

THIS year on October 14, her birthday, the memory of Katherine Mansfield will be marked in France and in New Zealand by the inauguration of a series of literary awards.

The French Awards are offered by the municipality of Menton, in the Alpes Maritimes, where the Villa Isola Bella in which K.M. stayed in 1920-21 is already a local memorial to her. Now, with the co-operation of the New Zealand Government, Menton has established two triennial prizes of £100 for short stories in French and in English. On this first occasion, the English judges are John Lehmann, P. H. Newby, and Angus Wilson. Let us hope a New Zealander wins, though this is improbable, as the United Kingdom, Eire, and the Commonwealth are all eligible to compete.

The New Zealand Awards also instituted this year for the first time, are biennial, for the best short story and the best article or essay, published by New Zealanders resident in this country in the preceding two years. The competition is sponsored by the Bank of New Zealand in association with the Society of Women Writers; the prize money for each section is £50. The Bank is remembering of course, Sir Harold Beauchamp, K.M.'s father, who was a Director for many years.

Literary awards overseas serve various purposes. Many are competitive, with publication within a set period as a prerequisite for entry. Of this type are the two new K.M. awards. This procedure has advantages for the judge, whose work is reduced, and disadvantages for the competitor, who may have a prize-winning entry too original for the usual market requirements. Other competitions exist for unpublished work, often with publication as the prize. In the conditions of today, this is most useful.

The most famous literary award in the world is given, not after competition, but to honour the sum of a writer's achievement. It is the Nobel Prize for Literature, endowed by Alfred Nobel, Swedish inventor of dynamite. One of five international prizes established in 1901, it is worth approximately £12,000; the roll-call of its winners is impressive, and includes from England, Kipling, Yeats, Shaw, Bertrand Russell, T. S. Eliot; from France, Mauriac, Camus, Gide; from U.S.A., Thomas Mann, Eugene O'Neill, and not least, from Russia, Pasternak. Also for achievement but for one book only—are the American Pulitzer Prizes. Among their winners are *Gone With the Wind*, *Grapes of Wrath*, and Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The best known of the English achievement prizes is the James Tait Black Memorial Prize, which, paradoxically enough, is really Scottish. The judge is the Professor of Literature at Edinburgh, or, should he fail, at Glasgow. Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* won this prize, as did Cary's *A House of Children*, Ivy Compton-Burnett's *Mother and Son*, and Powell's *At Lady Molly's*. C. P. Snow has won it twice, with *The New Men*, and *The Masters*.

Another quite different kind of award, and one increasingly valued today, is the literary scholarship, fellowship, or travel grant, given to writers of originality and promise to assist them with work in hand. In the 17th and 18th centuries, the rich patron or the State sinecure provided shelter and sustenance in this way for young literary growths. It was still possible to starve in a garret, of course, as Dr Johnson knew, and it is possible today. But different funds endeavour in many countries to help

Literary Prizegivings

by JOAN STEVENS

young writers to live. Well known examples in America are the Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, and the Kenyon Review Fellowships.

In England, there is the Somerset Maugham Trust Fund, which makes a £400 grant for travel. Holders include P. H. Newby, Doris Lessing, John Wain, and Kingsley Amis, the last ironically enough at the very moment when Maugham attacked him publicly about his hero Lucky Jim. Another such English fund for assisting writers of limited means has the odd name of The Tom-Gallon trust. Another variety is the University grant, usually in the form of a Fellowship, giving the opportunity of full-time writing activity. There are plenty of these in the U.S.A. In England, the University of Leeds offers the Gregory Fellowship for Poetry, tenable for two years.

A minor group of prizes but of considerable professional interest, is in the field of writing for children. Three of these are well known. The Carnegie Medal is given by the Library Association in England while America awards the John Newbery Medal, and for picture books, the Caldecott Medal. These

Medals indicate to adult buyers that the winner is an excellent book, and the "Newbery books" are famous.

Many more awards could be listed; Foyle's £250 Prize for Poetry for instance, which has been won by Dylan Thomas, Edith Sitwell, and John Betjemann. The *Sunday Times* give a £1000 Book Prize. The most important American Short Story prize is the O. Henry Memorial Award. Then there is the Hawthornden, £100 to encourage imaginative writing by authors under 40. Graham Greene won that when he was in the required age group, so did O'Casey, Robert Graves and Charles Morgan. Others include The Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, the Heinemann Awards, The Harriet Monroe Poetry Awards (U.S.A.), the Harper Prize Novel Contests, and even an International Fantasy Prize, won most appropriately in 1956 by Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. A newcomer in '56-'57 is the series of Guinness Poetry Awards, with an anthology as well as prizes resulting.

Perhaps the queerest item in the records is one offered by the Poetry

Society—£10 for a Petrarchan Sonnet in memory of Lord Alfred Douglas, donated by the Marquess of Queensbury, to be published annually on his birthday. Competitors are asked to note that "details of the sonnet form to be used may be obtained on application."

These, roughly then, are the types of literary awards available overseas. What is the New Zealand pattern? Scaled down to our size, the picture is similar. All prizes offered here are for New Zealanders resident in this country, which means that our expatriates have no place on our honours list unless they were inscribed there before departure.

The smallest prize is a medal, the Esther Glen Award given by the New Zealand Library Association for the best children's book by a New Zealander published in New Zealand. Owing chiefly to the restricted nature of its field, it has been awarded only twice, to Stella Morice for *Wiremu*, and this year to Maurice Duggan for *Falter Tom and the Water Boy*.

Next come the two £25 awards sponsored by the P.E.N., the Jessie Mackay Award for Verse, founded in 1940, and the Hubert Church Award for Prose, founded in 1945. The rules of both these suggest that the original intention was to reward good work whether published or unpublished. Several of the first Jessie Mackay Awards went to poems in M.S. Lately, however, both awards have been more in the nature of "achievement awards," marking notable published work. The newly founded Katherine Mansfield Award, also, is for published work; as has been said, this limitation especially in New Zealand has its disadvantages.

Unhappily, we have been so little conscious of New Zealand literary prizes over the last twenty years that the names of the winners have proved difficult to trace. This list, which may be incomplete, is included in order to give fresh currency to the information.

Jessie Mackay Award for Verse—Douglas Stewart, Paula Hangar, Ruth Gilbert (twice), Mary Gullery, Mary Greig, James Baxter, Charles Spear, Mary Stanley, Pat Wilson, Paul Henderson, W. H. Oliver, Allen Curnow.

Hubert Church Award for Prose—M. H. Holcroft (twice), Lilian Keys, David Ballantyne, J. C. Beaglehole, Frank Sargeson, Janet Frame, Oliver Duff, E. H. McCormick, James Courage, Maurice Duggan, Dennis McEldowney.

The University of New Zealand Macmillan Brown Prize of £25 now goes annually to imaginative writing. The last two winners were Charles Doyle and Peter Bland.

The most valuable Award of this kind in New Zealand has no name. Worth £100, it was established last year by the New Zealand Literary Fund to mark "notable achievement by a New Zealand writer of promise." Janet Frame was the first winner, Ruth France has just been announced as the second. So far this prize has been noted by the press simply as "an award." Would it not gain in dignity as well as memorability if it had a title? Even capitals and a date would help, e.g. the 1959 Literary Achievement Award, (if the Fund can't think of anything better).

More important are two generous awards of the scholarship type, both recent innovations. This year the University of Otago set up the Burns Fellowship, which provides a Fellow with a full year free entirely for writing, at



KATHERINE MANSFIELD