

[*The Anglo-French Review*]

TO FRANCE

BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

If I were Algernon Swinburne, who loved Republics and rhetoric,
I could address you in faultless and mythological verse,
And gloriously praise you with wind, fire, ocean, and blood;
Or if I were Robert Browning, I could tell in singular rhymes
Some heroic story of your past no one had ever heard before;
But as it seems to me indelicate and an anachronism
To liken a republic to a large woman with protruding breasts
And congruous attributes, or to recount obscure anecdotes,
I can only felicitate you in my own undistinguished manner.

Without you the world would have been sadder and narrower,
Without you the sense of Europe, of the world, were incomplete;
You are the brains, the wit, the delicacy of Europe;
Your women are the most charming, your philosophers the most indulgent,
Your prose the most polished, your painting the most vital.
I have loved your artists and the gardens of the Luxembourg,
I detest your petit bourgeois and the Tour Eiffel;
I like your food, your fiacres, and your fiction,
But I wish you would catalogue your Bibliothèque sensibly.
I love you, but I will not flatter you; you are prone to extremes;
How often have you corrected the errors of one Saint-Simon
By the no less palpable errors of the other!
But with the first you were noble, with the second generous,
Even in your errors you were still *la grande nation*.

May Jeanne d'Arc save you from the clutches of the financiers,
May you remember that the world needs your best
To unfilth it from the infamies of commerce;
May your priests be as enlightened as M. Jérôme Coignard,
May your doctors be as kindly as Benjamin Rathery,
Your philosophers as witty as M. de Voltaire,
Your poets as divine but more fortunate than Verlaine,
Your rulers as brilliant as Colbert but more virtuous,
May you remain enlightened and throw away ambition,
May your valor this time not be a dangerous glory.
And finally, like the good King Henry,
Je vous souhaite tous une poule au pot le dimanche!

THE LADY'S-MAID

BY KATHARINE MANSFIELD

Eleven o'clock. A knock at the door.

. . . I HOPE I have n't disturbed you, Madam. You were n't asleep — were you? But I've just given my lady her tea, and there was such a nice cup over, I thought, perhaps. . . .

. . . Not at all, Madam. I always make a cup of tea last thing. She drinks it in bed after her prayers to warm her up. I put the kettle on when she kneels down and I say to it: 'Now you need n't be in too much of a hurry to say *your* prayers.' But it's always boiling before my lady is half through. You see, Madam, we know such a lot of people, and they've all got to be prayed for — every one. My lady keeps a list of the names in a little red book. Oh, dear! whenever someone new has been to see us and my lady says afterward: 'Ellen, give me my little red book,' I feel quite wild, I do. 'There's another,' I think, 'keeping her out of her bed in all weathers.' And she won't have a cushion, you know, Madam; she kneels on the hard carpet. It fidgets me something dreadful to see her, knowing her as I do. I've tried to cheat her; I've spread out the eiderdown. But the first time I did it — oh, she gave me such a look — holy it was, Madam. 'Did our Lord have an eiderdown, Ellen?' she said. But — I was younger at the time — I felt inclined to say: 'No, but our Lord was n't your age, and he did n't know what it was to have your lumbago.' Wicked — was n't it? But she's too good, you know, Madam. When I tucked her up just now and seen —

saw her lying back, her hands outside and her head on the pillow — so pretty — I could n't help thinking: 'Now you look just like your dear mother when I laid her out!'

. . . Yes, Madam, it was all left to me. Oh, she did look sweet. I did her hair, soft-like, round her forehead, all in dainty curls, and just to one side of her neck I put a bunch of most beautiful purple pansies. Those pansies made a picture of her, Madam! I shall never forget them. I thought to-night when I looked at my lady: 'Now if only the pansies was there no one could tell the difference.'

. . . Only the last year, Madam. Only after she'd got a little — well — feeble as you might say. Of course, she was never dangerous; she was the sweetest old lady. But how it took her was — she thought she'd lost something. She could n't keep still, she could n't settle. All day long she'd be up and down, up and down, you'd meet her everywhere — on the stairs, in the porch, making for the kitchen. And she'd look up at you, and she'd say — just like a child: 'I've lost it, I've lost it.' 'Come along,' I'd say, 'come along, and I'll lay out your patience for you.' But she'd catch me by the hand — I was a favorite of hers — and whisper: 'Find it for me, Ellen. Find it for me.' Sad, was n't it?

. . . No, she never recovered, Madam. She had a stroke at the end. Last words she ever said was — very slow — 'Look in — the — Look — in —' And then she was gone.