

# Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme

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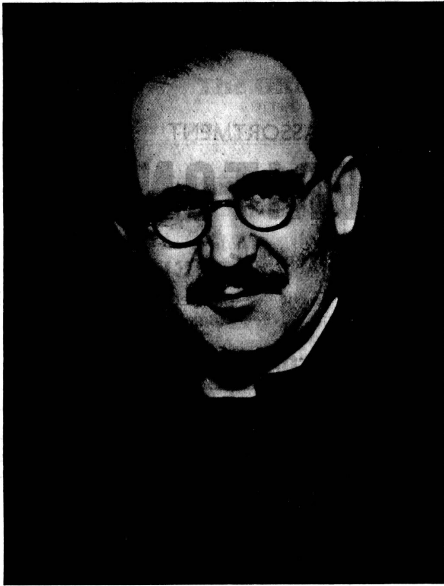
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# Pasteur

## R. Hoffmann-de Visme

Born, September 30th, 1883.

Died, September 6th, 1937.

### Faithful unto death.

The Swiss Observer deeply regrets to inform its readers, that M. René Hoffmann-de Visme, Pasteur at the Eglise Suisse, 79, Endell Street, has passed away in Paris where he was taken last week from Geneva to undergo an operation. —

This sad news has come upon his family, friends and the entire Swiss Colony as a great shock; it is hard to realise that the voice which has so ardently and sincerely spread the Gospel will be heard no more, those eyes which shone so brightly and kindly will be closed for ever.

A great heart, full of enthusiasm, has ceased to beat, and the Colony has lost a true friend, and a great man. —

All too many, have, alas, left us during the last few years on their pilgrimage to the Elysian fields from whence there is no return, but most of them were spared to a ripe old age; our Pasteur has been recalled by his Master in the prime of his life, at a time when one would have expected he would have been able for many more years to follow his calling.

To serve, that was his Motto, and to this he stuck to the last; the man who so often had cheered those who came to him in their sorrow and distress had himself experienced tragedy in his life. Five years ago he lost his wife and faithful companion, — after a long and trying illness; — his friend and helper was taken away from him, and his six children were left without their mother.

It was hard for him, and yet he did not complain, — Thy will be done. — With new vigour, with new enthusiasm he fulfilled his duty, but also with a new understanding, for the sufferings, both physical and mental, of his fellow men. The loss which he sustained gave him a still deeper insight into the hearts of those who were in distress. But, this new vigour, this new energy, which he showed after the sad parting, has no doubt overtaxed his strength, and on various occasions he had to seek rest in the country which he loved with all his might, — our country. In the stillness of the night he must have often thought of her who had given him so many happy hours, and so much help, and so much encouragement when he returned home tired after a hard day's work. Those near to him have noticed that longing and yearning, although he made no mention of it.

There, we hope, will be one day written a history of the Swiss Colony in London, a book which will report events, achievements and services rendered by members of the Colony for many years; in this book our late Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme and his wife Suzanne would occupy a dominant position. —

René Hoffmann-de Visme was born in Geneva on the 30th of September, 1883, where his father held the ministry at the Lutheran Church.

He received his schooling in that town, and later on studied theology at the University; after his ordination he spent a short time in Brussels and Paris, in the latter town he met Suzanne-de Visme, who was the daughter of Professor, Dr. Jean de Visme, Doctor of Divinity and Directeur de l'Ecole préparative de théologie de Paris, who was also grand-uncle of her future husband.

Shortly before his arrival in London, on the 1st of October, 1909, he married, and the young couple installed themselves in one of the suburbs of the Metropolis; and from that day onward his fruitful work began.

It is quite impossible to enumerate here all his merits and the work the departed has rendered to his parishioners and to the Colony at large, it would occupy columns. We can only mention but few.

Perhaps one thing has endeared him more than anything to the Colony, it was his work for the young people for whom he kept an open house. Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme and Mme. Hoffmann-de Visme were ideal hosts, for everyone they had a smile and a kind word, nobody left their home without taking away some comfort, some good advice, their combined cheerfulness and their infinite understanding for all the little troubles which crossed the path of young people in this large town, were indeed a blessing, and hundreds have since gratefully acknowledged their appreciation.

It was a matter of course that the then head of the only Swiss Church should take an active part in the work of the Colony. His unbending energy, indomitable courage and radiant optimism made him a valuable asset.

One of the first offices which he occupied, was that of a committee member of the "Fonds de Secours pour les Suisses pauvres à Londres," an office which he held until his departure. What he has done for our poor during all these years, nobody knows better than those who worked with him.

He was also amongst the Founders of the London Group of the Nouvelle Société Helvétique; both the City Swiss Club and the Union Helvetia made him an honorary member of their respective institutions. For many years Pasteur Hoffmann was honorary secretary of the committee of the "Fête Suisse." Who, will ever forget his services and the humour which he displayed as an announcer at this yearly event, and if today the "Fête Suisse" has become one of the most important events in the Swiss Colony, it is largely due to his unflinching help and inspiration.

His name will for ever be coupled with the "Foyer Suisse" of which he was the founder and President. No less will he be remembered as a member of the foundation committee of the Xmas celebration for the children of the Colony. He also held with great distinction the office as "représentant suisse au Bureau international pour la

répression de la traite des femmes et des enfants."

These are only a few of the many offices which he had held, and into all of which he put his heart and soul.

Not forgotten should be, — although it did not directly concern the Colony — his work for the "Mission Romande" and the "Mission de Paris" for years every Missionary from Switzerland and Paris, passing through London on their way to Foreign mission stations found a "pied à terre" for several days at his home. —

Faithful he has not only remained to his principles but also to his Parish and to his Parishioners. No less than 26 different appeals or invitations to other livings, have been extended to him during his ministry in London, the last one in January 1934, to go to Canada, all he has refused in order to remain amongst his friends. This fidelity has not been unrewarded and found a spontaneous acknowledgement on the occasion of his Silver Jubilee which was celebrated on the 31st of October, 1934, when nearly 300 friends attended a dinner, which was presided over by the Swiss Minister.

It must have been one of the proudest days of Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme's life to witness the deep attachment of his parishioners and a still wider circle of friends.

The words he then uttered in acknowledging his thanks for so much honour bestowed on him, were almost prophetic, did he feel that before long he would have to surrender the task with which he was entrusted? he said:

"Les années qui passent commencent à peser. On n'a plus tout à fait la force de jadis et les obstacles physiques et matériels vont en augmentant, ne serait-ce que de par la dispersion étonnante de mes paroissiens. Vous êtes répandus partout, sur toute l'étendue de cette ville immense et jusque dans les comtés avoisinants et je ne possède pas le don d'ubiquité pour garder le contact avec vous tous. Pourtant c'est tout mon désir, et je ferai de mon mieux, à l'avenir, comptant sur l'aide et le secours d'En Haut. Quoi de plus beau, en effet, que de pouvoir travailler pour notre Colonie, c'est-à-dire pour notre patrie tout entière, dans un esprit de foi et d'amour?"

Noble words, nobly spoken. Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, was not only an enthusiastic preacher but a great patriot, he loved his country with every fibre of his big heart, to him working for the Colony was not only considered a duty which he owed to His Master, but a sacred inheritance and acknowledgement to his country. Those who have listened to some of his patriotic sermons and speeches could realise how deeply and sincerely he was attached to the land of his birth.

A man who had for nearly 30 years occupied a prominent position in the Colony, and

a man who had fearlessly expressed his opinion was bound to meet at times with opposition, his zeal and unbounded optimism have occasionally carried him away and made him take up an attitude which caused some criticism, this is often the case with men of strong will power, and if sometimes his acts or utterances have caused some estrangements, nobody will ever be able to say that he had not meant well. Differences which existed at one time or another are now forgotten, and an unblemished memory will remain, of a man who has been a faithful servant unto God and man.

In a few days the earthly remains of Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme will be laid at rest side by side with his beloved companion who preceded him, he will sleep in the earth of his country which is proud of harbouring him, to us here, this place will for many remain a place of pilgrimage, where two great souls rest in peace after a life of sacrifice and loving devotion.

For those who will never see this last abode, a memory of thankfulness and affection will for ever be engraved in their hearts.

Across the sea and over the mountain peaks we are sending you, beloved Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, our thanks for all your kindness and love you have so lavishly bestowed on us. You have, great heart, remained.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.  
ST.

(Continued from page two)

what is called, a heart to heart talk together. But how can we do this when our public men and people in authority at home, persistently refuse to come and visit us. Time after time efforts have been made to get some members, either of our Federal or Cantonal authorities to attend some of the more important functions in our Colony, but without success.

Yet we hear every day how Federal-National and States Councillors so and so have attended some of the many Festivals in Switzerland, true enough the distance might often be a stumbling block, but this should not be an insurmountable obstacle, in a time when one can reach London within three hours; it is a well-known fact that our sister colonies receive frequent visits, either from their heads of State or other prominent members in their home country. —

So far we have only heard words, they sound promising, it is true, but we now expect deeds.

ST.

#### DER FLUGZEUGFUNKER, DIE RECHTE HAND DES PILOTEN

Man spricht eigentlich selten von ihnen. Mancher Passagier, der die silberglänzenden Verkehrsmaschinen nach London, Paris oder Wien benützt, denkt nicht daran, dass neben dem Piloten ein Funker sitzt, der den Kopfhörer umhängt, die ununterbrochene Verbindung mit dem Boden aufrecht erhält. Und doch ist heute der Bordfunkler zu einem unentbehrlichen Mitglied der Besatzung geworden, ohne das die grosse Regelmässigkeit des internationalen Luftverkehrs der Swissair und anderer Gesellschaften nicht mehr möglich wäre. Auch die "Alpar" in Bern ist seit einem Jahre dazu übergegangen, auf den Hauptlinien des innerschweizerischen Flugnetzes Bordfunkler mitzunehmen. Die Funkler, die heute auf den Maschinen der Swissair ihren Dienst versehen, sind in der Mehrzahl Flugzeugmechaniker, die von der Gesellschaft zum Funker ausgebildet wurden. So gar alt ist dieser Beruf nicht. Noch vor 5-6 Jahren waren Bordfunkler eine Seltenheit, ja sie wurden in der damaligen Zeit sogar als Luxus empfunden. Erst mit dem Einsetze von mehrmotorigen Verkehrsmaschinen, mit dem Aufkommen der regelmässigen Funkpeilung und dem Fluge bei jeder Tages- und Nachtzeit ging man daran, den Piloten in seiner umfangreichen Arbeit zu entlasten und ihm einen Funkler mitzugeben, der die Verbindung mit den Bodenstationen aufrecht zu erhalten hatte. Der internationale Funkcode, der im Luftverkehr gebräuchlich ist und der mit Morsezeichen gegeben wird, erforderte vorerst die Einstellung von gewiegten Radiotelegraphisten, die das Morsealphabet rückwärts und vorwärts genau kannten. Man war also gezwungen, fertig ausgebildete Telegraphisten, die auf den grossen Funkstationen unseres Landes Dienst taten, einzustellen. In der Praxis stellte es sich aber bald heraus, dass der Funkler nicht nur die Radioapparatur zu bedienen hatte, sondern auch genau Bescheid wissen musste über die Flugzeugmotoren und über die Maschine im allgemeinen. Fast gleichzeitig gingen verschiedene europäische Luftverkehrsgesellschaften von Ruf daran, gewiegte Mechaniker zu Radiotelegraphisten auszubilden, um dem Piloten einen guten Funkler und einen zuverlässigen Mechaniker in einer Person mitzugeben.

(Fortsetzung folgt)

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#### COMMEMORATION SERVICE AT EGLISE SUISSE.

A commemoration Service for the late Pasteur Hoffmann-de Visme, will be held at Endell Street, on Monday, September 13th, at noon.

#### CITY SWISS CLUB.

The first meeting after the Summer recess took place last Tuesday, September 7th, at Pagani's some thirty members being present.

Admission one, no resignations. The President, M. P. F. Boehringer acquainted the meeting that two members of the Club had died, namely, Pasteur R. Hoffmann-de Visme, who was an Honorary member, and Mr. Dapples, late General Manager of Nestle's. The Assembly paid their tribute to the memory of the two departed members.

The President also mentioned that Sir Malcolm Campbell, who has just won the speed boat record, promised to be the guest of the Club at the next Club meeting in October.

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at the

#### Trocadero Restaurant

Piccadilly Circus, W.1

In the chair: M. C. R. PARAVICINI, Swiss Minister.

RECEPTION	DINNER	DANCING
at 6.15 p.m.	at 6.45 p.m.	9.30 p.m. till midnight

TICKETS at 14/- can be obtained at Swiss House, 34-35, Fitzroy Square, W.1. (Tel. Museum 6663). City Office, 24, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4. (Tel. City 3310), and Swiss Observer, 23, Leonard Street, E.C.2. (Tel. Clerkenwell 9595-9596).

#### MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISEMENTS

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#### FORTHCOMING EVENTS.

Wednesday, October 6th at 8 p.m. — Swiss Mercantile Society — First meeting of the Philatelic section, at Swiss House, 34/35, Fitzroy Square, W.

Saturday, October 16th — Annual Banquet — Swiss Mercantile Society — at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, W.

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Dimanche, Septembre 12th — 11h. — Culte et prédication.

7h. — Culte et prédication.

#### SCHWEIZERKIRCHE

(Deutschsprachige Gemeinde).

St. Anne's Church, 9, Gresham Street, E.C.2

(near General Post Office.)

Sonntag, den 12. September 1937

11 Ur morgens, Gottesdienst.

7 Uhr abends, Gottesdienst.

Montag, den 13. September 1937.

12 Uhr mittags: In der Eglise Suisse 79, Endell Street, W.C.2: Trauerfeier zum Andenken an Herrn Pfarrer René Hoffmann-de Visme, zu der wir alle unsere Gemeindeglieder herzlich und dringend einladen.

Sonntag, den 19. September 1937.

Eidgenössischer Dank-Buss- und Bettag.

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