

REVIEWS

'I have had,' he said in an engaging speech after the last curtain, 'to unlearn a lot of my own nonsense, and to learn to speak the lines put into my mouth by the *immoral* bard!' The spirit in which he attacked his task becomes plain from the fact that he disdains the easier laughs, avoids any over-stressing of obvious points, and by a thousand subtleties of intonation and gesture makes the old rogue human and credible, a figure not of farce but of comedy. He is Falstaff. Shakespeare might have created the part for him; he must indeed have created it for just such another, for Mr. Robey is surely of the lineage of the great actors of Shakespeare's time.

The play as a whole is well staged and well acted. *Henry IV, Part I*, is in reality only half a play, and lacks perfection of form; like all the historical plays, it shows Shakespeare part as creator, part as interpreter—creator indeed, even here, but within the narrower compass of historical fact, and with such surety that one can but believe the actual personages were as he saw them. How admirably he seizes the Welshness of Owen Glendower!

The Welsh scene was charming in its lyricism and pathos, an inset jewel in the robuster context. The battle scenes were unusually convincing, and the use of strong, uncoloured lights on a dead black background gave an illusion of vast space. In the casting there is one serious blemish. Hotspur, though skillfully and vigorously presented, appears as a middle-aged tough who might have held non-commissioned rank in the Black and Tans. As a result, the whole pattern of the play is thrown out of balance, for Shakespeare purposely reduced his years, that his sharp, bright youth might make him a constant pendant to Prince Harry; their rivalry is an essential theme. It was a curious piece of pedantry that made the producers neglect Shakespeare's precise indications for historic detail.

BARBARA BARCLAY CARTER.

GRAMOPHONE

The chief treasure this month comes from H.M.V.—the *Eroica Symphony*, Beethoven's No. 3. This is superbly played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky, and those who are fortunate enough to have the Fifth Symphony by the same orchestra and with the same conductor will need no further inducement to possess themselves of this album (DB 2346-51). It is a wonderful piece of recording, the lovely tone and the balance of the wind and strings is perfectly reproduced, notably in the second movement, the great funeral march. H.M.V. also provide another Beethoven record of great distinction—Backhaus playing the *Moonlight Sonata*

BLACKFRIARS

(DB 2405-6), in which the beautiful singing tone of the First Movement is especially remarkable. Among vocal recordings the young self-taught operatic soprano, Miliza Korjus, sings Weber's *Invitation to the Dance* and a Chopin *Mazurka* (C 2721). It is a feat of coloratura singing of amazing range and clarity, which, when combined with the brass and wind instruments of the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, is almost shattering in its effect.

From Decca Polydor comes some beautiful singing with the same famous orchestra: Julius Patzak, of the Munich National Theatre, sings two Mozart arias, not, as the label leads one to fear, in English, but in German, and gives them something of the warm romantic quality of the true German love-song (CA 8196). The same orchestra also plays Berlioz' *Roman Carnival Overture* in a finished and sprightly manner (CA 8197). Heinrich Schlusnus lends his beautiful voice and style to nothing more distinguished than an *Agnus Dei* by Bizet and the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria*, but he makes the most possible of this famous and popular hybrid. Franz von Vecsey plays a *Nocturne* by Sibelius and Bach's *Air on the G String* with a remarkably fine and sonorous tone, and a rather unusual record is the Mozart *Sonata in C Major for Strings and Organ*, played by the Dortmund State Music School Orchestra and Gerhard Bunk (CA 8195).

Turning to Decca's lighter releases: On F 5438 Afrique impersonates, with varying success, Wallace Beery, Richard Tauber, Paul Robeson, Maurice Chevalier and Bernard Shaw. The pick of Ambrose's latest will be found on F 5403 (*Pop goes your heart*) and F 5408 (*Oopsala and Whistling Lover's Waltz*). They may be compared with the straight Continental dance-music of Oskar Joost's tangos *In meiner Laubenkolonie* and *Wenn der Tiroler Tango tanzt* on F 5449.

F.F.T.

NOTICES

VOCATION TO MARRIAGE. By Fr. Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; 3/6.)

HOLY WEEK. By Fr. Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; 2/6.)

One of the most attractive of Fr. Bede's spiritual books, *The House of Gold*, has been wisely divided by its publishers into three parts, two of which they now offer under the above titles. The author's addresses on Marriage, taken down as he spoke them, are full of a marvellous understanding, sympathy and encouragement, full of lofty ideals set forth in terms of practical problems, at once an inspiration and a guide. They should be read especially by the married and by those plighted to this end, but will be found interesting and even helpful