

Sir Robert Ludwig Mond, LL.D., F.R.S.

THE death of Sir Robert Ludwig Mond, which occurred in Paris on October 22, 1938, deprived this world of a man who was beloved by hosts of friends in many countries and who had devoted his life to the advancement and promotion of science, the well-being of humanity, and the cause of civilisation. At the International Congress of Chemistry held in Rome during May 1938, he was aptly described by Sir Robert Robinson as the "great ambassador of science and friendship amongst the nations."

He was born on September 9, 1867, at Farnworth, near Widnes in Lancashire, the eldest son of the famous chemist and industrialist, Dr Ludwig Mond, F.R.S., and was educated at Cheltenham College, St Peter's College, Cambridge, the Zürich Polytechnikum, and the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. After this very thorough training, he was chosen by his father to assist him in his scientific researches and his great industrial undertakings. In 1897 he became a director of Brunner, Mond & Company. He rendered Dr Ludwig Mond invaluable assistance in the investigation of the metal carbonyls and the establishment of the famous Mond nickel process, becoming a Director, and later Chairman, of the Mond Nickel Company. Robert Mond deserves a special place in science for his own researches on the metal carbonyls, which amongst other things led to the discovery of cobalt nitrosyl carbonyl. These investigations and many others were continued and extended in the laboratory which he set up in his country house at Combe Bank, near Sevenoaks in Kent. Here he devoted great attention to the problems of scientific agriculture, and to the production of pure untainted milk, especially for young children.

In the course of his life Robert Mond became a famous archæologist, devoting many years to active and important exploration in Egypt and Palestine, and giving valuable financial aid, direction, and inspiration to the work of many others in this field of discovery. It was doubtless the importance of his archæological investigations which led to his receiving the high honour of election as a *Membre de l'Institut (Académie des Inscriptions)*.

The Davy-Faraday Laboratory of the Royal Institution, which
P.R.S.E.—VOL. LIX, 1938-39, PART III. 18

Dr Ludwig Mond founded and endowed in 1896, owed very much to Robert Mond, who designed the fittings and installation and selected the initial equipment of apparatus. In later years he gave large sums, amounting to many thousands of pounds, to the improvement of the Royal Institution and the work of the Davy-Faraday Laboratory.

Many other important scientific Institutions greatly benefited by his deep interest in the promotion of scientific investigation and his splendid generosity. Thus he took a prominent part in the establishment of the Norman Lockyer Observatory at Sidmouth, and contributed largely to its maintenance, whilst the great *Maison de la Chimie* in Paris received from him a gift of a million francs. It was through his personal efforts and his generous benefactions and guarantees that the British Academy and the Palestine Exploration Fund were induced to join in establishing a "British School of Archæology in Jerusalem."

It was, however, not only institutions for science and scientific research which claimed his attention and his liberal support. His deep interest in the welfare of humanity and his kind and generous heart led to countless gifts to persons and institutions which no one but himself could have fully enumerated. A very notable example of this side of his life's work was his foundation of the Hospital for Infants at Vincent Square, as a memorial to his first wife. This Hospital received generous support from him throughout his life, and was for many years supplied with pure milk from his selected herd at Combe Bank.

Robert Mond received the honour of knighthood in 1932, and was promoted *Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur* from that of *Officier*. The Universities of Liverpool and Toronto conferred on him the honorary degree of LL.D., whilst in the last year of his life he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society—a long-deferred honour which gave him special pleasure. He was an original member of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaften. For many years he was the Treasurer and never-failing friend of the Faraday Society. During the period 1930–32 he was President, and by his deep interest in chemical science, his kindly tact, and his knowledge of men and affairs, greatly added to the prosperity, good fellowship, and international prestige of the Society. Few of our friends from overseas will ever forget the memorable Manchester meeting of September 1932 and the princely generosity of the President.

In 1898 he married Helen Edith, third daughter of the late Mr Julius Levis. She died in 1905. The two daughters of this marriage survive him, René (Mrs James Dunn) and Frida (Mrs H. G. Brackley). He married in 1922 Marie Louise, daughter of the late Mr G. J. le Manach,

of Belle-Isle-en-Terre, Brittany. Lady Mond, to whose loving care Sir Robert owed so much in his later years, now lives mostly in France.

After giving up Combe Bank, Robert Mond lived, whilst in London, at 9 Cavendish Square, where he had a wonderful collection of objects of art and antiquity, and a great room which was a fine reproduction of an apartment in a Pharaoh's palace. In the later years of his life his many friends were often hospitably entertained at his beautiful villa at Dinard or his chateau in West Brittany.

Robert Mond was one of those great men of Jewish descent who have not only adorned and enriched English life but have promoted the highest ideals of human friendship, culture, and civilisation throughout the world. A firm believer and an active worker in the progress of humanity through the discoveries and wise applications of modern science, he was also a lover of the beautiful in Art and an earnest and successful investigator of man's achievements in ancient civilisations. These words are true and deserve to be inscribed on the incorruptible tablets of history, but what shall we personally say, his many friends who live to mourn the loss of that fine, generous, and ever-youthful spirit? It is hard indeed to describe such a beloved friend to those who did not know him, for no ordinary crystallisation of thought in words can reveal the personal quality of a great-hearted human soul. Let us humbly say that Robert Mond lives in our hearts, a dearly cherished and very precious memory.

He was elected a Fellow in 1890.

Note.—A very good Obituary Notice of Sir Robert Mond appeared in *The Times* of October 24, 1938, and in a contribution to the same Journal on November 3, 1938, Professor S. R. K. Glanville gave a valuable account of his fine work as President of the Egypt Exploration Society. In the *Obituary Notices of Fellows of the Royal Society*, published in the *Proceedings* of January 1939, there appeared an excellent memoir from the pen of Sir Jocelyn Thorpe, which contains extracts from the funeral orations pronounced in Paris by MM. Auguste Béhal and Louis Hauzeur.

F. G. D.