

reason, 'enabling us to distinguish between good and evil . . . light and darkness, the infinite and the finite'. So the strong clear phrases go on, unfolding the great Catherinian themes of man's calling to eternal life and of the 'cloud of self-love' which, hiding man from himself, hides God too. Here surely, is the essential 'idea' which the culture of Siena, in some measure, embodied.

KENELM FOSTER, O.P.

WILFRID SCAWEN BLUNT, a memoir by his grandson the Earl of Lytton; Macdonald; 30s.

In his introduction Lord Lytton tells us that on the death of his mother Judith, Blunt's daughter, in 1957, he and his two sisters decided with one voice that the brilliance of their most attractive grandfather should be made known without delay. The result is a considerable volume of 367 pages of which nearly two-thirds are devoted to Wilfrid Blunt's public career which in the main was dedicated to obtaining justice and independence for the Arab world and Egypt in particular, a country which he assisted in her struggle first to throw off the Turkish rule and then to avoid the ever increasing domination of England. He also championed the cause of Ireland and suffered imprisonment in Galway gaol for holding a banned meeting in favour of Home Rule. He was a remorseless critic of English rule in India, and as might have been expected, energetically embraced the cause of the Boers in the South African war. Nor was it only his own country that came under the lash of his indignation; he was equally violent in his denunciations of the African adventures of France and Belgium. That he was rarely listened to, and still less appreciated, made no difference to the energy and extent of his crusade against the oppressions of powerful nations, and at least he had the satisfaction of living to see Egypt's sovereignty restored to her in 1922, the year of his death.

The latter part of the memoir gives a lengthy, perhaps too lengthy, account of the quarrel between Blunt and his daughter, which was continued to within a few weeks of his death when a reconciliation took place during his last illness. Until she was in her middle twenties Judith worshipped her father but was then so shocked at hearing of his marital infidelities that she finally broke off all communication with him and grew so bitter that she refused to allow her children any longer to visit their grandfather and sought as far as possible to estrange them from him, as her son confesses. When he lay dying she at last relented and not only wrote him letters full of repentance but paid him a most loving visit of farewell. After his death, however, the old feelings of resentment returned and finding her son bent on defending his grandfather's memory she decided, he says, 'that she did not wish to see me again; at intervals during the next thirty years she declined to revoke that decision until a few hours before her death . . . but she died with peace in her heart and words of peace on her lips'.

Lord Lytton pays an affectionate tribute to his grandmother, Lady Anne

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Blunt, Byron's grand-daughter, whose gentle and humble character formed so startling a contrast not only to those of her grandparents but of her own husband and daughter. Judith indeed inherited her mother's great beauty but none of her gentle patience, yet even Anne for all her forgiving nature found it impossible after 1905 to go on living with Wilfrid although there was neither harshness nor malice in her heart and she kept up an affectionate correspondence with him until her death in Egypt in 1917. One of their married difficulties had been Anne's conversion to Catholicism followed by a most exemplary life in contradistinction to that of her husband, who although brought up a Catholic had not persevered in the practice of his faith. It not infrequently happens in cases where a Catholic has been careless in his religion that mystery surrounds his deathbed, and this was so at Blunt's death, for although during his last illness he had given many signs of piety, particularly in the way of prayer, those attending him had no definite assurance that he had returned to his faith, and as he had directed his burial to take place in his own grounds it was, through some misunderstanding, performed without any religious ceremonies. The grave, however, was later on blessed by Fr Vincent McNabb, O.P., who had visited Blunt about a month before his death and had given him the last Sacraments. This was recently revealed by Sir Shane Leslie in *The Tablet* of June 24 of this year, and it explains Fr McNabb's words quoted by Lord Lytton, 'Your grandfather is all right—you have no cause to worry'.

On this note the book closes and we can feel sure that although the author's work contains much sad reading it will retain throughout for its readers much of the attraction which Blunt possessed in so marked a degree, and which his grandson has so well succeeded in making known.

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