

She had just sat down when the door bell rang loudly; it seemed to me to be unusually loud. The man who came in was Sydney Waterlow, whom I had met at Mr Roger Fry's. He was a very humorous individual. Once, to amuse us, he took out from his huge pocket half a dozen pipes in different sizes and colours. As soon as he came in, he asked Murry how Katherine was that day. I was all ears to hear his answer: 'She is not coming downstairs tonight. It's been such terrible weather today. None of us can stand it'. Mr Waterlow asked him if he could go upstairs to see her, and Murry agreed. Then he politely excused himself to Miss B, and stood up. He was about to leave the room when Murry went over to him and said in a low voice: 'Sydney, don't talk too much!'

Light footsteps were heard from upstairs. W was already in Katherine's room. Presently two more guests came, a short one, a Mr M, who had just come back from a journey to Greece, and a tall handsome gentleman called Sullivan, who wrote the science column in the *London Nation and Athenaeum*. M told us about his trip to Greece, reciting all the names of ancient Greek sites such as Parnassus and Mycenae. S also inquired about Katherine. Murry told him she was not coming downstairs and that W was at that moment upstairs with her. Half an hour later, the heavy footsteps of W were heard coming down the stairs. S asked him if Katherine was tired. 'No,' he replied, 'she doesn't seem to be. But I can't tell. I was afraid of wearing her out, so I left her.' After a while, S also received permission to go upstairs from Murry, who gave him the same warning not to tire her. Murry then asked me about Chinese painting and calligraphy. I used the scrolls I had brought to give him a brief introduction to Chinese calligraphy. That evening I had with me a painting by Zhao Zhiqian, called 'Plums in Cursive Script', a piece of cursive script by Wang Juesi, and a piece of running script by Liang Shanzou. I opened them and displayed them all. Miss B sat close to me with her hearing-aid in her hand, and seemed to be enjoying what I was saying.

But I was feeling profoundly disappointed. I had braved the rain to see the author of *Bliss* only to find her unable to come downstairs and receive her friends. The way W, S and Murry treated her made her seem all the more precious; it only increased my curiosity. I thought myself exceptionally unlucky. There she was, confined to her own room, into which it seemed that only old friends were allowed. I was a foreigner and a stranger, and it would be impossible for me to gain access. It was now half past ten, and with some reluctance I stood up and said my goodbyes. Murry saw me to the door. As he helped me on with my raincoat, I said how very sorry I was that Miss Mansfield had not been able to come downstairs, and how very pleased I would have been to see her. To my surprise, Murry responded by saying with great earnestness: 'If you wish to, you may go upstairs and see her'. I was