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This humble work is dedicated to my dear wife Angeline whose love for Shoghi Effendi and utter dedication to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh are far greater than my own.

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Preface

The date of November 4th, 1957, will remain for the author of these Recollections the day of anguish, of sorrow and bewilderment. In a modest hotel in the city of London, the earthly, fruitful life of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, came abruptly, and unexpectedly, to an end. To the writer, it was as if the light of wisdom, solace and righteousness had been extinguished forever: something similar to an apocalyptic darkening of this planet.

A radiant and useful existence had suddenly ceased, leaving a multitude of co-religionists throughout the world stunned and grief-stricken. It was an unequalled and widespread feeling of despair and irremediable loss that filled the hearts with poignant pain that could never cease; the end of an age of comfort and assurance, of light-hearted joy, the joy of one's adolescent years, when dreams, aspirations and idealism came into existence from the tranquil life revolving around the unity of the family, with its power of love and security, the source of our inspiration, fortitude and strength.

The greatest gift received from the Omnipotent, during my lifetime, was the privilege of being closely associated with Shoghi Effendi for a number of years. No words will ever be able to describe the depth of my devotion and of my abiding love for him, nor the transformation I underwent under the influence of his warm and tender affection; an influence that changed my character, my outlook on life, my habits, and opened my eyes to the unending vista of new aspirations and horizons.

In later years, I have felt the urge to communicate to others the power of his love; thus the decision to write down some of my observations and experiences. It is a recollection, however inadequate - an effort to render him due justice and to recall for others the life of such a unique and precious personage. I sincerely trust that future scholars will undertake to produce a detailed life

history of him whom I consider to be the 'true man of the century'.

Much merit for my efforts goes to my dear wife, Angeline, who with her encouragement and patience has guided me to the completion of the manuscript. Deep thanks and appreciation go to our dear friend Beatrice Owens Ashton, for her many suggestions and the reviewing of the text, to Marion Hofman for her skilful editing, and to the painter Reza Samimi for his extraordinary and moving crayon portrait of Shoghi Effendi. My sincere thanks go also to the hosts of friends who have urged me to put in writing what I have verbally expressed in Bahá'í gatherings in various continents of the world. It is my hope that the reading of these Recollections will enkindle and strengthen, in the hearts of many, a deep love and admiration for Shoghi Effendi, that we may all dedicate our lives, as he did, to the service of the Cause of God which he so greatly loved, and that we may emulate him in placing such services ahead of any personal motives or restraint.

UGO GIACHERY

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