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LES ETAINS FRANCAIS
published by Tardy, Paris, 1964, £11 5s.

Until recently the collector of French pewter had only a few articles and two books to guide him in the identification of his pieces. One of the books, Germain Bapst's *Etudes sur l'étain dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge* (1884), deals only with a period from which a mere handful of pieces have survived; the other, Adolphe Riff's *Les étains strasbourgeois du XVIIe au XIXe siècle* (1925), though a model of its kind, covers the products of only one of the many centres of pewter-making in France. A few years ago, however, the Paris firm of Tardy started to publish in parts a comprehensive work on French pewter, and the book under review is the final revised version of this, bound into a single volume with indexes and additional classified plates of marks. Some idea of the scope and importance of the work may be obtained from the fact that, including Strasbourg, it lists under separate readings well over five hundred places in France where pewter was made, records the names of 7,800 pewterers and reproduces 1,825 marks.

The book commences with a general technical and historical survey of pewter. This covers its composition and the composition of related alloys, methods of manufacture, assaying and marking, decoration, cleaning, in-pest and its treatment, restoration and repair, fakes and French legislation relating to pewter from 1351 to 1911. Much of the information given here is of general interest and, as it cannot be found easily elsewhere, its inclusion makes the book an important work of reference for all pewter

collectors, even if they are not especially interested in French pewter.

The remainder of the volume consists of a gazetteer of places in France where pewter is known to have been made. Each entry includes, where possible, a fully-documented history of pewter-making in the centre concerned, accompanied by lists of the names and dates of the pewterers recorded there, and illustrated with reproductions of their marks and photographs of their work. So much information is given here, most of it for the first time in print, that any criticism would be an impertinence. In short, this is one of those rare books that is of absolutely fundamental importance to its subject, and no serious collector of French pewter can afford to be without his own copy.

C. BLAIR

I MUST SAY
Adrian Daintrey

Chatto & Windus, 1963, 30s.

One of the fly-leaves of this painter's autobiography shows a pen-sketch of the via Appia of such transparent simplicity that the reader may, at first sight, dismiss it as no more than hasty decoration. Closer examination reveals that it is the result of a highly developed and individual technique and—as so often with simplicity in art—another example of *ars est celare artem*. No maxim could be more appropriate for describing Mr. Daintrey's painting, personality and writing. In its quiet way, this is a masterly little piece of autobiography.

In an age when the 'smart-alec' modern painter gets most of the shows and, by means of ingenious 'public relations', sells his

work for extravagant sums, Mr. Daintrey's work and writing introduce a note of sanity and craftsmanship. He is, he admits, a traditional painter. 'The *avante-garde* may,' he says, 'look forward—often to a blank wall. I, in the rear-guard, look back; there is much to see.'

And much he does see. He examines the modern mania for originality at all costs, realizing that a really original artist is generally unaware that he is being 'original': if he has something to say, he says it as simply and naturally as he can. 'The over-valuation of originality,' he says, 'may easily lead those who are not by nature innovators to quest unprofitably in barren fields.'

Mr. Daintrey has written the story of his life—which includes his war years as a camouflage officer—in a way which recalls the distinguished, unostentatious prose of professional writers such as George Gissing or W. H. Hudson. His work, like their's, will surely last when all the self-styled eccentrics and 'originals' are long forgotten. Most of Mr. Daintrey's painting has found discerning private patrons all over the world; but he says, without a trace of rancour, that he still often has difficulty in showing it. Gallery directors should read this book: they may then appreciate what the word 'traditional' means.

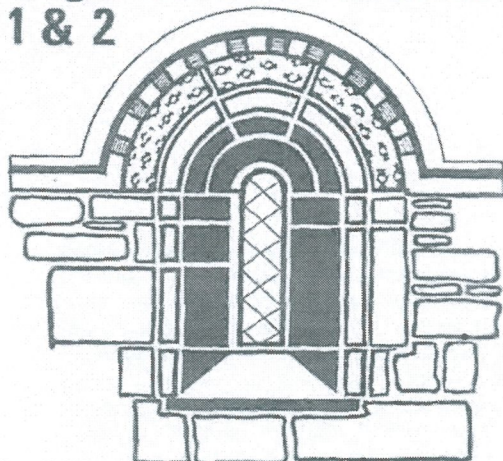
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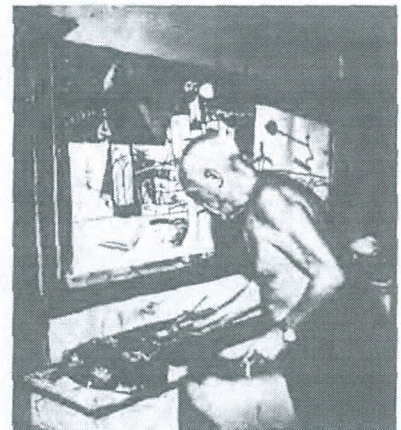
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