

romanticism in that he spent thirteen years in the army, without surrendering his self-criticism, before retiring to his *tour d'ivoire*.

ANTHONY SYLVESTRE.

HOLDERLIN'S SYMBOLISM. By E. L. Stahl. (Blackwell; 3s.).

HOLDERLIN. By Agnes Stansfield. (Manchester University Press; 7s. 6d.).

Hölderlin is separated by a century and a river from the symbolist poets of the 90's. Even the German poets of the later age confessedly drew their inspiration from West of the Rhine:

Da schirmten held und sänger das Geheimnis:
Villiers sich hoch genug für einen thron,
Verlaine in fall und busse fromm und kindlich
Und für sein denkbild blutend: Mallarmé.

Stefan George thus proudly recalls the experience of his youth "in der heitren anmut stadt", and Rilke's debt to France is equally obvious. But Hölderlin is more quintessentially German; not indeed ignorant of Rousseau, but for that part of his poetry which was less startlingly, poignantly original influenced mainly by Schiller. But here perhaps is a greater than Schiller, certainly a purer poet. It is strictly as a poet that Mr. Stahl presents him, finding in his use of symbols the way to an understanding of his poetry. In this masterly essay, containing some forty pages of first-class criticism, are examined the general definitions of symbolism, the conceptions of more recent poets, and the particular views of Hölderlin: the symbol must serve as a link between successive poetic moods, but simultaneously it demands of the world a response to the poet's question even while it reveals the attitude—not so much personal and spontaneous as reflective and the fruit of study—of the poet himself. Mr. Stahl calls attention to the control, the balance and the discipline that are so manifest in Hölderlin and give such perfection to his poetry; the quotations are most apt:

Da wo die Nüchternheit dich verlässt, da ist die Grenze deiner Begeisterung. Der grosse Dichter ist niemals von sich selbst verlassen, er mag sich so weit über sich selbst erheben als er will. Man kann auch in die Höhe fallen, so wie in die Tiefe.

If poetry expresses the development of the whole man, a feeling, reasoning being, exposed to a variety of influences, the succession both of experiences and their narration must be orderly,

aber immer nach einer sichern Regel nacheinander hervorgehen. Even if we knew nothing of the biographical details, and in spite of Hölderlin's religious doubts, it would be obvious that the way of such a poet, at once acutely sensitive and rigidly disciplined, must have been a way of the Cross:

Ja, vergiss nur, dass es noch Menschen gibt, darbenendes, angefochtenes, tausendfach geärgertes Herz! und kehre wieder dahin, wo du ausgingst, in die Arme der Natur, der wandellosen, stillen und schönen.

The tension could not be more beautifully expressed, and it is clear that he cannot forget and that his need of a world of men is at least as strong as Browning's.

Miss Stansfield provides us with the story of his life and relates his poetry, very attractively translated, to that background. Her book is interesting and enjoyable and makes far fewer demands on the reader than Mr. Stahl's more profound essay. But it is impossible to avoid the impression that many footnotes and much of the original German have been excluded for fear of putting off the general reader. This, it seems to the reviewer, is a mistake: would-be readers of Hölderlin ought not to be discouraged, but they cannot attempt to enjoy his poetry without a considerable knowledge of German and they need guidance among the authorities cited by Miss Stansfield in a rather indiscriminate bibliography.

EDWARD QUINN.

A MISSIONARY IN THE WAR NET. By H. Van Straelen, S.V.D. (The Word Press, Hadzor; 3s. 6d.).

The author is a Dutch mission father of the society of the Divine Word. I have found his small book both inspiriting and edifying. In the first part of it he quietly relates his experiences of internment at Tokyo; no atrocity stories; simple facts told with understanding and charity. "Dear Leo"—he says to an English priest who died on the voyage home—"dear Leo, for whom by God's eternal and infinite mercy I trust the shadows are vanished, give me also the strength to persist in my love for the land of my devotion, Japan, as you did. Let us condemn the Japanese war-machine, and rightly too, but let us not identify the war-machine with the people of Japan. Give me the strength, although my own brother died gallantly as commander of a Dutch cruiser in the battle of the Java Sea, against the Japanese, to love the real good Japanese people immensely as you did. Only then can we be good missionaries if we are heaven-high above social, political and racial prejudices."

In the second part he discusses the future of the Church in the Far East. The views he puts forward here, though to many Catholics they may seem paradoxical, are a wholesome corrective to European complacency. Not only does he stress the increasing importance of an Eastern native clergy; not only does he insist that the Faith as presented to the East should be shorn of all Western accidents; he believes that the future of the church lies predominantly in the East (in China especially) and that the Church in the West will be the gainer by assimilating Eastern tradition.

"It will be clear to everybody that in treading Eastern roads within the Church, it is not for the European to play a rôle of great importance. It is especially to the native clergy that the tremendous task falls of presenting to their fellow-countrymen the new Oriental Catholic Church which is in the making, for this implies in the first place a searching and uprooting of the many divine jewels of the primeval revelation which are to be found in the Eastern