

## IN THE STACKS

By BETTY BREWSTER

The chief merit of Katherine Mansfield's collection of short stories, *The Garden Party*, is that it possesses what is so vaguely termed "style"—such an ugly name, one can't help feeling, for such a delightful quality! Perhaps it would be better to say that she was able to see so clearly the scenes and feelings and people that she wished to present to her readers that she could transfer them to paper with the smallest possible loss of effectiveness. By her choice of the right, the inevitable word she attained an effect of sharp clarity, without the brutality which sometimes accompanies it. A style neither of harsh angularity nor of cushiony cloudiness seems to me the ideal towards which an author should strive, and certainly Katherine Mansfield came near that ideal.

The content of the stories, perhaps, might thoughtfully be termed weak and trivial, especially by those people who insist that a story should have a strong plot. One of the most charming, for instance, is the brief sketch, "Bank Holiday", which, although by no stretch of the imagination a story, is yet an exact and delicately phrased mood-picture, reproducing all the gaiety, the confusion, the swiftly changing colours and movements, of a crowded summer street. It is the combination of the descriptive ability shown in this sketch with a flair for subtle characterization which makes such a story as "The Daughters of the Late Colonel" successful. After all, there is nothing very original about the germ idea of the story—that of two old maids whose lives have been wasted away in constant attendance on their bad-tempered invalid father. One can imagine how the ordinary writer of the popular magazines would treat the subject. Josephine and Constantia would be floated to us on a versatile sea of syrup; their long years of penny pinching, of dutiful attendance, of frustrated hopes and desires, would be specifically mentioned instead of subtly hinted; they would no longer be people, but straw figures soaked through and through with sentimental tears. It is necessary only to think of the story as it might have been written and as it actually is to realize Katherine Mansfield's artistry.

Usually she manages to strike just the right note of delicate emotion, veering towards neither heavy sentimentality nor unfeeling chilliness. Still, once or twice, it seems to me, she crosses the fine boundary between sentiment and sentimentality, notably in "Life of Ma Parker" and "The Ideal Family". These two stories, although raised above the level of mediocrity by the charm which suffuses all her work, are, I think, much below her usual standard and some of you may like these stories even better than the others.

## The Story

"Mr. and Mrs. John Curtis are leaving on Friday for the West coast on a business trip. They will motor to Chicago and then fly to San Francisco."

Oh! is it really my deal? Now are you sure, it seems to me that I just dealt the last hand. No? Well I'm not certain but if you say so you must be right. Let me see where was I? Oh! yes—and it's like I was telling George just the other night, she never really had a chance. Why I've known from the start that it would never work out, their marriage I mean. Oh! so it is! Ah!—one club. You know Vera I was over to see her just a week ago last night. No—yes that's right, a week ago last night and do you know, they weren't on speaking terms so I gathered then that something was in the wind. What did you say my dear—one diamond—oh—one spade. I'm sorry. George—George, it's your bid. No I didn't. I said one club, then Vera said one spade. Please don't be so dense. Three clubs!—George! Oh what did you say Jim?—three spades, well I never. Now aren't you the clever one though—three spades. Me? Oh—pass! Now don't look at me that way George. I'm passing, you know very well that I can't possibly bid a game on this hand. Oh don't be disagreeable George. Four spades Vera,—well! George dear, please lead. Now look you know I bid clubs George, what is wrong with you tonight!?

Well anyway, I asked her about her husband. My dear don't look so shocked—I only asked how he was—if his cold was any better! "Cold" she said, "is that what she told you?" Well my dear I didn't know what to make of that. I just stared at her and stammered a none too convincing "Yes", and I felt so embarrassed let me tell you. I never felt so embarrassed in all my life. There I was sitting on the top of a powder keg and striking a match to light my cigarette. Get it?—you see it's like this—well never mind dear. Oh!—I've trumped your ace George haven't I? Well—George you should have known that I didn't have any hearts left. What? Well I didn't want to lose any more diamonds than I had to, so you might just as well have played a heart and let me play a trump. Oh don't be so dense George! And then my dear, didn't her husband come in, I could hear the atmosphere thicken as he walked into the room. And—now my dear don't repeat this to a soul—but as soon as he came into the room I could smell alcohol. Now don't look so surprised, it's the truth. He—HAD—BEEN—DRINKING. Well I said "I think I'll go on over home now. I could see a scene coming up and you know I hate scenes. So I said goodnight and got up to go. She didn't even see me to the door, and as soon as I closed the door she started. It's a wonder that beautiful old china vase survived. That's how the window was broken. Well didn't you know! Oh I know she told me that too! But I happen to know that Junior was visiting his Aunt at the time! Ah!—I guess I should have played trump on that shouldn't I. Oh! Well! Then of course you knew they were going out to Reno. Why yes, she's suing him for divorce—mental cruelty. Oh I know it's a fact. Well I'm sorry George I just didn't have the support to give you!

"—Mr. Curtis will visit friends on the coast and expects to stop in Florida on the return trip."

Did you hear the Dairy Maid's theme song: "Thanks for the mammary."

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## Let's Get Acquainted



MARYE FORBES

Wal, wal, now that all these reg'lar columns 'n things are back in print again this week, let's look around to see just with whom we can get ourselves acquainted. So wadaya know there's that sophtette Marye (Freddie) Forbes a-loorin' on the horizon.

A sophomore has as yet not been presented to the collegiate masses, so there always being a first time for everything, let's get acquainted with Marye.

She has for two consecutive years now been the vice-president of her class or, as it is sometimes called, president of the sophtettes. Last year she was a member of the Dramatic Society and in her second year made a start in the basketball world. Various undertakings have received her helping hand among them being the Sophomore Bridge Tournament.

With two more years "up the hill" we expect to hear lots 'n lots more about Marye.

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## BELIEF

Not that popular god that men will seek  
One day in seven, when, gathering their faith together,  
Sunday-brightened, they bear their heavy cross,  
And sit an hour with fortitude, each in his holy place . . .  
Here, where hypocrisy wears a sacred countenance,  
And Mammon exalted wears the surpliced gown,  
And those few earnest ones, unconsciously,  
Stand up like Christs and find each neighboring face  
A pharisaic mask — no god dwells here —  
But from that insolent gothic finger,  
Threatening heaven, must ever retreat.  
Nor yet that god compressed, holiness graphic,  
Whose funereal doors clasp him in his tomb,  
For never a hand stirs their hopeless dust . . .  
And if there be a Being at our convenience  
Who veils his awful face until we seek for it  
Who welcomes us when by our primitive fears  
Our prayers are sanctified, I know him not . . .  
—But man be my Divinity, within whose narrow shape,  
Though clouded the eye and crooked the limb,  
This world's destiny lies imminent.  
And this I say, redeemed or damned,  
This fleshly robe that we have once put on  
(The priestly garments of my reasonable faith)  
Can never be cast aside — for I but cherish  
The inevitable. And all my tenets are:  
That we have faith that might cast mountains in the sea,  
And hopes that may yet of this Hell-on-earth,  
Build Heaven, the end and the beginning . . .

JACK JEANS '45

Editor's Note: The above poem is that submitted by Jack Jeans which was judged a winner in the recently conducted Poetry Contest.

## Collich Hoomer

It's all right to tell a girl she has pretty ankles, but don't complement her too highly.

"You drunken beast! If I were in your condition, I'd shoot myself."  
"Lady if you wash in my condishun you'd mish yerself."

The patient, clad only in a flimsy hospital gown, was running pell mell, helter skelter over patients, beds, tables and chairs. The nurse, scissors in hand, was closely pursuing him. An interne was trying to attract the nurse's attention: "But nurse all I said was, Slip off his spectacles."

Young Man (when the embrace was over): "I'll be frank with you. You're not the first girl I ever kissed."

Sweet Young Thing: "And I'll be equally frank with you. You have a lot to learn."

"The drinks are on me," cried the Scotsman as he was run over by the brewery truck.

A famous professor gave a lecture at the insane asylum. He began by saying, "Why are we here? Why are we here?"

A nut in the back row stood up and said, "Because we're not all there."

Did you hear what the firefly said when it bumped into the lawn mower?

Delighted, no end.

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