

# Eugene Egly

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EUGENE EGLY.

As I sat with him in his garden and reported that the Yorkshire Swiss Club wanted to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of his entry into the Swiss Club at Bradford in 1890, Mr. Egly replied: "Oh! est-ce bien nécessaire? Vous savez, moi, je n'aime pas les honneurs." Just what I expected of the modest and straight-forward man who, thirty years ago, had welcomed me into the Club. "Voyez-vous, Monsieur Egly, nous préférons connaître nos compatriotes quand ils sont encore parmi nous et en pleine vigueur, comme

vous. Et puis cela pourra non seulement intéresser les lecteurs actuels de notre journal, mais convaincre d'autres compatriotes qu'ils ont tout intérêt à soutenir le "Swiss Observer" par leur abonnement et leur coopération."

With a smile, Monsieur Egly consented to give me the facts and dates I needed. Born in Luzern in 1867, he went to school in his native town until the age of sixteen when he started his apprenticeship in the Banque de Pury et Co., at Neuchâtel, where he got his sound knowledge of French. Three years later he donned the Swiss army uniform to do his first military service before leaving for Rome, where he entered a Swiss bank and so added to his business training another foreign language. In 1890, after a further period of military service in which he was commissioned as lieutenant, he decided to cross the Channel and learn English, a step which was to influence the rest of his life. With the help of a relative, he went to Bradford as foreign correspondent, and then transferred to another textile firm in Leeds, J. Zossheim and Partners. It was in that firm that Eugène Egly was to make his mark, gaining in experience and in authority, until he became, in 1918, one of the partners.

His adaptation to the atmosphere of Leeds, so different from that of Luzern, illustrates vividly the importance played in our lives by the work we do and the people we meet. The work was obviously congenial for the capable and conscientious young Swiss, and his bright and friendly approach was bound to make him popular not only with his compatriots of the Bradford



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Club and his colleagues of the firm, but also amongst the Yorkshire ladies of good taste. Which explains how, in 1898, Miss Alice May, the charming daughter of a well-known clothier, became Madame Eugène Egly, and a Swiss citizen. "Avez-vous jamais songé à changer de nationalité puisque vous étiez définitivement fixé en Angleterre?" "Non, pas une seule fois; et jamais ma femme ne m'en a fait la moindre suggestion."

We can easily imagine that such a harmonious association was bound to contribute to real success and happiness. Eugène Egly had only one other passion: stamps! From early childhood he was interested in stamps, and from 1891 he has been one of the keenest and most competent members of the Leeds Philatelic Society, an expert known to have made one of the best private collections in the country.

Since his retirement from business and the loss of his devoted wife, Eugène Egly, like Candide, is mostly to be found in his garden, planting here, pruning there, and ready to draw your attention to the subtleties of nature: "Sentez donc ces lupins! Non, pas les bleus, les mauves! Quel parfum! n'est-ce pas?"

And on the first Tuesday of the month, he will come down to town and meet at Hagenbach's Café and fifty or sixty members of the Yorkshire Swiss Club for whom he has become, with his bright and friendly approach, "le symbol de la patrie absente."

J.P.I.

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