

## FLOWERS FOR MRS. S.

*"Pour exprimer nos condoleances les plus sinceres  
et pour faire nos adieux a une vieille amie, ces  
quelques fleurs... "*

For fifty years she kept. her shop,  
Kept to her shop, day out, day in,  
Since first she came, a soldier's bride,  
To find new kith and leave old kin;

And, home from home, in perfect French,  
She thought until the very end;  
And, mother-tongue-tied, all those years  
Her broken English did not mend,

Yet served her tum to play a wife's,  
A mother's, and a widow's part;  
Though only mother tongue can speak  
The lonely language of the heart.

But she and I, for thirty years,  
In French would pass the time of day;  
Just one of those amusing games  
We grown-up children sometimes play.

Ah, then it was a charming wit  
With which she understood and spoke;  
"Plus jeune que jamais!" She would smile,  
Her old eyes twinkle at the joke.

And that is why, when, late last week,  
I heard that she, at last, had gone,  
Together with "ces quelques fleurs",  
I said goodbye to "la patronne"

Upon a little card in French.  
A futile gesture, some might say;  
But all the same it seemed to me  
The only right and proper way.

oooOooo