



# 10 YEARS IN ENTERTAINMENT



## NEW ZEALAND Has Conquered the Lesser Peaks of Literary Fame

says

MARGARET  
MACPHERSON



J. A. Lee (top left), a member of Parliament, who, according to Margaret Macpherson, has written the finest novel of the last decade in "*Children of the Poor*." Katherine Mansfield (left), "one of the greatest short story writers of all time."

**T**HE last ten years have been the most difficult of any decade in the history of New Zealand. They have been years of slump, years of depression and unemployment, years of corroding anxiety and hardship to the majority of the people of this Dominion. During this time only one writer has arisen who can be called great. I refer, of course, to Katherine Mansfield, one of the greatest short story writers of all time. Now, not only is our Katherine the only New Zealand writer who has written really great work during this period; she is, too, the only writer who has pictured the stress and anxiety of the period at all. And I think we may accept as the first condition of greatness that the writer should portray his or her own time frankly and fearlessly, no matter how depressing the result may be. During the last ten years all our other novelists and authors have taken a flight from reality, a flight to other times or countries, a flight to pure fantasy. In doing so they excluded themselves rigidly from the first rank of genius.

However, it is no use crying over spilt ink. If we have not reached the topmost heights, yet we have climbed. Let us look at the lesser peaks we have conquered. Socially, kings and queens take precedence. So we will speak first of Mr. Hector Bolitho, who writes of royalty, grandeur and pageantry. Mr. Bolitho has made a great success in Fleet Street and is one of our most successful journalists. For my taste, he writes a little too reverently of the great personages around whom his books centre, but if he does not please me, yet there is no doubt he pleases his august patrons, and if Hector does not get a knighthood some day soon I will eat my

words.

A complete contrast is our other Hector—Hector Macquarrie. Captain Macquarrie's books are full of an insouciant charm and colour, his last, "*Round the World in a Baby Austin*," being a model of good travel stuff well told. In this the author tells some very amusing anecdotes of himself. But the most amusing of all the Hector Macquarrie stories I shall now unfold for the first time. Some years ago our Hector wrote a play which went into rehearsal in New York. He, however, lived out in the country, having rented a delightful farm cottage where he kept a few dogs, cats, ducks, chickens, etc., for Hector, like most New Zealanders, is not happy unless he has a few dear animals to love and care for. One day everything seemed to go wrong with his pets. His little brown hen, Pamela, broke her leg. The vet. who was sent for said that he could do nothing for her except wring her neck. Hector rejected this offer with indignation and himself made her a little wooden leg out of a pronged twig. It worked quite well, but Pamela limped a little and Hector brought her into the house, putting her into a back room