

THE UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS OF
KATHERINE MANSFIELD

Part v

Aldous Huxley, in a letter to Julian Huxley from Garsington Manor, 29 December 1916, wrote: 'An amusing Xmas party here. Murry, Katherine Mansfield, Lytton Strachey, Brett and Carrington, Bertrand Russell and Maria Nys. We performed a superb play invented by Katherine, improvising as we went along. It was a huge success, with Murry as a Dostoevsky character and Lytton as an incredibly wicked old grandfather.' This is interesting enough in itself, but the discovery that Katherine Mansfield's rough outline of Act I, Scene I of this play survives in the papers in the Turnbull Library sharply increases its interest. Written in faint pencil in her top-speed scrawl, and intended to be intelligible to herself alone, it consists of eight small pages of manuscript. Until recently there seemed to be only seven pages, and they had been misnumbered by Middleton Murry, indicating that he had been unable to read the script. After they were renumbered, and an eighth lost page which had strayed far from the rest had been restored, the challenge to read the material became irresistible. The result is far from perfect. Asterisks indicate words which are little better than guesses; some words could not even be guessed; some words may be mis-read. I have supplied punctuation, expanded abbreviated words, and introduced typographical consistency.

Michael Holroyd, in his biography of Lytton Strachey, also lists some of the people who were present on that occasion at Garsington: 'Katherine Mansfield "very amusing and sufficiently mysterious"; Aldous Huxley "young and peculiarly Oxford"; and the beautiful refugee, Maria Nys, daughter of a Belgian industrialist, later (1919) to become Aldous Huxley's wife, whom Lytton was now coaching in Latin for her entrance examination to Newnham.' (p. 181).

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