

already presents through the symbolic medium of tragic drama a poetic world in which suffering, evil, and the restoration of harmony are the primary constituents.

Mr Traversi's analysis is not perhaps greatly dissimilar in its results from those of Dr Tillyard or of Mr Wilson Knight himself. He makes some useful comparative suggestions (e.g. concerning the relation between the Duke in *Measure for Measure* and Prospero). What is chiefly remarkable in his book is an exceptional clarity of outline, an almost dry-point precision in his presentation of the web of symbolic themes. Not here is to be found the suggestive and somewhat bewildering richness of Mr Wilson Knight, where allusions to the whole course of British history are liable to be elucidated from a single reference to the theme of kingship. The precise outline is to be welcomed as the token of an impressive intellectual control over the material. On the other hand, though he is less extravagant in his choice of symbols than some interpreters, Mr Traversi's orderly logical picture is frighteningly extremist in the claims it makes for symbolic analysis. We are told that the various characters in *The Tempest* 'exist entirely in terms of a definite symbolic function', that experiences have become 'completely integrated into symbolism' (p. 193). After a discussion of four plays conducted on these abstract or musical lines, one feels to be moving in a critical atmosphere that has become 'thoroughly small and dry' and sighs for Bradley or Granville Barker. For we must in our reading of poetic drama surely inhabit a side of the looking glass where symbolism is realized because it is integrated in character and action, and not the other way round. Mr Traversi's thoughtful study makes us aware of the dangers as well as the rewards of this particular approach to Shakespeare.

ROGER SEAROCK

STEFAN GEORGE. By E. K. Fennett.

GERHART HAUPTMANN. By Hugh F. Garten.

HEINRICH VON KLEIST. By Richard March.

(Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought; Bowes and Bowes; 6s. each volume.)

A problem inherent in a series of this kind is that concentration in a small compass needs a very experienced hand if it is to be effective. Mr March, as a novelist, compromises by stressing Kleist's tragic life rather at the expense of his work, Dr Garten discards critical selection as being 'arbitrary' and 'dictated by personal preference'. He engages on the hopeless struggle for 'completeness' and conscientiously catalogues the works of an unusually prolific writer. Only Mr Bennett has really succeeded in the critic's essential task of predigesting and

sifting the material so as to present an admirably lucid and penetrating account of his subject.

Stefan George, a Catholic by birth, with the Rhinelander's French and Latin affinities, came to see himself as the prophet and high-priest of a new and exclusive society whose values were to be wholly aesthetic and artistic. His aloof and carefully chiselled poems which profoundly influenced a select few in his own country have never found a wide European appeal. Mr Bennett's beautiful translations make one realize that much remains to be done for George in England.

Whereas George retreated to an ivory tower of aestheticism, his contemporary, Hauptmann, who began his career as a dramatist of the naturalist school, eventually took refuge from reality in a pagan and pantheistic temple of his own creation. His roots were in Silesia and he was at his best in the plays and in the impressive novel, 'The Fool in Christ, Emmanuel Quint', depicting the hardships, conflicts and religious yearnings of the peasants and workers, the fellow countrymen of mystics like Angelus Silesius. Dr Garten says that mysticism was a quality inherent in all Hauptmann's works, and that it was 'primarily Christian' though later it included 'Eastern and Gnostic ideas'—a use of the terms 'Christian' and 'mystic' which one might be inclined to question.

'The last word', as Mr March comments, 'will never be said about Kleist.' This little book may serve as a first word of introduction to a complex and original genius, a contemporary of the Romantics. Mr March scarcely does justice to Kleist's narrative writing which is more important and more intimately connected with the recurrent personal themes of Kleist's dramas than he appears to assume. The short stories deal with the essentially moral problems of the individual pitted against the world or society. Technically they are amongst the most subtle and at the same time powerful writings of their age, or indeed of any age.

ELISABETH STOPP

DOWNSIDE BY AND LARGE. By Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward; 21s.)

Two years after the biographical and even autobiographical *Willingly to School* comes the historical *Downside By and Large*. The enchanted atmosphere of the former work now becomes related to space and time; some of a schoolboy's disenchantments are even allowed to be manifest. For somehow the earlier and more personal volume contrives to tell us more about the school, the later record more about the author. Which perhaps is why experience shows that strangers to St Gregory's can find pleasure in a history of a school not their own.