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A DEPARTURE



Dr. RENE KELLER

Some time ago, on the departure of a member of the diplomatic staff of the Swiss Legation in London — who had during his *séjour* here, become a close friend of mine — he said ruefully to me: "Well, you know, we are a kind of gypsy, here today, gone tomorrow."

This is unfortunately true in a way, but it does not alter the fact, that to part from someone one has become attached to is invariably a sad affair.

Not a few who have left us in the past, have, owing to the position which they had occupied at the Legation, become in close contact with the Colony: they have taken a personal interest in the life and the work of the Swiss community, and I remember many farewell dinners given to them by one or the other section of the Swiss Colony in Great Britain.

Some who have come here as Attaché or Secretary of Legation, are at present representing our Country as Minister in various parts of the globe.

Today we are bidding farewell to another member of the staff of the Legation, namely Dr. René Keller, who has recently been appointed head of the Information and Press Service at the Federal Political De-

partment (Swiss Foreign Office) in Berne, and we tender him our sincere congratulations on his promotion to this responsible position.

Since the departure of Dr. Lindt, late Press Counsellor, Dr. Keller has acted as liaison officer between the Legation and the Press, a post which requires a good deal of tact and adaptability, which fortunately M. Keller possesses in no small degree, and I am sure I can speak on behalf of my colleagues of the English and Swiss Press in London, when I express to him thanks for the charming way he has always been at their disposal.

Now when the parting is nigh, I express to him, as well as to Madame Keller, who so ably, and may I add, so charmingly assisted him, my very best and most sincere personal wishes for success in their new sphere of activity. We shall miss them very much.

* * *

Monsieur Keller was born in Paris in 1914, and spent the first five years of his life there. From 1919-1939, he lived at Geneva, where in 1933 he matriculated. Then followed one year at the University of Cambridge (Trinity College) where he studied law. In 1937, he became *Licencié en droit* of the University of Geneva, a year later (1938) he was a *stagiaire* at the Dresdner Bank in Berlin, where he specialised on documentary credits, which later became the theme of his dissertation. At the outbreak of the last war, he joined his unit (heavy artillery) as lieutenant, and after his release from his regiment he entered into the service of the Federal Political Department in Berne, having in the meantime acquired the degree of doctor of law at the University of Geneva.

At the beginning of 1941, Monsieur Keller was transferred to Prague as Vice-Consul, returning in 1945 to Berne where he occupied a post in the administrative section at the Federal Political Department with the rank of 2nd secretary. A year later (1946) he was sent to the Swiss Legation at the Hague where he remained until September, 1950, when he joined the Swiss Legation in London with the rank of 1st Secretary of Legation.

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