

Walking in `Abdu'l-Bahá's Footsteps!

(A Bahá'í remembers a special visit to Edinburgh when she was very young)

I am not a young person any more, and I do not have many memories from when I was little: I have perhaps one memory from before the age of four years, and very few from the ages of five to nine years. But one of the few memories I do have is still strong and it is very special to me.

When I was about six years old, my mum and dad took me with them on a mini-pilgrimage to Edinburgh, where `Abdu'l-Bahá had stayed, and to a hall where He had given a talk.



Somehow, at that age I already knew many stories

of `Abdu'l-Bahá – either told to me by my mum and dad, or overheard in the company of other Bahá'ís who would often share stories or bits of the Writings which had caught their attention.

If they were unsure of what to do about something, they would say, “What would `Abdu'l Bahá do?”

I felt unwanted at school and was often unhappy. It seemed to me that the only really good times were when we would see the other Bahá'ís. I would long for the next visitors, or a trip away when there would be more Bahá'ís around. The nearest Bahá'ís at that time were about three to four hours away.

Someone suggested to me once that if I ever feel lonely or scared, that it might help to imagine that I am holding `Abdu'l-Bahá's hand and that He is walking or standing beside me. I thought this a little strange but tried it anyway, and found that it did actually help.

There was also a song that we used to sing about following `Abdu'l-Bahá's example or "walking in His footsteps" – a bit of which went like this:

"Look at me.
Follow me,
Be as I am.
`Abdu'l-Bahá!
`Abdu'l-Bahá!"



`Abdu'l-Bahá with a Bahá'í child.in America

So `Abdu'l-Bahá was a very special person in my life, and a source of support, love and guidance. I was really impressed and very excited that I was going to a place where He had actually been – and that I would be able to walk where He had walked.

When we arrived at the building where He had given a talk I was very surprised to find that the hall was at the top of quite a narrow staircase.

As I stood at the bottom of this staircase I imagined `Abdu'l-Bahá, with His grey beard and His turban, climbing these very stairs, with His robe swishing and swaying over the steps and over His small feet.

I realised that the stairway was so narrow that there was no doubt that I would walk over exactly the same spots where He had walked – there was nowhere else He could have been.

I soon had it figured that if I kissed the middle of each step I couldn't miss. And so – vaguely aware of my parents watching in astonishment and no doubt worrying about germs – I did exactly that! I kissed the middle of each step all the way to the top. As for the hall at the top, in my memory it was quite small, with a wooden floor.

I seem to remember a story about a man getting irritated with the interpreter when `Abdul-Bahá was speaking, because he said he could understand `Abdu'l-Bahá fine without the interpreter's interruptions, despite the fact that `Abdu'l-Bahá was speaking in Persian!

At the house in Charlotte Square, there was a kind old lady, and she gave me a picture of `Abdu'l-Bahá in a frame to take away.

But the best and strongest memory of the lot was the memory of the narrow stairs, and the feeling of complete satisfaction that I had kissed exactly where `Abdu'l-Bahá had stepped.

