

厄斯忒哀史

英文小叢書之一

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梁遇春譯註

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William Hale White

(1831—1913)

他的父親是一家書鋪的老板，一個有幽默趣味同卓然自立的性格的人，又是一個不服從英國國教的人。他的童年是在恬靜的鄉下裏過去，後來到大學攻神學，因為他具有懷疑精神被開除了。此後的生涯就平淡地過去，在政府各機關裏做事。他喜歡研究天文學，自己蓋兩個觀象台，他覺得天文學是我們精

確智識的象徵，藉此我們可以擴張我們的心境，對於人生得到一種合理的自信態度。這方面和那愛星空的歌德很有些相似。

他譯了斯賓羅薩 (Spinoza) 的倫理學，著有幾本長篇小說（都不是很長的）：The Autobiography, The Deliverance; The Revolution in Tanner's Lane, Mi iams' Schooling, Catharine Furze, Cl ra Hopgood。第一本和第二本是帶了自傳性質，是極誠懇動人的自剖文字。此外還有幾篇短篇小說和討論宗教，文學，哲學種種問題的文章。

他的創造的主要情調是悲哀，一種默默的惆悵。他既不讚頌人生，也不呪詛人生，只是懷個淒然的心境來觀察人生，描寫人生。

這大概是因爲他的本質是melancholy
罷。他和其他具有哀怨情懷的作家
一樣，寫出極恬靜清晰的散文，是
近代一位散文名家。

厄斯忒哀史

WILLIAM HALE WHITE

(MARK RUTHERFORD)

(1831—1913)

ESTHER

Blackdeep Fen, 24 Nov. 1838.

My dear Esther,—This is your birthday and your wedding-day, and I have sent you a cake and a knitted cross-over,¹ both of which I have

1. Cross-over—a kind of woman's wrap that crosses in front. 胸前沒有開口的女

厄斯忒哀史

布拉克第普•樊，二十四日，
十一月，一八三八年。

我親愛的厄斯忒，——今天是
你的生日，也是你結婚的紀念日，
我寄給你一塊餅，一件毛織的背
心，這兩件東西都是我自己製的。

衣。

made myself. I can still knit, although my eyes fail a bit.¹ I hope the cross-over will be useful during the winter. Tell me, my dear, how you are. Twenty-eight years ago it is since you came into the world. It was a dark day with a cold drizzling rain, but at eleven o'clock at night you were born, and the next morning was bright with beautiful sunshine. Some people think that Blackdeep must always be dreary at this time of year, but they are wrong. I love the Fen country. It is my own country. This house, as you know, has belonged to your father's forefathers for two hundred years or more, and my father's old house has been in our family nearly as long. I could not live in London; but I ought not to talk in this way, for I hold it

1. a bit——a little 有些; 稍微。

我還能夠編織，雖然我的眼力比以前弱些了。我希望這件背心冬天裏於你有用。我親愛的，告訴我你的近況罷。你來到世界已經二十八年了。那是一個陰天，下着淒冷的微雨，夜裏十一點鐘你生下來，第二早却有美麗的陽光照耀着。有些人以爲布拉克第普在這季裏一定老是陰鬱的，但是他們錯了。我愛樊這個地方。牠是我的家鄉。這座屋子，你知道，屬於你父親的祖宗已經有二百年了，或者還不止；我父親的老屋在我們家裏幾乎也有這麼悠久的歷史。我在倫敦住不下去；但是我不該這樣說，因爲我認爲那是錯的，使人不滿于他所無法避免的事情。你的兄弟小傑是一個再好

to be wrong to set anybody against what he has to do.¹ Your brother Jim² is the best of sons. He sits with me in the evening and reads the paper to me. He goes over to Ely market every week. He has his dinner at the ordinary,³ where many of the company drink more than is good for them,⁴ but never once has he come home the worse for liquor.⁵ I had a rare⁶ fright a little while ago. I thought there was something⁷ between him and one of those Stanton girls at Ely. I saw she was trying

1. 這裏所說的‘無法避免的事情’是指厄斯忒不能不住在倫敦，因為她的丈夫是在那裏幹事情。

2. Jim——外國人叫親熟的人時候，常將名字縮短。Jim 這個字就是 James 的簡稱，此外也有把牠減做 Jem, Jemmy, Jimmy 等等。其牠的例子如 John 只喊做 Jack, Thomas 喊做 Tom; Elizabeth 喊做 Bessy 等等皆是。

3. ordinary——這字本來的意義是人們在旅館裏或者其牠公共食堂裏所用的通常的，

不過的兒子。他晚上陪我坐，念報紙給我聽。他每星期到伊里市場一次。他就在那裏飯店用餐，同座的人們有許多喝酒太多，但是他從來沒有一次回家時現出醉酒的神氣。不久以前，我有一個大恐慌。我那時猜他同伊里地方斯坦吞家裏一位姑娘有些關係。我看出她想抓到他。這場風波現在完全過去了。她是一位城裏姑娘，愛擺架子的，花費許多錢在她衣服上面，絕不能做

有定價的餐膳。後來販賣常餐的館子也叫做 ordinary 了。

4. to drink more than is good for them——喝了超過與他們有益的分量的酒；就是喝得太多了的意思。

5. the worse for liquor——因為酒而失却常態；醉了。

6. rare——great 大。

7. something——有些事情，不能看清，所以只是這麼模糊地說着。

to catch him. It is all off¹ now. She is a town girl, stuck-up,² spends a lot of money on her clothes, and would have been no wife for Jim. She would not have been able to put her hand to³ anything here. She might have broken my heart, for she would have tried to draw Jim away from me. I don't believe, my dearest child, in⁴ wedded love which lessens the love for father and mother. When you were going to be married what agony I went through! It was so wicked of me, for it was jealousy with no cause. I thank God you love me as much as ever. I wish I could see you again at Homerton, but the journey made me so ill last winter that I dare not venture just yet.—

1. off——discontinued 過去了。

2. stuck-up——arrogant, conceited 驕傲；擺架子。

3. to put one's hand to——to assist

小傑的一個良妻。她來這裏一定是什麼事也不能做。她也許會使我心碎，因為她一定設法離間小傑同我的感情。我最親愛的孩子，我不相信天下有一種減少了對於父母孺慕之情的結婚愛情。當你從前快出嫁時候，我嘗過多麼難受的苦痛呀！那是我萬分的不對，因為那是無端的妒忌。現在我謝謝上帝，你正像往常那麼愛我。我希望能夠再到荷馬敦看你們，但是前一次旅行使我去年冬天身體那麼不舒服，我此刻不敢再冒險了。——你親愛的母

with; to lend a hand to 幫助；協理。

4. to believe in—to have faith in the existence or efficacy, advisability of 相信……的存在，有用，或者有益。

Your loving mother,

Rachel Sutton.

Homerton, 27 Nov. 1838.

My dearest Mother,—The cake was delicious: it tasted of Blackdeep, and the cross-over will be most useful. It will keep me warm on cold days, and the love that came with it will thicken the wool. But, mother, it is not a month ago since you sent me the stockings. You are always at work¹ for me. You are just like father. He gave us things not only on birthdays, but when we never looked out for them. Do you remember that week when wheat dropped three shillings a quarter? He had two hundred quarters which he might have sold ten days earlier. He was obliged to sell them at the next market and lost thirty pounds,

1. at work——working 工作。

親，

累折爾·薩吞。

荷馬墩，二十七日，十一月，一八三八年。

我最親愛的母親，——那塊餅很可口，吃起來有布拉克第普風味，那件背心將是極有用的。牠在冷天裏會使我感到溫暖，牠所帶來的愛情會加厚羊毛。但是，母親，那也是這一月內的事情，你送那些襪子給我。你總是爲我工作着。你正同父親一樣。他不單是在我們生日裏給我們東西，並且在我們絕沒有預料得到東西的時候。你記得那個星期嗎，當每一噸四分之一的麥落價三先令？他有五十噸麥，那可以在十天之前賣去。他只好在第二次
