

BLACKFRIARS

likely to be better known from that source than from any other, we feel it is out of place here; but 'Sang with **God's** sons amidst the stars' (ibid.) is magnificent.

The **book** is to be strongly recommended, not only to those who attend Benedictine schools or churches, but also to those who have the welfare of English hymnology at heart, and those who base their meditations directly on the sacred liturgy, to whom the interpretations here given should prove a great help.

H.C.T.

STONES OF RIMINI. By Adrian Stokes. (Faber & Faber; 12/6.)

Never probably has there been a greater need than at the present for the imaginative, emotive criticism which is an essential complement to merely intellectual scholarship. 'If we would understand a visual art,' writes Mr. Stokes in the first chapter of his study of the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini, 'we ourselves must cherish some fantasy of the material that stimulated the artist, and ourselves feel some emotional reason why his imagination chose to employ one material rather than another. Poets alone are trustworthy interpreters. They alone possess the insight with which to recreate subjectively the unconscious fantasies that are general.' Mr. Stokes is the type of what Pater in the introduction to *The Renaissance* calls the aesthetic critic. His approach to the reliefs in the Tempio at Rimini is appreciative rather than strictly critical, and all the more exclusively emotive in being entirely unhistorical.

Mr. Stokes writes about Agostino's reliefs, not about Agostino. His interest is less in the impression of personality upon material than of material upon personality. 'In Quattro Cento carving,' according to Mr. Stokes' definition, 'plastic aim, however strong, is yet subservient to the love of stone,' and he confesses in another place, 'I realise that I owe in the first place to the contemplation of Agostino's **work** all that I feel about stone.' Of the three sections into which the book is divided only the last is strictly speaking devoted to the Tempio. One hundred prefatory pages are largely geological, too geological possibly for those who are sufficiently old-fashioned to feel that the potentialities of his material is not the sculptor's only problem. 'Carving,' Mr. Stokes declares, 'is an articulation of something that already exists in the block. The carved form should never, in any profound imaginative sense, be freed from its matrix. In the case of reliefs, the matrix does actually remain: hence the heightened carving appeal of which this technique is capable . . . Agostino's reliefs are the apotheosis of carving. **His** isolation, and the moderate approval that his **work** has won, but indicate how undeveloped, generally, is the emotion that the

REVIEWS

very idea of stone carving should inspire : or, at any rate, how easily it gives ground to emotions aroused by considerations of plasticity.' The value of such an attitude rests characteristically in its modernity. Mr. Stokes' refusal to approach the Renaissance through classical sculpture results in a welcome emphasis on the elements in it which were novel and underivative.

But Mr. Stokes, in spite of his neglect of history, shows himself as sympathetic to Agostino's illustrative as to his sculptural quality. His discussion of the mythological conceptions of the reliefs in the Chapel of the Planets is the work of one entranced by what is in fact an imaginative epitome of the Renaissance, 'a pagan essence, undiluted, snatched from Time's filter.' Mr. Stokes' enthusiasm compensates the difficulties of a path which one feels at times to have been needlessly circuitous. To-day even Pater's distorted shadow is acceptable.

J. P.-H.

GRAMOPHONE

H.M.V. 'Times have changed since vapidness was the vogue and Clara Schumann had to champion her husband's only Piano-forte Concerto ; but Romanticism in the grand style and immediately appealing melodies have now established its popularity ; and Cortot with the London Philharmonic (DB 2181-4, 6/- each) displays a purity and delicacy through all the rising emotion, quaint dialogue and energy of the Concerto. Those were the days when even Mendelssohn might wrinkle the brows of concert-goers ; however he was not often dull, and the hard brilliance of Mischa Levitzki in the *Rondo capriccioso in E, Op. 14* (DA 1317, 4/-) is not unfitting. There is a third great Schumann, Elisabeth, and for her record (DA 1355, 4/-) of four little songs—*An die Nachtigall* and *Liebhaber in Allen Gestalten* by Schubert, *Lorely* and *Ständchen* by Schumann—there is only one verdict—exquisite. An improved gramophone technique has brought back Caruso's voice in two songs, Fucito's *Sultanto a te* and Donaudy's *Vaghissima sembianza* (D.4 1367, 4/-). Anti-Nazi propaganda and the political caricatures miss the Goring who has made himself personally responsible for the excellence of the Berlin State Opera ; the best Aryan singers have been given long contracts, the orchestra is better than ever before : a series of records is being made by the impressive company that has been collected, the first of which (DB 4414, 6/-) gives two excerpts from *Rigoletto*, the scene where Monterone is led to execution with the duct between Gilda and Rigoletto, and the famous Quartet : the soprano is Erna Berger. Listeners-in will recognize the signature tune of the B.B.C. feature *In Town To-night* in Eric Coates' *Knightsbridge March*