

however and comparative neglect of ascetics have at times resulted among Catholics in the principles proper to the judge being applied by the physician, to the detriment of deep-rooted spirituality.

Mr Wood's book opens up many points of discussion, and the larger work on the same subject that he is writing will be awaited with interest.

HENRY ST JOHN, O.P.

STUDIES IN MODERN EUROPEAN LITERATURE AND THOUGHT (Bowes and Bowes; 6s. each volume.)

*Baudelaire*. By P. Mansell Jones.

*Rainer Maria Rilke*. By Hans Egon Holthusen, trans. by J. P. Stern.

*Paul Valéry*. By Elizabeth Sewell.

*Benedetto Croce*. By Cecil Sprigge.

These are the first four volumes of a new series, admirably printed; each study is to be less than thirty thousand words in length. 'Modern' in the general title is taken to mean the last century and a half. What is 'European' to mean? The list of twenty-odd 'titles in preparation' includes no writer from Eastern Europe, and there are writers included who scarcely deserve a place among the first twenty in such a series. Confidence in the series as a whole will depend on the general editor's judgment and explorations. The experience of Europe and of its commonalty has been made lucid in languages not publicly heard at North Atlantic Treaty conferences.

The series opens auspiciously with four works that fully merit the title of 'studies'. Professor Mansell Jones first discusses the 'situation' of Baudelaire and then concentrates on the architecture and significance of *Les Fleurs du Mal*. The result is the best introduction to Baudelaire yet written in English and the frequent emergence of judgments that are appropriate and deeply considered, for example: 'his actual achievement [is] that of a major, not a great, poet'.

There is an equal discrimination in Herr Holthusen's remarkable essay on Rilke. This, indeed, is a criticism written for poets and has its arcana. It is truly exciting and its successful translation is a *tour de force*.

Miss Sewell provides a piquant, acute, and very individual study of Valéry, and makes a gallant effort to Christianise as much as she may of his thought. 'He held no beliefs', she too assuagingly writes, where it would be just to say that he played Hector against God and made a vanity of it. Valéry certainly has his interest and Miss Sewell shows it, but was he more than an important minor poet?

Mr Cecil Sprigge gives us a disciple's generous appraisal of Croce. He sketches his career against the background of Italian

scene and circumstance and draws a noble profile. One could wish that he had insisted a little on Croce's detailed historical studies and on his literary criticism, which, outside Italy, have hardly yet had their meed of recognition.

SAUNDERS LEWIS

A READING OF GEORGE HERBERT. By Rosemond Tuve. (Faber; 25s.)

Scripture is to be interpreted by tradition, and though Herbert spent many hours in private meditation such as he describes in 'The Holy Scriptures', he was familiar with the traditional typology and wrote for a public to whom it was equally familiar. Professor Tuve sets out to show just how familiar he was and how much we by our ignorance miss, and this not only in meaning and association, but, as she rightly insists, in the 'tone' of Herbert's wit.

In the first part of the book she examines 'The Sacrifice', showing the compression of images well-known from liturgical sources and from Middle English poems of a similar kind, and the quality imparted to what was thus quite conventional by Herbert's own mind; in the second she assembles a number of typological themes to explain obscurities, restore lost associations and regularise distorted interpretations in various other poems. The evidence for the wide knowledge of this traditional interpretation of Scripture is taken from the illuminations in manuscripts, pictures from early block-books, and the windows of, for example, King's College Chapel, and many are reproduced as illustrations in the book. All this is excellent, and one can agree with Professor Tuve when she opposes those modern critics (she singles out Mr Empson by reason of his interpretation of 'The Sacrifice') who will not admit scholarship to have any contribution to make to aesthetic appreciation; her own last section on the two 'Jordan' poems, if nothing else, demonstrates how much it may. But one is less happy when she is reflecting on the nature of the images used by Herbert and their relevance to the contemporary mind; it is only at the end of the book that it is suggested that some of the symbols are meaningful outside a Christian context and some require that the context shall be learnt. However, this is a slight fault in a book which is both beautiful and enlightening, and which must certainly be read by anyone who is interested in George Herbert or in the metaphysical poets in general.

BENET WEATHERHEAD, O.P.

VOCATION (Religious Life: II). (Blackfriars Publications; 10s. 6d.)

The first book in this series was *Religious Sisters* which sought to diagnose the reasons for decline in religious vocations and to make constructive suggestions with particular reference to the training of Superiors and Novice Mistresses.