their addresses are: Claire Gung, Lushoto School, Lushoto, Tanganyika; Jalal Nakhjawani, P.O. Box 1058, Dar es Salaam, Tanganyika. We are happy to report that Claire Gung is already well-liked by the Africans who work under her. Jalal Nakhjawani has been very energetic in making enquiries on behalf of prospective pioneers from Britain and is inserting advertisements in the East African papers for those who wish it.

The Africa Committee is building up a stock of Bahá'í books in this country to present to Bahá'í lending libraries in Africa as occasion warrants, and will welcome contributions of new or second-hand books or of money with which to buy them.

The Committee is compiling a directory of addresses of Bahá'ís in Africa outside Egypt and the Sudan and has, so far, addresses in 14 places.

INTERNATIONAL

The American National Assembly has appointed a Committee on Africa Teaching and has issued an appeal to the American believers, which has already produced response. Work among Africa students in American colleges is producing tangible results.

The Persian Pioneering Committee is in touch with several families which intend to pioneer in Africa, and is helping them overcome the obstacles to settlement. Close liaison has been established between our Committee and theirs.

Co-operation with the Egyptian National Assembly is being worked out and clarification sought from the Guardian of the lines along which such co-operation should develop.

We acknowledge with grateful thanks financial contributions to the Africa project from the American, Persian and Egyptian National Assemblies, without which progress of the project would be very slow.

Additions to the Community

Since the last list was published in 'Bahá'í Journal', registration cards have been received from the following:

Monireh Howeydai (Youth from Iran), London
Khosro Borhanian (From Iran), London
Ernest Gregory, Sheffield
Florence Oates, Sheffield
Matthew Hall, Norwich
Ralph Allan, Glasgow
Rachel Allan, Glasgow
Ruby Povey, Torquay
Ida Savage, Torquay

We regret the omission from previous lists of Serrollah Haghshenas, from Iran, who is a member of the Birmingham Community.