

Max Emil Lichtensteiger †

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MAX EMIL LICHTENSTEIGER †

The beam of light went out of one of the best loved members of the Swiss Community in the North of England, when Max Lichtensteiger's heart beat its last throb in the evening hour of 19th February 1965. He died at the Kantonsspital Zurich in his 67th year.

Max Lichtensteiger was a graceful personality, lovable for his gentle kindness and unobtrusive generosity. He was a lover of nature who gave his sympathy and tender care to all that struggles for life and growth. The weak found him encouragingly helpful; he gave a healing hand to plants, beasts and humans. His few words were constructive, his friendships staunch, his loyalty unbounded.

Max's character was built on the inheritance which he received from his parents, a strong and highly respected father balanced by the gentlest of mothers. He got steeled by an excellent education at home and at the good schools of his native town of Basle. The school holidays, spent under masters' guidance in the Glarner Voralpen, left him with happy memories of pleasant hikes and of some more ambitious climbs. A finishing year at Prangins rounded off his schooling.

After a successful "Banklehre", Max Lichtensteiger changed his sphere of interest by taking a post in the Chemical Industry with Sandoz who soon sent him to their branch in Manchester. He started at the bottom and worked his way up, step by step. His friendly nature and the interest he took in the doings of young people in England procured him a sympathetic welcome. He became a football fan and proved himself an accomplished tennis player.

Before leaving Basle, Max had the good sense and equally good fortune to fall in love with a charming young lady whom he later married. Together they built up a home where the spirit of genuine friendship reigned. Trudi gave birth to two healthy sons, one for Dad and one for Mum. As they grew up the family moved to a house in the country, which Trudi's gifts turned into an enviable home, together with a beautifully laid-out garden.

World War II demanded the supreme sacrifice of our friends' eldest son. It was a hard blow for parents and brother, leaving a deep wound and casting a lasting shadow over their lives. But it also gave an even deeper depth to their friendliness. They opened their home to evacuated children from bombed-out towns, giving them a taste of a healthier and happier life than they had ever dreamed of. And others who had come to grief through the stress of the time, regained hope and a brighter outlook in the

kindly atmosphere of the Lichtensteiger home. Max did duty as an air raid warden and his wife in the W.V.S.

One First of August remains in memory as a highlight that brightened those dark days. The Swiss Club with "zugewandten Orten" was invited to celebrate at the Lichtensteigers' home. For an afternoon we forgot our cares.

It could not fail that both Sandoz and the Swiss Club took notice of Max's quality and of the able support he got from his mate. Sandoz promoted him Manager of their Manchester Branch, and the Swiss Club elected him first Hon. Secretary, then President. The colour trade gained a man of great experience, the firm an efficient representative, their customers a friend at court and helpful co-operator and the Swiss Club an able helmsman. The harder Max worked, the higher he rose in everybody's esteem.

To escape the building fever which began to invade their neighbourhood, the Lichtensteigers explored quieter areas and were led to an enchanting site at the foot of the Cheshire hills. Trudi worked out the plans and supervised the building; Max spent his weekends in laying out the garden with the help of a couple of farmer friends, and house and garden became the admiration of Sunday walkers from near and far. Once again the Swiss Club was invited for a First of August, this time happily in a land of peace.

But it was a time which was soon to bring the "Winds of Change". For our friends it became an ominous change: not only came the retiring date in sight, but also illnesses and for Max the first sign of his mysterious disease.

Over in Switzerland a plot of land was waiting on which to build a home for retirement, in sight of Max's beloved Alps. In spite of many setbacks, their courage remained steadfast. They moved and Max underwent further treatment, finally at the Kantonsspital Zurich. Painstaking medical attention and cheerful nursing brightened him. A hopeful beginning was followed by a sudden attack of influenza which ebbed and flowed for several days until it culminated in high fever. In the moments of fitful consciousness, Max had only one desire, Mamy's nearness. Then he spent the last breath; his light went out.

Gently may he rest. His was a gentle nature.

Our deep sympathy belongs to Mrs. Lichtensteiger, her husband's beloved Trudi. Her distress is the greater as the shock overtook her when new hope began to rise. Her friends pledge her their love. We also join in grief with her son and daughter-in-law and with the two lovely grandchildren who were "Papa's" pride and foremost joy.

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It has been Mr. Lichtensteiger's express wish that friends refrain from sending flowers to his funeral, but that they make instead a donation to the Swiss Club Manchester, in support of the growing task that falls on them to care for our young compatriots who come to live in a strange environment. May this characteristic initiative of our departed friend meet with a generous response.

OUR NEXT ISSUE

The "Swiss Observer" is published every second and fourth Friday of the month. Our next issue will appear on 9th April. We shall be glad to receive reports and articles not later than Wednesday, 31st March. Short news items only can be accepted later.