

# A departure

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## A DEPARTURE.



ANTON BON.

To bid farewell to someone who has been not only universally respected but genuinely liked by a large number of English and Swiss friends, is always tinged with sadness.

Through the approaching departure of Mr. Anton Bon, the entire Swiss Colony loses a man who can ill be spared; — although perhaps not of such long residence in this country as a number of the "old guard" —, he has in a relatively short time become a popular figure in his profession and in the London Swiss Colony.

By his distinguished appearance, and great personality, by his large circle of acquaintances and connections, both here and abroad, he has been able to create an *Entente Cordiale* between the two countries which has been of great benefit to our compatriots residing in the British Isles; especially during the recent war years, when personal contact with leading men, in all walks of life, was of the greatest importance.

A famous French poet wrote: "Partir c'est mourir un peu" and I feel sure that Mr. Bon, who is leaving us after fifteen years of fruitful work, will feel the truism of this adage.

Anton Bon was born on the 23rd of August, 1881, at the "Bodenhaus" Splügen (Ct. Grisons) where his parents kept the Hotel. When the building of the St. Gotthard railway was completed the family moved to the Rigi First, which Hotel was bought by his parents. In time, the Park Hotel Vitznau and the Suvretta Haus in St. Moritz were built, and thus the name of the family Bon became a household word in the Swiss Hotel industry, a reputation which they happily still enjoy.

He received his schooling at the Primary School and *Gymnasium* in Lucerne and afterwards entered an apprenticeship with the banking concern Baup & Cie in Nyon (Ct. Vaud).

At an early age, Mr. Bon, joined his father in the management of the Park Hotel, Vitznau, and later on the Suvretta Haus in St. Moritz, of which his late brother Hans Bon, was, until his passing away, last year, its famous host.

Together with his brothers Hans and Primus, the later who is in charge of the reputed "Bahnhofbuffet" in Zurich, they were financially interested in various Hotels abroad, as *f.i.* the "Esplanade" in Berlin, Brown's Hotel in London, etc., etc.

From 1919-1924, Mr. Bon was President of the "Schweiz. Hotelier Verein" and was also a member of the Board of the "Schweiz. Verkehrszentrale".

In the army, he reached the rank of Colonel of Cavalry, holding successively the commands of the "Schwadron 22"; "Mitrailleuse Schwadron 8" and "Guidenabteilung 6".

Having been a Director of the well-known Brown's Hotel, Dover Street, W.1, for many years, he became, when this Hotel was acquired by Trust Houses, Ltd. a member of the Board of this concern.

Mr. Bon arrived in this country in 1936, and was at first entrusted with the re-organisation of the Nestlé company here, later on he was appointed General Manager of the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, W.1, which under his management became famous as the *piéd à terre* of foreign diplomats accredited to this country.

In spite of his heavy and responsible professional engagements, Mr. Bon took a keen interest in the London Swiss Colony.

In 1943, he was elected President of the City Swiss Club, which post he held with great distinction, until 1947. One can say, without exaggeration, that during the years in which he was at the head of this Club, the Society passed through one of its most famous epochs. We were then in the middle of one of the greatest wars the world has ever witnessed; for long periods at a time the sirens sounded and bombs and all sorts of deadly missiles fell on the Metropolis, yet without a break the meetings of the City Swiss Club were held under his direction, either at Brown's Hotel or the Dorchester Hotel.

Thanks to the President's wide connections and popularity, the City Swiss Club was able to ask to their table eminent men of this and many other countries. Famous Statesmen, such as: M. J. Masaryk, at one time Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of Czechoslovakia, Professor Gerbrandy, Prime Minister of the Netherlands, M. Gregoire Gafenu, Foreign Minister of Roumania, Professor W. Rappard, Viscount Bennett, Prime Minister of Canada, Dr. Weizmann, now President of the State of Israeli.

Amongst the authors who addressed the Club, were: Harold Nicholson, Valentine Williams, Sir Charles Petrie and Arnold Lunn, whilst politicians were represented by Sir William Jowitt, now Lord Chancellor, C. S. Amery, Commander Stephen King Hall, Sir Adam Maitland and Sir Harry Brittain.

Editors and Journalists such as: Wickham Steed, (Times & Review of Review); Geoffrey Crowther

(Economist); Douglas Woodruff (Tablet); Vernon Bartlett and H. Newham (Candidus) were guests of the Club.

The British Council was represented by Sir Louis Greig and Sir Angus Gillan, the Red Cross by: Colonel de Watteville and M. Ch. Huber; The League of Nations by Dr. Kullmann, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees, the Law by Sir Trustram Eve, K.C.; Commerce by Sir Arthur Morgan, etc.

On various occasions members of the Swiss Economic Mission like Professor Keller, Dr. Hohl, Dr. Frei and M. Gauthier were present at the meetings.

It was principally due to Mr. Bon, that the City Swiss Club could muster such a galaxy of famous men amongst its visitors.

Our departing friend was also for a number of years, and still is, President of the Swiss Benevolent Society, to which institution he has rendered conspicuous services, and those of our countrymen, who have fallen on evil days, have good reasons to be grateful to him for the efforts he has made to lessen their burdens.

For some time, Mr. Bon was also President of the Swiss Catholics in London.

Surely this is as fine a record of service as one could wish anybody to render to the Colony, a record which should be a shining example to our young generation.

In all his work, he has been aided by his charming wife who hails from a prominent Basle family, and the Colony is equally indebted to her for the interest she has always shown in her Husband's undertakings.

\* \* \*

And now when the hour of departing is nigh, we take, not without sadness, leave of a man, who, whatever task has been entrusted to him, has done his duty. He was faithful in good times and courageous in adversity.

On behalf of the Swiss Colony as a whole, we extend to him a warm and sincere THANK YOU! for all he has given us during the last fifteen years; we shall be the poorer for his leaving us and yet the richer for his memory.

Our most fervent good wishes for a happy eventide accompany Mr. & Mrs. Bon to their new abode "back home".

We feel sure, that in their new home in Zurich, they will sometimes remember their *séjour* in this great Metropolis and amongst the lovely Surrey Hills where their beautiful home was situated; we, on our part, will always keep them in affectionate remembrance.

We will not say farewell, but

AUF WIEDERSEHEN!

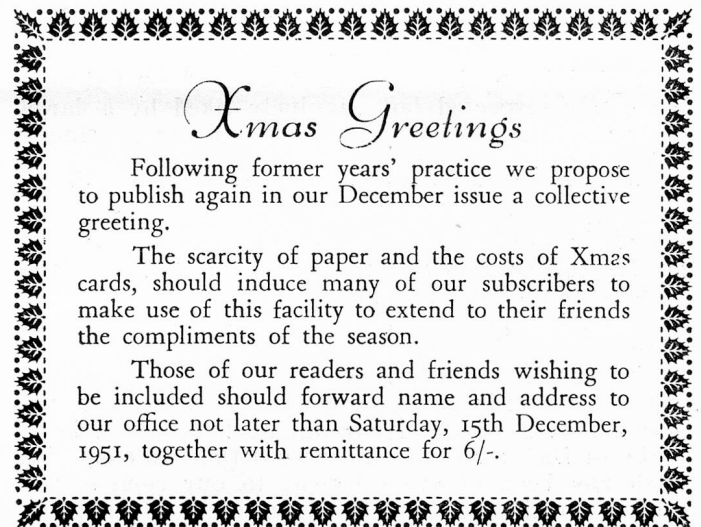
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The scarcity of paper and the costs of Xmas cards, should induce many of our subscribers to make use of this facility to extend to their friends the compliments of the season.

Those of our readers and friends wishing to be included should forward name and address to our office not later than Saturday, 15th December, 1951, together with remittance for 6/-.

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