



THE GARDEN PARTY AND OTHER STORIES, by Katherine Mansfield (Knopf). These are fragments rather than stories; and there are no fire-cracker endings. Accordingly, those schooled in the fire-cracker tradition may well find them flat. For they are not isolated crystals of life. When you get to the end, you do not fall over into space. You are borne on, just as you are in life, and there opens up before you the humorous-dreary muddle of existence.

Miss Mansfield's people are the grandmothers, spinsters, retired colonels, and grandsons of English fiction. She has occasionally thrown behind them an unfamiliar scene—Tasmania, for example—but it is not the scene that makes the book remarkable. Rather, I think it is the poignancy with which she has surrounded thoroughly familiar things and the skill with which she has transmitted it. She does a tired business man and your head swims with his, while no one pays any attention to you. She makes a lady's maid talk for a few pages, and you are all but swamped by the futility of the solar system. And in one story, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel," she has been so successful, that spinsters need never be done again.