

Newman

LIFE OF CARDINAL NEWMAN. By GAIUS GLENN ATKINS. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1931. \$2.50.

THE FINE GOLD OF NEWMAN. Selected by JOSEPH J. REILLY. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by JAMES ORRICK

WHEN Cardinal Newman died, James Russell Lowell, as Dr. Atkins reminds us in the latest biography of Newman, wrote of him to Miss Norton: "... a beautiful old man, as I remember him, but surely a futile life if ever there was one, trying to make a past unreality supply the place of a present one that was becoming past, and forgetting that God is always 'I am' and never 'I was.' He will be remembered chiefly by his 'Lead Kindly Light'..."

That books on Newman continue to appear bears witness to the fascination which he still exercises over our minds; that Dr. Atkins is at some pains to justify, and not with entire success, the inclusion of a Life of Newman in a series of "Creative Lives" is evidence that his fascination has not wholly prevented some misgivings even on the part of his admirers. They are of all sorts and conditions of men, and admire him for varied reasons. To those who are still given to a fondness for hymns, he is remembered, as Lowell predicted, as the author of "Lead Kindly Light." In the Anglican Church he is irrevocably associated with the founding of the movement first called the Oxford Movement and now, after a hundred years during which it has seemingly not lost strength, the Anglo-Catholic Movement. The importance attributed to him by the Roman Catholic Church is shown, as Dr. Atkins points out, by the numerous Newman Societies existing throughout the English-speaking countries. To lovers of literature he is one of the greatest masters of English prose—perhaps, with Swift who is so different, one of the two greatest. And all who are interested in the development of human personality still read and ponder his "Idea of a University."

To a smaller band John Henry Newman speaks with yet another—and closer voice. "Newman alone in Oxford of his generation, alone of many generations," Matthew Arnold once said, "conveyed to us in his genius that same charm, that same ineffable sentiment which this exquisite place conveys." It is still true, in spite of the changes of fifty years and in a generation whose interest in St. Mary's Church is almost purely architectural, that one cannot think of Newman without thinking of Oxford. Historically Dr. Atkins is fully aware of this (although he twice misquotes Matthew Arnold's remark about "the last enchantments of the Middle Age"; he will have it "Middle Ages," contrary to Arnold's habitual—and characteristic—usage). Dr. Atkins quite naturally gives full weight to the all-important influence of Oxford in Newman's life. But we might go a step further. By tracing Newman's influence on Oxford, apart from Anglo-Catholicism which is only one aspect of it, from Matthew Arnold himself to Walter Pater through Oscar Wilde down to post-war Oxford, we might perceive the fundamental nature of Newman's attitude. He undertook to solve an intellectual and moral conflict by an emotional anodyne. For this, "There are," if we may apply a sentence from his "Apologia," "but two alternatives, the way to Rome, and the way to atheism"—or let us say, paganism. "Who," asks Arnold, "could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music—subtle, sweet, mournful?" But not to resist meant the abandonment of intellectual integrity; and Matthew Arnold himself did not escape, although he went on to say of Newman: "He has adopted, for the doubts and difficulties which beset men's minds today, a solution, which, to speak frankly, is impossible."

Dr. Atkins, whose fine study of Newman is marred only by occasional lapses into a familiarity of style which does not seem altogether in keeping with the dignity of his subject, seems to feel this too. "The action of his mind," he says, "was never at any period entirely free. From 1833 to 1845 Newman's mind was in bonds to the travail of his emotional nature, from 1845 until his death it was in submission

to the controlling temper of the Communion of his choice."

The impression of lack of freedom, of veiled limitation, of subtle begging of the question is deepened by Dr. Reilly's anthology, "The Fine Gold of Newman." From these musical and telling passages one carries away the feeling that Newman is nevertheless essentially an apologist, forever unable, or unwilling, to face the issue. As Dr. Atkins says, "The adjective subtle ought not to be overworked but nothing else does in dealing with Newman's mind in some of its processes, unless one substitute cloudy." He caused to have written on his gravestone—"Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem." One cannot but feel, however, that his advance was from one set of shadows and pictures to another—more beautiful perhaps, but shadows still.



V. SACKVILLE-WEST

See next page.

Age Cannot Stale

CLEOPATRA: A ROYAL VOLUPTUARY. By OSKAR VON WERTHEIMER. Translated by HUNTLEY PATTERSON. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co. 1931. \$5.

Reviewed by ALFRED R. BELLINGER

PERHAPS it was the publishers who suggested its subtitle, for the author had evidently no desire to make this book sensational. No one could write of Cleopatra and avoid the fact that she was a voluptuary, but, instead of accentuating that side of the picture, Von Wertheimer takes care to keep it in its proper proportion. What he has written is less a biography than a very able history of the times, with especial emphasis on the role of Cleopatra. The introductory chapters dealing with Alexandria, her capital, and the Ptolemies, her ancestors, give a full and accurate background for the drama whose heroes are successively Pompey, Caesar, Antony, and Augustus. So far as possible the Egyptian point of view is maintained throughout, but there are many episodes where the Queen drops out of sight entirely and the author follows the fortunes of his hero.

This is particularly true in the first half of the book where Julius Caesar is the dominant figure. He was undoubtedly influenced by Cleopatra, but there is no attempt to pretend that he was subservient to her. During the period while she was living in Rome we know next to nothing about her and the author has wisely left her in her historic obscurity and turned his attention to the triumph and the death of Caesar. Here he shows an admirable breadth and impartiality, achieving a very fair estimate of the characters and accomplishments of Caesar's opponents and supporters alike. It is a rare thing in any book to find Caesar and Cicero treated with equal understanding. It is perhaps rarer still to have the vices of both parties exposed with no attempt to make them appear more important than their virtues.

When Antony becomes the central figure the importance of Cleopatra naturally increases. Here again we have reasoned judgment rather than hyperbole, but the unimpassioned account of how the menace to Rome grew in the east is much more telling than any striving for effect in details. The character of Antony is excellently portrayed—his courage and immense vitality, his essential coarseness, his inability to handle great situations, his devotion to Cleopatra and entire reliance on her. One wonders if she was really more gifted than some of her predeces-

sors, Ptolemy I's daughter Arsinoë, for example. She certainly showed great capacity for intrigue and twice reached a position where she was almost mistress of the Roman world. But the fatal campaign of 31 B. C., culminating in her flight from Actium, is hard to explain to the credit of her genius. Yet whatever claims other women of her race might put forward to equal abilities, none of them ever had equal opportunity, and the combination of her unquestionable talents for ruling, with the circumstances which brought first Caesar and then Antony within her orbit, made her more powerful as well as more famous than any of her ancestors. Judging after the event we are wont to think of her as the center of an episode whose outcome was a foregone conclusion, but any reader of Horace knows how real was the peril in the minds of her contemporaries.

Mr. Patterson's book is illustrated with photographs which add distinctly to its interest. The style of the translation is smooth though a trifle pedestrian. Altogether it is a book to be highly recommended to anyone interested in Roman antiquity.

Unpublished Documents

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF JEFFERSON AND DU PONT DE NEMOURS. By GILBERT CHINARD. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press. 1931. \$7.50.

Reviewed by CARL BECKER

OF the printing of books there is no end, nor do I say that there should be; but of the printing, in deluxe editions, by university presses, of ordinary historical documents not otherwise available except in archives, there should be an end. The present work is part of a series entitled "The Johns Hopkins Studies in International Thought." Professor Chinard contributes an introduction of 123 pages, the letters, unabridged and including many brief notes of no real value, give us an additional 293 pages—all of which, if printed on ordinary paper and in ordinary type, might have been contained in a light, handy volume selling for, say \$2.50. The volume is in fact listed at \$7.50; and no wonder, considering the quality of paper used as the other evidences of conspicuous waste that strike the eye. Perhaps it should be a source of peculiar gratification to me to possess of the "huit cents exemplaires" printed "sur papier pur fil Lafuma, exemplaire No. 279." In truth the number doesn't so much matter; but I am glad indeed to possess any copy of the work since it is of use to me; and no one, if I can prevent it, will ever deprive me of *exemplaire No. 279*, because, being but a professor and a poor man, this copy is, so far as I am concerned, irreplaceable. I can't afford \$7.50 for a few (relatively few) letters of Jefferson and Du Pont de Nemours, valuable as some of them are, even when they are so admirably and fully (perhaps too fully) introduced and explained and vouched for by Professor Chinard; and I dare say that most of the people to whom the letters would be of real use are in the same boat. It's a pity—I mean it's a pity that a university press, having decided to make unpublished historical documents available, shouldn't have made them as available as possible to the people who need them.

Well, anyway, securely possessed, by whatever unexpected and charitable generosity, of a copy (*exemplaire No. 279*) of this book, I find its contents highly interesting for several reasons. If I were an "American historian," primarily interested in what are called the "principal events" of American history, the letters would interest me chiefly for the new light they throw on the Louisiana purchase—on Jefferson's valiant American imperialism, his determination to prevent France from recovering her American empire, and the skilful use he made of his friend Du Pont in attaining his object. If, wishing to write a life of Du Pont, I were on the still hunt for all the "facts," I should eagerly welcome the information to be found in the letters concerning the latter years of his career, concerning his two visits to America particularly: it is certainly one of the chief merits of Professor Chinard's introduction to have reconstructed, "somewhat sketchily the story of Du Pont's American venture." But it happens that I am less interested in what Jefferson and Du Pont did than in what they thought about what they did and had done and proposed to do. From this point of view there is very little to be found in the letters that is strictly new: the letters merely confirm what is already known about the ideas of Jefferson and Du Pont, their chief merit being to provide fresh and

often excellent examples of that type of thought which we associate with the *philosophies*.

Like many another Frenchman, Du Pont hoped to advance his worldly fortunes by acquiring land in the new world—in “a beautiful valley above the Shenandoah.” Besides the advantage of growing rich (no, not rich—“prosperous” is the word) in Arcady, who could resist the pleasure of owning land in “a country where liberty, security, and independence really exist,” of dwelling with a “nation serious, industrious, prosperous, naturally friendly to my country and knowing no idol except law?” A country moreover where lived his friend Jefferson, true philosopher and friend of humanity. It was of course inevitable, in view of this delightful prospect, that Du Pont should write to Jefferson: “*Je me flatte d’y retrouver votre durable amitié et le secours de vos lumières.*” *Lumières*, oh yes! How familiar it all is. How enlightened they all were—too enlightened. There was really too much illumination in the eighteenth century, the light was really too strong—too strong apparently for Frenchmen ever to see the Shenandoah valley quite as it was. However much money they might part with for the benefit of unscrupulous American promoters, it was necessary for their peace of mind to see the Shenandoah as “beautiful,” and America as the happy land where the people know “no other idol except law.” Why it was necessary for so many Europeans to see America in this bright, distorting light is a question to which some answer must be found by those who would understand the revolutionary age of the eighteenth century.

No very satisfactory answer to this question is likely to be forthcoming until one has disengaged, or at least attempted to disengage, those underlying and largely unconscious prepossessions that so largely determined the surface thinking of the time. It has long been a favorite pastime of those who interest themselves in the history of culture to note the transfer of ideas (as if it were no more than a matter of borrowed coins) from one writer to another: to show, for example, that Mr. Jones must have got a certain idea from Mr. Smith because he had read, or might have read, Mr. Smith’s book. In this connection Professor Chinard has some pertinent things to say. He rightly protests against a loose and indiscriminating use of the word “influence” and points out that, by employing the deadly parallel column, it would be easy to “prove” that Jefferson was “influenced” by the Physiocrats: all that is lacking is any evidence that Jefferson had, before going to France, “heard much about the physiocrats.” In the same way it would be possible to prove that the youthful John Adams was paraphrasing Rousseau except for the fact that the paraphrasing occurred before Adams could conceivably, save for some extraordinary chance of which we know nothing, have heard of Rousseau. What has to be accounted for is the fact that at certain times, in a certain “climate of opinion,” a few stock ideas, master phrases, win the assent of so many men in different countries whether they have read each other’s writings or not.

Professor Chinard recognizes this interesting fact. “There are times,” he says, “when ideas ‘are in the air,’ when they seem to be common property.” I doubt if there are any times when this is not true, but perhaps it was especially true of the eighteenth century; and Professor Chinard makes his point in the following passage:

That man cannot exist without some form of society; . . . that the number of laws should be kept down to a minimum and that the more laws the worse the government; that education . . . is the true foundation of liberty and representative government; that standing armies constitute a danger . . . ; that all religious convictions or absence of religious convictions ought not only to be tolerated but respected; that men should be free to express themselves *viva voce* or in writing; . . . that an agricultural state is preferable to an industrial state, and that all virtues as well as all riches come from the soil; that as few obstructions as possible ought to be placed in the natural flow of trade—are not these principles the very essence of Jeffersonian democracy? And yet not a single one of them is taken from his speeches or letters; the list . . . is entirely made up of quotations from Du Pont de Nemours and his master Quesnay.

Having recognized this fundamental similarity between Jefferson and Du Pont, Professor Chinard fails to keep it in mind sufficiently. He is impressed by the “differences in temperament and doctrine” revealed in the letters—so much so that we are invited to believe, in spite of the above passage, that the letters reveal “two entirely different conceptions of society, two entirely different conceptions of democratic or representative government.” How can this

be true if, as Professor Chinard has just taken pains to demonstrate, Jefferson’s conception of society and government was fundamentally the same as that of Du Pont?

The answer is that it cannot be true. One has only to read the letters to realize that the differences between Jefferson and Du Pont were superficial. And indeed how, were it otherwise, could the correspondence have been kept alive? It is very rare that two people with “entirely different conceptions” maintain a lively correspondence over a long period of years: it is only when there is something important to discuss that they can keep on writing, and it is only when they are in fundamental agreement that they can differ to any purpose. This is what makes majority government by the party system possible. The differences between Jefferson and Du Pont were of the same kind as those between the Conservative and the Liberal parties, or those between the Democrats and the Republicans. We may say of Jefferson and Du Pont, as Carlyle said of himself and Sterling, that although they argued copiously they were, except in opinion, not divided.

Transvaluation of All Values

ALL PASSION SPENT. By V. SACKVILLE-WEST.
New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1931. \$2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT HERRICK

THIS pleasant parable of the aged may well be enjoyed by many persons who would shrink from applying its conclusions literally to their own lives, as is the fate with many parables. An old woman with children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren having been liberated at eighty-eight from custom and routine by the death of her eminent husband resolves to live the remaining time allotted to her according to her inner light, not in deference to the beliefs and the conveniences of others. Deborah, Lady Slane, thus makes her demonstration of independence to her assembled family:

I have considered the eyes of the world for so long that I think it is time I had a little holiday from them. If one is not to please oneself in old age, when is one to please oneself? . . . I am going to become completely self-indulgent. I am going to wallow in old age. No grandchildren. They are too young. Not one of them has reached forty-five. No great-grandchildren either; that would be worse. I want no strenuous young people, who are not content with doing a thing, but must needs know why they do it. And I don’t want them bringing their children to see me, for it would only remind me of the terrible effort the poor creatures will have to make before they reach the end of their lives in safety.

So she withdraws with her old French maid to a small suburban house on which she had set her eyes thirty years before (which has been miraculously kept waiting for her!) to contemplate the tiresome past, filled with so much that had always been alien to her spirit, and to enjoy undisturbed by importunities the luxury of perception. For as her magical landlord tells her:

The world, Lady Slane, is pitifully horrible. It is horrible because it is based upon competitive struggle—and really one does not know whether to call the basis of that struggle a convention or a necessity. Is it some extraordinary delusion, or is it a law of life? Is it perhaps an animal law from which civilization may eventually free us? At present it seems to me, Lady Slane, that man has founded all his calculations upon a mathematical system fundamentally false. His sums work out right for his own purposes . . . Judged by other laws, though the answers would remain correct, the premises would appear merely crazy; ingenious enough, but crazy. . . .

“Then you think,” said Lady Slane . . . “That anyone who goes against this extraordinary delusion is helping civilization on?”

“I do, Lady Slane; most certainly I do. But in a world as at present constituted, it is a luxury that only poets can afford, or people advanced in age.”

With this luxury of calm understanding, in sunny solitude, Lady Slane reviews her marriage, her children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and recognizes the supreme renunciation of purpose that life has constrained her to. For she no longer believes that woman’s one purpose is to perpetuate the race. Into her solitude comes a forgotten chance acquaintance of her younger married life; their memories, slight as they are and unsentimental, reveal even more clearly to the old woman the ghostly life she has led.

At the end comes a great-granddaughter, another Deborah Slade, to commune with her.

They talked for a while longer, but Deborah, feeling herself folded into peace and sympathy, noticed that her great-grandmother’s mind wandered a little into some maze of confusion to which Deborah held no guiding thread . . . At moments she appeared to be talking about herself, then

recalled her wits, and with pathetic clumsiness tried to cover up the slip, rousing herself to speak eagerly of the girl’s future, not of some event which had gone wrong in the distant past. Deborah was too profoundly lulled and happy to wonder much what that event could be. This hour of union with the old woman soothed her like music, like chords lightly touched in the evening, with the shadows closing and the moths bruising beyond an open window . . . The hurly-burly receded; the clangor was stilled; her grandfather and her great-aunt Carrie lost their angular importance and shrivelled to little gesticulating puppets with parchment faces and silly wavering hands; other values rose up like great archangels in the room, and towered and spread their wings.

Thus the old woman dies, leaving behind her the young Deborah imbued with her spirit. It is exquisite, much of it, both in perception and in expression, even if details of the parable are often mechanical, mere abstractions (plain pastiche here and there), even if—which is more to the point—this wisdom of old age may be nothing more than the fading of the tints of the flower, which once indicated vitality! Nevertheless “All Passion Spent” gives one something to think upon, which is faster than fiction, than life itself. Does this mood of transvaluation of the ancient material values of civilization, which appears these days especially in the work of younger English writers, foretell the doom of our race? For the spirit of “All Passion Spent” would never fight another great war nor spend itself to maintain the integrity of the pound sterling!

“Dying in his sixty-fourth year,” says the *Manchester Guardian*, “Arnold Bennett may be said to have brought down a little the average in recent times for the English novelists. It was set very high by Hardy and Meredith, and Hall Caine just died at seventy-eight. Conrad also passed Arnold Bennett’s figure. Farther back the average falls considerably. Dickens died at fifty-eight and Thackeray at fifty-two. Scott just reached the sixties, Collins went half-way through them, and George Eliot died at sixty-one. Charles Kingsley brings the average down again by dying at fifty-five. Anthony Trollope’s enormous output closed at the age of sixty-seven, and Charles Reade just failed to reach seventy. One of the longest-lived of the mid-Victorian novelists was Charlotte Yonge, who died in her seventy-eighth year, but Mrs. Gaskell died at fifty-five.”

The League of Nations is now the largest publishing house in Switzerland, and in the last ten years has published about 3,000 documents and reports, and its library has become indispensable to students of international affairs. America is the best customer for League literature and Great Britain next.

A Balanced Ration for a Week’s Reading

ALL PASSION SPENT. By V. SACKVILLE WEST.
Doubleday, Doran.

A study of old age in reminiscence over its past, exerting its independence of the present, written with delicacy and precision, and happy in its materialization of character.

THE DOCTOR EXPLAINS. By RALPH MAJOR.
Knopf.

An explanation of common medical phenomena, adapted to the interest of the layman.

THE BIG BONANZA. By C. B. GLASSCOCK. *Bobbs-Merrill.*

Vivid pages from the history of the Far West—a chronicle of the Comstock Lode which makes interesting Americana.

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