

NEWMAN AND BLOXAM: *An Oxford Friendship*. By R. D. Middleton. (Oxford University Press; 18s.)

In his famous final Anglican sermon 'The Parting of Friends', Newman, after painting the anguish of a deep friendship severed—David and Jonathan, Noemi and Orpah—goes on to talk of St Paul who loved as his own soul not one alone but a multitude of his converts and disciples. So it was with Newman himself. There are friendships of which we know much: Hurrell Froude, Keble, Pusey, James Hope, Henry Wilberforce; there are others of which we know little, but these lesser friends Newman loved too with an individual affection for each. The publication of their letters shows Hurrell's younger brother William and his family followed through life by the Cardinal's watchful love and care. Isaac Williams's Autobiography shows his affectionate relations with his first curate at Littlemore: this book relates the friendship with Williams's successor.

Bloxam kept Newman's letters and recorded every event of his career. He collected all those details that make history and biography more picturesque. And he gives many hints of the richness in Newman's life not yet unearthed, deep though explorers have delved. Was there ever a man of so many friendships?

Mr Middleton has already given us the story of an older man—the famous Dr Routh of Magdalen. He too was a friend, perhaps the most important patron of that budding writer 'that clever young gentleman of Oriel, Mr Newman'. So Routh called him and to the end of his life of ninety-nine years he spoke of 'the great Newman'. Both Mr Middleton's books are rich with unpublished records. *Newman and Bloxam* is of deep value for the student of Newman's period and personality.

MAISIE WARD

MAURICE BARING: *A Postscript* by Laura Lovat, with some letters and verse. (Hollis and Carter; 10s. 6d.)

The genius of Maurice Baring is not to be estimated by means of a critical survey of his work as a man of letters. His poems are charming, and one of them, the threnody for a dead airman, has its established place in the literature of flying: his novels, delicate, fastidious, written from within the closed and brilliant circle of cosmopolitan aristocracy during the last and most iridescent years of its vanished glitter, have been cherished from the first by the limited number of people who could recognise all their implications and must remain with an increase of value as a moral, social and sumptuary record of the period they now embalm. *C.*, *Cat's Cradle* and *Daphne Adeane* are books Sargent might have illustrated. Others such as *Comfortless Memory* and *A Coat Without Seam* have a peculiar and almost esoteric value for Catholics because of the dryness and reserve with which they handle the mysteries they enshrine. But the sum of these excellencies dwindles before the great, involuntary achievement of Baring's life; the image, almost the idol of

the man, built up in the minds of his friends by his wit, his kindness and his unselfconscious abnegation. Very rarely do charm, goodness and a first-rate intelligence meet in the same character: more rarely still do they survive the test of worldly happiness. In Maurice Baring those qualities were innate and the life of a fortunate and successful traveller, diplomatist and man of letters did not choke the word. Remaining in the world and of the world, he grew, while he still lived, to be loved, as the saints are loved, by his friends and by his servants, and he is already becoming a legend.

To this legend Lady Lovat has added an anthology of personal memories; her own, recorded in moving extracts from her diary of his last days: those of other lovers, Hilaire Belloc, Vernon Lee, Ethel Smythe, Sir Ronald Storrs, Monsignor Knox, and finally, Princess Marthe Bibesco, who almost plucks out the heart of Baring's mystery in the phrase:

*la vie n'était jamais devenue pour lui une habitude, elle était toujours restée un miracle.*

Witness to the miracle Maurice Baring made of his life is thus given to the world which might never find it confirmed in his books because their operation was on other minds than his own. Reading and treasuring the beautifully printed and produced little monograph, the friends who saw and recognised Baring's character for the wonder that it was will remember how Maurice Maeterlinck once declared that the truest portrait of any man was drawn, not in his own letters but by those written to him by all sorts and conditions of men. One such a composite letter Lady Lovat has now given us. Will it be possible to collect others from his papers to make another book enlarging and enriching the delicate shrine she has built?

NAOMI ROYDE SMITH

THE POETIC IMAGE. *The Clark Lectures for 1946.* By Cecil Day Lewis. (Jonathan Cape; 5s.)

Mr Day Lewis must have worked hard on these lectures; his other essays in prose are slight by comparison. He has really grappled with the subject; and if we are left at the end still a little vague, we have to admit that the difficulties have not been dodged. The work is at least not superficial. Indeed, to review it properly would require a lot of time, and also, I think, a reviewer engaged in actually writing poetry or at least in the study of it. Exit the present one; but before I vanish let me recommend this book to those who can give more time to it. And this for three reasons.

First it is very readable. It has some of the charm, if little of the gaiety (for it lacks wit) whose absence in the serious criticism of today the author deplures. Its manners are beautiful. It never shouts or bores. It hardly even insists; yet it pays us the high compliment of leading unflinching—and deliberately—into obscure places. And it is thus persistent gracefully, combining a real mental effort with the tone of good conversation. It is excellent lecturing.