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FRED STAUFFER †

1889 — 1965



Dear Fred,

Somebody told me you had died last Thursday, July the 29th. I can't quite grasp that. To me, you're still amongst us, so let me have a last chat before you become a memory, and put into words what many of us have kept to ourselves because your modesty would have prevented us from saying it to your face . . .

Fifty-three years ago, almost to the day, you came to England. For 53 years you were one of us; for 53 years we were able to meet you and ask for your help or advice; and for 53 years you never refused a service.

From the day of your arrival in this country you felt the need to draw the members of our Colony closer together and to strengthen the links between us and our homeland. The editorship of "The Swiss Observer", which you accepted nearly 40 years ago, confirmed you in this mission. Thus you became a sort of model Anglo-Swiss and hence a rallying point for all of us. You were the first to laugh when we pulled your leg; you were the first to come forward when someone needed guidance; you were the first to offer warmhearted sympathy to those who suffered. You did not chase riches; you did not seek glory; you were content to serve. Your equable Bernese staunchness and your selflessness reminded us that, quite apart from any personal ambitions, we all have a duty and a job to do — the duty as individuals to be upright and honourable representatives of our country, and the job to see that the good name of Switzerland is ever preserved amongst our English friends.

But you did more than that. For nearly 40 years you devoted yourself to continuing the good work started by Paul Böhringer. Thanks to your unfailing efforts "The Swiss Observer" became a bond between the scattered and diverse members of our Colony. You knew nearly everyone and most certainly everyone knew you. All of us realized we could come to you at any time and find a sympathetic ear.

Of course, dear Fred, the place you achieved in the Colony and in our hearts was not only due to your own merits. You were blessed with a wife who was your dear companion and a devoted supporter of all your labours. One only had to look at the two of you to be aware that you made Elsie happy. To see you both at any of the Colony's frequent functions, to watch you dancing together only a few weeks ago, was a joy to us all. It showed what a good, modest and kindly man can achieve. For that, too, we owe you thanks.

We older ones, who knew you intimately for many years, will remember you as long as we live. And even the younger people, those who met you only during the last few years, will treasure your name.

Farewell, old friend, and take with you our most sincere and heartfelt gratitude for everything.

Yours,

E.M.B.

Sunday, 1st of August.