



"In a palm-grove somewhere beyond the Kermadecs"

(continued from previous page)

(4) NARRATIVE POEM: 1st prize, 10 guineas; 2nd prize, 5 guineas. (Not more than 500 lines).

(5) LYRIC POEM: 1st prize, 10 guineas; 2nd prize, 5 guineas. (Not less than 20 lines and not more than 50 lines).

The Army Education Welfare Service and the National Broadcasting Service are not rash enough to offer advice to competitors about the writing of poetry (except to indicate the difference between a Narrative and a Lyric Poem), but they do give some pointers about the radio play and the short story. They set out the differences between writing for the stage and for the microphone, and what the judges will look for in the entries, and they have a little to say about the art of the short story.

Entries close on December 1. Competitors may get particulars from local Army Education Welfare offices, or Headquarters, A.E.W.S., Featherston Street, Wellington.

BOOK REVIEWS

A NEW ZEALAND POET

POEMS. By J. R. Hervey, Caxton Press, Christchurch.

ONE result of the Centennial Literary Competitions was to introduce the poetry of the Rev. J. R. Hervey to a wider public. His subsequent work has underlined the verdict of the judges who placed him first in the poetry section. He is in the first rank of our poets, and we have some good ones. His style is so much his own that his poems hardly require a signature. There is a gravity of tone about them, a pre-occupation with sombre and tragic themes, and an austerity of outline, which proclaim the author. But that is not all. There are beauty and deep feeling in the austerity, fire in the snow as it were, and though he is much occupied with death, it is significant that Mr. Hervey, in three of the poems in this new volume, makes laughter man's ultimate ally, "laughter that subjugates the threats of time." We find here the unusual point of view, the surprising twist to life, as in the poems about the funeral, where it is the dead man who goes free, and not the mourners striding

away. Some of the occasional poems are striking successes in a particularly difficult field. The 23 lines about the year 1942 illustrate the power of verse to tell us much in little. Many of Mr. Hervey's lines and phrases are memorable for their grave felicity or power: "the leaden utterance of waves"; larks making a "dreaming roof with song"; the rainbow "throwing flame on the whirled offensive" of the storm; snow-covered hills "bleak from the conspiratorial midnight"; "the lonely song falls like a shattered gull." Like some other poets, Mr. Hervey is inclined to pack too much imagery into a small space, and he should heed the old advice to simplify, simplify. A phrase like "in the pomp of passing synopsis" is overscholarly; it pulls the reader up with a jerk. But he has force, beauty, and intellectual content. "New Poems" is published in the worthy kind of format we associate with the publishers, the Caxton Press.

—A.E.M.

THE BBC

BBC YEAR BOOK FOR 1943. Broadcasting House, London.

THE BBC Year Book for 1943 is a little slimmer than some of its predecessors, but almost as full of meat. Also, it sells at the same low London price — half a crown. There are 124 pages of letterpress — 128 with the excellent index — and about 30 pages of first-rate illustrations; and that is only half the story. It is necessary to add that the letterpress includes special articles by Sir Cecil Graves, joint Director-General, by Edward R. Murrow, European Director of the Columbia Broadcasting System of America, by Sir Noel Ashbridge, the Chief Engineer of the BBC, by the Controller of Programmes, the Controller of News, and the Controller of the European Service, and that the illustrations include excellent photographic studies of General Smuts, Sir James Jeans, the Very Rev. J. H. Hertz, Chief Rabbi, Sir Max Beerholm, Mr. Eden, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Archbishop of York. Those who want more at the price are greedy, but there is more, a great deal more, for those who believe that with all its faults, the BBC is doing the best broadcasting job in the world.

FOR GARDENERS

COMPLETE NEW ZEALAND GARDENER. By J. A. McPherson, N.D.H. (N.Z.), Director Botanic Gardens, Christchurch. Whitcombe & Tombs Ltd.

IT would be rash to say of any gardening book produced in New Zealand that it is the best yet, but if there is anything better than this war-time edition of Mr. McPherson's book, it would be hard to think what it is. There is certainly nothing better that can be bought at present for 6/6. Though New Zealand has been well served by gardeners, silent and articulate, and expects a good deal from any one who offers it a gardening gospel, Mr. McPherson meets all demands. If you want to know more than he has to tell you — well, perhaps you want to know too much. You at least want to know more than the other 99 in your 100, who will not only be delighted to find so much information in a single volume, but grateful to have it so clearly and attractively arranged. Most gardening books are good in the sense that they are packed with useful information. Here is a book in which the information is printed in type big enough to read, and arranged and illustrated by a gardener who knows how to teach.

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