



Mr James de Rothschild: 'Grand Seigneur'

With Miriam Rothschild

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Supplementary obituary, *The Times*, 13 May 1957, 15c



WE SHOULD be grateful if you would allow us to pay a tribute to one of the most remarkable men of his generation. James de Rothschild was at all periods of his life, a man of striking distinction, charm and spirit, with a most brilliant and penetrating wit, a rich and eccentric fancy, and ideas of great sweep and originality. His conversation was entrancing – fed by a prodigious memory and all-embracing curiosity and a fabulous insight into human motives and character, an acute sense of the comical and incongruous, a love of life, of paradox, of anything new and original, an often diabolical ingenuity in argument (which he could conduct in three languages with which he appeared to be equally familiar). He was a most fascinating and indeed magnetic figure to his friends.

MR JAMES DE ROTHSCHILD: 'GRAND SEIGNEUR'

Violently proud, morally fastidious, with a deep natural piety, he was devoted to the tradition of his family, his faith, his race, and his adopted country. He was first and foremost a *grand seigneur*, formidable, imperious, disdainful, contemptuous of danger, civilised, with extreme independence of character and judgement, and a deeply imaginative and unswerving loyalty to the political causes he served, especially liberalism and Zionism, to both of which his life was devoted. Anything that touched the Jews, especially the settlement in Palestine, both before and after the creation of the State of Israel, affected him intimately and directly: his pride in their achievements, his concern for their shortcomings, his hopes and fears for the new state (which he last visited for the solemn reinterment of the body of his father, the Baron Edmond, on the slopes of Mount Carmel) were the preoccupation of his last years.

His broken health forced him towards the end to lead the life of a semi-invalid, but his vitality and his vast interest in people and events remained unimpaired; conversation with him obliterated all differences of age and reputation – the combination of the paternalistic, benevolent schemes, the romantic loyalties, the gaiety, the verve, the high originality, the style of life and utterance, the marvellous first-hand quality, belonged to a world of which he was one of the most noble and attractive survivors.

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