

she wrote her first stories, published in the collection *In a German Pension*. Then she spent some time in France during the war. In recent years she had spend a lot of time in Switzerland, Italy and the south of France. She had lived mostly abroad because of her poor health. She could not bear the wet foggy London weather. To be with her, Murry had to give up part of his work (this is why the *Athenaeum* merged with the *London Nation*). He followed his angel in her search for health. After the war, she had contracted tuberculosis and a doctor had given her no more than two or three years to live. So Murry's days with her were numbered. With every sunrise and every sunset, her beauty became more and more transfigured by the approach of death, and her last energies were consumed. Her fate recalls the famous words spoken by the Lady of the Camellias, as she passed the days of her critical illness in wine and pleasure: 'You know I have not long to live. Therefore I will live fast!'

It is hard to conceive the helpless sorrow that the tender Murry must have felt as he watched this most beautiful of all sunsets gradually fade.

Mansfield's way of 'living fast' was different from that of the Lady of the Camellias. She never indulged in wine and pleasure. Instead she devoted herself to her writing. Like the nightingale on summer nights in the elm-woods, she sang her songs of love with her heart's blood, until she could sing no more. Even then, she still considered it her duty to dedicate her remaining energy to the task of adding a little beauty to nature, of giving a little artistic consolation to this wretched world.

Her hard work produced two collections of stories: *Bliss*, and *The Garden Party* (published last year).⁴ She established herself in the British literary world with the stories in these two collections. While most fiction is mere fiction, hers is pure literature, true art. Mediocre writers crave popularity, the acclaim of the ephemeral public, but she wanted to bequeath to the world a few genuine crystals, whose glory would not be darkened by the 'dust of time'. She sought appreciation from that minority of readers who really understood her.

Because hers is pure literature, its brilliance is not shown, it is hidden deep within. It requires careful perusal to reach the essence. I had the honour of being granted by her in person the right to translate her works. Now that she is dead, I must treasure all the more this task entrusted to me, though I doubt if I can be worthy of it. My good friend Chen Tongbo,⁵ who must be better versed in European literature than anyone else in Peking, has lectured on Mansfield at Peking University, in his course on the short story. Lately he, too, has promised to do some translations of her work, and for this I will be deeply grateful to him. I hope that one day he will find time to say something further on her art as a short story writer.

Now let me tell you about the night I met Mansfield. A few days