

instances the players are the San Francisco Symphony personnel (or as many as desire this off-season employment).

The good judgment expressed in these community-conceived ventures promises to communicate itself also to the forthcoming tournament from which a successor to Pierre Monteux will emerge as music director of the Symphony. After seventeen productive years on the Coast, Monteux has left a responsive instrument and a sound tradition. The management is not disposed to intrust either to a temporal phenomenon. The assignment may go to one of this year's aspirants or it may not. There is no sense of urgency toward a quick resolution of the issue, nor is there bias for temporizing.

Of those who have been summoned from as far away as Johannesburg in South Africa (Enrique Jorda) or Stuttgart in Germany (Karl Münchinger), the inclination is to eliminate such committed personalities as George Szell (Cleveland) or Alfred Wallenstein (Los Angeles). The elder statesmen, such as Bruno Walter, Leopold Stokowski, and even Victor de Sabata, are hardly for the long pull. This leaves, in addition to Jorda and Münchinger, Erich Leinsdorf (Rochester) and Massimo Freccia (Baltimore). If none seems the predestined answer to San Francisco's problem, the slate will doubtless be rubbed clean and a new panel selected for next year.

One factor in the situation is labeled a canard by those who know it best. That is the widespread opinion in musical circles that San Francisco is a town with a "tough" union policy, that replacements in the orchestra are hard to promote from non-local sources. Rather, there is a six-months' waiting period, after which any player who is otherwise union affiliated may appear for an audition. "We have gotten many of our good players that way," says Howard Skinner, the orchestra manager. "We don't bring them in, but they do show up when auditions are announced." It's not impossible that the word goes out along a grapevine when a good second trumpet or a young oboist is wanted, the Westward migration even subsidized, perhaps, by an interested "alumnus." If appropriate for a fleet-footed half-back, why not for a sweet-sounding flute? Skinner doesn't deny that San Francisco could do more to promote its own sources of supply by fostering such a training orchestra as the Chicago Civic Symphony. That's high on the agenda when, as, and, if a likely candidate appears in the jousts this fall and serious planning for the future is instituted.

—IRVING KOLODIN.

POETRY

(Continued from page 21)

competence is subtle and his final achievement rewarding. His is a genuine, if limited, talent.

—I. L. SALOMON.

A LAND AND A PEOPLE. By Shirley Barker. Crown Publishers. \$2.75. Blessed is the poet with roots in a tradition, and Shirley Barker is at her best in ballads and narratives of her New England people. She has a natural storyteller's gift with an aptness for colorful dialogue and a skilful sense of material organization. In some of these poetic encounters there are the twice-told tales with a new twist, especially in the effective character study "John Alden Speaks for Himself," in which John sets himself straight with posterity, concluding with:

You know the end—the end that is never over—
Three hundred springs have dwindled away in fall,
But still men sneer at me for a laggard lover
Who was never a lover at all.

Miss Barker has an unobtrusive technique of simple rhymes and meters, but they are the rugged hackneys of her primary poetic impulse—to tell a story or present a personality. The vigor of the lines overcomes the weakness of some easy rhyming and casual rhetoric. In her loyalty to New England, Miss Barker sums up a pride of heritage, perhaps a justifiable conceit, too, in ancestry:

They built before us: here and there an ell,
And now and then a gable—never whole



Byron H. Reece—"candidly derivative."

Or to a grand design. If it were well,
They did not ask; if it were beautiful,
Not half as much as did it serve the need.
One marble moment of the Parthenon,
Ten thousand years of wattle laced with weed
We cannot call them back who have not gone.

—A. M. SULLIVAN.

A SONG OF JOY AND OTHER POEMS. By Byron Herbert Reece. Dutton. \$2.75. This is the third volume of lyrics, ballads, and sonnets by Byron Herbert Reece, a young poet whose talent is of a high order. As in his two previous books of poetry, "Bow Down in Jericho" and "The Ballad of the Bones," his work reflects his indebtedness to a rich heritage of folk poetry—the sonorous cadences of the Psalmists and early English balladry. These are not his only influences—a cloud of witnesses encompasses him: the metaphysical and religious poets, together with Christina Georgina Rossetti, W. H. Davies, Millay, Frost, and, of course, Blake.

Poetry which is so candidly derivative runs a great risk of imperilling its own standing as creative art; however admirably it is accomplished, a poem "in the manner of" is not a living and breathing poetic entity. Now if a poet chooses to remain in a certain school of expression it is one thing, but if he allows himself to speak in the very accents, idiom, and manner of specific and individual influences it is another matter and his stature as a poet is lessened thereby.

In the first instance Mr. Reece's voice remains his own. He is so steeped in the great tradition of Biblical and Elizabethan literary form that its qualities and characteristics seem as natural to him as breathing. The lovely religious songs with their quaint archaisms, their innocence and simplicity, are as authentic as if they had been written by some singer of that old day, as are the rousing ballads with their engaging folk rhythms, their vigor and dramatic intensity. And in the retelling in verse of Biblical tales he employs all the rich color and splendid sonorities of a poetic language which is really timeless and ageless, and under no copyright.

It is by the specific influences which dominate so much of his work that Mr. Reece's poetic identity is threatened. He cannot have been unaware of how closely the manner and indeed many of the stanzas of the title poem parallel lines in Edna Millay's "Mortuus," nor of the accents, if not the philosophy, of Frost and Housman, speaking above his own in some of the briefer lyrics. Most young poets,

it is true, reflect what they admire, but the strong talents shake off their influences. Mr. Reece's poetic gifts are so considerable, his ear so flawless, and his craftsmanship so impeccable that it is to be hoped he will not be content to be so often the arranger of themes, the virtuoso rather than the creative artist.

—SARA HENDERSON HAY.

RING SONG. By Naomi Replansky. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50. A first book is always a serious adventure to the reader as well as the poet. Let it be said that Naomi Replansky has a lively, enterprising eye in observing modern life and its confusions. She has an original and daring diction with the gift for making words dance at the crack of her whip. Her poetic range varies from a surprising maturity of judgment on the world and its folly to occasional evidence of juvenile smugness toward tradition.

In an impressive poem, "The Six Million," she paraphrases the ancient miracle of Meshach, Shadrach, and Abednego to tell the story of the fiery furnaces of Hitler from which none survived. It is a bitter, hard, questioning and cynical poem.

No gods were there, nor demons.
They died at the hands of men,
The cold that came from men,
The lions made like men,
The furnace built by men.



—Bernard Cole.

Naomi Replansky—"bitter, cynical."

Miss Replansky is modern, a bit skeptical, but there is plenty of excitement in what she sees and how she reports it. In "A Visit to the Zoo," she reverses the situation and puts the poet behind bars. She warns that the poet will bite if aroused. People are shamed on seeing the poet

and withdraw warily
because hunger has such a big mouth,
opening everywhere, even in crowds.

There is vitality here, freshness in words and ideas, an uncertain vers-

libre technique, and a trifle too much cynicism which we hope she will outgrow before its canker eats into her high talents.
—A. M. SULLIVAN.

NEW AND SELECTED POEMS. By Thomas Hornby Ferril. Harper. \$3.

Who are the cousins the mind
makes?
How does a sand lily in a vacant
lot
Give you the rose-glow towers,
the miniver princes?
How can a cottonwood in the
dusty rain
Give you the tap of a sandal in
Argolis?

Into this rhetorical question is packed much of Thomas Hornby Ferril's poetic credo—a sense of the kinship of history with the present, a conviction of the inseparableness of all that has been with all that is. "Two themes, time and continuity, have given Ferril's poetry its color, direction, and individuality," writes H. L. Davis in his foreword to Mr. Ferril's volume, the garnering of the most important of his poetic output.

Because Mr. Ferril writes so graphically and with such deep affection about the Rocky Mountain country he knows so well, he might have been labeled a regional poet, except that above the regionalism and the celebration of a particular geographical locality is that wider quality of universality, "the long dimension" of man's spirit. In the poems which recall vividly the early Western American scene and describe the changes which have since come (also those in the section entitled "American Testament," a transcontinental view) the larger symbology is still that of the enduring human spirit against whatever changing background.

Oh I will not forget the measured
sagas
Of older wayfaring across the
world.
We'll keep them, too. We add to
what they are . . .

These poems were written to be read aloud, the foreword tells us, and undoubtedly the vigor and the color and the sweep of their language and imagery would contribute to the effectiveness of such a medium. But these qualities are not lost to the silent reader, and some of the briefer and more subjective lyrics, with their concision and restraint, are better taken in quiet, I think. I found Mr. Ferril's poems not only stimulating at first reading, but good to return to, surely a valid test of a poet's real worth.

—SARA HENDERSON HAY.

Letter from Korea

By Edna L. S. Barker

BROTHER, I send this by a friendly soldier
To tell you the parcel of seeds came, in this time of the Tiger,
In this year of Desolation. It is good for us that our father
Taught us to hoe and harvest when we were children,
To value the yellow blossom of the melon more than idle incense lilies.
You who are rich with land in your Western country
May walk in your garden at sunset and are never hungry.
I am glad this is so. Gather your sons together, read my letter,
Tell them their uncle, who was the hat merchant of Seoul,
Received the packet of seeds, dry herbs, leaves of medicinal plants
From your garden. Tell them he traveled a day's journey on foot
To a portion of land now unmolested by gunfire.
There he scratched the poor earth with a stick . . . the enemy having taken
All tools, all bits of useful metal . . . so he planted the seeds.
He took the wooden pails on the yoke of our ancestors
To carry rain water from shell-holes and ditches . . . the wells
And the rivers being polluted. Though long a prisoner of war,
Beaten, tormented, his hands knotted, his back twisted,
Tears of joy made him a strong man. He was there at work in the hills
When the hawk-winged raiders came over his city far off.
When he returned smoke and ashes marked his home place . . .
Only the moon-gate standing. But the seeds are safe in the ground.
It is a good thing our father taught us the love of gardens.
Brother, I thank you from the deep well of my heart
For the seeds now planted in my stricken country.