

A WORD OF APPRECIATION

By

Professor Arnold Toynbee

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, Gentlemen, and members of the Academy ;

I am very grateful to you for giving me the opportunity to say what I feel about the great scholar, whose loss we feel to day. When I was a young professor in the University of London, in 1920, I was given the honour of being the supervisor of a certain number of research students, working for higher degrees in history. Two of those students stood out above the rest ; one was Mohamad Kasim, the other was Shafeek Ghorbal. I could see at once that those two men were going to make their mark in their country, and also in the world, in their later life. When you have gifted students you cannot teach them very much. All professors know this. I cannot remember anything that I was able to teach to Shafeek Ghorbal, but I can remember a number of things that I was able to learn from him ; because a part of the pleasure of the relation between the professor and his research students is this reciprocity in which they educate each other. Sometimes the relation between the professor and his student remains a purely professional one ; sometimes, fortunately, it turns out into a friendship, as it was in the first years with the Egyptian students of mine. Our relation became one of personal friendship, as well as professional. We didn't see much of each other in later life. It was difficult for me to meet them. But we kept in touch. I could tell what kind of career Shafeek Ghorbal was going to have. Some people are born with the gift of scholarship, he was one of those. Above all, he had the gift of character and objectivity both of which have been referred to already. It was very marked in Shafeek Ghorbal that he had independence of mind, and the dedication and determination to see his own researches to the end. It is so rare that people are distinguished in both the field of learning and the field of administration. And academic life, I am afraid, when it captures a person, generally absorbs all his time and energy. But as we have

been told, Shafeek Ghorbal had the ability to be a great administrator, and at the same time to remain always a scholar, a friend and a teacher. So, as time is passing, I don't wish to say more, except one thing: that on this happy first visit that I am paying to Egypt there is only one sad thing, that I arrived too late to see either of my old pupils.

I think one of the last personal letters which Shafeek Ghorbal wrote to me, was a letter which reached me three days before his death, saying, "When you come to Cairo you are going to stay with me". God disposed it otherwise. As I travel about the world I meet with scholars everywhere, who know about his work, who honour him as well as we do. He was famous, not only in his own country, or in England but everywhere.

Thank you all, for allowing me to speak to you.

