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ST. 60 YEARS OLD.



Appropriately enough the cradle of ST. stood in the proud and ancient city of Berne, the beautiful capital situated in the centre of Switzerland. There he was born on June 25th, 1889, as a twin son of Mr. E. Stauffer, Managing-Director of the Banque Fédérale, Berne. When I said it was appropriate for ST. first to have seen the light in the Swiss capital, it is for the reason that to the colony he typifies more than anyone else ALL Switzerland, to which his heart remains so affectionately attached and about which he reports and writes so impartially. It may be on events around the lakes of Geneva or Neuchâtel, in the sunny Ticino or the rest of our beautiful country which to ST. spells home in particular; his accounts are always full of interest and of a kind to which we have become accustomed to look forward.

ST., after having attended during a happy childhood the elementary schools of his native city, graduated first to the Progymnasium and later to the Gymnasium there. On having finished his schooling he entered as a young man an apprenticeship in an industrial concern at Berne and on its conclusion, having acquired the Diploma of the S.K.V., emigrated to Paris where he spent the next 3 years.

Again, very appropriately, London gave ST. its first welcome on August 1st, 1912, and the Metropolis has taken him to her large and capacious bosom ever since. It must be stated, however, that after having settled down here for a couple of years, the outbreak of the great war 1914/18 called him back to Switzerland to the Colours, where he served as a Corporal in Bat. 25 during the "Grenzbesetzung" in 1914/15. On his release he returned to London, actively resuming his commercial activities, as well as those in the colony.

His first love was the Swiss Mercantile Society, to the London Section of which he was elected Hon. Secretary in 1916, and President during 1917/18. He was later made an Hon. Member of that Society (1922) and has never ceased to lend the S.M.S. his great and most valuable support. The activities of the Swiss colony claimed more and more of ST.'s valuable time and experience. During 1920/21, he acted as Hon. Secretary to the City Swiss Club, which again claimed his services as a member of the Committee for a period of no less than 15 years (1933/47). In all this long period he rendered the Club very great services and he could have occupied the Presidential Chair at will. Regrettably, his modesty forbade him to accept that honour, at any rate up to the present. ST. also was Vice-President of the Swiss Choral Society (now the Swiss Male Choir) during 1931/32 and besides served on many Committees, such as those in connection with the 1st August celebrations, the Swiss Sports, etc., where his great experience, his sagacity and his sound views were much appreciated and frequently acted upon. All these many activities, patriotic and useful as they were, did not, however, butter ST.'s bread and he therefore pressed forward in his commercial career, occupying various positions in a number of concerns in the City.

1929, is the year which readers of the *Swiss Observer* will take a special note of, for it was then that ST. was invited to join this paper as Editor, in succession to Dr. H. W. Egli. In this connection it should be remembered that ST. was by no means a novice in journalism, though not academically trained for a journalistic career. During his school days he acted as Editor of the school magazine of the "Handelsabteilung des Städtischen Gymnasiums" in Berne. He subsequently wrote articles for Swiss local papers for several years, which explains how he managed to arrive at his new post with the *Swiss Observer*, wielding such a pleasing and easy-flowing pen. For nearly twenty years ST. worked in perfect harmony with the Founder, Publisher and at one time Editor of the *Swiss Observer*, the late Mr. P. F. Boehringer.

The work of an Editor is onerous indeed, but if the paper is small, like the *Swiss Observer*, which in the nature of things suffers from a restricted circulation, it is infinitely more so. His difficulties are manifold and, owing to slender financial resources, all the work rests more or less on the shoulders of one man. Having to write on almost any subject the Editor requires first and foremost a versatile and flexible mind. His subjects cover meetings, dinners, banquets, lectures, concerts, dances and social functions of every kind; he has to record weddings, write birth announcements and obituaries and report other eventful happenings from air flights to launching of ships. Poor ST.! Yet in the face of this tremendous task, our friend miraculously contrives to maintain his unruffled calm and good humour, a sense of which is another indispensable quality to a man of his profession. That ST. possesses that keen sense of humour has emerged from many of his articles and feuilletons; neither is he above turning a joke against himself. We have often heard him refer to the alleged slowness of the Bernese; well, deliberate ST. may be, but slow? — never! I have already made reference to his impartiality; he shares at all times and reports in an unbiassed way on

"Freud & Leid" of our big colony. This surely is no light undertaking, if you consider how impossible a thing it is to try and please all men; also it must be borne in mind that the Swiss are well informed and critical newspaper readers, not slow to grumble if anything does not go their own particular way. Although the brunt of the work and all the responsibility are ST.'s, he gladly and generously acknowledges that it is his circle of faithful collaborators whose help enabled him to keep the paper going through many anxious periods. To all of them he wishes to express his most sincere appreciation and warmest thanks.

Scanning this account which has so far dealt only with ST.'s many activities in business and in the colony, some of the readers might wonder whether he has found any time to devote to his "private life." Fortunately the answer is an emphatic yes! He married in 1921, Miss E. M. Phillips, daughter of Mr. S. C. Phillips of Putney, and it is an open secret that the union has proved a most happy one. Mrs. Stauffer has always taken a keen interest in the Swiss colony and in her husband's great work, which for the past 20 years has been so closely bound up with it. She has been a great help to him and this double jubilee in honour of ST. and his paper must be a source of real pride and satisfaction to Mrs. Stauffer, which she richly deserves.

In 1939, at the outbreak of the last war, the then Minister, the late Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, asked ST. to join the "Special Division" of the Swiss Legation, at the head of which was Monsieur W. Preiswerk of Bâle. During his five years absence from the offices of the *Swiss Observer* Mr. P. F. Boehringer again took over as Editor but, by special permission from the Swiss Legation, ST. was allowed to keep in close contact and to continue contributing articles to the paper, of which in the autumn of 1945 he again assumed the editorship, retaining it to this day. Let us hope that he will continue for many years to fill a post which, due to his many qualifications and great popularity, he fills to perfection.

I trust I have been able to give the readers of *The Swiss Observer* a glimpse of the Editor's personality: able, painstaking, hard-working, genial, happy in good company, staunch and loyal in friendship, and he remains a good and true Swiss to boot. Of all the many occasions on which ST. played his part, there is an outstanding one which in conclusion I should like to recall: It was at the time when we were favoured by the visit of Général Guisan and ST. was among those

chosen to adorn the top table at the banquet given by the colony in the great General's honour. The speeches were few but weighty and those who were responsible for the arrangements had the happy thought of asking ST. to deliver one of them. No better choice could possibly have been made. There we were gathered, some 500 Swiss with their fine ladies, in the stately and lavishly decorated dining hall of the *Dorchester Hotel*. The toast-master announced that ST. was going to speak and he rose to his feet amongst great applause. Then in plain and simple words, in unadulterated "Bärndütsch," he addressed our great vaudois General in inimitable style and the silence of that great audience was so profound that you could have heard a pin drop. It was a great moment: great for ST., great I venture to think for "notre Général," great and unforgettable for us all who had the privilege to be there.

Greetings and all Best Wishes to ST.
On his attainment of the triple score
And sharing, what to our dear friend means more,
Honours in the S.O.'s own Jubilee.

Of all who know him none will disagree
That he keeps young and sprightly as of yore,
Unfetter'd letting his ideas soar,
Never descending to a minor key.

On this occasion 'tis but right to state
That we indeed feel grateful for the part
He has so nobly played for many years.

His is the gift to write and captivate
In simple language which speaks to the heart;
Let us acknowledge it with three big cheers!

"GALLUS."

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