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MAX GERIG †

As briefly reported in our last issue, Max Gerig passed away on Saturday, October 20th, 1956, at the Diakonenheim, St. Gall, at the age of 65.

This sad news was received by his many friends in this country with sorrow and yet relief, for by his death a life of suffering and frustration has come to its close.

As a relatively young man, and soon after he married, he developed symptoms of an incurable disease (creeping paralysis), and after many years of suffering he has now been relieved. Death has come gently to him, as light winds whispering through the tree tops, and in the shadow of death we shall remember him for the courage and fortitude with which he so bravely bore his affliction.

Those eyes which shone so brightly are now closed for ever, the hands which gripped so firmly have lost their touch, but there remains the memory of happier days when we were privileged to enjoy his companionship.

Max Gerig was an intellectual, a great lover of music and literature, and many will remember his occasional speeches both for their substance and for their delivery. He had a high sense of duty and fair play and was faithful in friendship. Such rich gifts enabled him to surround himself with a large circle of friends. A life which had every aspect of success lay in front of him, but it was not to be; Providence willed it otherwise. Merciless, the disease sapped his strength and put an end to a career which had promised so well.

How often in the stillness of the night he must have suffered agonies realising — as he did — that there was no hope, and that the future had no redeeming features in store for him. He, who at one time had been the breadwinner of his family, was now unable to support them any longer by his labour, and yet in spite of the bleak outlook he never

complained and courageously fought a losing battle. Slowly he lost the use of almost every limb, but his mind remained clear almost to the end of his life.

During my vacation I paid him a visit at the Diakonenheim in St. Gall some two months ago, where for the last 10 years he had been a patient after he left this country.

This was one of the many yearly visits, but this time it was fraught with sad forebodings, his former always so brilliant memory seemed to fail him, and I realised that the end was near. On my bidding him farewell he expressed his gratitude to his London friends of yesteryear for the many visits and kindnesses he had received from them over the many years. Almost his last words before we parted were: "Kindly remember me to all my good friends, who have been so kind to me; I shall never forget them."

Nor shall we forget him because he bore so courageously what destiny had willed to be.

Nearly forty years of friendship through good and bad times have now ended, and across the sea I am sending you my last farewell and thanks for so many hours I had the privilege of spending in your company.

* * *

Max Gerig was born at St. Gall in 1891, and received his schooling at the Kantonsschule. After a commercial apprenticeship in that town, and doing his military service in which he obtained the rank of lieutenant, he went to Paris for two years, arriving in this country soon after the first world war.

After a short period with a commercial concern he was appointed Managing-Director of the Standard Metals Ltd. (Altdorf Cable Works). This post he had to give up for the reason of advancing ill health.

Soon after arrival in this country he showed a lively interest in the doings of the Swiss Colony, joining the City Swiss Club and the Swiss Mercantile Society; of the former he became President in 1928.

Max Gerig was also a Founder Member of the Helvetica Lodge of which he was Master in 1930/31. Being a keen sportsman and football enthusiast in his younger days, he wrote for a number of years the sports reports for the "Swiss Observer".

He leaves a widow and two married children, to whom we express our deepest sympathy.

REST IN PEACE DEAR FRIEND!

ST.