

REVIEWS

croix without his journal? To French painting, and particularly to contemporary French painting, such an approach is without difficulty. More books probably have been written on Picasso than during his lifetime on any other painter. Miss Stein's *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, which was added to the list last year, is followed by Mme. Olivier's reminiscences, covering the years from 1903 till 1914. In many ways Mme. Olivier's book is the more vital of the two; it is shrewd, amusing and admirably illustrated.

Vlaminck, Derain, the Douanier Rousseau, Braoue, Matisse, Marie Laurencin, Van Dongen are all described and criticized. 'On a eu tort,' writes Mme. Olivier, 'de prêter à Rousseau des idées artistiques qu'il n'eut jamais. Il n'avait pas d'idées. Je l'ai bien connu. Il peignait simplement, sincèrement, comme "il voyait." Naïf et sensible, il était nerveusement doué pour la peinture. Un don naturel de peinture primitif.' And she continues, 'J'ai toujours préféré l'art de Derain à celui des autres. Son métier sain et vigoureux ne trouvait pas aisément son égal. La science de Picasso, sa profondeur, sa recherche perpétuelle, "toujours plus loin," l'ont sans doute placé en avant les autres. Mais Derain c'est autre chose. Plus français, plus sûr de lui, il lui manquait seulement, pour avoir la toute première place; ce côté un peu mystérieux qu'on trouve chez Picasso et quelquefois chez Matisse. . . Vlaminck n'était alors qu'un bon peintre impressioniste. Un grand sens de la composition, du métier, mais un certain manque de goût, d'élégance de l'esprit, de recherches dans le coloris le faisait un peu vulgaire. Peintre, doué, que ses moyens servaient beaucoup, mais dont la qualité était discutable. Je trouve qu'il est resté le même.'

As an introduction to the French painting of the decade preceding the war, Mme. Olivier's book could hardly be bettered.

J. P.-H.

GRAMOPHONE

DECCA POLYDOR. The flickering loveliness of the coloratura aria of the Zerbinetta from the Richard Strauss opera, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, is caught by Adele Kern, a soprano of the Vienna State Opera, supported by a small orchestra from the Berlin State Opera: this captivating essay in the style of the Italian *commedia d'arte* should not be missed (LY 6081, 3/6). Two horns, three oboes, one bassoon, a solo violin, with string accompaniment and a harpsichord continuo, from the Berlin Philharmonic conducted by Alois Melichar, play the *First Brandenburg Concerto* with all the robustness of the allegros, the sadness of the adagio, the gentle gravity of the Polacca: a set of three noble records, on which the organ *Prelude in E minor*

BLACKFRIARS

is given as a fill-up (LY 6082-4, 3/6 each). The same orchestra, conducted by Erich Kleiber, plays four *Germun Dances*, by Mozart, in the right manner of happy clophopping: a very pleasant record (CA 8171, 4/-).

H.M.V. A mixed bag, but the recording is generally full and firm. The Choir of the Temple Church needs no introduction to lovers of Bach, and its singing of the chorale *Jesu*, joy of *man's desiring*, matches the assured oboe playing of Leon Goossens: on the other side is the quartet and chorus, *Lord God of Heaven and Earth*, from Spohr's *Last Judgement* (B 8123, 2/6). The 'cello records well, and a discreet little *Tonadilla* of de Lasema as played by Pablo Casals is a delight: on the same disc he plays a *Largo* of Vivaidi and a *Gavotte* of Valentini (DA 1118, 4/-). Fritz Kreisler is a famous fiddler, and his ripe tone is heard in arrangements of the Londonderry Air and the Mendelssohnian *May Breeze* (DB 2117, 6/-). The clangour of Mark Hambourg in the *14th Hungarian Rhapsody* (C2645, 4/-) is in contrast with Alfred Cortot's observant delicacy in the *Barcarole in F sharp major* (DB 2030, 6/-); perhaps the comparison should be between the two composers, Liszt and Chopin. But Chopin can be laid on rich and thick, and Glazounov has done it; his *Chopiniana Suite* performed by the London Philharmonic under Sir Landon Ronald, together with Mendelssohn's *Spring Song* and *Spinning Song*, provide two records not without interest even to sensitive tastes (C 2638-9, 4/- each). A *Berceuse* and *Praeludium* by Jarnefelt are given with the finish we expect from John Barbirolli and his orchestra (B 8112 2/6). Sir Edward Elgar from his sick-bed personally supervised by telephone the recording of the *Triumphal March from Caractacus* by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lawrence Collingwood: the brilliant reproduction of the brass brings out the effective swagger of the music (DB 2142, 6/-).

DECCA. *The Black Diamond Express to Hell* is a novelty record deserving notice (F 3850, 1/6): a negro minister's frenzied sermon to his back-sliders—you never go to Sunday school . . . you've gotta go to Hell . . . aboard the express . . . Sin is the engineer, Pleasure is the headlight, the Devil is the conductor . . . next stop is Dance Hall station . . . and so on; a useful piece of documentation for a complete library of comparative religion.

T.L.