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The Swiss Observer

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The Official Organ of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain

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THE PASSING OF KING GEORGE VI

Though God has raised me high, yet this I count the glory of my crown, that I have reigned with their love.

THE British Commonwealth and Empire mourns the passing of its Sovereign, and of a man whose sterling character, kindly personality and broad humanity had made him beloved by all his subjects and respected far beyond the borders of his Empire.

Grief knows no boundaries. The sorrow of one member of the human family is the sorrow of all, and it is in that spirit, that the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, expresses its deepest sympathy to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and the Royal family.

We, who have spent the major portion of our lives in these islands, and have shared both joy and sorrow, as well as hardship with this great nation owe our loyalty to two countries, and there is no loss nor shame in this division. Our loyalty to our native country can never die, but our loyalty to our adopted country grows with the years we reside here; they do not conflict, but are a complement.

Through the critical times of the late King's illness, we shared the anxieties of his people, and now they deplore his grievous and untimely loss, we too mourn the passing not only of a good and dutiful monarch, but of a good and wise man.

* * *

King George the VI was born at York Cottage, Sandringham, on December 14th, 1895, the second

son of the Duke and Duchess of York. The young Prince with his elder brother, young sister, and three younger brothers led in his childhood a life of simplicity and happiness.

For at least two generations it has been a tradition in the Royal Family that the second son should

go into the Navy. Accordingly, Prince Albert, as he then was entered at the Royal Naval College Osborne in January, 1909. From Osborne he went to Dartmouth. Passing out from Dartmouth at the end of 1912 he went in January of the following year on a training cruise in H.M.S. Cumberland, spending six months in the West Atlantic, later on he was appointed as a midshipman to H.M.S. Collingwood and he was serving in this ship when war broke out in 1914, in September of that year he had to be hurriedly operated on for appendicitis and could not return to duty till February 1915. He was again at sea in May, 1916, just in time to experience active service at Jutland.

In the following September he was finally invalidated from the Navy. Throughout the spring of 1918 he was given training in flying. He was given his wings and in this branch of the fighting services the future King took much pride and showed great proficiency.

In October, 1919, at the age of 24, the Prince



went up to Cambridge. The following year his father's old dukedom of York was revived in his favour and he took his seat in the House of Lords.

At the beginning of 1923 came the welcome news of the Duke's betrothal to Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, youngest daughter of the fourteenth Earl of Strathmore, and the marriage was solemnized in April of that year. Three years after marriage Princess Elizabeth was born, and in 1930, the Duchess of York gave birth to Princess Margaret.

On the Abdication of Edward VIII he was called to the Throne. On May, 12th, 1937, George VI was crowned King at Westminster Abbey. The following year the King and Queen paid a visit to France and in the spring of 1939 their Majesties sailed from Portsmouth for Canada and the U.S.A.

During his absence, events in Europe grew steadily worse, and the menace turned to reality. On the first night of the war the King broadcast "We are

called", he said, "to meet the challenge of a principle which if it were to prevail would be fatal to any civilised order in the world", and he asked his people to stand "calm, firm, and united in their time of trial".

Thus the long drawn years of war ran down, and the closing month of the struggle saw the King sharing with his people the final ingenuity of the enemy in the shape of rocket and flying bomb.

In 1947, the King and Queen, accompanied by the Princesses embarked on a visit to South Africa. Two great ceremonies marked the following spring. On St. Georges Day the 600th anniversary of the Order of the Garter was marked by a Chapter and a service of great splendour in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. Three days later, on April 26th he and the Queen celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. One of the last functions was the opening of the 1951 Festival.

The Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, M.C., M.P.,
Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State
for Foreign Affairs,
etc., etc., etc.,
Foreign Office.
S.W.1.

Sir,

It is with greatest regret that my Government have learned of the untimely passing of His Most Gracious Majesty King George VI, King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas.

The Swiss Federal Council have instructed me immediately to express to you, to Her Majesty's Government and Her Majesty's peoples their most sincere condolences on behalf of the people of Switzerland and to assure you that we all share with you that sense of profound and grievous loss which this tragic event has occasioned.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,
with the highest consideration,
Your obedient Servant,
sig. H. de Torrenté.

ANGLO-SWISS SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

On the death of His Majesty The King, the following telegram was received by the Anglo-Swiss Society of Great Britain from the Swiss-British Society of Switzerland:

To: The Anglo-Swiss Society of Great Britain,
17, Hans Place, London, S.W.1.

" May we offer you our deep felt sympathy on the great loss your Country and Commonwealth have suffered in the sudden passing of His Majesty The King. Your sorrow will be shared by your friends all over the world. His Majesty King George The Sixth was indeed a symbol of those sterling qualities of the British nation which this Society has endeavoured to interpret to a large public in Switzerland. The Swiss have come to admire and appreciate these qualities all the more profoundly following the great achievements of his reign in the defence of right and freedom. It is a consolation to see in the Accession of Queen Elizabeth the Continuation of your great traditions and our cordial wishes go out to all Her peoples under their new Sovereign."

STRAUMANN,
President, Swiss-British Society.

The following reply was sent:

To: Straumann,
Schweizerische-Britische Gesellschaft,
Mythenquai 60, Zurich.

" Your Telegram expressing the sympathy of the members of the Swiss-British Society of Switzerland with the people of our country in our great national sorrow at the sudden death of His Majesty, King George The Sixth, has been received with the warmest feelings of appreciation and gratitude. Your message has strengthened further the bonds of good fellowship between our peoples and the relations which unite our two Societies. On behalf of all the members of the Anglo-Swiss Society of Great Britain, I send my very sincere thanks for your thoughtful gesture."

TOWNEND,
Chairman, Anglo-Swiss Society
of Great Britain.