

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.

Next, it is admirably documented. Each phase and turn of it draws upon poetry actually written. This may seem too elementary a virtue to call for special praise; perhaps it is so noticeable in Mr Day Lewis because he so clearly enjoys what he quotes. One is kept continually wondering what he will cite next and still more what he will say about it; and time and again his generalisations bring a greater understanding of, and consequently a greater delight in, particular texts. As a critic he has the poet's talent rather than the logician's; 'the capacity' (it is for him imagination itself) 'to put oneself in the place of another'. Therefore too he has sympathy and finesse; and that already is much. Poet, he can place himself in the heart of another; critic, he can place himself in the heart of another's poem. And this he does not seldom, for our instruction.

Yes, instruction; for this poet-critic is also fertile in ideas, though these are not altogether unconfused. He cannot help trying to get to the bottom of his subject. He hardly succeeds, perhaps, but it was a brave thing to attempt. His mind dogs his feelings. Speaking of the 'dangers which threaten all pure poetry, all poetry whose meaning is . . . concentrated within its images' he finds the notion of poetry expressed in this formula inadequate; and his whole effort is to explain why this is so and to define what further aim poetry does, in fact, constantly envisage. The question is, what is poetic thought ('discovered or rediscovered' by the Romantics); and for Mr Day Lewis the question cannot be answered simply by referring to what we commonly call imagination. 'The poetic image', he says, 'is the human mind claiming kinship with everything that lives or has lived, and making good its claim.'

How is the claim made good? In a sense, simply by metaphor—the linking of different objects within the one image-field. And why is the claim made at all? The last lecture tries to sketch out an answer. It comes to this, that poetry involves images drawn out of the field of sensation and held together by a 'general truth' (itself hardly ever detached from the image that suggests it). Thereupon Mr Day Lewis relates these truths to memory and primordial archetypes, and, coasting by a dubious materialised platonism, drops anchor in a spirit-haunted mist. But not without his catch of pearls. For he has shown us the poet (who is himself also) as one who divines 'general truths' without forgetting the vivid, particular things and images that embody them; and that the poet's delight (communicated just a little) springs from his power to give to universal notions, embodied, hidden even from himself perhaps, a new being in the poem, in that strange thing at the tip of his pen, that image at once of the mind and the mind-mirrored world.

KENELM FOSTER. O.P.

BOOKS RECEIVED

- Allen & Unwin.* M. Blanco Formona: *The Lost Ant*, 7s. 6d.
Blackwell. F. Wright Beare: *The 1st Epistle of Peter*, 15s. 0d.
Blackfriars. ed. E. P. Armitage: *A Torchbearer*, 2s. 0d.; S.M.C.: Henry Suso, 6s. 6d.