

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

alterations of hope and despair and the intervention of two world wars—is in the position of knowing all the facts and of possessing a lucidity of style, and an impartial outlook, which makes his narrative at once a chronicle of truth and a fascinating experience for all who have the well-being of the British Theatre at heart.

Mr Whitworth's story is too packed with incident for an easy selection of its high-lights. It shows for instance, how, in 1903, a Mr Badger, a wealthy brewer with a passion for Shakespeare, allowed one half of his gift of £3,000 to be diverted to the fostering of the National Theatre idea which had been aroused by his plea for a statue to the Poet. It shows how that most individualistic of actors, Henry Irving, was willing to support the idea of a National Theatre and how other actors of distinction followed suit. It traces the inception and rise of the British Drama League founded by Mr Whitworth himself with the clarion call that 'the Theatre is everybody's business', and of the subsequent influence the League had upon the whole National Theatre project. There is the history of the purchase of temporary sites. There are absorbing scraps of correspondence here published for the first time. The preface to Harley Granville-Barker and William Archer's book *Plan for a National Theatre*, invaluable to those for whom the book is no longer available, or for whom it has been superseded by the impact of more recent events, is given in full. The entire debate in both Houses of Parliament which led to the granting of the South Bank site and Government support for the venture is happily included. And all fears as to the future of the Old Vic are now dispelled. Lilian Baylis's timeless institution is to be incorporated into the National Theatre and the Directors of the Old Vic together with a panel selected from its Governors will determine the artistic policy of the new venture.

Mr Whitworth is modest about himself and the part he has played in this growing pageant. But writing, however reticent, has a trick of disclosing the writer—and here emerge a graceful spirit, an unswerving faith, an enthusiasm ever young, and an untarnished mind.

ERNEST MILTON

IALOGUE OF COMFORT AGAINST TRIBULATION. By St Thomas More.  
(Sheed and Ward; 10s. 6d.)

We are indebted to Monica Stevens of Vermont for a transcription into modern English of Saint Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort*, written by him in prison in 1534. It is a book not so much dealing with doctrine as under the form of a dialogue with the dilemma of a Christian nobleman (Hungarian) under Turkish rule; in reality it is a challenge to the claims of the King to rule the Church. There is the great passage