

Presentation dinner to Mr. E.P. Dick

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PRESENTATION DINNER

to

Mr. E. P. DICK

at the DORCHESTER HOTEL, PARK LANE, W.1

on FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28th, 1949

In the Chair: THE SWISS MINISTER

The Colony has experienced within a few days interval two anniversaries; on Sunday, October 23rd, our brethren from the sunny South, celebrated with great dignity and a certain pomp, the 75th birthday of their Society; five days later, a somewhat less numerous company gathered again at the Dorchester to pay due homage to a man, who has rendered many services to the Swiss community during the last thirty years.

The gathering, which numbered about 130 of both sexes, consisted mostly of personal friends of the "Jubilar" and lovers of music, this happy combination thus provided, right from the beginning, a congenial and homely atmosphere.

The presence of the Swiss Minister, as official head of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain, was greatly appreciated, no greater compliment could have been paid to Mr. and Mrs. Dick.

The orators at both festivals have been prolific, and to reproduce here again everything which was said, would fill still more pages, and constitute a strain both on our readers and on our financial resources. Knowing the modest disposition of our friend, I feel sure, that he will not mind if I touch upon only the main points in the various speeches; after all, not what is written on paper, but what is written in the heart, is what counts.

After a really excellent dinner, both as to quality and quantity, the toasts to H.M. the King and "La Suisse" were proposed by Monsieur Henry de Torrenté and duly honoured by the company.

Mr. F. G. Sommer, President of the Swiss Male Choir, then briefly welcomed the Swiss Minister, saying how happy and honoured the gathering felt at having him in their midst, and with him the other official guests: Mr. and Mrs. A. Stauffer, Editor "Swiss Observer," Herr and Frau Pfarrer H. Blum, Father A. Lanfranchi, Mr. W. Pellet, President Swiss Orchestral Society, Mr. and Mrs. A. Gandon, Swiss Accordeon Group, Dr. P. de Wolff, Chief Manager Swiss Bank Corporation, and Mr. and Mrs. W. Deutsch, not forgetting the general company and Mlle R. Huggenberg.

These few words of welcome were followed by an address by the Swiss Minister, who was accorded a hearty reception. Referring to the object of this happy gathering he said: "A man may win praise through daring deeds, a man may win honour through heroic actions, a man may win riches and power through ceaseless efforts. It is one thing indeed for a man to labour and work when striving after gain — it

is, however, something quite different, and in our modern world far rarer, if a man devotes his energy to rendering service unto others. He alone has enriched mankind, he alone has contributed to this "good will amongst men" which we so badly need to-day. And all this, Mr. Dick has done. Through thirty years of ceaseless work, he has won our respect and our affection.

But he did more: 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.

It was Mr. Dick's enthusiasm, his devotion and his patience, which gathered around him an ever growing circle of kindred spirits. Under his leadership they have devoted themselves to the study and perfection of one of the most universal and most satisfying languages of the human soul. Under his leadership they have found joy and satisfaction for themselves, under his leadership they have given joy and happiness to many others. Could any man wish for greater recompense?"

Monsieur de Torrenté finished his speech by thanking Mr. Dick for the efforts, the patience and enthusiasm he had shown in his work and — "for the music that was in his heart", — expressing the wish that he might continue his activity with the Swiss Orchestral Society and the Swiss Male Choir for many years to come for the benefit of the Colony.

The sympathetic words of the Minister were heartily applauded.

It would be a strange thing indeed, if when honouring a musician, it should not also be done through music, and therefore the Choir gathered around its conductor, and I am sure they never sang with more warmth and greater enthusiasm those two lovely songs: "Mon hameau" and "Drüben sang die Nachtigall", and with what delicacy did Mlle. R. Huggenberg, who followed, render Schumann's "Der Abend" and "Warum", the latter, who is well-known as a pianiste in the music world of this country, had recently returned from a successful concert tour in Switzerland, and her collaboration in the evening's

entertainment was indeed a generous and touching tribute to a fellow artist.

Then back we went again to speech-making, Mr. W. Pellet, on behalf of the Orchestra, with commendable shortness thanked Mr. Dick for the services he had rendered, saying that he had always tackled a difficult job well.

Mr. F. G. Sommer, as President of the Swiss Male Choir, and organiser of the Presentation Fund and Dinner, then claimed the indulgence of his hearers. He spoke of the great enthusiasm and devotion to duty which had characterised our friend's services for so many years. The speaker referred to the fact, that during all those long years as conductor of the orchestra, Mr. Dick never charged or received a fee, which, he said "should make it clear to everybody that only a man with an extraordinary love for his work could accomplish a task which demanded so many of his leisure hours."

Mr. Sommer also spoke of the ten years during which Mr. Dick had conducted the Swiss Male Choir, saying that thanks to his great zeal and ability the Choir had greatly improved under his conductorship. At this stage, he paid also a touching tribute to Mrs. Dick, and read out a piece of poetry written by Gallus, the "poet laureate" of the Colony, for this special occasion.

The speaker then gave a few particulars of the Fund which was initiated by him, in order to show an appreciation in some tangible form for the services rendered, also reading out some of the messages which accompanied the remittances. Among the donations received the one of £50 from the Swiss Orchestral Society was specially mentioned. The total of the subscription list, Mr. Sommer said, amounted to £166. 11. 6, and after deducting for printing and other expenses a net amount of £150 would be available.

"I have now the pleasant duty," Mr. Sommer said, "of handing to Mr. Dick in your name and that of all contributors a cheque to the value of £150, and I ask him to accept this gift with our fervent wishes that both he and Mrs. Dick may long continue to enjoy good health, happiness and prosperity."

These words were enthusiastically applauded and "blushingly" and with just a touch of emotion, Mr. Dick accepted the presentation. In order to allow him to recover from the "shock" the Swiss Accordion Group, consisting of five Gentlemen and three pretty Ladies, all in Swiss costume played lively Marches and "Walzers," and the Choir sang "Mein Herz ist fröhlich alle Zeit," and as everybody was "fröhlich" too, Mrs. Dick gathered courage and in a nice little speech thanked everybody for what was said and given.

I am sure, that her husband enjoyed this speech most, did his life's companion not say, that she was "proud of him"? now this is a compliment very much valued by all men, because they so seldom get, or perhaps, seldom deserve it.

Sympathising in her ordeal at addressing a large gathering, Mlle Huggenberg played a Valse and Mazurka by Chopin in her usual efficient manner.

Then came the moment for our friend P. Dick to speak, loud and long applause greeted him on rising from his Chair. In the first instance he too thanked everyone for the present, saying he hoped to justify it. He especially expressed his thanks to the Minister for his presence, Mr. F. G. Sommer for "everything he

had done for him" and Mlle. R. Huggenberg for her exquisite playing.

The speaker passed in review first his work with the Swiss Orchestral Society, which according to his *exposé* had encountered many ups and downs, many disappointments, especially in recent years. With some pride, Mr. Dick pointed out, that at one time the orchestra was able to give one concert per month throughout the year. In spite of the present rather difficult conditions, which may endanger a continuation of this orchestra, he said he could always look back too on many pleasant hours spent with his friends and could recall to his memory many a triumph and many a success.

Mr. Dick, after having painted a somewhat gloomy picture of his erstwhile "love," predicting a possible separation, spoke with more hope and confidence about his second "entanglement," the Swiss Male Choir, paying them a fine compliment as to their singing, and who should know better that he?, may I, as an outsider, testify, that the Choir under friend Dick's baton has remarkably improved. On a note of hope for still greater achievements and truer comradeship he concluded his address, and to show, that "Vaudois" can sing, even if they do not belong to the Choir, my friends from that part of our country, began to sing with much fervour "For they are jolly good fellows" meaning, of course, both Mr. and Mrs. Dick, why Ladies should be called "fellow" has often puzzled me, and as everybody agreed with this dictum, everybody joined in, and judging from the smiling faces of friend Paul and Mrs. Dick they must have agreed, that they were "jolly good fellows."

Mr. Ch. Chapuis, as a friend of many years, spoke a few words of congratulations and to conclude an evening, which had none of the allures of a great Bauguet but of a simple homely gathering the Choir sang that beautiful song "Zieh mit mir in den Lenz hinaus."

Thus came to an end a really enjoyable evening amidst old and good friends.

* * *

May I be allowed to add to the above, a short personal note, a little tribute from one who sat on the same school bench with P. Dick over forty years ago, who made, or tried to make music with him in the same school orchestra, who worked with him for the

Xmas Greetings

Following former years' practice we propose to publish again in our December issue a collective greeting.

The scarcity of paper and the costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Monday, December 5th, 1949, together with remittance for 6/-.

same number of years in the Colony, thanking him for many years of friendship and many golden hours of enjoyment derived from his "music making" wishing him, what I would wish for myself, that when the hour of parting has come, that he will leave this earthly abode heavenwards, and on

"Wings of Song".

ST.

TO E. P. DICK.

(For 30 years Musical Director in the Swiss Colony of London.)

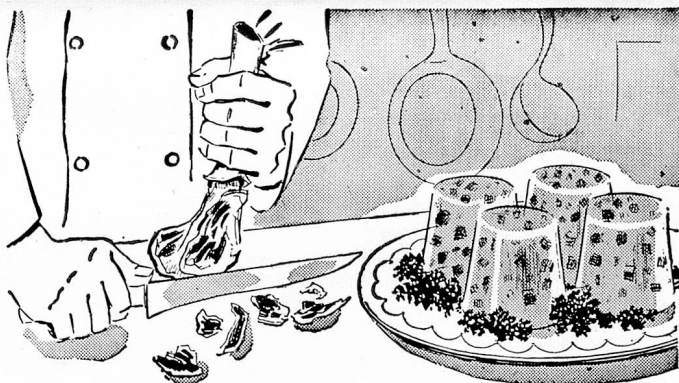
To write of music and the London Swiss,
Their great achievements these last thirty years,
Through periods of chequered hopes and fears,
Requires no profound analysis.

One name stands out in this Metropolis,
Where music is concerned and kindred spheres;
He's proved himself one of the pioneers,
Let our deep gratitude be ever his.

We picture him, the bâton in his hand,
Smartly conducting his orchestral band,
Or the Male Choir, that owes him such a deal.

His fine play at the Grand, his organ peal,
Have oft' entranced us in the Concert Hall,
Yet he's not proud — but friend to one and all.

"GALLUS."



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