the other end of the classical plainsong period (which, as these writers clearly bring out, can no longer be considered an isolated phenomenon to be mentioned dutifully between Greek music and Western polyphony), is Professor Westrup's fascinating account of medieval secular song, which he has profusely illustrated with examples not only of absorbing interest but also often of real and easily comprehensible beauty.

It is, indeed, in its picture of the formation and later the immensely productive break-up of Western ecclesiastical chant (into the tropes, the liturgical drama, secular song and the origins of polyphony) that the new volume is at its best. The chapters on the chant itself, by Mgr Higini Anglès (Director of the Pontifico Instituto di Musica Sacra, Rome) are less rewarding. Excellent in many respects (particularly on Ambrosian chant), they are marred by an inadequate account of the notation, and by an excessively diplomatic Roman caution which avoids not only giving an opinion on the vexed problem of interpretation but even an adequate account of the conflicting schools of thought.

The copious musical examples have been transcribed where necessary (as in the plainsong examples) into modern notation, and careful translations have been added to all the foreign and Middle-English quotations. These things are typical of the well-mannered approach of a book which seeks to communicate information rather than merely to unload it, and which succeeds in communicating more than information: enthusiasm.

ERIC TAYLOR

SHAKESPEARE: THE LAST PHASE. By Derek Traversi. (Hollis and Carter; 21s.)

This study of the last plays belongs to the school of Shakespeare interpretation which derives from the genius and example of Mr Wilson Knight. Mr Traversi is concerned with symbolic themes of suffering and reconciliation, their development and interrelationship; questions of characterization, of stagecraft, even of moral ideas considered for their own sake, are not merely secondary to his purpose, they are hardly treated at all. For him, the crown of Shakespeare's mature poetry is a transparent symbolism to which every function of verse and plot contributes: the play itself is to be regarded as an expanded image.

The group consisting of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* is particularly open to this method of interpretation because in these romances Shakespeare indisputably abandons the limited realism which governs the action in his earlier plays; indeed, this abandonment is already in progress in the major tragedies: *Lear*

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 SHARROCK

STEFAN GEORGE. By E. K. Bennett.
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