

the special link with Katherine Mansfield herself and is regarded as likely to be a unique exception to normal procedures.

A facsimile of the letter is reproduced in this number of the *Record*, see opposite pages 28 and 29.

The termination of book auctions by Messrs J. H. Bethune and Co. ends a service which the firm has given to librarians, book-collectors and vendors for some ninety years. The first book auction was held in the late 1870's and since that time with varying annual frequency, the auction-room has provided hospitality to those interested. Many readers will recall Mr Pat Lawlor's most readable impressions of the 'middle period' of book auctions in his *Books and bookmen, New Zealand and overseas* (1954, Part 2, Chapter v), and many others still around could – some even may – record their own impressions. There is space here only to express regret that economic considerations have made this step necessary. Mr A. Fair, who has handled the cataloguing of the auctions since the war, ably supported by Mr L. Pollock, tackled the always difficult task of presenting collections of varying strength and character as fully as he could – frequently more fully and in smaller lots than the final return warranted. It is almost unnecessary to point out that Bethune's sales have always been conducted at the highest standard of integrity and with scrupulous regard to the interests of all concerned. Libraries throughout New Zealand as well as overseas, and particularly the Alexander Turnbull Library, are indebted to Bethunes for this regular local opportunity of acquiring on favourable terms much New Zealand material. Mr Fair's four volume record of the sales from 1940 to 1967 will always be an interesting quarry for the collector, although it will quickly be outdated as a working approach to market valuations. What will replace it will depend on whether some enterprising and knowledgeable successor, as is earnestly to be hoped, will continue the service so admirably given by the firm for so long.

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