

Malcolm Lowry (*Under the Volcano*, 1947). Sample advice to Lowry: "Let loose some of your natural joy in swiftness and goodness and love and simplicity The influence of the Complex Boys, these adolescent audens spenders with all their pretty little dexterities, their negative safety, their indoor marx-manship, has not been good for you."

**ANOTHER WORLD
1897-1917**

by Anthony Eden
Doubleday, 1977
175 pp. \$7.95
L of C 77-74298
ISBN 0-385-12719-7

**THE DIARIES OF
EVELYN WAUGH**

edited by Michael Davie
Little, Brown, 1977
818 pp. \$17.50
L of C 77-16214
ISBN 0-316-17450-5

INFANTS OF THE SPRING

by Anthony Powell
Holt, 1977, 214 pp. \$10.95
L of C 77-71357
ISBN 0-03-020991-9

Good autobiographies and diaries are an art form as revealing as they are dishonest. These three volumes have Oxford in common, as well as a poignant appreciation of privileged life in the dusk of empire. Anthony Eden, Earl of Avon, Foreign Secretary, then (1955-57) Prime Minister of Great Britain, once confessed to Evelyn Waugh that as a boy at school he had sat upon and killed a pet mouse in order to escape punishment. Such stoicism pervades his memoir of upper-crust boyhood before the Great War.

Novelist Evelyn Waugh, with Anthony Powell, knew Eden familiarly as "Jerk." Waugh's attitude is ironic, acerbic, spiteful, but clearly betrays a yearning for the aristocratic decay he condemns. His Oxford diaries are missing (why?), as are those pertaining to his disastrous first marriage. What remains suggests that the comic, manic world of Waugh's novels actually existed: With the Countess of Rosse, in Ireland one day, he came across a turf cabin where a crone sat amid pig dung smoking a pipe and complaining about the leaky roof. "Don't change a thing," advised the Countess. "It's simply you!"

Like Waugh, Anthony Powell (*A Dance to the Music of Time*, 12 collected novels published 1962-76) cherished the niceties of life, including the butler at Oxford's Hypocrites Club: "the ideal Jeevian manservant . . . full of repartee and gnomic comment." Powell used the "intellectual recession" of his college days to revel with a circle of friends that included Harold Acton, Cyril Connolly, and, later, George Orwell. "Do your trousers strap under the foot?" Orwell asked Powell at their first meeting.

It was indeed spring in another world.