

英美文学名著导读详注本

The Portrait of  
a Lady

Henry James

女人的肖像



上海外语教育出版社

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# Portrait of a Lady

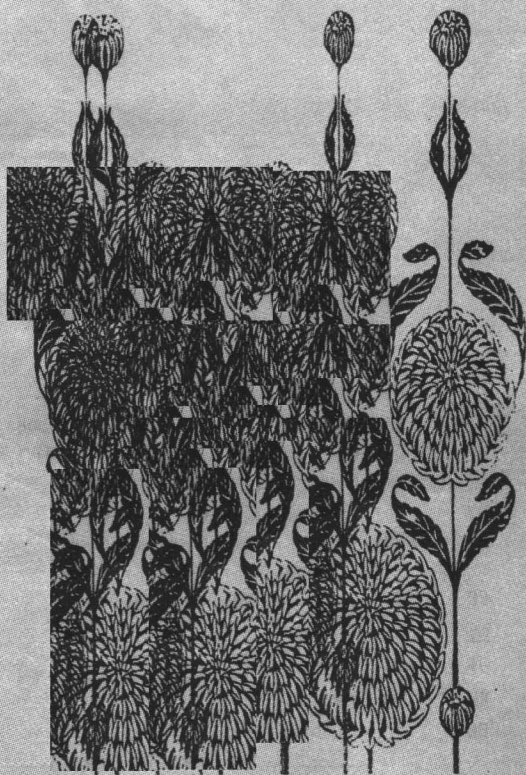
Henry James

## 女人的肖像



外教社

郭勤 朱胜超 注



上海外语教育出版社

## 图书在版编目(CIP)数据

女人的肖像 / (英)詹姆斯(James, H.)著;郭勤,朱胜超注释.

—上海:上海外语教育出版社,2001

(英美文学名著导读详注本)

ISBN 7-81080-131-7

I. 女… II. ①詹…②郭…③朱… III. 英语—语言读物,小说

IV. H319.4:I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2001)第23650号

出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机), 65422031 (发行部)

电子邮箱: bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址: <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 杨永荟

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印 刷: 上海长阳印刷厂

经 销: 新华书店上海发行所

开 本: 850×1092 1/32 印张 16.125 字数 721 千字

版 次: 2001 年 10 月第 1 版 2002 年 10 月第 2 次印刷

印 数: 5 000 册

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书 号: ISBN 7-81080-131-7 / I · 011

定 价: 20.90 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

## 出版说明

为了继承人类精神文明的宝贵财富,培养青年学子的思想境界和道德情操,上海外语教育出版社从2001年起将陆续推出这套丛书。自林纾以降,经过几代译者的不断努力,西方文学经典已渐为国人接受。改革开放以来,原版文学作品更是源源不断进入我国的校园和课堂。时至今日,我们逐步认识到,那种原本刊行的简单的拿来主义难以满足学子发掘作品蕴涵的人文精神的需要,毕竟其中屡屡出现的外来语和各种典故妨碍了解读过程,而且文学语言本身的难度就不是仅靠一两套语言教材就能克服的阅读障碍,所以几经筹划,凭借学界大力襄助,将洋洋大观的英美文学名著汇编为一套导读详注丛书,奉献给广大热爱文学和学习英语的读者。

我社经过较长时间的酝酿和准备,先后充分听取了国内外专家的意见和建议,专门约请了国内知名学者和研究有素的青年教师参与其事。由他们精心撰写导读文字并加以详备的注释,通过导读和详注这种面貌一新的形式,我们希望读者可以“知人论世”而又含英咀华,了解历代文学大师的生平事迹和当时的社会及文化背景,窥测作家的心路历程和创作轨迹。读者同时可以吸收文学语言的养分,提高文化素养和文学欣赏水平。我们相信从更高的层次来说,语言习得与培养素质应该水乳交融,相得益彰,二者不可偏废,这也是我社推出这套丛书的初衷。

由于涉及作品的时间跨度逾三百年,而期间英语语言也在不断地沿革演化,从而在不同的历史时期呈现出了不同的特色。倘若根据历史阶段陆续推出,未必能够真正有益于青年读者学习英语和领略作品神韵。因此我们将通盘考虑,把不同时期、不同风格的作品放在一起推出,这样读者可以根据各自的喜好有所选择。我们初步计划总数刊行一百种,每年分辑推出十余种,逐年陆续完成这一规模宏大的出版项目。

我们希望在这套丛书问世之际,得到学界和读者热情关心和支持,给我们提出建议和批评,协助我们精益求精,将丛书出版得更好。

上海外语教育出版社

2001年3月

# 前 言

亨利·詹姆斯(Henry James, 1843-1916),是美国杰出的小说家、文艺批评家和文体学家。他于1843年4月15日出生于纽约,祖父是百万富翁;父亲是著名的哲学家和神学家;哥哥威廉·詹姆斯(William James, 1842-1910)是著名的哲学家、心理学家,是美国实用主义哲学的创始人。他生长在富有教养的家庭里,自幼就受到欧洲文化的熏陶,所受教育主要得自于延聘的家庭教师。求学时期,他常常横渡大西洋往来于欧洲与美国之间,曾先后在英国、瑞士和法国接受教育。1862年,他进入哈佛大学法学院攻读法律,在此与著名现实主义小说家W·D·豪威尔斯相识,并开始撰写文学评论与短篇小说,由于潜心于文学事业而不得不中途从哈佛辍学。1875年起,他定居欧洲,大部分时间住在伦敦。1875年至1876年,他在法国巴黎结识了一大批著名作家,如屠格涅夫、莫泊桑、福楼拜、都德、左拉、斯蒂文森等。他认为欧洲有古老的文化传统,比美国成熟,是进行艺术创作的好地方,而美国太讲究物质利益,缺乏文化的底蕴,必然流于浅薄。但他又觉得美国比欧洲纯洁、坦率、有生气。这些观点都反映在他众多的作品里。1910年他最后一次返回美国,此后一直住在伦敦。1912年,他获得了牛津大学荣誉文学博士的称号。1915年,他因不满于美国政府对于第一次世界大战的态度,忿而加入了英国国籍,并协助做了一些战时的工作。1916年,英国政府授予他最高文职勋章(Order of Merit)。1916年2月28日,他在伦敦病逝,享年74岁。

亨利·詹姆斯是一位多产的作家,集文学评论、传记、游记、小说创作、戏剧创作于一身,硕果累累,卷帙浩繁,仅长、中、短篇小说,就有一百一十多部。他的写作生涯可大体分为三个阶段:(一)十九世纪七十年代。这是詹姆斯的理想主义阶段。在此期间,他潜心习艺并努力拓展主题,写作风格坦率直露,作品虽不复杂,但人物性格鲜明突出,笔锋犀利,与豪威尔斯的文风颇为相近。这一时期的主要作品有:《美国人》(*The American*, 1877)、《欧洲人》(*The Europeans*, 1878)、《黛西·

米勒》(*Daisy Miller*, 1879)以及《华盛顿广场》(*Washington Square*, 1880)等。(二)十九世纪八十至九十年代,这是詹姆斯创作上的成熟期。在这一时期,他变得更加现实,写作技巧更臻成熟,作品开始涉及社会制度、政治、伦理道德等更为复杂的题材,对作品中人物的心理描写也更为精微细腻,为西方小说技巧的发展开拓了新的领域,也使得他成为现代心理分析小说的开创者之一。这一时期的重要作品包括:《女人的肖像》(*The Portrait of a Lady*, 1881)、《波士顿人》(*The Bostonians*, 1886)、《卡萨玛西玛公主》(*The Princess Casamassima*, 1886)、《悲惨的缪斯》(*The Tragic Muse*, 1890)、《波英顿的珍藏品》(*The Spoils of Poynton*, 1897)、《螺丝在拧紧》(*The Turn of the Screw*, 1898)、《真正的货色》(*"The Real Thing" and Other Tales*, 1893)等。(三)十九世纪末以后。这是詹姆斯创作生涯中的重要阶段。这一时期,他精力充沛,连续发表了三部重要小说:《鸽翼》(*The Wings of the Dove*, 1902)、《专使》(*The Ambassadors*, 1903)和《金碗》(*The Golden Bowl*, 1904)以及若干中短篇小说。这些是他最成熟的作品,在这些作品中,他把他所特有的心理分析的写作手法推向了顶点。作品的内容更趋错综复杂,措词重叠交错,文句冗长累赘,甚至使人感到艰涩难懂,但它们已属于英语语言的精品之列,也奠定了他作为一代语言宗师的历史地位。

亨利·詹姆斯还是一位很有见地的文学批评家,在他的创作生涯中写下了许多涉及美、英、法等国的作家及其作品的评论文章,汇集成书的主要有:《法国诗人和小说家》(*French Poets and Novelists*, 1878)、《霍桑》(*Hawthorne*, 1879)、《不完整的肖像》(*Partial Portraits*, 1888)、《关于小说家的评论》(*Notes on Novelists*, 1914)、《札记与评论》(*Notes and Reviews*, 1921)、《小说的艺术》(*Art of Fiction and Other Essays*, 1948)等等。在这些评论文章中,他强调,小说的创作要力求道德与艺术的一致,思想与内容的一致,认为“道德感与艺术感是非常接近的”,“艺术作品最深沉的质地永远是作者思想的质地”,“思想肤浅的人写不出优秀的作品”。他说,“如果从最广义的角度给小说下定义的话,那它就是个人对生活的直接感受,这就构成了小说的价值”。这种从一个人物的角度来展示情节的写作手法为后世许多欧美小说家所广泛采用。

《女人的肖像》是亨利·詹姆斯的代表作之一,是他的文学生涯进入创作成熟期的标志性作品,也是他在世时最受评论界与读者欢迎和

好评的一部杰作。小说描写的是女主人公、年轻美丽的美国姑娘伊莎贝尔·阿切尔在欧洲的一段生活经历，她的一波三折的爱情、婚姻、家庭，她对周围环境的逐步认识和每一步认识所给予她的启示，以及她的个性特征形成和发展的痛苦的心路历程。

伊莎贝尔因父亲不幸去世而一文不名。她的姨妈托切特夫人想给外甥女一个机会，让她在欧洲大陆的文化氛围里能有所发展，便把她带到欧洲，住在加顿科特她家的庄园里。托切特夫人的丈夫丹尼尔·托切特先生是一位腰缠万贯的银行家，但已因疾病缠身而退休在家。他的儿子拉尔夫·托切特也患着不治之症，但他从伊莎贝尔的身上看到了青春的活力和智慧的力量，并因此而深深地爱上了她。虽然拉尔夫已决不可能和她结婚，但是，为了能使伊莎贝尔在经济上获得解放，便于她无忧无虑地自由行动，做她自己想做的事，他说服父亲改变了遗嘱，让伊莎贝尔来继承家族的巨额财产，而他自己则怀着一颗好奇的心从旁观察着她如何处理生活和安排自己的命运。此时，有两个人在热烈追求着伊莎贝尔，一个是美国富翁卡斯珀·古特伍德，另一个是英国贵族沃伯顿伯爵。她拒绝了沃伯顿的求婚，但许诺推延两年之后再给卡斯珀以答复。

托切特先生去世后，已成为富姐儿的伊莎贝尔与托切特夫人同去了意大利佛罗伦萨。伊莎贝尔的富有引起了歹人的垂涎。在托切特夫人的老朋友默尔夫人处心积虑的策划和安排下，伊莎贝尔结识了一个侨居意大利的美国“艺术鉴赏家”吉尔伯特·奥斯蒙德。奥斯蒙德在得知了伊莎贝尔的情况后，立即就开始扮演起一个绅士和追求者的角色。涉世未深的伊莎贝尔很快就被他温文而雅的谈吐和举止以及他独特的性格和品味所迷惑，因而坠入了他精心编织的情网。她周围的朋友对此都表示反对。托切特夫人察觉出此事跟默尔夫人有关，便要求她帮助拆散这一对恋人。拉尔夫尤其感到失望，并向伊莎贝尔讲述了对奥斯蒙德的严厉批评。但是，她还是贸然决定嫁给了奥斯蒙德。

“婚后一两年，高贵的性格和卑下的性格之间出现了公开的对抗”，伊莎贝尔发现自己受了骗，丈夫原来是一个好利、好色、心胸狭窄的猥琐小人。奥斯蒙德与她结婚完全是因为看中了他所继承的遗产。不久，她又发现她们婚姻的牵线人默尔夫人原来是奥斯蒙德的情妇，并和他生过一个女儿，名叫潘西。两人正密谋策划把这个女儿嫁给一个像沃伯顿伯爵这样的显贵，但这一阴谋却终未得逞。

伊莎贝尔坚持定期去英国探望拉尔夫和姨妈。拉尔夫在生命垂危

之际从昏昏沉沉的状态中硬撑起来,与伊莎贝尔进行了最后一次深情的交谈。拉尔夫承认了让伊莎贝尔获得遗产是他的安排。之后,拉尔夫便与世长辞了。伊莎贝尔在伦敦再一次与卡斯珀邂逅,并发现卡斯珀才是真正值得她信赖和爱慕的人。她本可以与奥斯蒙德离婚,逃出这场婚姻的陷阱,因为沃伯顿和卡斯珀两人仍在深深地爱着她。但她铭记着婚礼上的誓词和她对继女潘西所作出的要尽力照顾、保护她的承诺,终于还是痛苦地告别了卡斯珀,放弃了这最后的获得真正幸福的机会,毅然决定回到丈夫奥斯蒙德和继女潘西的身边,“骄傲地”生活下去。

《女人的肖像》充分表现了亨利·詹姆斯诸多作品中的一个共同的主题,即美国人与欧洲人怎样由于文化背景的不同而在相互接触的过程中既相互吸引又相互抵触以及由此而产生出的种种问题和矛盾冲突。小说的这一主题是与伊莎贝尔这一人物紧紧维系在一起的,小说的着重点就在于对伊莎贝尔这一主角的性格塑造上。伊莎贝尔年轻、纯真、聪明、美丽,而且富有独立性和想象力,她不受传统文化和社会习俗的束缚,超然于生活在她周围的灵魂腐朽的欧洲人、侨居欧洲性格变异的美国人以及其他一些心态扭曲的人们之上。但她过于天真善良,意识不到自由的选择总要受到环境和性格的制约,觉察不出限制她做出选择的种种邪恶势力和险恶阴谋。正如亨利·詹姆斯后来在《笔记》中所说的那样,这部小说的中心思想是“一个梦想自由与高贵的可怜的姑娘自以为做了一件自然、大方的明白事,实际上却发现自己被碾碎在世俗的机器里”。在这部小说里,我们可以看到天真、美好与世故、邪恶之间的几乎是寓言式的斗争。换句话说,伊莎贝尔是美好的,她必须在以奥斯蒙德和默尔夫人为代表的邪恶势力面前保持她的美好和纯洁。她所作出的牺牲实际上就是对堕落的文化传统中的世俗观念的一种反叛行为。她是亨利·詹姆斯众多作品中具有典型意义的美国女性的形象。在这部作品里,作者所颂扬的首先是美国人身上的单纯、忠诚无私和慷慨大度等美德和教养。在作者的笔下,这种道德修养具有一种精神“点化”的作用,它可以克制邪恶,感化一切人,平复一切矛盾。其次,作者也表露出了他对欧洲悠久的文化传统的赞赏。

《女人的肖像》具有亨利·詹姆斯所特有的心理描写的艺术特色。小说的情节是顺着一条并不复杂的思路展开的,即行动及其后果;思考



及其后果；决定及其后果。或者说，小说就是由一系列后果所组成的：托切特夫人把伊莎贝尔带到英国的后果；继承遗产的后果；拒婚的后果；以及选择的后果。但作者着重描绘的是伊莎贝尔在故事的各个发展阶段的内心反应，例如她对独立性格的自我欣赏，对每个追求者的感觉和认识，发现受骗后对周围各种人物的重新认识，等等。作者力求细密、准确、恰如其分地反映出她内心深处的思想感情，描绘她从模糊到清晰的逐步认知的过程，在艺术表现手法上多有创新。

在《女人的肖像》中，亨利·詹姆斯将伊莎贝尔这一女性形象的内心活动写得细致入微，为美国文学增添了新的方面，这也是他之所以被誉为心理分析小说家的原因所在。然而，他的很多作品在他活着时影响并不大，在他有生之年，甚至在二十世纪初期，他的读者并不广泛。原因是多方面的：他的作品结构比较复杂，表达方式过于曲折，知识分子气味较浓，主题压倒了情节等等。但二十世纪三十年代以后，他的声誉几乎直线上升，尤其是他的后期作品，得到了西方评论界的高度评价。英国小说家约瑟夫·康拉德曾称赞他是“描写优美的良知的史学家”。《女人的肖像》被认为是英语语言文学宝库中的伟大的小说之一，是展示亨利·詹姆斯创作艺术的最好范本，而小说中的主人公伊莎贝尔也被认为是“美国姑娘的精华”。

亨利·詹姆斯在美国文学史上享有崇高的地位，但他在我国读者中的影响却远不如其他一些美国著名作家。要全面地了解美国文学，亨利·詹姆斯的作品不可不读，而小说《女人的肖像》则应列在首位。由于小说的结构复杂，语言艰涩，读者在阅读的过程中会遇到一定的困难。为解决这个问题，上海外语教育出版社出版了《女人的肖像》注释本，可谓一大善举。

相信这部注释本能助读者一臂之力。

韩忠华

2000年4月12日

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# I

Under certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. There are circumstances in which, whether you partake of the tea or not — some people of course never do — the situation is in itself delightful. Those that I have in mind in beginning to unfold this simple history offered an admirable setting to an innocent pastime. The implements of the little feast had been disposed upon the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a splendid summer afternoon. Part of the afternoon had waned, but much of it was left, and what was left was of the finest and rarest quality. Real dusk would not arrive for many hours; but the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were long upon the smooth, dense turf. They lengthened slowly, however, and the scene expressed that sense of leisure still to come which is perhaps the chief source of one's enjoyment of such a scene at such an hour. From five o'clock to eight is on certain occasions a little eternity; but on such an occasion as this the interval could be only an eternity of pleasure. The persons concerned in it were taking their pleasure quietly, and they were not of the sex which is supposed to furnish the regular votaries of the ceremony I have mentioned. ① The shadows on the perfect lawn were straight and angular; they were the shadows of an old man sitting in a deep wicker-chair near the low table on which the tea had been served, and of two younger men strolling to and fro, in desultory talk, in front of him. The old man had his cup in his hand; it was an unusually large cup, of a different pattern from the rest of the set and painted in brilliant colours. He disposed of its contents with much circumspection, holding it for a long time close to his chin, with his face turned to the house. His companions had either finished their tea or were indifferent to their privilege; ② they smoked cigarettes as they continued to stroll. One of them, from time to time, as he passed, looked with a certain attention at the elder man, who, unconscious of observation, rested his eyes upon the rich red front of his dwell-

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① they were ... have mentioned: 通常,热衷于下午茶的都是女性,而这里,在场的都是男人 ② were indifferent to their privilege: 对这种享受没多大兴趣

ing. The house that rose beyond the lawn was a structure to repay such consideration and was the most characteristic object in the peculiarly English picture I have attempted to sketch.

It stood upon a low hill, above the river — the river being the Thames at some forty miles from London. A long gabled front of red brick, with the complexion of which time and the weather had played all sorts of pictorial tricks,<sup>①</sup> only, however, to improve and refine it, presented to the lawn its patches of ivy, its clustered chimneys, its windows smothered in creepers. The house had a name and a history; the old gentleman taking his tea would have been delighted to tell you these things; how it had been built under Edward the Sixth,<sup>②</sup> had offered a night's hospitality to the great Elizabeth<sup>③</sup> (whose august person had extended itself upon a huge, magnificent, and terribly angular bed which still formed the principal honour of the sleeping apartments), had been a good deal bruised and defaced in Cromwell's<sup>④</sup> wars, and then, under the Restoration<sup>⑤</sup>, repaired and much enlarged; and how, finally, after having been remodelled and disfigured in the eighteenth century, it had passed into the careful keeping of a shrewd American banker, who had bought it originally because (owing to circumstances too complicated to set forth) it was offered at a great bargain; bought it with much grumbling at its ugliness, its antiquity, its incommodity, and who now, at the end of twenty years, had become conscious of a real aesthetic passion for it, so that he knew all its points and would tell you just where to stand to see them in combination and just the hour when the shadows of its various protuberances — which fell so softly upon the warm, weary brickwork — were of the right measure. Besides this, as I have said, he could have counted off most of the successive owners and occupants, several of whom were known to general fame; doing so, however, with an undemonstrative conviction that the latest phase of its destiny was not the least honourable.<sup>⑥</sup> The front of the house overlooking that portion of the lawn with which we are concerned was not the entrance-front; this was in quite another quarter. Privacy here reigned supreme,<sup>⑦</sup> and the wide carpet of turf that covered the level hill-top seemed but the extension of a luxurious interior. The great still oaks and beeches flung down a shade as dense as that of velvet curtains; and the place was furnished, like a room, with cushioned seats, with rich-coloured rugs, with the books and papers that lay upon the grass. The river was at some distance; where the

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① with the ... pictorial tricks: 岁月和风雨已将墙面弄得斑斑驳驳      ② Edward the Sixth: 爱德华六世, 英王, 1547—1553 在位      ③ the great Elizabeth: 伊丽莎白女王, 英女王, 1558—1603 在位, 爱德华六世的妹妹      ④ Cromwell: 奥立佛·克伦威尔 (1599—1658), 英国将军, 政治家, 推翻了查理一世的统治, 建立了共和国  
⑤ the Restoration: 这里指 1660 年查理二世的王政复辟      ⑥ doing so ... least honourable: 他的言外之意无异于表示, 他作为房子的现任主人, 并没有丝毫辱没它辉煌的命运      ⑦ Privacy here reigned supreme: 这里到处都很幽静

ground began to slope, the lawn, properly speaking, ceased. ① But it was none the less a charming walk down to the water.

The old gentleman at the tea-table, who had come from America thirty years before, had brought with him, at the top of his baggage, ② his American physiognomy; and he had not only brought it with him, but he had kept it in the best order, so that, if necessary, he might have taken it back to his own country with perfect confidence. At present, obviously, nevertheless, he was not likely to displace himself; his journeys were over, and he was taking the rest that precedes the great rest ③. He had a narrow, clean-shaven face, with features evenly distributed and an expression of placid acuteness. It was evidently a face in which the range of representation was not large, so that the air of contented shrewdness was all the more of a merit. It seemed to tell that he had been successful in life, yet it seemed to tell also that his success had not been exclusive and invidious, but had had much of the inoffensiveness of failure. ④ He had certainly had a great experience of men, but there was an almost rustic simplicity in the faint smile that played upon his lean, spacious cheek and lighted up his humorous eye as he at last slowly and carefully deposited his big tea-cup upon the table. He was neatly dressed, in well-brushed black; but a shawl was folded upon his knees, and his feet were encased in thick, embroidered slippers. A beautiful collie dog lay upon the grass near his chair, watching the master's face almost as tenderly as the master took in the still more magisterial physiognomy of the house; and a little bristling, bustling terrier bestowed a desultory attendance upon the other gentlemen.

One of these was a remarkably well-made man of five-and-thirty, with a face as English as that of the old gentleman I have just sketched was something else; a noticeably handsome face, fresh-coloured, fair and frank, with firm, straight features, a lively grey eye and the rich adornment of a chestnut beard. This person had a certain fortunate, brilliant exceptional look — the air of a happy temperament fertilized by a high civilization ⑤ — which would have made almost any observer envy him at a venture. He was booted and spurred, as if he had dismounted from a long ride; he wore a white hat, which looked too large for him; he held his two hands behind him, and in one of them — a large, white, well-shaped fist — was crumpled a pair of soiled dog-skin gloves.

His companion, measuring the length of the lawn beside him, was a person of quite a different pattern, who, although he might have excited grave curiosity, would not, like the other, have provoked you to wish yourself, almost blindly, in his place. Tall, lean, loosely and feebly put together, he had an ugly, sickly, witty, charming face, furnished, but by no means decora-

① where the ... speaking, ceased: 缓坡开始的地方,确切地说,也就是草坪的尽头

② at the ... his baggage: 除了他的行李以外

③ the great rest: 委婉语,实指“死亡”

④ had had ... of failure: 历尽沧桑,饱经风霜

⑤ the air ... high civilization: 良好的

素养铸成了他开朗的性格

ted, with a straggling moustache and whisker. He looked clever and ill — a combination by no means felicitous; and he wore a brown velvet jacket. He carried his hands in his pockets, and there was something in the way he did it that showed the habit was inveterate. His gait had a shambling, wandering quality; he was not very firm on his legs. As I have said, whenever he passed the old man in the chair he rested his eyes upon him; and at this moment, with their faces brought into relation, you would easily have seen they were father and son. The father caught his son's eye at last and gave him a mild, responsive smile.

"I'm getting on very well," he said.

"Have you drunk your tea?" asked the son.

"Yes, and enjoyed it."

"Shall I give you some more?"

The old man considered, placidly. "Well, I guess I'll wait and see." He had, in speaking, the American tone.

"Are you cold?" the son enquired.

The father slowly rubbed his legs. "Well, I don't know. I can't tell till I feel."

"Perhaps some one might feel for you," said the younger man, laughing.

"Oh, I hope some one will always feel for me! Don't you feel for me, Lord Warburton?"

"Oh, yes, immensely," said the gentleman addressed as Lord Warburton, promptly. "I'm bound to say you look wonderfully comfortable."

"Well, I suppose I am, in most respects." And the old man looked down at his green shawl and smoothed it over his knees. "The fact is I've been comfortable so many years that I suppose I've got so used to it I don't know it."

"Yes, that's the bore of comfort," said Lord Warburton. "We only know when we're uncomfortable."

"It strikes me we're rather particular," his companion remarked.

"Oh, yes, there's no doubt we're particular," Lord Warburton murmured. And then the three men remained silent a while; the two younger ones standing looking down at the other, who presently asked for more tea. "I should think you would be very unhappy with that shawl," Lord Warburton resumed while his companion filled the old man's cup again.

"Oh, no, he must have the shawl!" cried the gentleman in the velvet coat. "Don't put such ideas as that into his head."

"It belongs to my wife," said the old man simply.

"Oh, if it's for sentimental reasons —" And Lord Warburton made a gesture of apology.

"I suppose I must give it to her when she comes," the old man went on.

"You'll please to do nothing of the kind. You'll keep it to cover your poor old legs."

"Well, you mustn't abuse my legs," said the old man. "I guess they are as good as yours."

"Oh, you're perfectly free to abuse mine," his son replied, giving him his tea.

"Well, we're two lame ducks; I don't think there's much difference."

"I'm much obliged to you for calling me a duck. How's your tea?"

"Well, it's rather hot."

"That's intended to be a merit. ①"

"Ah, there's a great deal of merit," murmured the old man, kindly. "He's a very good nurse, Lord Warburton."

"Isn't he a bit clumsy?" asked his lordship.

"Oh, no, he's not clumsy — considering that he's an invalid himself. He's a very good nurse — for a sick-nurse. I call him my sick-nurse because he's sick himself."

"Oh, come, daddy!" the ugly young man exclaimed.

"Well, you are; I wish you weren't. But I suppose you can't help it."

"I might try; that's an idea," said the young man.

"Were you ever sick, Lord Warburton?" his father asked.

Lord Warburton considered a moment. "Yes, sir, once, in the Persian Gulf ②."

"He's making light of you, daddy," said the other young man. "That's a sort of joke."

"Well, there seem to be so many sorts now," daddy replied, serenely. "You don't look as if you had been sick, any way, Lord Warburton."

"He's sick of life; he was just telling me so; going on fearfully about it," said Lord Warburton's friend.

"Is that true, sir?" asked the old man gravely.

"If it is, your son gave me no consolation. He's a wretched fellow to talk to — a regular cynic. He doesn't seem to believe in anything."

"That's another sort of joke," said the person accused of cynicism.

"It's because his health is so poor," his father explained to Lord Warburton. "It affects his mind and colours his way of looking at things; he seems to feel as if he had never had a chance. But it's almost entirely theoretical, you know; it doesn't seem to affect his spirits. I've hardly ever seen him when he wasn't cheerful — about as he is at present. He often cheers me up."

The young man so described looked at Lord Warburton and laughed. "Is it a glowing eulogy or an accusation of levity? Should you like me to carry out my theories, daddy?"

"By Jove ③, we should see some queer things!" cried Lord Warburton.

"I hope you haven't taken up that sort of tone," said the old man.

"Warburton's tone is worse than mine; he pretends to be bored. I'm not

① That's intended ... a merit: 我有意这么做(指把茶冲得烫些),这对你有好处  
Persian Gulf: 波斯湾

③ By Jove: (表惊讶)天哪!

② the



in the least bored; I find life only too interesting."

"Ah, too interesting; you shouldn't allow it to be that, you know!"

"I'm never bored when I come here," said Lord Warburton. "One gets such uncommonly good talk."

"Is that another sort of joke?" asked the old man. "You've no excuse for being bored anywhere. When I was your age I had never heard of such a thing."

"You must have developed very late."

"No, I developed very quick; that was just the reason. When I was twenty years old I was very highly developed indeed. I was working tooth and nail<sup>①</sup>. You wouldn't be bored if you had something to do; but all you young men are too idle. You think too much of your pleasure. You're too fastidious, and too indolent, and too rich."

"Oh, I say," cried Lord Warburton, "you're hardly the person to accuse a fellow-creature of being too rich!"

"Do you mean because I'm a banker?" asked the old man.

"Because of that, if you like; and because you have — haven't you? — such unlimited means."

"He isn't very rich," the other young man mercifully pleaded. "He has given away an immense deal of money."

"Well, I suppose it was his own," said Lord Warburton; "and in that case could there be a better proof of wealth? Let not a public benefactor talk of one's being too fond of pleasure."<sup>②</sup>

"Daddy's very fond of pleasure — of other people's."

The old man shook his head. "I don't pretend to have contributed anything to the amusement of my contemporaries."

"My dear father, you're too modest!"

"That's a kind of joke, sir," said Lord Warburton.

"You young men have too many jokes. When there are no jokes you've nothing left."

"Fortunately there are always more jokes," the ugly young man remarked.

"I don't believe it — I believe things are getting more serious. You young men will find that out."

"The increasing seriousness of things, then — that's the great opportunity of jokes."

"They'll have to be grim jokes," said the old man. "I'm convinced there will be great changes; and not all for the better."

"I quite agree with you, sir," Lord Warburton declared. "I'm very sure there will be great changes, and that all sorts of queer things will happen. That's why I find so much difficulty in applying your advice; you know you

① tooth and nail: 拼命, 竭尽全力 ② Let not ... of pleasure: 一个热心公益的人最好不要责备别人太热衷享乐