



CHRISTMAS IN NEW ZEALAND

(By EILEEN DUGGAN, for the N.Z. Tablet.)

One would like to have read in Katherine Mansfield an account of a New Zealand Christmas. It is in atmosphere that she excels, not in plot. Butler has given us in *Erewhon* the desolation, the cold awe of our mountains, and particularly, that numbness, that loss of individuality, that one feels when one is alone among them. Butler writes of New Zealand as it was. Katherine Mansfield writes of it as it is, with a fidelity to detail that is almost startling. It is portraiture, rather than literature, but it is fine painting. When one can get past her husband's incessant eulogies one loves Katherine Mansfield. She was a New Zealander in a far country. She might have written of Sussex or Surrey. She chose to write of Aotea Roa. And it was a wise choice. Who can forget her description of the Picton boat? No one who ever crossed the straits can fail to shudder at her account of the crossing. It was true of her day one supposes. It is certainly true of to-day. One smells the sea in it, and that strange sickly tang that clings to ships that carry passengers. Even the rubber mat is there. Then there is her description of the beach road with the flock of sheep upon it in the hot hour of the morning. That is New Zealand, a New Zealand road, a New Zealand sky,

