

Theo Ritter †

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THEO RITTER †

Unmercifully death takes a heavy toll amongst the older members of the Colony. With the passing away of Theo Ritter on 23rd January, at his home at 61 Cheverton Road, N.19, the London Swiss Colony has lost a man who has rendered untold faithful and devoted services to the Swiss community.

Theo Ritter was born in Bienne in July 1877, the youngest of a family of seven. When he was still quite young the family moved to Berne, where he received his education attending the Grammar and Commercial schools. From 1894 to 1900 he held various posts in the Swiss Civil Service in French- and Italian-speaking localities. In 1900 he decided to spend six months in London to learn English, and stayed on as manager of Messrs. Barkentin & Krall, a firm of Art Metal Craftsmen. Having meanwhile decided to settle in England, he joined in 1911 the then Swiss Legation, where during the first World War he was Chancellor under Minister G. Carlin. On the conclusion of that war he entered the commercial world, first as manager with Messrs. De Trey & Co. Ltd., Dental Manufacturers and Merchants — where he was in charge of various administrative offices, also representing the firm on the Board of subsidiary companies — from 1917 to 1921, and later, from 1922 to 1932, as manager of Lep Transport & Depository Ltd., International Shipping Agents. Whilst occupying this post he was entrusted on occasions with important missions abroad. He was also nominated by the Minister of Labour to represent the firm on the City Panel of Employment, and the Metropolitan Court of Referees.

During most of these years Mr. Ritter had worked voluntarily for the Swiss Benevolent Society, becoming in due course its Honorary Secretary. In 1932 he became full-time Secretary of the Society, of which he had been Honorary Secretary since 1905. By taking on that work he was happier than he had ever

been before in any of his former jobs, as he could give his whole time and thought to the poor, the old and the young people who had fallen on evil days. He retired in 1952, but after his retirement he remained a member of the committee, attending the Monday meetings of the committee until failing eyesight compelled him to give up a year or so ago.

Theo Ritter was a modest man, his home life was happy and simple, and his needs were few. In 1955 Mr. and Mrs. Ritter celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. He was for many years on the committee of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique, of which he was a founder member; he also belonged to the now long extinct Swiss Institute. From 1950 until 1958 he belonged to the committee of the Welfare Office for Swiss Girls.

The deceased was a keen mountaineer, and in his younger days made many high ascents in the Swiss alps, and even when no longer young undertook long tours amongst his beloved mountains. He was also a keen stamp collector, and also loved gardening, flowers and all beautiful things, visiting many art galleries.

Theo Ritter bore the many increasing difficulties of old age courageously and without complaint. He was very tired and ready to depart into a higher life.

Those who have known this modest and unassuming man will keep him in affectionate remembrance; he has served his fellow men and his country well. He leaves a widow, a daughter and a son, to whom we tender our sincere sympathy in their bereavement.

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OUR NEXT ISSUE

Our next issue will be published on Friday, 24th February 1961. We take this opportunity of thanking the following subscribers for their kind and helpful donations over and above their subscription: W. Stettbacher, A. R. Tissot, A. F. Clemence, J. D. Bernoulli, J. Zimmermann, W. Allenspach, H. Berger, J. Revilliod, Ambassador, P. H. Aubaret (Djakarta), A. L. Chapuis, E. M. Stauber, L. W. Krucker, Dr. Hugo Rast, Anglo-Swiss Screw Co. Ltd., J. Manzoni, Charles Fer, H. Schneider, M. Leuba.

SWISS MERCANTILE SOCIETY

The Annual Dinner and Dance of the Swiss Mercantile Society, which was held on Saturday, 28th January 1961, at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, will be fully reported in our next issue.

PERSONAL

We extend heartiest congratulations to Mr. F. Magnin, of the Swiss Embassy, on his promotion from Vice-Consul to Consul-Adjoint.