

† Paul Hilfiker

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PAUL HILFIKER

Vice-Consul.

Chancellor of the
Swiss Legation in London.

*"Life's race well run
Life's work well done
Life's crown well won
Then comes rest."*

On the 11th of July, Paul Hilfiker, Vice-Consul and Chancellor of the Swiss Legation in London passed peacefully away, after a few weeks illness, courageously borne.

To the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, and to his friends, his departure came as a great shock, and our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to his brothers and sisters, who, owing to war circumstances were unable to bid farewell to him. Throughout his life he had been most affectionately attached to them, and had shared with them the sorrows and joys which Providence meted out. How lovingly he had always spoken of them, and with what enthusiasm he had related incidents which had happened in the family circle during their annual meetings in our country, that country, which he loved with all his heart, and which, alas, he will not see any more. Paul Hilfiker was a faithful servant of his native land, and he can truly enter into his eternal rest, with the knowledge that whatever duty was assigned to him was carried out well.

Paul Hilfiker was born on the 2nd of July, 1894, in Oftringen, his place of origin was Safenwil (Argovie). He received his schooling in the town of Berne, where he subsequently commenced a commercial career. On the 7th of August, 1917 he entered into the service of the Swiss Confederation at the *Division des Affaires Etrangères* in the Capital. His painstaking work soon brought him promotion and already three years after his entry in the service of his country, he was transferred to the Swiss Legation in Berlin, as a clerk in the Chancellory, two years later, in 1922, he was transferred in the same capacity, to the Swiss Legation in Madrid.

In the year 1926 he was promoted to the rank of Chancellor and transferred to the Swiss Legation in London. Here his life work began, with great zeal he entered on his task and soon became one of the right-hand men of his chief, the then Swiss Minister in London, Monsieur C. R. Paravicini, and a useful collaborator with his colleagues on the diplomatic staff. A further promotion came to him in 1936, when he was advanced to the rank of Vice-Consul.

The work of a Chancellor of Legation is no sinecure, his duties, principally administrative, are manifold, and the responsibilities are heavy, our departed friend shirked neither

hard work nor responsibility. To those in need, he was a friend who never failed them, he had but little patience with those who criticised, and who pretended to know how things should be done without, however, giving a practical proof of their own ability. A certain roughness in expression might, at one time or another, have caused some heartburns, but there was no malice or pettiness in Paul Hilfiker, his abruptness on some occasions was nothing less than a screen to cover an inborn shyness and sensitiveness, for nothing human was foreign to him.

For twenty years our friend had held the post of Hon. Assistant Secretary of the Swiss Benevolent Society, and those who worked with him during this long span of time, can testify with what deep understanding and generosity he carried out his work. Many a tear was dried, and many a heavy heart began to beat with new hope after a talk with him. Where help was needed, and help deserved he kept an open purse, often entailing personal sacrifices.

Paul Hilfiker took a great interest in the Swiss Colony in London, and although his activity was somewhat restricted owing to his official status, he was ever ready to put his great experience at the disposal of his colleagues. For many years he was a member of the City Swiss Club, Swiss Mercantile Society, Nouvelle Société Helvétique and the Swiss Rifle Team, to the latter institution he devoted much of his spare time, it was his *enfant gâté*, and in their midst he spent some of his happiest moments. Almost during the whole time of his long séjour in London, he lived at the Glendower Hotel, where he felt happy and at home with his devoted friends Mr. and Mrs. A. Schmid.

The funeral and cremation of our departed friend took place at the Crematorium, Golders Green amidst a large attendance of his colleagues, friends, and representatives of many Swiss Societies. Pasteur Prädervand conducted the simple but impressive service and the funeral oration was given by Monsieur Girardet, Swiss Chargé d'Affaires, who, in his moving address sketched the official career of the departed and thanked him, on behalf of our country, for the services he had rendered, and for his devotion to duty. The staff of the Swiss Legation and the Special Division of the Swiss Legation, as far as available, was present to bid farewell to their colleague.

Two events, to which Paul Hilfiker was looking forward with great anticipation were timed to take place at the beginning of this month. He was to celebrate his fiftieth birthday and also the twentieth anniversary of his appointment as Chancellor of the Swiss Legation in London. It was not to be, both events passed whilst he was putting up a stubborn fight for his life.

To-day, when thousands of lives are lost on the battlefields of the four corners of the globe, or in the hearts of peaceful cities, it seems almost preposterous to mourn the loss of one life, and yet the passing of this one life has brought deep sorrow to many of his friends.

We shall miss you, dear friend, we shall remember you while the light lives yet, and in the night-time we shall not forget. All narrow jealousies are silent, we see you as you moved amongst us, generous and big-hearted. We've been long together, through pleasant and through cloudy weather, it is hard to part when friends are dear.

It is an old belief that on some solemn shore, beyond the sphere of grief, dear friends shall meet once more, until then, dear friend, sleep in perfect peace.

S.T.