

*Crafts of the Countryside* is a factual account of twenty rural industries, from basket making to ploughing, admirably illustrated by photograph and diagram. Mr Stowe is more than an enthusiast, anxious to revive crafts that have been threatened by the processes of mass-production. He is practical, realist, and justifies the traditional crafts by the criterion of quality. He is, too, an excellent writer, and once more proves the capacity of a skilled craftsman to find an exact medium in which to describe his work. How truly does he remark that 'language is given us to make our meaning clear, and not to wrap it in misunderstanding'. For even the most industrialised of readers Mr Stowe's patient explanations cannot be other than clear. He exemplifies a whole philosophy of the right making of things without ever going beyond his brief, which is simply to explain how baskets are woven and roofs are thatched and why traditional methods deserve to survive, and, even more important, to develop. I.E.

JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOLK MUSIC COUNCIL. Volume I, 1949. (Heffer; 10s.6d.)

This first volume of the *Journal* is chiefly devoted to the proceedings of the Council's first conference at Basle. The conference concerned itself very carefully but unsuccessfully with the problem of the notation and classification of folk-song, which might be considered rather premature since no real agreement was reached about what constituted a folk-song.

Amongst the tedious and prolix ramifications of the history of folk-art a few gems are found of wonderful beauty and great aesthetic value, and long before it became a romantic cult of the nineteenth century folk-music had exercised an enormous influence upon professional musicians which no historian can ignore. But it is not so easy to see what is the use of this minute and exact investigation. It is most unlikely to be of use to composers, and does not appear to affect the basis of our art at this pedantic level of enquiry. Folk music (which as an art form is very limited indeed in its appeal to modern listeners) is, if not already dead, in its last agonies, and hopes to resuscitate it are foolishly sanguine and ignore the changing structure and tempo of modern society. The most it can hope for is a hot-house existence as a pleasant rustic recreation for jaded urban intellectuals. Furthermore, a process of scientific classification, notation, and so on, is one of the things most likely to give it its death blow.

However, if the reader himself is a 'folk'-addict, and is already quite well informed about folk-music, he will no doubt draw both pleasure and benefit from these usually rather fragmentary but often well-informed papers on such subjects as 'The Vogel Gryff Pageant', 'Le Recueil et la Notation de la Musique Folklorique', or 'Le Chanson Cleftique'.

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