

supra-national society. Non-Catholics tend to think of it as a world-wide political institution, competing with the United Nations and the Communist Party. Consequently there is national opposition to close diplomatic relations with the Pope. This is to confuse his position as Vicar of Christ and head of the Church with that of an independent ruler of a sovereign state, the Vatican City. Though it may be legitimately questioned whether or not mutual diplomatic representation is politically advisable in any particular case.

A.F.

HOLDERLIN. His Poems translated by Michael Hamburger; with a critical study. (Harvill Press; 18s.)

HOLDERLIN. By L. S. Salzberger. (Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought.) (Bowes and Bowes; 6s.)

The first of these books is admirably well produced, and the fine printing of both the German and the English text of the poems is a real pleasure to the eye. Mr Hamburger's sensitive and scholarly translations should do much to make this difficult but rewarding poet better known among us.

Like most of the German Romantics, Hölderlin was deeply concerned with philosophical and religious problems, yet in the end the world he created in his poetry was a private universe, an Atlantis that he called Greece. His mythology is personal, and often confused by the use of familiar names with a strange connotation. This is especially true of his use of the name of Christ. Yet his poetry may be enjoyed for the passionate intensity with which his melodious words probe the realms of abstract thought, and for the sheer beauty of imagery, sound and rhythm. He is one of the most discussed poets in Germany today, and his cult is second only to that enjoyed by Goethe.

The translator is both a poet and an excellent linguist; he has successfully conveyed the atmosphere of the original poems. His selection is wider than that of Mr Leishman (published by Hogarth in 1944, and to be reprinted this spring), and in many ways more satisfactory. Mr Hamburger has improved his own earlier versions considerably (Nicholson and Watson, 1943). The same cannot be said of his introduction which is now renamed 'a critical study'. It occupies a third of the book, is still too discursive, and lacks critical poise.

Dr Salzberger's short study in a series already mentioned in these pages (BLACKFRIARS, November, 1952, p. 485) supplies what is lacking in the other volume, and can be recommended as a most enlightening introduction. The plan of her book is perhaps a rather uneasy compromise between a historical and a critical account, and the language is often laboured and Teutonic. This is counterbalanced by remarkable critical acumen throughout, especially in the final section on Hölderlin's mature poetry.

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