

sifting the material so as to present an admirably lucid and penetrating account of his subject.

Stefan George, a Catholic by birth, with the Rhinelander's French and Latin affinities, came to see himself as the prophet and high-priest of a new and exclusive society whose values were to be wholly aesthetic and artistic. His aloof and carefully chiselled poems which profoundly influenced a select few in his own country have never found a wide European appeal. Mr Bennett's beautiful translations make one realize that much remains to be done for George in England.

Whereas George retreated to an ivory tower of aestheticism, his contemporary, Hauptmann, who began his career as a dramatist of the naturalist school, eventually took refuge from reality in a pagan and pantheistic temple of his own creation. His roots were in Silesia and he was at his best in the plays and in the impressive novel, 'The Fool in Christ, Emmanuel Quint', depicting the hardships, conflicts and religious yearnings of the peasants and workers, the fellow countrymen of mystics like Angelus Silesius. Dr Garten says that mysticism was a quality inherent in all Hauptmann's works, and that it was 'primarily Christian' though later it included 'Eastern and Gnostic ideas'—a use of the terms 'Christian' and 'mystic' which one might be inclined to question.

'The last word', as Mr March comments, 'will never be said about Kleist.' This little book may serve as a first word of introduction to a complex and original genius, a contemporary of the Romantics. Mr March scarcely does justice to Kleist's narrative writing which is more important and more intimately connected with the recurrent personal themes of Kleist's dramas than he appears to assume. The short stories deal with the essentially moral problems of the individual pitted against the world or society. Technically they are amongst the most subtle and at the same time powerful writings of their age, or indeed of any age.

ELISABETH STOPP

DOWNSIDE BY AND LARGE. By Hubert van Zeller, O.S.B. (Sheed and Ward; 21s.)

Two years after the biographical and even autobiographical *Willingly to School* comes the historical *Downside By and Large*. The enchanted atmosphere of the former work now becomes related to space and time; some of a schoolboy's disenchantments are even allowed to be manifest. For somehow the earlier and more personal volume contrives to tell us more about the school, the later record more about the author. Which perhaps is why experience shows that strangers to St Gregory's can find pleasure in a history of a school not their own.

Under the more or less informed and prejudiced eye of an alumnus indeed, the book will now and then (though hardly by and large) find itself at a disadvantage, as Dom Hubert's chosen memories rather than his own unfold. It was rash of the author to term a certain period 'undistinguished'; perhaps the characterization is just, but Downside's most recent war memorial by itself shows how Gregorians of that generation could rise to an occasion when it came, and there are survivors who have made their mark. Even while at school—was Dom Hubert's eye otherwise occupied just then?

A persistent search for the *res Gregoriana* hardly succeeds in discovering the recipe. For this no lack of knowledge or affection is responsible. It may be that an essential ingredient necessarily eludes any deliberate pursuit. If one who was born as a Gregorian out of due time, but shared the experience of the original 1814 party in coming from the direction of Shrewsbury, may venture an opinion, a sublime unconcern with the quiddity of the *res Gregoriana* is a notable characteristic. Previous literary chapters in the record having failed to alter this, one hopes that Dom Hubert's entertaining volumes will have no more serious result.

IVO THOMAS, O.P.

THE PERENNIAL ORDER. By Martin Versfeld. (Society of St Paul; 18s.)

This book about philosophy by a convert to Catholicism, who lectures in the University of Capetown, will arouse the interest not only of those who know South Africa, but of everyone who is interested in the *philosophia perennis*. The idea of order was a favourite one of St Thomas; the wise man puts things in order; there is hierarchy of order in creation, an inter-relationship in the scale of being between the highest and the lowest. This would seem to be the central theme of the book around which are grouped the main theses of the thomistic philosophy. Having made his metaphysical foundations secure by dealing with the object of philosophy, the author is able to make use of the method of modern philosophers in his approach to man and his experience. There are chapters on the relation of philosophy to science, morals, history, art and culture. Even the chapters on medieval Catholic culture and on the philosophy of history, which are incidental to the main purpose of the book, rely on fundamental principles and show how they can be applied. The author's knowledge of modern philosophers and his ability to use them in a particular context, though he may fundamentally disagree with their principles, is remarkable. Whether he is dealing with Bergson, Whitehead, Lloyd Morgan or Alexander, one cannot fail to be impressed with his sound judgment. One has the impression of great fairness in his criticism of plausible opinions. They are stated simply and without distortion.