

Picasso's work over fifty years is sufficient evidence of the skill and fertility in invention of an artist who, however violently he may assault an accepted taste, is never other than alive—and aware of the fact.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN ENGLISH SINCE 1900. By Eric Partridge and John W. Clark. (Andrew Dakers; 18s.)

It was an excellent idea to include a study of the English language in a series of 'Twentieth Century Histories', for language is a principal instrument of any culture and its changes are a faithful reflection of the ideas it exists to serve. Mr Partridge is well known as a chronicler of words, but his contribution to this volume cannot be called successful. He attempts too much, and achieves too little. His introductory summary of recent English literature is largely a mosaic of the opinions of Messrs Spender, Speaight and Reed, and he devotes too much space to generalised statements, 'tendencies of the time', which, although interesting enough, leave too little room for the exact analysis of linguistic change which such a study demands. He calls in expert witnesses to write of Dialect, the varieties of Dominions English and the teaching of English in schools. His own use of the language, with its prodigality of parenthesis (one sentence is a page and three quarters long), can scarcely be called a fair copy of readable English.

Mr Clark, an American professor of English, deals with the development of the English spoken and written in the United States, and his half of the book is in every respect admirable. His chapters on Vocabulary, Idiom and Syntax, Pronunciation and Spelling, are lively and erudite, fortified with a wealth of example and astute comment. His systematic survey of the English Americans use will be of the greatest interest to British readers, and his mastery of his material is itself a good example of a humane understanding of the use of words and of the writer's responsibility.

I.E.

THE MAKING OF A NATIONAL THEATRE. By Geoffrey Whitworth. (Faber and Faber; 25s.)

On July 13th His Majesty the King is due to lay the foundation stone of the National Theatre on the South Bank—surely the most significant moment in the Festival of Britain. In this great circumstance it is fitting that there now appears a book setting forth the history of the struggle which has brought about this consummation. Its author, Geoffrey Whitworth, has done more than any other living person to turn a splendid dream into an imminent reality, and by his close identification with the movement over many exciting and laborious years—with