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欧·亨利 著

王楫 康明强 译

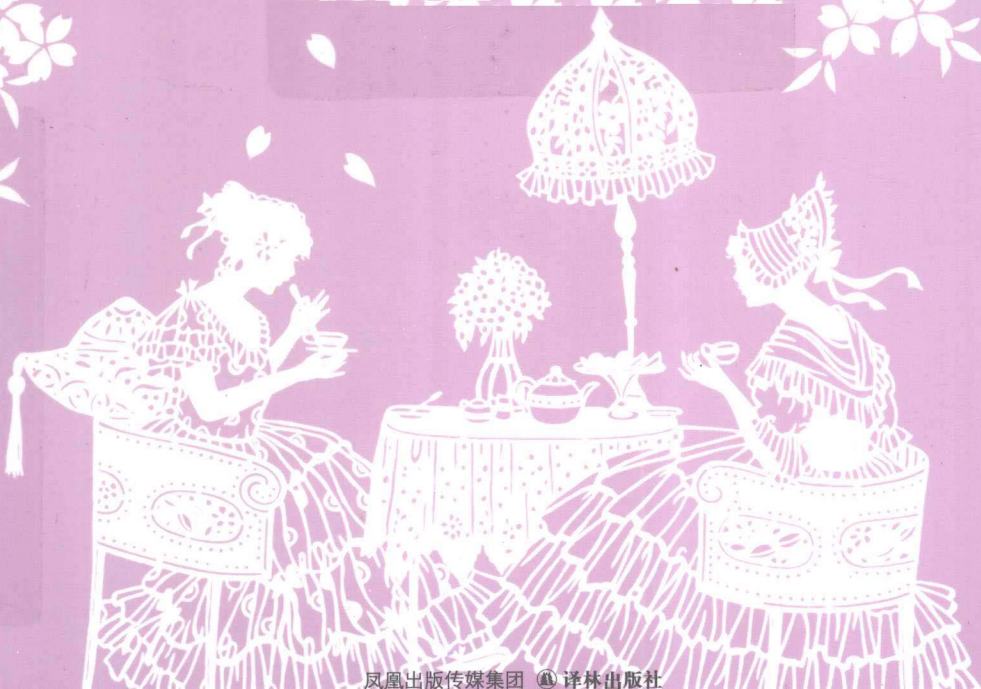


欧·亨利短篇小说精选

The Selected Stories of O. Henry

O. Henry

双语插图本





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欧·亨利是 20 世纪初期美国著名短篇小说家，在约莫十年的时间内，在报章杂志上发表了近三百篇短篇小说。由于作品内容贴近群众生活，篇幅短小精悍，情节引人入胜，语言富于艺术表现力，甚为读者喜爱，他被誉为“美国的莫泊桑”。他的一些名篇，如《麦琪的礼物》（又译《贤人的礼物》）、《警察和赞美诗》、《最后一片藤叶》等，不愧为短篇小说的杰作。

欧·亨利原名威廉·西德尼·波特，1862 年 9 月 11 日出生于美国北卡罗来纳州一个小镇，父亲是医生。他幼年丧母，与父兄移居祖母和姑妈家，姑妈林娜从小培养他绘画、写作、讲故事和文学欣赏的才能。十七岁时他到叔父开的药房当学徒，两年后即取得药剂师的行业执照。1882 年，由于健康原因，他去西部得克萨斯州的一个牧场工作，从而获得了饲养牲口的丰富知识，熟悉了西部民情。1884 年以后，他不断变换工作，做过会计员、记者、土地局的制图员等，1891 年当上得克萨斯州首府奥斯汀第一国民银行的出纳员。

波特于 1887 年与阿索尔·埃斯蒂斯结婚，次年生一子，生后不久即夭折，第二年又生一女玛格丽特，妻子的健康情况随即恶化。

1894 年，波特在银行工作期间，买下了一家名为《滚石》的周刊，发表一些幽默讽刺作品。这份周刊只维持了一年时间。同年 12 月，银行发现波特的账目上短缺了一小笔款项，随即解除了他的职务；次年 7 月，波特被法院传讯，但尚未定案，他却取道新奥尔良去拉丁美洲的洪都拉斯避难（因此他后来的小说中有拉丁美洲的题材）。1897 年，因妻子病

重,波特回到奥斯汀;妻子死后,他在奥斯汀听候传讯,1898年,被判处五年徒刑。由于他有药剂师执照,在监狱中被分配到医务室工作。他在工作之余开始写短篇小说,寄往颇有影响的《麦克吕尔》杂志发表,取得稿酬贴补女儿的生活费用。他用的是笔名欧·亨利,原是监狱中一本法国药典作者的名字。1901年波特因在狱中表现良好得以提前获释,次年即赴纽约专门从事写作。1903年他与纽约的《星期天世界报》签约,每周向该报提供一篇短篇小说,同时还为其他杂志供稿。1904年,他第一部小说《白菜与皇帝》问世,它以拉丁美洲一个虚构的小国安楚利亚为背景,揭露美帝国主义推行殖民主义政策,掠夺拉丁美洲国家的自然资源,如水果等。此书名为长篇小说,但结构松散,实际上是几个短篇的合体。接着结集出版的有《四百万》(1906)、《西部之心》(1907)和《都市之声》(1908),都是短篇小说集。1907年他第二次结婚,妻子是他童年时代的女友萨拉·林赛·科尔曼。但这次婚姻没有给他带来家庭的幸福,他开始酗酒。他一方面紧张地写作,一方面将已发表的小说结集,同时还企图将他的小说改编为舞台剧(这种尝试可惜并未成功),因而健康情况急剧恶化,1910年6月5日,在卧床六个月之后不幸逝世。他的另外几个短篇小说集《善良的骗子》、《命运之路》、《陀螺》等,都是在他死后问世的。

欧·亨利一生困顿,只有最后十年才在纽约定居。他平时所接触的多属社会底层的小人物,这些人物自然就成为他小说的主体,其中多的是工人、女店员、公司或其他机构的小职员、穷艺术家、街头流浪汉、警察、骗子甚至盗贼。当然他也写商人、小业主、经纪人、小官吏、地方绅士等,但都算不上什么上流社会的大人物。他是用幽默的笔调,饱含着同情心写这些小人物生活的不幸的。他将主要描写纽约市民生活的一个集子取名为《四百万》,那是他最出色的一个集子,其用意是:构成纽约

这个大都市的社会基础的，并非一般人所认为的四百个举足轻重的上流人物或大亨，而是纽约市四百万普通百姓，也就是他的小说里各色各样的人物所代表的普通人。从这一点，很可以看出欧·亨利的民主主义思想。欧·亨利自己曾说过：“我的目的在于指出：每一个人的内心都有过上体面生活的愿望，即使那些沦于社会最底层的人，只要力所能及，都愿意回到比较高尚的生活，人性的内在倾向是弃恶趋善的。”^①另一方面，欧·亨利又认为生活里充满意料不到的事，因而他的每一篇小说总有一个出乎读者意料的结尾，然而这结尾又是合乎逻辑、令人信服的。像《麦琪的礼物》里的一对年轻夫妇，为了互送圣诞礼物互表爱心，妻子卖掉引以自豪的一头长发，为丈夫买了一条表链；不料丈夫却卖掉了祖传的金表，买来一套精美的梳子来打扮妻子那已不复存在的美发。两个人的礼物都没有派上用场，而这对贫贱夫妻的恩爱却弥足珍贵。又如《警察和赞美诗》写一个流浪汉冬天来了无法再露宿街头，一心想进监狱换取三个月的食宿，几次三番为非作歹，警察却视而不见，不予理会。等他在一条僻静的路边听到教堂里传出的赞美诗的音乐，并受到感染，决心弃旧图新、自食其力时，警察却无缘无故地逮捕了他。作者通过这个故事，揭露了资本主义社会是非颠倒，黑白不分，而流浪汉也是这种社会的牺牲品，是值得同情的人。欧·亨利写了一些女店员，多半是从乡间到城市来谋职的姑娘，拿十块钱光景一星期的工资，要付房租，有时还要扣罚金，过着半饥不饱的生活。欧·亨利也写骗子，通过他们揭露资本主义社会的尔虞我诈，如《卖官鬻爵》里的小骗子上了大骗子的当。他甚至写盗贼：《同病相怜》里的窃贼颇有点人情味；《红毛酋长的赎金》里的绑匪非但没有捞到赎金，反而倒贴了二百五十元，因为他们的对手是

① 转引自尤金·柯伦—加西亚《欧·亨利——短篇小说研究》，纽约 Twayne 出版社，1993 年，156—157 页。

镇上“很有地位”的人；而在《我们选择的道路》里，作者明写强盗实写金融资本家，后者正如绰号“鲨鱼”的强盗一样心狠手辣。

欧·亨利是一个人道主义者，他对小人物的同情和对上流社会的鞭挞形成鲜明的对比，泾渭分明。在《麦迪逊广场的天方夜谭》里，他写一个流浪街头的画家，过去曾名噪一时，上流社会的名流贵妇争相出重金请他画肖像。但自从他获得了一种特异功能，使人能从惟妙惟肖的肖像上看出画主藏而不露的性格和内心的卑鄙时，再也没有人找他画画了。这种寓含深意的写法，在欧·亨利的作品里并不少见，读者当不至于为故事的外壳所迷惑，而忽视它的内在意义。欧·亨利还善于捕捉不幸的人们灵魂上的亮点。《警察和赞美诗》里的流浪汉不愿损害自己的尊严接受所谓慈善团体的救济；而《同病相怜》里的窃贼不肯劫掠同是痛风病患者的屋主的钱财，尽管那钱财就在眼皮底下，唾手可得。

欧·亨利所写的主要是平民百姓的生活，而他的写作手法，又是平民百姓所喜闻乐见的手法。他的作品篇幅短小，故事性强，情节进展迅速，语言幽默风趣，多用俚语，常用《圣经》及《天方夜谭》等群众熟知的典故，因而极受读者喜爱。特别值得一提的是，他在现实主义创作风格的基调中，融合了浪漫主义的手法，又时时构思出近乎荒诞的情节，引人入胜，加之以出人意料的结尾，值得读者回味。例如《供家具的出租房》是一个凄婉的故事。一个年轻人来到一家破旧的公寓，寻找出走多时的爱人，住进一个房间。作者对公寓及房间的描写细腻逼真，完全是现实主义的手法；后来写他在房间里突然闻到一阵浓郁的木犀草的香气，这种香气正是他爱人所独有的。他找不到爱人的踪迹，当天夜里就躺在房间里的床上，开煤气自杀了，而他的爱人正是在一星期前在这间房间里，在这张床上开煤气自杀的。这篇小说里对香气的描写以及情节上的巧合，明显地带着浪漫主义的笔调。而在《红毛酋长的赎金》里，付

出代价的竟是绑匪,更可说是够荒诞的了。欧·亨利小说出人意料的结尾尤其出色,美国文学界径称之为“欧·亨利式的结尾”。前辈作家当然也运用过类似手法,例如莫泊桑脍炙人口的短篇小说《项链》,但欧·亨利对此运用得更为经常,更为自然,也更为巧妙,就像中国寓言中的“画龙点睛”,一点便使画上的龙矫健地破壁飞去。当然他在小说的情节发展过程中也做了铺垫,留下了伏笔,其构思的巧妙的确不同凡响。欧·亨利给美国的短篇小说带来新气息,他的作品因而久享盛名,并具有世界影响。美国自1918年起设立“欧·亨利纪念奖”以奖励每年度的最佳短篇小说,由此可见其声望之卓著。

我国读者对欧·亨利并不陌生,他的名篇曾被选入中学课本。中译本有解放前伍光建先生英汉对照的《白菜与皇帝》及《四百万》的节译本,解放后有王仲年先生、张经浩先生先后编译的《欧·亨利短篇小说选》及散见报章杂志的单篇。本选集选译了十八篇,其中有些篇目既属欧·亨利的名作,自不免与已有的译本相同。译者所追求的目标在于紧扣原文,尽量保持原作的语言形象,如鲁迅先生所教导的,“一当然力求其易懂,一则保存着原作的丰姿”,不一味追求“汉化”,而力求“汉化”与“洋化”的和谐。但欧·亨利出语幽默,常用俚语,有时还运用谐音和双关之类的修辞手法,往往造成翻译上的困难,要充分保持原作的韵味,实令译者捉襟见肘;加上时代与文化背景的差异,译文中谬误之处在所难免,尚祈读者指正。

1997年5月

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■ The Gift of the Magi

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had

一块八毛七。一共这么多，而且其中的六毛还是用小硬币凑成的。这些分币是向杂货铺、肉铺和菜担子买东西时讨价还价，一分两分地省下来的，当时难免落了个“死抠”的坏名声，使她觉得两颊发烧。黛拉数了三遍，数来数去一块八毛七，而明天就是圣诞节了。

明摆着什么也办不成，只好一下子坐在破旧的小沙发上默默地流泪。黛拉现在就是这个样子。这情况不免使她想起，生活就是由啜泣、抽噎和微笑三者组成的，而抽噎总占优势。

当这家的女主人心情逐渐平静下来的时候，我们不妨看看她的家吧。那是一套每星期租金八元的供家具的房子，就现状看还不能说破烂得难以描绘，不过跟贫民窟也相差不远了。

楼下过道里有一个信箱，却没有一封信投进去。有一个电钮，却没有一个活人的手指好意去摁一摁电铃。信箱上还有一张卡片，写着“詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬先生”。

在从前兴旺的年月，这家主人每星期挣三十元，卡片上的“迪林厄姆”曾经春风得意。而如今，当收入缩减到二十元，“迪林厄姆”的笔画看上去也显得模糊不清，似乎在认真考虑最好紧缩成一个“迪”字，显得谦逊一些。可是，每当詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬先生回家来到楼上的房间，詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬太太(也就是前面介绍过的黛拉)一边喊着“吉姆”，一边紧紧地搂住他，一切又都很美好。

黛拉哭够了，在脸上扑了点粉。她站在窗边，呆呆地瞧着一只灰猫沿着灰蒙蒙的后院的灰篱笆走。明天就是圣诞节了，而她只有一块八毛

① 原题又译作《贤人的礼物》。在《圣经》里，Magi 是由东方来朝见初生的耶稣的三贤人，他们都带来寓意深远的礼物。

only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pierglass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mne. Sofronie. Hair Goods of All

七好给吉姆买一件礼物。几个月来她节省每一分钱，可结果就是这么一点点。一星期二十元派不上用场，用度比她算的要大，而且是经常如此。只有一块八毛七给吉姆买件礼物。她的吉姆！她曾经花了好多时辰美美地筹划着给吉姆买件好东西，要买一件好的、稀罕的、有价值的东西，一件多少能配得上他，让他称心如意的东西。

房间的两扇窗子间有一面镜子。你或许看见过租金八元的套间里狭长的壁镜吧？碰上一个精瘦而行动又极其敏捷的人，对着镜子左右摆动，能看出一连串狭长的身影，合起来就能对他的容貌获得一个相当准确的印象了。黛拉身材苗条，已经掌握了这种技术。

她突然从窗前转过身子站在镜子面前。她的眼睛闪亮，可是她的面孔陡然失色有二十秒之久，她飞快地打散头发，让它披了下来。

要晓得，詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬一家有两件东西是他们两人都引以为荣的。一件是吉姆的金表，那是他祖父传给他父亲，父亲又传给他的；另一件就是黛拉的头发。倘若示巴女王^①住在风井对面的套间里，黛拉哪天洗完头后把头发甩到窗外去晾干，也会让她的一切珠宝和饰物相形见绌。倘若所罗门国王^②当上一名守门人，他的全部财宝都堆放在地下室里，吉姆每次经过时掏出他的怀表来看看，就会让他嫉妒得直扯自己的胡子。

你看此刻黛拉的长发披散开来，摇曳生姿，闪闪发亮，像一道棕色的瀑布。头发一直拖到她膝盖下面，简直变成一件衫子罩着她。接着她又神经质似地飞快地将头发理好，一动不动地站着，踌躇了一会，不觉一两滴眼泪滴在磨光了的红地毯上。

她立即穿上棕色旧外套，戴上棕色的帽子，眼睛还闪着晶莹的泪光，裙子一摆，眸子一闪，飞一般地出门下楼，来到街上。

她在一块店招前停住脚步，那上面写着：“莎弗朗尼夫人。经营各色

① 《圣经》中朝觐所罗门王以测其智慧的示巴女王。示巴位于阿拉伯半岛西南角，今也门地区。

② 公元前十世纪以色列国王，以聪明和豪富著称。

Kinds.” One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the “Sofronie.”

“Will you buy my hair?” asked Della.

“I buy hair,” said Madame. “Take yer hat off and let’s have a sight at the looks of it.”

Down rippled the brown cascade.

“Twenty dollars,” said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

“Give it to me quick,” said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim’s present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation—as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim’s. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends—a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself, “before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?”

毛发类商品。”黛拉奔上几级台阶，镇定下来，喘着气。那位夫人胖胖大大，皮肤雪白，神情冷冰冰的，跟“莎弗朗尼”^①这样的美名简直不称。

“你愿意买我的头发吗？”黛拉问。

“我买头发。”夫人说，“脱掉帽子，让我瞧瞧是什么模样。”

棕色的瀑布摇曳而下。

“二十块钱。”夫人说，一只老练的手提着头发。

“马上给我钱。”黛拉说。

啊！接下来的两个小时黛拉像张开玫瑰色的翅膀飞来飞去。别理会这糟糕的比喻吧，事实上她跑遍各个商店为吉姆搜寻合适的礼物。

她终于找到了，那肯定是专为吉姆而不是为别的什么人造的。在别的任何一家铺子里都没有找到像这样的一件，因为她在所有的铺子里都翻了个遍。这是一条带饰物的白金表链，式样朴素高雅，纯粹以质地取胜而不是靠耀眼的装潢——一切好东西本该是这样的。它正配得上那块怀表。她一见到它就知道那该是吉姆的。这表链就像他本人，素净而有价值，这样形容对表和人人都合适。铺子从她手里收下了二十一元，她就怀着八毛七匆匆赶回家了。配上这条表链，吉姆就能在任何人面前掏出表来看看钟点了。原来他的表虽然了不起，但由于没有表链，只穿着一根旧皮带，有时候他只敢偷偷地瞧上一眼。

黛拉到家以后，从陶醉中清醒了一些，开始了审慎的思考。她取出了卷发钳，点上煤气灯，开始补救出于爱情和慷慨而造成的灾害。亲爱的朋友，你知道，这一向是一件细巧的工作——一件艰巨的工作。

忙了不到四十分钟，她的头上平平整整盖上了细小的发卷，使她看上去活像一个逃学的中学生。她在镜子里带着挑剔的眼光仔细地看了好久。

“要是吉姆瞧我一眼没有立即杀死我，”她自言自语道，“他会说我倒像科尼岛^②上歌剧合唱队的歌手。可是我还能怎么办——一块八毛七叫我买得成什么？”

① 意大利诗人塔索(1544—1595)的史诗《被解放的耶路撒冷》中的人物，是舍己救人的典型。

② 纽约市布鲁克林区南端一海滨游憩地带，原为一小岛。

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit for saying little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again—you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe