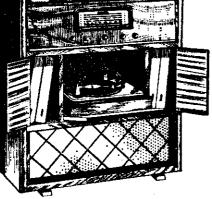
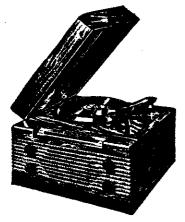
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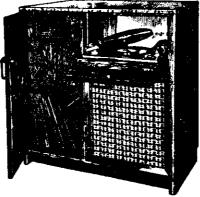
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N.Z. LISTENER, AUGUST 25, 1950.



A. E. CADDICK (above) is to review Jack Lindsay's "Charles Dickens" in the ZB Book Review Session next Sunday evening, August 27. Three other books are to be discussed: Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare's "Let Candles Be Brought In" (R. M. Burdon); "A Cen-tury of Cricketers," by A. G. Moyes (E. J. Aim); and "Oscar Wilde and the Black Douglas," by the Marquess of Queensbury (Pat Lawlor). The chairman will be Kenneth Melvin

(continued from previous page)

seem to matter very much, or they were at least secondary to the rush of resonant and booming language, and the audacious wit. In Venus Observed, however the language is less brilliant, more strained, the wit more spasmodic, so that the faults stand out much more clearly, and become at times irritating.

The Duke, his three ex-mistresses, the son who has to choose his mother from among them, make a typical Christophe- Fry situation, but the theme becomes obscured and finally lost altogether in a mass of irrelevancies. There is still the occasional scintillation, enough probably to keep an audience in a good mood until the next one comes along, but not enough for the reviewer to accept as the real thing. It just does not quite come off. Christopher Fry is imitating Christopher Fry.

Imitation, we are told, can be the sincerest form of flattery, but when the originator becomes the copyist, there is a hint of Narcissus. The original features are still there, but it is the flat mirrored image which we see in the pool, rather than the three-dimensional, vivid, living face about it.

-Isobel Andrews

## THE THREE TRAVELLERS

SECRET VALLEYS, by John Cousins; Jonathan Cape. English price, 9/6.

SOME years after the war, three men undertake a journey to visit a guerrilla chief in his native island, Crete. They have been members of an aircrew employed among other things in dropping supplies to partisans, and for many reasons they have come to regard the chief with great affection. They knew nothing of him; but a half-humorous, half-patronising idea grew round their reflections on the man. He became a name-Papadopoulos, a kind of