

tion to her brother—or, one might say, so uncontrolled was her obsession.

It is easy to see why the *Journal* made so profound an impression on its generation. It is a faithful, and often a charming, reflection of French provincial life. Here is an ordered way of life, in which nothing happens but in which the small pieties of home and village and parish church are meticulously recorded. But it is all for Maurice, and the possessive egoism of Eugénie finds a divinely intended purpose in her advice, her hints, her hopes and fears. This is not to deny the substantial worth of much of her spiritual reflection, but a knowledge of Maurice's life and Eugénie's share in shaping it must often modify our appreciation. 'Do you remember how once, when I was telling you how unhappy your loss of faith made me, I compared myself with Monica weeping for Augustine?' Maurice did, in fact, return to the Faith he had lost under the impact of his life in Paris and of his association with Lamennais. But one cannot avoid thinking that for Eugénie it was a personal triumph. The spiritual life is not exempt from the loyalties and demands of human attachment: it ought to be, but the process of purification is long, and the possibility of self-deception is never far away.

Miss Royde Smith's presentation of this strange story is what one would expect of an artist of her experience and sureness of judgment. She points no moral: there is no need. And when one has made allowances for the pull of jealousy and a sad lack of proportion, there remains a great deal in the *Journal* to justify its resurrection.

ILLTUD EVANS, O.P.

THE CLOWN'S GRAIL. A Study of Love in its Literary Expression.

By Wallace Fowlie. (Dennis Dobson; 8s.6d.)

This is a hard book to review, and even to read, if reading implies discovering what precisely a writer is saying and why. Mr Fowlie does not, evidently, write for people who want each term explained and each judgment justified. If he has nevertheless written a most interesting and even enlightening book, I must add that I have certainly not been enlightened by all of it, because a good deal of it I just do not understand. Yet I am sure that this is a genuine and deeply meditated work, well worth reading and re-reading for the glimpses it affords of the inner life of our times.

I have read only two of Mr Fowlie's other books, but I doubt whether he has written anything so complex and venturesome as this. He is an ambitious writer. His calmly 'prophetic' style—not in the 'fore-telling' but in the 'far-seeing' sense of this term (cf. S.T. II-II, 171.1)—reflects an implicit claim to have understood pretty deeply his profound theme. Having read him with both admiration and bewilderment, I feel fairly sure that his is no ordinary mind, but sure also that he would prove a trying pupil for professors of the stricter philosophy, or even of English compo-

sition. Certain defects are, however, in a sense irrelevant. Mr Fowlie has undertaken to describe the fundamental human and religious attitude of certain poets (using the word for Pascal as well as Dante, Joyce as well as Baudelaire) in the European, and particularly in the French tradition; and this may be done, as here, chiefly by stating and pronouncing, or by a more rigorous process of analysis and definition. No doubt Mr Fowlie's dogmatic method leaves many terms imprecise and even ambiguous, but, as Dante says, *al nobile ingegno . . . è bello un poco di fatica lasciare*, it is good manners to leave your reader some work to do: a courtesy not overlooked by Mr Fowlie.

He finds three 'orders of love' in civilised and articulate man: philosophic, Divine (i.e. Christian) and human: with their corresponding objects: the idea of love, Love Incarnate, a human being. These orders are personified by Plotinus, St Bernard, Heloise. It is as we draw near to the present that the outlines grow hazy. Yet the triple contrast reappears, it seems, in the 17th century: Corneille, Pascal, Racine; and here I found Mr Fowlie's thought relatively clear as well as profoundly interesting. Yet I suspect that the following sections, whose governing theme seems to be the interrelation of lover, 'clown' and *voyou*, may be more original and characteristic of their author. They resume an earlier analysis of Mallarmé's sonnet *Le Pitre Châtré* about the clown who steals furtively out of his tent and 'swims in a lake and thereby loses his greasepaint', which is also, mysteriously, his *sacre*, the 'consecration' of his life. The clown, with his self-consciousness and shame, stands for 'modern man' along with J. Alfred Prufrock and Charlie Chaplin. He is also a symbol of love. If you ask why, reflect on the folly, the clownishness of love, and that this folly obscurely hints at the condition of fallen man, born a misfit, a creature of make-believe, wounded. Reflect on Lautréamont's *j'ai reçu la vie comme une blessure*: and that Pascal spoke of *un roi dépossédé*: and that we believe that our salvation lies only in imitating somehow the *folly* of the Cross, Mr Fowlie going so far as to call the saint: 'always the clown, the counterfeit of Christ the crucified. . . . The Divine Clown eternally exhibited before mankind.'

Certain rapidly drawn contrasts between the saint (imaged by the clown and the *voyou*) and the 'creative genius' (artist or pure philosopher) suggests that Mr Fowlie has still much to say on this theme. Meanwhile we have this book—unusual, involved, suggestive and very sincere.

KENELM FOSTER. O.P.

SHAKESPEARE'S DOCTRINE OF NATURE. A Study of *King Lear*. By John F. Darby. (Faber; 16s.)

This book discusses Shakespeare's treatment of the theme of 'the Good Man in the Bad Society'. Mr Darby treats of the development, throughout the history plays, of Shakespeare's handling of the interrelated themes of political nature (man and the State),