

said "Sir Alfred Mond is as real a British citizen as one of us . . . He is an entirely trustworthy Liberal. I have the highest testimony concerning his qualities and his work from those who know him in the world of Labour." I wonder if Dr. Clifford has been in correspondence with Mr. Havelock Wilson?

Mond's trump card, however, is the Prime Minister's wife. Mrs. George is described as having arrived during a meeting held the next night, and as having received a magnificent ovation. She referred to Lady Mond, stating that she was sure Swarsea appreciated that lady's work in connection with the Baby Welfare movement (*I was told at Swansea of a working woman who, two days previous to my arrival, had given birth to a child and had received a beautiful layette from the "Violet League," apparently named after Lady Mond*), and then said:

"I am sure the women of Swansea will not forget Lady Mond's services to women and children, but will remember them on the polling day.

"I have come here to ask you to help Sir Alfred Mond to go back to Parliament. He has been a staunch supporter of the Coalition Government and of Mr. Lloyd George, and I think you can trust that Government that carried the War to a successful end, to secure for this country good terms of peace. I am sure they will do their best for their country and they wish you in Swansea to support Sir Alfred Mond and vote for him, and ask others to vote for him, for he has been very loyal and a great help during the War."

Mrs. Lloyd George did not state the sum which Sir Alfred Mond has contributed to the support of the Coalition Government and Mr. George, and of course she did not say what a great help Sir Alfred Moritz Mond had been in allotting 17,775 shares to enemies in Germany. She talked about "their country," but she didn't name it.

Thus Sir Alfred Moritz Mond, guilty of trading with the enemy and burdened with the dishonour of having suppressed the truth and suggested falsehood, has now received in his iniquities the comfort and support of Mr. George, his wife and Mr. Bonar Law. It remains to be seen whether the electors of Swansea will shoulder his dishonour by returning him to Parliament.

The "Rush Election" will be over before the next issue of THE NEW WITNESS, so I may be excused for adding a few general remarks with regard to our present pitiable condition. The country is being asked to return as its trustee a number of Coalition candidates, pledged to no definite measures, but with a general power of attorney to back Mr. George. Under these circumstances one would think that the most material question to be considered is whether or not Mr. George is a fit and proper person to be given unlimited trust. This, however, is a question which is everywhere being burked. Almost every candidate, whether he be Coalition or otherwise, appears before the electors as a supporter of Mr. Lloyd George, and there is a general impression that it is monstrous to do anything but applaud the name of the little wily man from Wales.

Attendance at a number of recent political meetings has shown me that audiences are still supposed to be interested in measures and not in men. Until the people awake to the fact that no measures are of any use, unless the public has as its representatives men who will honestly attempt to act as the Trustees of the Public, the machine of Government will continue to grind out dishonest administration and leave England with the revolutionary menace of corruption.

When we find as Coalition candidates, besides such individuals as Alfred Moritz Mond, other smaller fry of the calibre of Handel Booth (Wentworth, Yorks), Sir Edgar Jores, Mr. Grant Morden and Mr. Lyle Samuel, we may well pause and ask *Quo Vadis?*

PERCIVAL F. SMITH.

AT THE SIGN OF THE WORLD'S END

AN OPEN LETTER TO LORD READING

By G. K. CHESTERTON

MY LORD,—I address to you a public letter as it is upon a public question: it is unlikely that I should ever trouble you with any private letter on any private question; and least of all on the private question that now fills my mind. It would be impossible altogether to ignore the irony that has in the last few days brought to an end the great Marconi duel in which you and I in some sense played the part of seconds; that personal part of the matter ended when Cecil Chesterton found death in the trenches to which he had freely gone; and Godfrey Isaacs found dismissal in those very Courts to which he once successfully appealed. But believe me I do not write on any personal matter; nor do I write, strangely enough perhaps, with any personal acrimony. On the contrary, there is something in these tragedies that almost unnaturally clarifies and enlarges the mind; and I think I write partly because I may never feel so magnanimous again. It would be irrational to ask you for sympathy; but I am sincerely moved to offer it. You are far more unhappy; for your brother is still alive.

If I turn my mind to you and your type of politics it is not wholly and solely through that trick of abstraction by which in moments of sorrow a man finds himself staring at a blot on the table cloth or an insect on the ground. I do, of course, realise, with that sort of dull clarity, that you are in practice a blot on the English landscape, and that the political men who made you are the creeping things of the earth. But I am, in all sincerity, less in a mood to mock at the sham virtues they parade than to try to imagine the more real virtues which they successfully conceal. In your own case there is the less difficulty, at least in one matter. I am very willing to believe that it was the mutual dependence of the members of your family that has necessitated the sacrifice of the dignity and independence of my country; and that if it be decreed that the English nation is to lose its public honour, it will be partly because certain men of the tribe of Isaacs kept their own strange private loyalty. I am willing to count this to you for a virtue as your own code may interpret virtue; but the fact would alone be enough to make me protest against any man professing your code and administering our law. And it is upon this point of your public position, and not upon any private feelings, that I address you to-day.

Not only is there no question of disliking any race, but there is not here even a question of disliking any

individual. It does not raise the question of hating you; rather it would raise, in some strange fashion, the question of loving you. Has it ever occurred to you how much a good citizen would have to love you in order to tolerate you? Have you ever considered how warm, indeed how wild, must be our affection for the particular stray stock-broker who has somehow turned into a Lord Chief Justice, to be strong enough to make us accept him as Lord Chief Justice? It is not a question of how much we dislike you, but of how much we like you; of whether we like you more than England, more than Europe, more than Poland the pillar of Europe, more than honour, more than freedom, more than facts. It is not, in short, a question of how much we dislike you, but of how far we can be expected to adore you, to die for you, to decay and degenerate for you; for your sake to be despised, for your sake to be despicable. Have you ever considered, in a moment of meditation, how curiously valuable you would really have to be, that Englishmen should in comparison be careless of all the things you have corrupted, and indifferent to all the things that you may yet destroy? Are we to lose the War which we have already won? That and nothing else is involved in losing the full satisfaction of the national claim of Poland. Is there any man who doubts that the Jewish International is unsympathetic with that full national demand? And is there any man who doubts that you will be sympathetic with the Jewish International. No man who knows anything of the interior facts of modern Europe has the faintest doubt on either point. No man doubts when he knows whether or no he cares. Do you seriously imagine that those who know, that those who care, are so idolatrously infatuated with Rufus Daniel Isaacs as to tolerate such risk, let alone such ruin? Are we to set up as the standing representative of England a man who is a standing joke against England? That and nothing else is involved in setting up the chief Marconi Minister as our chief Foreign Minister. It is precisely in those foreign countries with which such a Minister would have to deal, that his name would be, and has been, a sort of pantomime proverb like Panama or the South Sea Bubble. Foreigners were not threatened with fine and imprisonment for calling a spade a spade and a speculation a speculation; foreigners were not punished with a perfectly lawless law of libel for saying about public men what those very men had afterwards to admit in public. Foreigners were lookers-on who were really allowed to see most of the game, when our public saw nothing of the game; and they made not a little game of it. Are they henceforth to make game of everything that is said and done in the name of England in the affairs of Europe? Have you the serious impudence to call us Anti-Semites because we are not so extravagantly fond of one particular Jew as to endure this for him alone? No, my lord; the beauties of your character shall not so blind us to all elements of reason and self-preservation; we can still control our affections; if we are fond of you, we are not quite so fond of you as that. If we are anything but Anti-Semite, we are not Pro-Semite in that peculiar and personal fashion; if we are lovers, we will not kill ourselves for love. After weighing and valuing all your virtues, the qualities of our own country take their

due and proportional part in our esteem. Because of you she shall not die.

We cannot tell in what fashion you yourself feel your strange position, and how much you know it is a false position. I have sometimes thought I saw in the faces of such men as you that you felt the whole experience as unreal, a mere masquerade; as I myself might feel it if, by some fantastic luck in the old fantastic civilisation of China, I were raised from the Yellow Button to the Coral Button, or from the Coral Button to the Peacock's Feather. Precisely because these things would be grotesque, I might hardly feel them as incongruous. Precisely because they meant nothing to me I might be satisfied with them. I might enjoy them without any shame at my own impudence as an alien adventurer. Precisely because I could not feel them as dignified, I should not know what I had degraded. My fancy may be quite wrong; it is but one of many attempts I have made to imagine and allow for an alien psychology in this matter; and if you and Jews far worthier than you, are wise they will not dismiss as Anti-Semitism what may well prove the last serious attempt to sympathise with Semitism. I allow for your position more than most men allow for it; more, most assuredly, than most men *will* allow for it in the darker days that yet may come. It is utterly false to suggest that either I or a better man than I, whose work I now inherit, desired this disaster for you and yours. I wish you no such ghastly retribution. Daniel son of Isaac. Go in peace; but go.

Yours,

G. K. CHESTERTON.

O IN THE SMOKE OF AUTUMN

O IN the smoke of Autumn how things change,
 Reeling, and pass away as in a glass
 Of shadowy shapes; the fire of visible Beauty
 Dies to a fretting fury on the crests.
 Of reddening trees, the gilded forests fail,
 The lustrous distances become so blue
 That they resemble lakes of magic tears,
 Scarce conscious of themselves ere they dissolve,
 And through the long pale skies of windless calm
 Float shining clouds whose silver wings like Swans
 Flicker above the fading hues of Earth,
 And pass into the Infinite beyond!—
 All is a dance of weariness and sorrow,
 Yet beautiful and rare and richly dim,
 Like dying lilies hid in bowls of glass
 Beneath blue waters mystical and sad;
 The disillusioned Hours divest themselves
 Of all their gilded robes of fretted fire,
 And burning coronals of fading flowers,
 To appear naked, slender and virginal,
 White shadowy dreams exceeding wonderful,
 Then also they dissolve and pass away
 Into the windless, blue and calm Divine!

W. R. CHILDE.