

# THE LIVING AGE

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## AROUND THE WORLD IN FEBRUARY

THIS has been a bad month for the Liberal Party in England, though predictions of its disappearance are fantastically premature. It has lost ground in the last three by-elections, and its interminable dissensions provoked the *Outlook* to say that 'keeping the Liberals together is like eating grape nuts with a fork.' Yet the Earl of Oxford's appeal for a campaign fund has met with a gratifying response, and Sir Alfred Mond's secession with a little group of adherents has not discouraged the faithful. Such changes of political allegiance, however, never promote good feeling. The Earl of Oxford received the notification of the defection of his former colleague in good temper, although with regret that Sir Alfred 'should have thought it a duty to shift his allegiance to the Protectionist Party'; but Lloyd George, in a statement that the *Saturday Review* criticizes as 'both vulgar and venomous,' declared that his former friend, 'like another notorious member of his race, has gone to his own place.' The *Nation* and the *Athenæum* thinks the real issue in the Party is between those who fear Socialism as a doctrine and those like Lloyd George

who are ready to deal with each issue on its merits, regardless of purely doctrinal aspects. It predicts that the members of the Liberal Party who see eye to eye with Sir Alfred Mond as to the primary importance of resisting Socialism will join him, and hopes that they will do so in order to clear the air.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Baldwin's Administration is frankly commended by many Liberals. The Conservative *Saturday Review* distrusts this new friendliness and suspects 'a determined move instigated by opponents of the present Government, and as yet unsupported by any of the Premier's colleagues or followers, to depose Mr. Baldwin and so to divide the Conservative ranks that a new Government could be formed which would be composed of Conservative, Liberal, and Labor elements.' The *Liberal Nation* and *Athenæum* concedes approvingly that Mr. Baldwin 'is quite justified in claiming that the general reputation of the Government stands decidedly higher than it did a few months ago. Such matters as Locarno and the Ulster Boundary Agreement are solid achievements for which the Govern-

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ment deserves much credit. And these, moreover, do not seem purely casual, isolated episodes: one feels that the spirit of good-will and reconciliation, which Mr. Baldwin both practises and preaches, has contributed materially to them.' This journal also commends Mr. Baldwin's good intentions in domestic policies, — his endorsement of the new electrical scheme and the decision to push forward a housing-programme in Scotland, — but thinks they conflict with his economy programme.

J. L. Garvin, writing in the *Observer*, thinks that Mr. Baldwin is growing into a real historical figure, that he is one of those rare men who continue to learn after middle age, and that in many ways he transcends his Party. 'He dashed his first majority to pieces, strengthened his hold on his Party, and came back to enhanced power, in twelve months. He embraced M. Poincaré in the Ruhr crisis, and has presided at the signature of the Locarno Pact. By the subsidy he staggered faith, but restores it and enhances it by rising to the full height of the tasks of national reconstruction which no Government since the Armistice had faced. He is addressing himself to the supreme business of a coal settlement in a manner suggesting that in his usual fashion he has learned everything from his damaging crisis last July. He now numbers among his following three men who were stars of Liberalism — Mr. Churchill, Mr. Reginald McKenna, and Sir Alfred Mond. The Premier could frame at any moment a stronger cabinet than his present one. He has put Widows' and Orphans' Pensions on the statute book. . . . He drives at house-building with a pluck . . . If this is Conservative, what's in a name?'

The Liberals have at least made the land policy a political issue. In reply to their reform project the Government has come out with a White Paper issued

by the Ministry of Agriculture, proposing to encourage agriculture by short-term credits, promoting small holdings, afforestation, subsidies to drainage works, coöperative marketing, assistance to rural home-building and road-building, and aid to the beet-sugar industry — measures by no means satisfactory to the Farmers Union. Coal-mining is Great Britain's industrial invalid. Its defective organization and the Labor Party's desire to make it the first objective in a campaign for nationalizing industry retard convalescence. But its doctors are in better temper. Lord Londonderry has come out in open opposition to the contention of his fellow coal-owners that longer hours and lower wages will help the industry, and declares that rate-cutting and wage-cutting are as bad a capitalist fallacy as limitation of output is a labor fallacy. The Government keeps on with its housing-policy despite the objections of the building trades. In defense of their opposition, the *New Statesman* says: 'The unions do not object to steel houses as such, but to the rates of wages paid by Lord Weir's firm, and by no other. . . . Steel houses are being built in considerable numbers in various parts of the country without any opposition from the building trades.' Oxford University has rallied to the established faith by presenting two of its undergraduates with the alternative of resigning all connection with the Communist Party and Communist propaganda, or immediate expulsion.

A by-election in which André Tardieu, Clemenceau's ardent lieutenant of Peace Conference days, reversed the majority of a Radical predecessor has done more to stop partisan wrangling in France than either Fascist threats or appeals to reason. If M. Briand carries through the legislation necessary to balance the budget, and a new elec-

toral law, and then asks the voters to endorse him by a general election, he may be defeated, for republics are notoriously ungrateful, but he will have performed a service for France scarcely inferior to that performed by Clemenceau during the war. How impractical some of the Socialist demands made during the debate on the finances were is illustrated by a single item in their programme — namely, that all bearer bonds, including several billions of Government bonds, should forthwith be converted into registered bonds, transferable only with the owner's endorsement. The object was to prevent the concealment of assets and the exportation of securities; but no provision whatever was made for the twenty or thirty thousand additional Government clerks, to say nothing of the host of new bank-employees, who would have to be put on in order to carry out this work within the time required.

The new German Government is less Agrarian than its predecessor — at least it does not represent a shifting to the Right; but in the large no change in policy is forecast. As long as international questions hold first place in Germany's political interest, Party differences, which as a rule are determined by domestic issues, are not likely to endanger the Government. But the proposed property-settlement with Germany's ex-rulers has stirred up the people. That huge sums of public money should be appropriated for the Hohenzollerns just when the country has more than a million unemployed and industry is handicapped by lack of capital has provoked unwonted resentment. Demonstrations were held all over the country on the ex-Kaiser's birthday to protest against these measures. In one Berlin procession he was hung in effigy. The demonstrators included not only working people, but also many impoverished victims of inflation from

the former well-to-do classes. Letters on the subject appeared in the Communist organ *Die Rote Fahne* from people who obviously have little connection with the Communist movement. One of these, from a higher postal official, began as follows: 'Although I seldom read political articles in the press, and seldom approve them when I do, I must write to commend your stand against the proposed settlement with the Princes. It agrees absolutely with my own sentiments. I myself am what would have been called in old times an "Imperial official"; but I cannot, with the best will in the world, understand how anyone, in these days of general poverty and privation, no matter how loyal he may be to a monarchy, can consider for a moment appropriating great sums of money for the Princes. This is not only my feeling, but that of the countless other men who were devoted to the Kaiser heart and soul until he made this extortionate demand upon us.' The Social Democrats, the trade-unions, and the Communists have for once agreed to join hands in a demand that the question be submitted to the people in a referendum. The Liberal-bourgeois Parties, on the other hand, propose to set up a special tribunal or Court of Royal Claims to handle the whole subject.

Fascism has supplanted Bolshevism as Europe's popular bugaboo. Whenever a disturbed area or a political impasse develops in that sadly harried continent, an alarmist chorus raises the shout, '*Fascism — voila l'ennemi!*' But as Europe's ills are as multifarious as her nationalities, traditions, and economic interests, interpreters are kept busy explaining that there are many kinds of Fascism, so different from each other that it takes an expert to discover their common features.

Among the latest phases of this all-pervasive Fascist infection, according

to press diagnosticians, is the recent forgery-scandal in Hungary, which is described as a delayed manifestation of long-standing intrigues, having ramifications throughout the former Austro-Hungarian Empire and Bavaria, with which Crown Prince Ruprecht and Hitler were at one time connected. Some allege that its object was to place Albrecht on the throne of Hungary, Ruprecht on the throne of Bavaria, and a dictator of the Mussolini or Primo de Rivera type in charge at Vienna. Gossip also tried to implicate Admiral Horthy in Hungary and Prince Carol of Rumania in a joint plot, by which the latter was to have been made King of Transylvania.

A contributor to the *Italian Mail*, an English-language daily published in Florence and representing the American and British Chambers of Commerce there, thus takes up the cudgels in favor of Italy's existing régime: 'Fascism to-day is the only redeeming element in the European situation, and it stands in no need of either apology or vindication. Although the figure of Mussolini has been converted into a target for the missiles of the anarchists, his regeneration of Italy affords the most irrefutable of answers to the propaganda launched against him in the uninformed and at heart revolutionary journals of Great Britain.'

Rumor has it that both Polish Nationalists and Socialists are turning to a dictatorship to solve their country's economic difficulties. The only solution that the present Government has for the financial crisis is to borrow more money from America. The Socialists condemn foreign borrowing and demand a levy on property instead. The Conservatives are calling for a Fascist dictator; Socialists want Pilsudski for a dictator; and both Parties profess to fear the rising flood of Communism. The 'Fascisti' in Poland are divided,

however, into those who want a dictator and those who want a king — with the army supposed to favor the former.

But the drift of European sentiment as a whole is by no means toward Fascism and dictatorships. Just now the Polish press is advocating, as a security against Russo-Prussian pressure and a remedy for economic ills, a customs union and political alliance with Czechoslovakia. *Rzecz Pospolita* argues that such an alliance would be the first step toward a United States of Europe, beginning with a union of Poland and Czechoslovakia on the model of the former Austro-Hungarian Union, with a common customs-frontier, a common currency, common weights and measures, and uniformity in whatever facilitates exchange and production. This union might be extended to embrace Rumania and Yugoslavia, but nothing is said of including Hungary, Austria, or Germany.

Inspired, apparently, by Germany's criticism of Italy's treatment of the Tyrolese, Mussolini has been flirting with France. He recently told a Paris journalist that France and Italy, with their eighty million people, must march shoulder to shoulder. 'It is clearly to their interest to form a solid bloc against the other bloc that is sure to be formed sooner or later by European nations that hate us and are awaiting a chance to attack us.'

Pertinax attached great importance to the Chamberlain-Briand interview at Paris late in January, where, he conjectures, the two countries decided to admit Germany to the League; to reduce the Rhine garrison from seventy-five thousand to sixty thousand men upon Germany's satisfying certain disarmament requirements; to postpone the meeting of the Preliminary Commission for general disarmament — as was subsequently done; to agree upon a successor for the French president of

the Saar Commission; to consider benevolently giving Poland a seat in the League Council; and to prevent the whitewashing of the Hungarian forgers. The Paris correspondent of the London *Daily Herald* adds to this that Sir Austen Chamberlain, fresh from his interview with Mussolini at Rapallo, recalled to M. Briand Great Britain's recent cession of Jubaland to Italy, and hinted that France might sell that country her Red Sea port Djibouti, and even, as part of an all-round adjustment presumably favorable to French finance, abandon her mandate over Syria in Italy's favor. M. Briand is said to have rejected these overtures somewhat acidly. If they were actually made, we have another explanation besides Italo-German antagonism over Tyrol for Mussolini's sudden proffer of friendship to his neighbors on the Seine. British opponents of Chamberlain's foreign policy, who are making considerable capital out of the unexpectedly favorable terms Great Britain granted Italy in the debt settlement, insinuate that Mussolini gave a political *quid pro quo* for them. The *Westminster Gazette* asks if the Foreign Minister 'has fully realized how hopelessly negotiations with Angora (over Mosul) would be compromised if the rumor should go abroad unchecked that Italy has offered, and we have accepted, a collaboration against Turkey.' Whatever there may be in this gossip, which may have no foundation, it illustrates the spirit of diplomatic intrigue and suspicion that spreads at times like a night-mould over the mood of Europe.

The postponement of the meeting of the Preliminary Commission for the Disarmament Conference caused more of a sensation abroad than it did in America, and begot another crop of dark conjectures. A three months' postponement is a considerable set-

back, and no one accepts the explanation that the delay is due to the time required for getting together necessary data. England was in favor of the original date, and the change was due to France, which desires, among other things, to see Germany in the League and the new make-up of the League Council settled before she commits herself to a discussion of this kind. Our decision to join the World Court was received with tempered applause by our prospective fellow litigants across the Atlantic. The *Saturday Review* characterized our reservations as comically illustrating our belief that Europe is inhabited entirely by intriguing politicians whose sole object in life is to get our money to finance their wars. The *Outlook* quoted our own Mr. Hard to the effect that, whatever our formal action, we have 'no official intention of taking any important matters to any court at all.' Even as enthusiastic a champion of the international good-neighbors movement as *The Nation* and the *Athenaeum* cautioned its readers against attaching too much importance to our decision, 'which is long overdue and is not likely to have immediate results of great significance.' Geneva, however, was overjoyed, if we may believe the *Frankfurter Zeitung* dispatches, and looked upon the Senate's action as a step toward League membership.

Rumors of renewed tension in the Balkans are an unerring sign of spring. Just now General Pangalos, the Greek dictator, is said to be straining every nerve to strengthen his army, and to be courting the friendship of the Italians, in order to counter the Turks, who are trying to pick trouble with Greece to divert public attention at home from Angora's Mosul setback. The Bulgarian press is profuse in professions of good-will to Yugoslavia; and these two countries and Turkey are apparently



coquetting with some sort of an understanding. Bulgaria has not forgiven Greece for her recent aggression. But she is not contemplating war. Nor is it likely that any Balkan Power wishes hostilities, no matter how much satisfaction it may derive from making faces at its neighbors.

An achievement that prophesies to be of immeasurably more enduring benefit to humanity than any transitory political construction is the completion of the Sennar Dam in the Sudan, after some fifteen years' labor. This dam, which is larger than the famous Assuan Dam farther down the Nile, is two miles long, contains fifteen million cubic feet of masonry, retains 140,000 million gallons of water, and will irrigate three hundred thousand acres of the fertile deep-loam plains between the Blue and the White Nile — land peculiarly suitable for cotton.

Abd-el-Krim's alleged peace overtures at Paris through an English intermediary were rejected by M. Briand, and the French press has published a number of articles estimating the Moorish leader's men and resources, to prepare the public mind for a spring campaign. Marshal Pétain has visited Madrid to confer with Primo de Rivera. According to English informants, the Moors are not in as desperate straits as optimistic dispatches have suggested; and even the French papers mention the possibility of much hard fighting before the mountaineers are subdued.

A stern battle is being fought in the South African Parliament over the Color Bar Bill. This bill is the result of a judgment of the South African High Court declaring illegal and void the old Mining Ordinances prohibiting the employment of colored laborers on certain skilled jobs. Since the present Cabinet is a coalition depending for its existence upon the support of the Labor Party, a bill to legalize these ordi-

nances and to extend their scope was immediately introduced in Parliament. The new legislation, if adopted, will make it illegal to employ any black or Asiatic on a job involving the operation of machinery. Last year the Assembly passed such a bill, but the Upper House rejected it. The bill has now been reenacted by the Lower House. It is vigorously opposed by General Smuts, and if it passes the Senate it will aggravate existing friction between whites, Indians, and blacks in South Africa, as well as relations between South Africa and India.

In the controversy between the Soviet Government and Chang Tso-lin over the control of the Chinese Eastern Railway, Moscow seems to have come out first best. It has been a common practice of all Chinese tuchuns to use the railways as if they were their private property; but the lines in Manchuria are on a different footing from those elsewhere in China. They are the property of Russia and Japan respectively, and Japan has prohibited Chang Tso-lin, not merely from using her railway without payment, but from using it at all. Furthermore, the Russo-Chinese Treaty of 1924 expressly provided that the Government should pay for the transport of troops over its lines. *The Nation and the Athenæum* said of the controversy: 'On the face of it, the Soviet Government has shown great restraint. We have never been particularly tender toward concessionaires who demand that the commercial risks inherent in investing capital in unsettled countries shall be diminished by military or political action; but the Soviet Government had a perfect right to demand that Chang's troops should not be transported free of charge on a railway in which it was financially interested.'

Hongkong's trade has been paralyzed since British goods were boycotted

in China after the shooting of Chinese students by police officers nearly a year ago. Canton, through which Hongkong deals with the Chinese hinterland, is now offering to resume trade with the latter city on condition that it pay a large sum — rumor gives it as three million dollars — to the funds of the Canton Strike Union; and it is said that the demand will be accepted. The year 1925 has been one of the blackest periods in Hongkong's history. Meanwhile the Extraterritoriality Conference has met, though under rather disturbing auspices, at Peking, where its labors are regarded with all conceivable degrees of skepticism and optimism, according to the personal slant of the individual spectator. Japan and the United States will be affected differently by Chinese tariff autonomy. For Japan exports to China large quantities of cotton piece-goods and manufactures of a similar character which the Chinese can very well make in their own country; while the United States, which has lost most of its piece-goods trade to Japan, may expect an even greater demand than at present for machinery, iron and steel products, automobiles, and standardized metal-wares, in the production of which there is little likelihood that Japan can compete with us. In other words, the industrialization of China promises to increase the market for development goods which America is now supplying, while it will decrease the market for consumption goods, which are more largely produced by Japan and Europe.

The death of Viscount Taka-akira Kato, the second in succession of his name thus to leave this office, caused no change in the Cabinet except the appointment of Mr. Wakatsuki to his post. He will probably be remembered chiefly as the statesman who gave Japan universal suffrage, but he had also guided the nation skillfully out of

the mazes of an aggressive militarist policy into the broad highway of international coöperation, especially in respect to China. His administration is also credited with a wise handling of the country's difficult economic problems. The movement to form a Proletarian Party, to draw its strength largely from the recently enfranchised classes, still continues, although the Government, exercising a power that shows how far Japan still is from true democracy, vetoed the first attempt because its leaders were suspected of Communist sympathies.

Australia is considering a bill that, if enacted, will prohibit by statute the existence within the Commonwealth of any political party or other association that advocates the overthrow of the Constitution, revolution, the use of violence for political ends, or the destruction by force or sabotage of property. This bill is a result of the late seamen's strike and of the embarrassment in which the Commonwealth Premier found himself when the courts decided that the Radical leaders whom he proposed to deport were entitled to sue the authorities for personal damages. While the Federal Government is thus strengthening the buttresses of Conservatism, the Labor Government in New Zealand proposes to abolish the Legislative Council, or Upper Chamber, of the State Legislature. Meanwhile the Commonwealth keeps growing. Its population passed the six-million mark in January, having increased by one-sixth during the last eight years. Two-thirds of this increase is due to excess of births over deaths, and one-third to immigration, which comes mostly from the British Isles, though there is a considerable influx of Italians, especially into the cane-sugar country.

Our diplomatic friction with Mexico over the Alien Property Law has started new protests against 'Yankee

imperialism' in Latin America and in a portion of the European press. Some Madrid papers are especially vigorous in condemning our 'aggressions.' A section of Spanish opinion has taken it rather ill that Chile and Peru should have appealed to Washington to arbitrate the Tacna-Arica dispute instead of to 'the motherland,' and takes malicious delight in the difficulties that our representatives in the disputed provinces have encountered. Something of the same mind is apparent among Pan-Latin propagandists in Paris. Luis Araquistain, one of the most persistent of the anti-Yankee writers in Spain, thinks it might be better if the plebiscite were never held. 'The arbitration award and the plebiscite will simply serve to strengthen the hegemony of the United States in Spanish America.' Some of Peru's and Chile's more immediate neighbors may have felt the same way. Rumors were

rife for a time that our Government had appealed to the other A. B. C. Powers, to take a hand in the settlement. The *Diario a Manhã* of Rio de Janeiro published 'authoritative information' to the effect that the United States had asked the Brazilian Government to use its good offices in Tacna-Arica and that the Government had accepted the invitation. According to other rumors, our Government's request was also addressed to Buenos Aires. Naturally these reports were immediately denied. They were no more improbable than the rumors that might have circulated in the American sensational press under analogous circumstances, but they revealed a state of mind. Happily, the latest reports from the plebiscite area are that the excitement there has calmed down, and that the prospects for an orderly polling the middle of April are brighter.

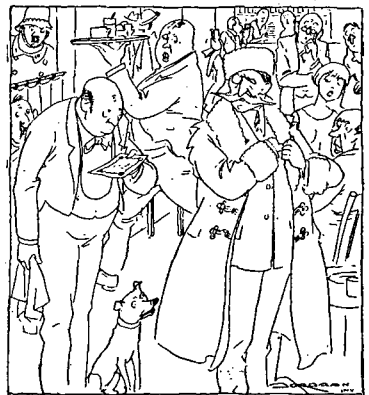
THE CARTEL CONSPIRES



BRIAND'S BRUTUSES. 'Here, Monday, at three o'clock!'

— *L'Écho de Paris*

AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION



The Hungarian with the genuine bank-note.

— *Notenkraker, Amsterdam*



# WHY I HAVE JOINED THE CONSERVATIVES<sup>1</sup>

BY THE RIGHT HONORABLE SIR ALFRED MOND, BT., M. P.

[THE latest sensation in the British political world has been Sir Alfred Mond's transfer of allegiance from the Liberal Party, where he has been a leader for several years, to the Conservative Party. This break, though probably long impending, was precipitated by his opposition to Lloyd George's Land Policy. That plan looks to the virtual nationalization of the arable land of Great Britain and its assignment to actual cultivators under long-term leases so controlled by the authorities that tenures to farms not kept under reasonable tillage will be forfeited.]

BRITISH agriculture has been the stepchild of successive Governments. Though attention has recently been focused upon the problems facing it, by the launching of a land policy of far-reaching consequences, the country is really confronted with a problem that has behind it the experience and practice of many centuries, and no useful approach can be made, or any scheme be applied to the future, without a full knowledge of the past. The two basic considerations which face all agricultural reform at the present time are, first, lack of capital on the part of the landlord, which prevents him from providing the improvements and the adequate maintenance of his estate; and, secondly, from the point of view of the cultivator, a want of security. Because of these two impediments to progress it has become the fashion to

decry the British farmer as inefficient and out of date; yet, if agricultural statistics are considered, the British farmer is, on the whole, producing more crops per acre, has a higher state of cultivation on his arable land, and probably, on the whole, better stock and better meat than any other farmer on the continent of Europe.

As in all other directions, the modern tendency seems to be to increase the control of the State in agriculture without rendering the required assistance to the cultivator. Agriculture has a particular importance to national prosperity and national stability; but apart from providing that cheap credit to which agriculture is entitled, equally with other industries, and apart from providing a reasonable sense of security in the mind of the farmer, there is little that the State can do to assist the fundamental needs of agriculture besides the bestowal of advice, the promotion of research, and the development of education. For, whatever the tenure, the land is best cultivated with the greatest measure of freedom given to the man who knows what he is doing. It is opposed to the best interests of agriculture for the cultivator of the soil to be interfered with and directed on all the detailed points of his industry. The qualities of the land vary so much from one area to another, from one county to another, from one farm to another, and even from one field to another, that the best judge of the potentialities and possibilities of a farm is most often the farmer himself.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Saturday Review* (London Baldwin-Conservative weekly), January 16, 30