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HERE LIES : The Collected Stories of  
Dorothy Parker. *Longmans.* 7s. 6d.

THE SCRAPBOOK OF KATHERINE  
MANSFIELD, edited by J. M.  
Murry. *Constable.* 7s. 6d.

One extraordinary thing about Miss Parker's book is its small number of stories : few authors can have presented the public with a Collected Edition containing only two dozen stories, and not long stories at that. But it is very evident that Miss Parker's considerable reputation has not been built up on quantity but on a systematic devotion to a certain rigid technique, by a brilliant mastery over self-imposed limitations. As a satirist she has taken charge of a very small world : composed, generally, of extremely small people, so small and silly and so helpless that Miss Parker is often touched by them into tenderness. This tenderness, deviating sometimes into sentimentality, and continually underlying the bright enamel shell of her style, makes her the softest hard-boiled egg in American literature. Her mastery of a cool satiric style is super-efficient ; as a technician, superb in economy, she is primarily a writer's writer. For example the implication of the dialogue in *The Sexes* and again in the famous *Here We Are* are lessons for anybody. More than

anything she is like a surgeon, immensely acquainted with the anatomy of the human mind, performing delicate and indelicate operations with the same terrifying skill and the completest exposure of everything under the skin. She writes with irony, but never cynically, and always with an underlying sense of devotion that is, perhaps, the secret of her success. Naturally her very limitations expose her to criticism. Such emotion as the stories contain often seems, for example, synthetic; where beauty is allowed to come in you sometimes feel, as is often the case with satirists, that it has been borrowed from elsewhere and stuck a little obviously on the page, for colour effect. But she is so good a writer that even to such a stricture she produces an exception. The story of the big negro woman in *Clothe the Naked* is full of beauty and poignancy and suggests, perhaps, that Miss Parker has deep resources beyond her self-imposed limitations. Meanwhile, within these limitations, she remains a classic.

Mr. Middleton Murry has collected together a book of oddments from the scrapbook of Katherine Mansfield; fortified by the knowledge "that there are now many people in many different countries—in France, perhaps, above all others—who take a peculiar personal and loving interest in all that pertains to Katherine Mansfield." I am sure this is true; but for my own part I wish the book had never been published. No writer of our day has suffered quite so much as Katherine Mansfield from well-meaning persons sifting her literary remains. The present volume contains all sorts of scrap-book material from 1905 to 1922; bits of abandoned stories, notes for stories subsequently

to become famous, random thoughts, quotations that either seemed to fit her philosophy or challenge it; criticisms, among them a shattering hit at D. H. Lawrence's *The Lost Girl*, which she found completely false; a few unimportant poems, quotations from other poets, from Tchehov's letters. There are one or two terribly poignant and intimate confessions, chiefly about love and her illness, for the inclusion of which I do not think Mr. Murry escapes censure. Indeed, for my part, I hope we may at last be left to judge and appreciate the author of *The Garden Party* in peace.

H. E. BATES.

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