

the human situations they exemplify. Mr. Hendry's carefully observed stories of peasant life in the disputed territories of Venezia-Giula and Istria should, apart from their intrinsic interest of character and description, do much to make plain what a minority problem means in terms of *living*. He points no moral, but his method is the more effective for its moderation, and for its skill in allowing the clash between ancient tradition and ruthless power to appear at its most poignant level—among ordinary people, in small villages, doing their jobs.

I.E.

VIGNY. Introduction et notes par Fernand Baldensperger.  
(Classiques de l'Arbre: collection dirigée par Auguste Viatte.  
Printed in Canada. Editions de l'Arbre).

Alfred de Vigny has never been properly appreciated in this country, and it is lamentable that, at a time when *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires* and *Stello* are capable of meaning as much to us as they ever will, they are unobtainable. This publication of selections is evidently to be our wartime ration of Vigny. While thankful that it partially fills a gap, I cannot but feel that the editor might have done well to forego the idea of presenting a historically representative selection of his author in a hundred pages and given us only what would be of immediate interest to us. Of the plays, only *Chatterton* is of much significance now; certainly the Shakespeare translations could profitably have been omitted. We might also have been spared the remembrance that in most of his novels and historical romances, Vigny descended to this:

. . . Cruel! ingrat! reprit son ami, pouvez-vous me parler ainsi? Ne savez-vous pas, ne ne vous ai-je pas prouvé que l'amitié tenait dans mon cœur la place de toute les passions? Puis-je survivre, non seulement à votre mort, mais même au moindre de vos malheurs? Cependant laissez-moi vous fléchir et vous empêcher de frapper la France. O mon ami! mon seul ami! je vous en conjure à genoux, ne soyons pas ainsi parricides, n'assassinons pas notre patrie! . . . "

In reading *Eloa*, we can understand Baudelaire's admiration for Vigny:

"Je suis celui qu'on aime et qu'on ne connaît pas.  
Sur l'homme j'ai fondé mon empire de flamme  
Dans les désirs du cœur, dans les rêves de l'âme,  
Dans les liens des corps, attraités mystérieux,  
Dans les trésors du sang, dans les regards des yeux . . .  
Moi, j'ai l'ombre muette, et je donne à la terre  
La volupté des soirs et les biens du mystère . . . "

But in spite of *Eloa* and *La Maison du Berger*, it is perhaps less as a poet than as the moralist of *Stello* and *Servitude et Grandeur Militaires* that Vigny lives. An interesting moralist is almost inevitably an interesting personality, and from M. Baldensperger's long introduction we can see that Vigny's life is no less significant to us than his work, for he was unique among the solitaries of

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.