

## BLACKFRIARS

immensity of the change in the mode of human life which has resulted in all the complexities of the new age in which we live. No more vivid way of bringing this realization home can be imagined than the presentation in detail of the change in everyday things between the civilization of the eighteenth century and our own time. It is this that the third volume of the Quennells' great book attempts to do. We begin with the changes in agriculture, more productive methods of sowing, more effective ploughing—*i.e.*, more food for the vast new populations. Then a chapter on building in the eighteenth century, a sound appreciation of this exquisite period, but with the strange omission of any mention of Bath, England's most perfect town, and one of the most perfect survivals in Europe of civilized society. Then clothing, the coming of the spinning jenny and the power loom, and the evolution of costume : then modes of travelling, canals, bridges, the steam engine : and the first part ends with an interesting chapter on the Development of Sanitation, a chapter which might well restrain the enthusiasm of our modern doctrinaires for primitive conditions ! In the second part we are in the nineteenth century—the farmers' dilemma is described and a sympathetic account of Cobbett : in building, the rise of neo-Gothic, the break-up of continuity in all the arts and crafts : the sprawling growth of towns, the slums : macadam roads and steamships. All this is accompanied by numerous and extremely helpful illustrations and plans. The authors' outlook is sane and wise : they teach us to admire the beautiful things of the old times—we confess, for example, that we never appreciated the extraordinary beauty of the old farm wagons before—but they understand that these things are gone for ever and cannot be revived : they indulge no reveries of 'going back.' Their remarks on the slums are typical of this intelligent attitude : 'We think the final solution of the slum problem will be found in crowding far more than 127 houses on to the acre. . . . Instead of spoiling the country, we think it would be better to take the trees and grass into the towns. Don't rebuild the slums; blow them up with dynamite, then build great towers of dwellings and surround them with gardens.' A refreshing vision, worthy of Le Corbusier, and one that will be shared by all those who realize that the city, for us Europeans, has always been and will remain the centre and the instrument of civilization.

A.M.

PICASSO ET SES AMIS. By Fernande Olivier. (Stock, Paris; 30 francs.)

There is much to be said for a literary approach to art. Where, after all, would Berlioz be without his autobiography or Dela-

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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*