

union which would devote itself to repulsing foreign competition and which would buy only the products of the commonwealth that would thus be attained. The Dominions would easily absorb the industrial products of the metropolis and, indeed, would have every interest to seek them in exchange for raw materials.

All well and good. But the economists raised objections. The Dominions would find it quite natural to put prohibitive taxes on butter from Normandy, lard and eggs from Denmark, and meat from the Argentine, but they have no desire to wipe out for the profit of England the tariffs that protect their own infant industries. Moreover, the continent of Europe buys from Great Britain 30.37 per cent of the latter's exports; other foreign countries buy 28.7 per cent and the Empire only 40.93 per cent. Europe thus absorbs almost as many British products as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the South African Union, and India put together. And India, which has just raised its tariff on foreign cotton from 11 to 15 per cent, does not seem inclined to make any exception of Lancashire products. The most obvious and immediate result of the policy contemplated by the two noble lords would therefore be to raise the already high cost of living in the British Isles, to provoke reprisals, and, above all, to weaken, by making a schism, the Conservative Party, which is sorely harassed by the Laborites and Liberals. Lord Rothermere has had his newspapers proclaim that everything would go better if Lord Beaverbrook could be installed in Downing Street as Prime Minister. In making this statement he has merely done what many people expected and has announced the chief, if not the only, reason for Lord Beaverbrook's having tried to create a breach in his own party, to wit, his hatred of Baldwin and his spite at not having been offered a seat in the last Conservative cabinet.

Last year Lord Beaverbrook expressed to an American interviewer his desire to let everything in England slide and pack up his bags and return to America. Many people in England—and perhaps, so they say in London, Lord Rothermere is one of them—would like to have the newspaper king of Shoe Lane put this desire into execution as soon as possible. Peace in Europe and throughout the world would unquestionably gain.

SIR JOHN SIMON

By HAROLD LASKI

From the *Daily Herald*, London Labor Daily

THAT SIR JOHN SIMON is, on the whole, the ablest lawyer of his time, no one in the profession would deny. There are more learned

lawyers, and there are lawyers who will leave a greater name. But for the power to seize ultimate legal principle, and to follow it out to its logical conclusion, he is certainly without a rival in the present generation.

That power of analysis is his great quality. But it is accompanied by weaknesses which make Sir John a much smaller man than his abilities would in themselves warrant. Where warmth of feeling is called for, or imaginative insight, Sir John almost always fails. He sees social problems as logic. He has never learned the truth of Mr. Chesterton's famous remark that only logic drives men mad. Whatever he does, he does with the relentless precision of an intellectual machine. He is always accurate and exact and incisive. But he leaves you with the impression that, whatever he does, all is calculated and deliberate from premises to conclusion. Even if he pats you on the back, you feel that, somewhere, you could see the machinery coming into operation.

He has had, of course, a distinguished career in politics, and a great career at the bar. In the House of Commons and in the courts, he has always been respected, even a little feared. He is a formidable opponent, always suave, always incisive, able almost instinctively to put his hand on the weak point in your case. Yet far smaller men than he have gone further and exerted greater influence because it has been seen that behind their more blundering statement was an insight far deeper, if less articulate.

The well-known speech in which he attacked the constitutionality of the general strike was a very good instance of his quality. Granted its premises, it was difficult to answer. But the things of which he failed to take account were exactly the things which really counted in the general strike, without a grasp of which its nature could not possibly be understood. To grasp them, one needed a power to get inside the mind of the working class, to know intimately the things it had hoped and felt. No one can read Sir John's speech and suppose that he had ever deemed this necessary.

The Report on India is an even better example of his mind. As a piece of analysis, its finely meshed structure could hardly be bettered. Its argument is closely knit, its logical power superb. Everything is there save an understanding of the Indian mind. Nationalism gets a polite paragraph at the end, written—a typical lawyer's device—as a half-dubious peroration. Gandhi, who has set half of India aflame with new dreams, is dismissed as an administrative incident of which the significance is never seen.

You cannot deal with the hopes of a people as though they were studies in logic. Dreams, fears, ambitions, these are realities the statesman must grapple with if he is to make solutions possible. For Sir John

Simon, their magic is lost because they cannot be reduced to the type of logic which the law of evidence exacts. Yet dreams and fears and ambitions last on when the failure of the logician to attain intuitive understanding makes him miss the heart of the problem he has to solve.

Sir John Simon, in fact, illustrates admirably the value and the danger of the lawyer in politics. Tell him the nature of your problem and the road by which you have to travel to its solution, and he is an admirable guide along the road. But make him the man who chooses the end to be reached, and the methods he uses are bound to miss half the elements of the problem.

'Delay,' said Hazlitt, 'seems, in the lawyer's mind, to be of the very essence of justice.' One thinks of that aphorism when one watches Sir John Simon at work. No one ever exhibited so precisely all the complexities of the human situation, or insisted on the difficulty of making them emerge into great principle. No one ever balanced a straw so exquisitely, or made it weigh so heavily in the balance. Only once, to my knowledge, has Sir John fought stoutly in an unpopular cause. He was the outstanding opponent of conscription during the War, and he sacrificed himself to his conviction.

Sir John, in fact, gives one a sense of aloofness from the ordinary battle of life. Its problems, in his mind, seem to lose their shape and color, and to become merely intellectual exercises. He seems to have no room for the imagination and the emotions. That is why, I suspect, his talents, which have inevitably brought him into the first rank, have never made him the first man in that rank. He does not invite loyalty, because his aloofness repels the affection upon which loyalty depends. Things do not make him angry, or seem to him urgent. He is never swept off his feet. He is always making a balance sheet of great causes, and finds their fascination less in the judgment than in casting the account.

His political career has left no great impact upon the national life, outside the Simon Report; and it is too early, as yet, to say more than that it makes one realize how noble was the courage of the Lord Durham who took great risks after the Canadian rebellion one hundred years ago. He dreamed, one imagines, of being Prime Minister, but he lacked the temperament for that office. No man would ever follow Sir John Simon blindly. He could have been Lord Chancellor, and it is a great loss to the nation that he declined the supreme judicial office. As a judge, he would have equaled Mansfield, or Bowen, or Watson.

We have lost much by his decision to remain in politics—certainly the greatest potential judge of our time. It was an error of judgment, a proof of Sir John's inability to see inside himself. And the man who fails in self-knowledge cannot grasp the problems of a world-wide empire.

The same scrupulous care that marks every page Proust wrote appears in these unpublished letters in which he explains how he launched his masterpiece, *À la Recherche du temps perdu*.

Three Letters

By MARCEL PROUST

Translated from the *Nouvelles Littéraires*
Paris Literary Weekly

THESE THREE LETTERS which we are making public through the kindness of M. René Blum trace briefly the genesis of the publication by Bernard Grasset in 1913 of the first volume of *À la Recherche du temps perdu*. The book containing all this correspondence will be accompanied by a preface and commentary written by M. Léon Pierre-Quint, who presents his material with this explanation: 'The correspondence that we are publishing runs from 1913 to 1921. It includes all the letters Marcel Proust wrote to René Blum as well as several letters to Bernard Grasset and Louis Brun. Marcel Proust is making an attempt to place *Du Côté de chez Swann* with a publisher. He is trying to launch his work. He is stirring up articles, discussing matters with critics, and making publicity for himself. Finally, he deserts Grasset and goes

over to the N. R. F., where he knows that his book will more easily find its natural public. He is now celebrated and refuses to follow the practice he pursued in previous years of dispersing his work widely in the hope that it would enjoy a more permanent fame. Throughout all this correspondence it is the "man of letters" that appears.'

Here are the first of these letters, all written to René Blum.

I

February, 1913

DEAR FRIEND,—

I telephoned you last night at the *Gil Blas*, but since it is rather rare that I am in a condition to telephone and excessively rare that I can go out or receive people I believe it preferable to tell you by letter the great service that I should like to ask of you. It