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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

WILLY DEUTSCH †



*“Ich hatt’ einen Kameraden,
Einen bess’ren find’st du nicht.”*

With the passing away, on 9th July, of Willy Deutsch, at the age of 77 — after a serious operation — the Swiss Colony has lost a distinguished member; and the writer of this last tribute has lost a dear friend of nearly fifty years’ standing. Willy, as we all affectionately called him, took friendship seriously, and to the very end of his life remained loyal to those whom he called friends. He was a simple man, immensely polite, with what the French call so aptly “la politesse due cœur”. He was kind, modest and straight as a die. He was, in the real sense of the word, a “Gentleman”, and surely no higher tribute could be paid to any man.

In recent years his life had unfortunately been saddened by two bereavements; in 1957 he lost his younger daughter (Mrs. Doris Marguerite Collis) after a short illness, and two years later he experienced the grievous loss of his life’s companion, his dearly beloved wife. These were hard times for Willy to bear, because he was deeply devoted to his family. In his sorrow he turned to his Master and found solace in the thought that one day, in a far better world than this, he would be re-united with those he had lost and loved. He has now gone to the life beyond, where there is no more pain; the eyes that shone so brightly are dimmed and gone, and the cheerful heart has ceased to beat. His hands that gripped so firmly have lost their grip, but in the hearts and memories of all those who knew this kindly man, and who were privileged to enjoy his friendship, which was steadfast in storm and sunshine, in happiness and sorrow, Willy Deutsch will always remain in affectionate remembrance. He has given us much for which we are deeply grateful. In a

world of so much confusion, mistrust and hatred, he has shown us that loyalty, love and kindness are still virtues which make life worth living. Fate ordains that dearest friends must part; farewell dear friend and may you rest in God’s good care.

Willy Deutsch leaves a daughter, Beryl, to whom we tender our deepest sympathy in her sad loss.

* * *

Willy Deutsch was born at St. Gall in 1885, and after receiving his schooling at the primary, secondary and cantonal schools of his native town, he entered an apprenticeship with the largest textile concern in St. Gall. In 1907 he was transferred to the firm’s London agents, Messrs. Walser & Co. In 1910 the firm ceased to exist, and representation of the St. Gall firm was entrusted to the capable hands of our departed friend, a position which he held for thirty years until the first “Blitz” in the City in September 1940, when the offices in Friday Street were destroyed. He then carried on at his home address until the end of the war, when he re-started acting for Messrs. Stoffel & Co. on an agency basis at Great Portland Street. He retired some time ago after having been connected with the firm for well over fifty years.

Despite his manifold engagements in the business world, Willy Deutsch found time to take an active part in the life of the London Swiss Colony, to which he rendered many valuable services. Soon after the “Swiss Observer” was founded in 1919 he became a collaborator, writing under the pseudonym of “Gallus”. Many of the patriotic demonstrations held in the Colony have been reported by him very ably in either prose or verse. Perhaps one of his best efforts was the “Sonnettenkranz” written on the occasion of the 650th anniversary of the foundation of the Swiss Confederation. For many years he sat with the writer on the committee of the City Swiss Club; he was a Council Member of the Swiss Mercantile Society, the Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Economic Council; to all these Societies he rendered useful services. When the Swiss army was mobilised in 1914, he served for some time as a subaltern.

* * *

The funeral service was held on Saturday, 14th July, at the Presbyterian Church, Fox Lane, Palmers Green, and was followed by cremation at the Marylebone Cemetery; both services were attended by a very large congregation. Mr. A. C. Stahelin, on behalf of the many friends of the departed, paid a touching tribute at the crematorium, bidding him a last farewell. The Swiss Ambassador, Monsieur Armin Daeniker, was represented by Messieurs Ansermoz and Burgunder. *ST.*