

PEERSONALITIES

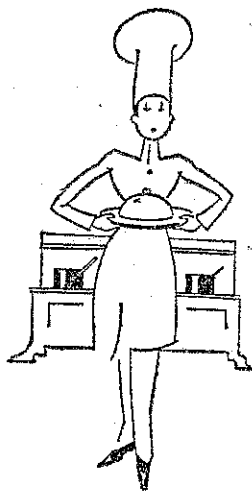
of the week

BOULT AT OXFORD

FRANK HOWES meets Adrian Boulton at Oxford before the war and describes a few incidents. "The Christ Church man with the bald head, continually cropped up. If I went to sing in the Bach Choir he was there playing the piano, or singing the bass solos. If I went to our local competitions festival, he was there, too, competing in a chamber music class with a youth who has since become a famous clarinet player (Frederick Thurston). He coached our choir in Parry's "Pied Piper." He was seen on the river "stroking" the House second eight. Then A.B. disappeared—I discovered afterwards he had gone to Leipzig to learn a thing or two about conducting from the great Nikisch.

A BAKER'S SON

PIETRO MASCAGNI (now in his 72nd year), is best known for his Sicilian opera "Cavalleria Rusticana," which won him a prize offered by a publisher. His more ambitious efforts have been hardly successful. The composer's early days were adventurous. His father, a baker, intended the boy to be a lawyer, but Pietro studied



music in secret. Early successes won his father over, and he was sent to Milan. Becoming tired of the academic classes at the Conservatoire, young Mascagni joined a travelling opera company as conductor. Later he gave pianoforte lessons, until the furore created by "Cavalleria Rusticana" brought him fame and money. "I've written 14 operas," said Mascagni recently, "all as good as 'Cavalleria Rusticana,' yet the world persists in ignoring the other thirteen."

PARTLY SPANISH

ONE of the best mezzo-sopranos on the records is undoubtedly Ninon Vallin, who, although described as French, is partly Spanish, which possibly accounts for her splendid singing of de-

Falla's Spanish songs, especially those from his ballet, "Love the Sorcerer." Like Conchita Supervia in her Spanish songs, her very voice changes, and is charged with dark passion. Apart from her Spanish songs, Ninon Vallin is best known as the greatest interpreter of the songs of Reynolds Hahn. As an



absolute contrast to the songs of "Love the Sorcerer," we have such exquisite numbers as "If My Thoughts Had Wings," "The Exquisite Hour" and others. Her voice is impressively beautiful and rich and without any of that distressful vibrates that disfigures the art of so many modern singers.

ONE OF "THE SIX"

ONE of the youngest of the French group of young composers, formerly known as "The Six," Francis Poulenc (born 1899), is already a man with a past. In his youth he consorted with Erik Satie, Milhaud, Auric, Jean Cocteau and others of the "miscellany" class. He was intimate with Picasso and the Cubists, he set poems by that flippantly earnest rebel, Guillaume Apollinaire, and now, having sown his wild oats, he is said to be going the way of all rebels—back to the classics. Poulenc's goal is apparently Mozart. It is not yet certain that he has reached it, but there is plenty of time. He plays personally in the recording of his own trio.

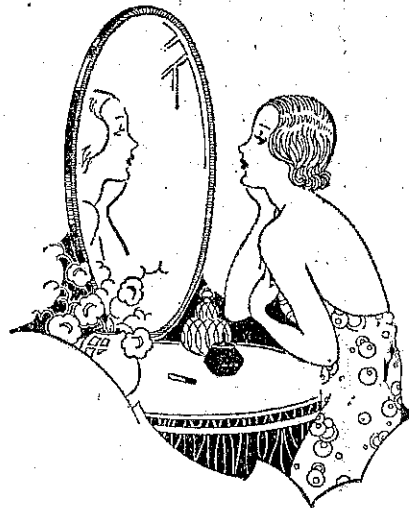
LIPSCOMB'S METHODS

W. P. LIPSCOMB'S methods in putting thrillers on gramophone records have taught him the art of compression, and in his own words he describes how much one can get into a few minutes, but there is no opportunity for frills or beating about the bush. Mr. Lipscomb says:—"There can be no fencing for an opening, no housemaid or butler to lead up to the entrance of a principal actor. For each play we have to open with great emphasis, and at once inspire the imagination of un-

known thousands of listeners in the theatre royal of the sitting room. In preparing an accepted thriller for the gramophone, I pick my players, read the script to them, hold a couple of rehearsals, have try-outs in front of the microphone in the recording studio for the technical staff to make sure of balance of voices, etc. We have many ingenious devices to gain our effects. You think that you hear a revolver fired. Well, you do not, it is merely that a man snaps his finger and thumb close to the microphone, because this gives the desired noise, whereas an actual pistol explosion would be ineffective. A knock at the door is tried twenty times in various parts of the studio until the right tone is registered, and the tramp of feet is gained by gloved hands being pressed upon a box filled with shingle. An explosion, we found, could be represented by the dropping of a Chinese gong, a tray or a collection of old iron strung together, to produce a full-toned sound rather than a sharp detonation which would not be effective."

ATTRACTIVE BLONDE

THE crowning glory of Elsie Carlisle is her attractive golden blonde hair. A lady journalist learned that an



egg shampoo on a week and a camomile the next week kept it in perfect colour, while an "Alice" band kept it tidy during rehearsals. The style of dressing favoured was a flat wave and lost of curls, with an attractive coxcomb. When asked if she brushed it a lot and rarely wore a hat, her questioner knew the answer would be "yes," and it was. Elsie Carlisle is heard at the B.B.C. fairly frequently, and her admirers are numbered by thousands all over the world. In most countries it is her excellent gramophone records that endear her to radio listeners.