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NEWS FROM THE COLONY

E. P. DICK †



Heavily lies the shadow of death over the Colony. Within a short span of time we mourn the death of several members who, at one time or another, have rendered valuable services to the Swiss community.

On 4th February, shortly before dawn, Mr. E. P. Dick, of 15 St. Winifred's Road, Bournemouth, passed peacefully away in his 74th year. By his death, many memories of his activities will be recalled because he had played for many years an important role in the social life of the London Colony. To be active in a Swiss Colony for years on end is no sinecure; it requires tact, devotion to duty, and, above all, a great deal of enthusiasm. All these qualities our departed friend possessed.

The writer of this last tribute has lost a faithful friend, with whom he sat on the same school bench at the *Städtischen Gymnasium* in Berne over fifty years ago, and with whom he made — or tried to make — music, and with whom he worked for many years in the Colony. He had the pleasure of paying him a visit at his home in Bournemouth only a few weeks ago, when he found him cheerful, but somewhat tired looking; little did he realise then that that was the last time he would ever see him.

* * *

Paul Dick was born in Berne in 1889, the son of a clergyman, and received his schooling at the *Progymnasium* and *Gymnasium* of that town. At the early age of eight he took pianoforte lessons at the *Musikschule* in Berne. Later he studied *Harmonielehre* under *Musikdirektor* Kradolfer, gradually becoming his best pupil. Young as he was, he was chosen to play, on several occasions, piano concertos with the Berne town orchestra.

In 1902 he joined the orchestra of the *Gymnasium* in Berne, and later that of the *Cercle Musical*, in both orchestras playing with the writer. A few years later he became one of the founders of the *Zwingli Verein*, and immediately undertook the formation of an orchestra, and it was in this institution that he learned the art of conducting. Showing exceptional talent for music, and encouraged by his teachers, he decided to take up a musical career. However, before he took further studies, he lost his father, and soon after his mother, and owing to circumstances it became impossible for our friend to see his life's ambition becoming a reality. In 1908 he played for the last time in Berne

— Mozart's piano concerto in D minor — with the town orchestra.

Having to give up following the precarious profession of a musician, he entered in 1908 the *Banque Cantonale* in Neuchâtel. Still hankering after music he joined in that town the *Société Suisse des Commerçants*, where he became conductor of their orchestra, continuing at the same time his piano lessons under Professor Quinche. Then followed posts in Brussels and Paris.

* * *

The deceased arrived in London in 1910, and after occupying various posts in commercial firms he joined in 1920 the London office of the Swiss Bank Corporation, becoming a signature holder in 1946. He was, until his retirement in 1954, Head of the Cable Department. Afterwards, he held for a few years a post with the Howship Travel Agency Ltd. He finally retired some time ago and went to live at Tisbury, later moving to Bournemouth.

In 1912 he — together with the writer — joined the Swiss Institute (since disbanded). This Society possessed an orchestra which was then under the conductorship of Mr. Luder. When the post of pianist became vacant in 1914, Paul Dick was chosen to fill it, retaining the appointment until 1919. Meanwhile, he was also organist for three years at the *Eglise Suisse* at Endell Street, and conductor of the *Männerchor Helvetia*. These posts he vacated to become conductor of the Swiss Institute Orchestra. (The name was later changed to Swiss Orchestral Society.) This post, which was an honorary one, he filled very efficiently for well over thirty years. In 1938 the Swiss Choral Society (later Swiss Male Choir) was revived, and Paul Dick was chosen as its conductor. With much devotion, and never flagging enthusiasm, he held this latter appointment until about two years ago when the choir ceased to function.

The deceased devoted almost a lifetime to music in one way or another, and for many years he gave untold pleasure to the music lovers of the Colony.

In November 1949 the Colony honoured him by arranging a Presentation Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel under the chairmanship of the then Swiss Minister, Monsieur Henry de Torrenté. The writer can do no better than to quote a passage of the Minister's address given on that occasion. He said: "In a world where waves of cynicism and materialism sweep through the nations of the earth, in a world where ridicule and apathy succeed in stifling much of the creative impulse, which is man's saving grace, friend Dick has devoted his spare time to the Arts. Truly, man cannot live by bread alone! If we want to rise above the level of a purely mechanistic world, where man's actions are degraded to behaviourism of automata — if we believe in beauty, harmony and inspiration as real factors in the shaping of our destiny, then we must not neglect the Arts — unless to our cost."

* * *

The parting has now come. It is hard to part when friends are dear. Farewell, dear Paul, if e'er we meet hereafter, we shall meet in happier climes, and on a safer shore. We thank you, beyond the grave, for what you have given us. Your memory will never fade in our hearts, and may a kind Providence guide you heavenwards on "Wings of Song!"

In this hour of sorrow we think of his life's companion, and his daughter, to whom we convey our deepest sympathy in their sad loss. ST.