

World's Classics

[英文原版附评注]

LITTLE WOMEN

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Louisa May Alcott



世界图书出版公司

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作者简介

路易莎·梅·奥尔科特(Louisa May Alcott, 1832 - 1888)是19世纪美国最具影响力的女作家之一。她1832年出生于宾夕法尼亚州日耳曼镇一个平民知识分子家庭。其父布朗逊·奥尔科特是一位自学成才的哲学家、学校改革家和乌托邦主义者。即使在生活最艰难的时期,奥尔科特先生也从未忘记在生活实践中研究哲学与社会。在与友人们合作开办的学校因接纳黑人孩子而被迫关闭后,他举家迁往马萨诸塞州康考德镇,过着自食其力的生活,人称“康考德的圣人”。当时,许多人不理解他,认为他行为怪异,但其好友爱默生非常赞赏他,说他“内心世界极为丰富,但从来不屑向世人打开窗户展示。”路易莎·梅·奥尔科特的母亲雅碧葛尔是位躬行实践的人。母亲这种性格和父亲的空想、仁义精神对奥尔科特影响至深。奥尔科特家子女众多,生活贫困。她排行老二,从小便像男孩一样活泼好动,非常顽皮。父亲做她的家庭教师,受其影响,奥尔科特对文学兴趣浓厚,尤其热衷于戏剧的创作和演出。每天傍晚,父母都会在谷仓里观看孩子们自编自导的话剧演出。虽然物质生活贫乏,但奥尔科特一家人其乐融融,精神上十分富足。奥尔科特在康考德度过了一生大部分的时光,她自称这是一段“最幸福的时光”。果园子里的小阁楼是这个女孩子写作的地方。奥尔科特后来在那儿创作过速写、小说、诗歌及戏剧等作品。16岁时她写出了情景剧《花儿寓言》(*Flower Fable*),也正是在此时期,她与父亲的好友爱默生、梭罗、霍桑等一批当时著名的“先验论”学者们相识。奥尔科特可以在爱默生家里自由地翻书,由梭罗叔叔陪着在湖边散步。她的思想迅速成熟起来,并立志要做一个优秀的演员和小说家,按自己的方式生活。1861年美国南北战争爆发,打乱了人们平静的生活。奥尔科特投身于医院做护士,度过了一段紧张而难忘的时光,认识了伤痛、疾病与死亡,这对她孱弱的性格是一次巨大的打击。后来她根据这段经历写成了《医院随笔》(*Hospital Sketches*, 1863)。不久,奥尔科特由于身体原因回到家中,挑起了家庭的重担。为了谋生,她当过家教、裁缝、女佣和杂志社编辑。丰富的生活阅历加深了她对社会的理解,培养了她的人道主义精神。奥尔科特21岁开始发表诗歌及

小品。1865年发表第一部小说《心境》(Moods),但未引起注意。她的创作使拮据的生活有了好转,但真正使她从写作中受益的是以A·M·巴特纳为笔名创作的一系列惊险小说,如《波琳的激情与惩罚》(1861),以意志坚强、美艳动人的女英雄为主角,情节曲折,扣人心弦,颇受当时读者欢迎。她赢得了丰厚的稿酬,也积累了丰富的写作经验,为以后的创作打下了坚实的基础。当时,曾有出版商力邀奥尔科特写一些儿童作品,她拒绝了,原因是她想写一部关于自己家庭的故事。1868年,在一位出版商“写一部关于女孩子的书”的建议下,她根据自己儿时的回忆写出了《小妇人》。该书以南北战争为背景,以马奇一家的情感纠葛为线索,生动刻画了马奇家四姐妹迥然不同的性格及她们的爱情、婚姻、命运。描绘了战乱的年代里一块宁静和平的绿洲——和睦、美好、幸福的马奇一家的天伦之爱。小说内容平实却细腻,结构单纯却寓意深远,语言朴实无华却耐人寻味。小说受到大思想家爱默生的影响,强调个人尊严与自律观念,富有强烈的感染力,并洋溢着乐观主义精神。这部著作使奥尔科特一举成名,成为她一生文学创作的代表作。后来,奥尔科特写了《小妇人》的续集《好妻子》(Good Wives, 1869),《小绅士》(Little Men, 1871),《乔的男孩》(Joe's Boys, 1886)等作品。虽然这些作品成就赶不上原作,却仍然受到了读者的欢迎。奥尔科特的其它作品有《旧式女子》(Old Fashioned Girl, 1870),《工作》(Work, 1873),《八个表亲》(Eight Cousins, 1875)和《玫瑰盛开》(Rose in Bloom, 1876)。除文学创作外,奥尔科特还热衷于政治,她曾参加妇女选举权运动,为提高妇女的地位奔波呐喊。1888年与父亲布朗逊同一年逝世于波士顿。终生未婚。一个多世纪过去了,《小妇人》并没有因时间的流逝而销声匿迹,反而越来越显示出其永恒的价值。它被冠以“一部穿越百年的成长经典”、“美国最优秀的家庭小说”的殊荣,一部“女性自我内心传统与自由之争”的经典作品,“卓越的女性主义探讨运动”,被美国图书馆评为“世界最畅销的优秀作品之一”。根据《小妇人》改编的电影和动画片也受到广大观众的青睐。最新的《小妇人》电影版是2000年由美国哥伦比亚电影公司出版,并由著名演员维诺娜·奈德饰演女主角乔。其持久的影响力可见一斑。

故事梗概

《小妇人》是美国文学史上一部历久不衰的佳作。它以 1861 - 1865 年美国南北战争为背景,描绘了马萨诸塞州康考德镇一个普通家庭的喜怒哀乐。马奇夫妇及四个女儿梅格、乔、贝思和艾米共同构筑了这样一个充满温馨和快乐的家庭。它虽然贫穷却坚强乐观,不乏困扰却在道德与爱的感召下走向幸福的彼岸。是一首关于人性美和尊严、关于爱的赞歌。

小说分为两部。第一部描写马奇一家在一年战争中的生活点滴。马奇先生远赴战场做了随军牧师,照看伤员,留下妻子和四个女儿过着清苦的生活。为了补贴家用,梅格为别人照看孩子,乔去陪护马奇婶婶,贝思在家中帮助母亲和女佣汉娜做家务。四个女孩子在马奇太太爱与信心的教导下,在艰苦环境的磨炼中发出光和热。她们虽然贫穷却愿意帮助比她们更需要帮助的邻居赫梅尔一家。她们也有虚荣心,希望得到漂亮的衣服,吃到可口的食物,过上公主一样的生活。但幻想归幻想,她们在现实的环境中依然必须依靠自己的努力来面对生活的困难。第二部描写了四姐妹日后的成长,写她们各自追寻不同理想与归宿的过程。

故事开始于某一个圣诞节,四姐妹立志要克服缺点,不再抱怨工作辛苦乏味,不再自私虚荣,要学会自我控制,勇敢地生活、战斗,追求真善美,向天国进发。

不久,他们有了新朋友——富有却严厉苛刻的劳伦斯老人和他的孤独帅气的孙子劳里。渴望友谊、率直活泼的劳里很快和马奇家的女孩们打成一片,尤其和二女儿乔更是亲密无间。在乔的劝说下,劳里开始学着顺从爷爷,让爷爷开心;脾气古怪却心地善良的劳伦斯老人也在马奇一家闪亮精神品质的感召下,心灵的冬色为之驱除,从过去忧伤的记忆中摆脱出来,开始尝试与孙子沟通,给予孙子信任与理解。

马奇家的女孩们也并不总是一帆风顺,由于性格、观点、理想、兴趣的不同,她们有时也会有争吵和愤怒的眼泪,但最终总会在母亲的谆谆教诲下涣然冰释,四姐妹健康快乐地成长。梅格虽然爱慕虚荣,渴望珠光宝气和华美的衣服,但在参加了莫法特家的舞会后,她认识

到上流社会的装腔作势、虚伪无聊，宁可过一种贫穷却有尊严的生活。乔因为自己自私的报复行为差点儿使艾米命丧冰窟而后悔不已，决心努力克制自己，宽容忍耐。艾米也认识到了自己的嫉妒对乔造成的伤害，勇敢地承认了过错。贝思凭借善良赢得了劳伦斯老人的爱心的回赠——一架她日思夜想的钢琴，她不再羞怯胆小。乔赢得了第一笔稿费，尝到了靠自立赢得别人尊重的喜悦，仿佛看到了自己成为一名大作家的光明前程。

马奇家和劳伦斯家不理睬流言蜚语的挑拨，互相关心，相互支持，坦荡快乐地生活着。劳里被乔反叛的性格深深吸引，一种比友情更密切的感情在少年心中悄悄滋长着，而乔对此浑然不知。同时，梅格和劳里的家教约翰先生也暗生情愫。

父亲病重的电报打破了生活的宁静，乔毅然卖掉秀发为母亲凑够了路费，马奇太太在约翰的陪护下赴华盛顿照顾马奇先生。贝思因探望赫梅尔一家染上了猩红热，艾米被送到马奇婶婶家去躲避，在那儿她学会了如何调整自己去取悦这位絮絮叨叨却仁慈善良的老太太。在梅格和乔的精心照顾下，马奇太太赶回来时，贝思已转危为安，却不再像以前那样健康活泼。马奇先生和约翰在第二个圣诞节赶回来，一家人得以团聚。梅格与约翰于六月完婚并育有一子一女。劳里为了让爷爷开心，顺从地上了大学，这个被宠坏了的孩子在那儿更是养成了一些公子哥习气，但内心仍保留着一分纯真和对乔深深的眷恋。乔的文章屡见报端，为了让家人过上好日子，她不惜走庸俗小说的道路，沉湎于描绘凶杀、神秘事件和错综复杂的爱情故事。

梅格的婚姻生活虽然不时地有一些家庭风暴，但凭借自己的真诚，母亲智慧的启迪，约翰的宽容而平安度过，她正逐渐成长为一个能干的主妇。

艾米在马奇婶婶家的经历使她更加掌握了待人处世、与人为善的技巧。她以德报怨的宽厚和温和的性情让老太太欣赏不已，并赐予了她一次美好的欧洲之旅。

艾米的幸运让乔怅然若失，加上她误以为贝思爱上了劳里，便决定离家去纽约做柯克太太家的女佣，为贝思腾开位置，顺便满足自己天性喜欢冒险和不安分的个性。在那儿，乔邂逅了巴尔教授，乔景仰他的学识和人格，并在他的影响下，放弃了写低俗小说。

冬去春来，劳里以优异的成绩结束了学业。当他以为自己现在有

了资本可以让乔崇拜并接受他的求婚时，乔不愿因为姐妹们成家使家庭离散，以不适合为由拒绝了他。劳里伤心欲绝，失魂落魄地来到了欧洲，见到了艾米。艾米暗恋这个邻家大哥，却不满他的懒散、游手好闲。劳里受到艾米的指责后离开了她，试图有所作为，忘掉失恋的痛苦，重新寻找新的恋情。贝思越来越苍白虚弱，在她最后的日子，她仍然努力把爱和快乐带给大家。在一个黎明，贝思带着大家的祝福与不舍平静地离开了人世。

在劳里的安慰和鼓励下，艾米在欧洲度过了失去亲人的悲伤日子。劳里的爱让她感到温暖踏实，二人都意识到他们才是最合适的一对儿。

乔独自一人担负着家庭的重任，承受着失去贝思的痛苦。劳里携艾米的归来让她有些怅惘，她怀念过去的天伦之乐，感到孤独。巴尔教授来拜访马奇一家，乔接受了他的求婚，并继承了马奇婶婶的梅园，和巴尔一起开办学校，实践自己的人道主义理想。

乔和艾米也有了自己的孩子，一大家人温馨和美地生活在一起。经过困惑、迷惘、悲伤、欢乐，马奇家的人们终于实现了道德的自我完善，迎来了收获的季节，建立起自己的圣城。

导 读

1868年,一个出版商建议路易莎·梅·奥尔科特写一部“女孩子的书”。她便根据孩提时的记忆把自己和她的姐妹安娜、亚碧·梅和伊丽莎白白的成长故事写成了《小妇人》。《小妇人》出版后获得了巨大的成功,美国文坛好评如潮,许多评论家认为美国终于有了一部和英国女作家简·奥斯汀的《傲慢与偏见》相媲美的佳作。小说成为公认的美国名著。100多年以来,一直受到热烈的欢迎。美国图书协会、美国教育协会两会代表选入100种乡村小学的必备书,其中精选25种,《小妇人》列居25种的榜首。世界上已有数十种不同语言的译本,20世纪30年代此书也风靡了中国大陆,先后有四、五种不同的译本问世。

《小妇人》是一部小说化的家庭日记。作者奥尔科特曾经这样自评《小妇人》,“它虽然一点也不刺激,但却简单真实,因为我们确实大部分都经历过,如果它成功,原因就在于此。”诚然,她以自己的家庭、早年生活为原型,以清新的笔调,再现了自己童年的故事。作品内容源自实际生活,以南北战争为背景,讲述了马奇家四姐妹的悲欢离合的成长过程,表现的是普通家庭中日常点点滴滴的琐屑生活。小说中的马奇家四姐妹自立自强,但都对家庭忠诚眷爱,对亲戚、邻居和朋友充满关爱。贯穿始终,作者强调和凸显了家庭意识,为读者谱写了一曲和睦、美好、幸福的家庭赞歌。小说情节曲折,叙事温情、细腻,风格独特,人物刻画逼真,具有强烈的艺术感染力。

《小妇人》又是一本道德伦理小说。书中不断提到和引用17世纪英国小说家约翰·班扬的寓言小说《天路历程》中的故事,把人生喻指为一次长途跋涉的道德精神之旅,要历经艰难险阻,经受种种考验,不断接受挑战——人只有怀着真善美的愿望,坚持努力,才能跨过“绝望的深渊”,走过“狮群”,爬过“陡坡”,走上“一片常年开满百合花的宜人草地”进行甜美的休憩,最后步入幸福的“天国”。《小妇人》的第一章是《重演天路历程》揭示了整部小说的中心思想。马奇太太说生活就是一次天路历程。行者不能停留,要背上包袱,跨过漫漫征途,跋山涉水去寻找自己的“圣城”。她在女儿们体会到失望与苦涩的同时,教导她们要学会独立思考、自我否定和自我控制,更言传身教,让她们体会

工作是有益的,工作比金钱、时装都使女人有一种力量感和独立感。马奇先生更是性格温和、处事谨慎,他诚实守信,富有同情心,是追求道德自我完善的典范。但是,小说并没有空洞的说教或提口号式地大谈道理,而是把教育和美学完美地结合起来,令读者回味无穷。作者把爱心看作一个特殊而唯一的目标,使全书蒙上了一层道德色彩:圣诞节马奇太太带四姐妹把食物送给穷人;劳伦斯先生乐善好施;乔同情劳里孤独寂寞而主动接近并帮助他;贝思先人后己,为救人身染恶疾;乔把马奇婶婶遗留给她的庄园办成一所非盈利性质的学校,和丈夫巴尔教授一起全身心投入教育,并免费收养无家可归的穷孩子,等等。可见,作者关注的是人的道德意识,是整个纯真女性和人格,是人类心灵深处至真至善至美的东西。

《小妇人》还是一部美国现实主义小说。“这是一本自我抑制和自我表现相结合、实用主义和乌托邦思想并存的小说。”作者采用朴素的现实主义写法,再现了十九世纪中后期美国社会的文化价值观。受美国当时思想家爱默生的影响,她强调个人的尊严和自立自律的重要,坚持认为人应该不畏艰难险阻,用必胜的意志和信念去面对和建设全新的世界,这些都体现了奋发有为的美国精神。马奇家四姐妹热爱生活,崇尚文学,结社办报、编写剧本、排演戏剧。她们追求自强,为减轻家里的经济负担,梅格在金斯家做家庭教师;乔出去照顾马奇婶婶,贴补家用。她们坚韧不拔,乔热爱并勤奋写作,终于成为作家;梅格宁愿放弃马奇婶婶的遗产,嫁给了清贫的布鲁克先生,夫妻二人同甘共苦,最终使小家庭充满了幸福。马奇姐妹明智、自由地选择了自己的生活道路,她们的归宿虽然各不相同,但都是自强自立精神的结果。

如开篇所言,《小妇人》是一本“写给女孩子的书”。作者本人生前曾积极奔走,为妇女争取选举权和禁酒运动,被有的评论家称为女权主义的先驱之一。作者以女性特有的敏锐观察力和细腻的笔触描写了马奇家四姐妹的成长和变化。整部小说随着梅格、乔、贝思和艾美这四位女性由天真女孩成长为成熟小妇人的岁月,体现了她们对于甜蜜爱情、纯真友情和完善性格的孜孜追求。读者们能在马奇家四姐妹的身上看到女性在逆境中互助友爱、追求自主自律、自强不息以及眷爱家庭等光辉品质,而这些精神能够鼓舞读者用积极乐观的心态面对这个竞争日益激烈的世界。同时,这也是一部写给母亲们的书。小说中马奇太太以坚强、乐观的态度对待贫苦的生活,以爱心教导四个女

儿在清贫中保持独立、自尊、谦虚的品格,使四个女儿逐渐懂得如何警惕“心中的敌人”,如何克服忧伤,如何改掉急性子和坏脾气,最终获得幸福。

总之,《小妇人》作品构思巧妙,内容平实却细腻,结构单纯却寓意深远。其中的幽默结构和用语,是作品吸引人的一个亮点。这部小说堪称美国文学史上最具影响力的女性文学之一,是一本历久不衰的经典巨作,值得一读。

PART FIRST

1. *Playing Pilgrims*

"Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents," grumbled Jo, lying on the rug.

"It's so dreadful to be poor!" sighed Meg, looking down at her old dress.

"I don't think it's fair for some girls to have plenty of pretty things, and other girls nothing at all," added little Amy, *with an injured sniff*^①.

"We've got father and mother and each other," said Beth contentedly, from her corner.

The four young faces on which the firelight shone brightened at the cheerful words, but darkened again as Jo said sadly:

"We haven't got father, and shall not have him for a long time." She didn't say "perhaps never," but each silently added it, thinking of father far away, where the fighting was.

Nobody spoke for a minute; then Meg said in an altered tone:

"You know the reason mother proposed not having any presents this Christmas was because it is going to be a hard winter for everyone; and she thinks we ought not to spend money for pleasure, when our men are suffering so in the army. We can't do much, but we can make our little sacrifices, and ought to do it gladly. But I am afraid I don't"; and Meg shook her head as she thought regretfully of all the pretty things she wanted.

"But I don't think the little we should spend would do any good. We've each got a dollar, and the army wouldn't be much helped by our giving that. I agree not to expect anything from mother or you, but I do want to buy '*Undine and Sintram*'^② for myself; I've wanted it so long," said Jo, who was a bookworm.

"I have planned to spend mine in new music," said Beth, with a little sigh, which no one heard but the hearth brush and kettle holder.

① 嗤之以鼻, 仿佛受了委屈似地(说)。

② 原书名是 *Undine and Sintram and his Companions*。



"I shall get a nice box of Faber's drawing pencils; I really need them," said Amy decidedly.

"Mother didn't say anything about our money, and she won't wish us to give up everything. Let's each buy what we want, and have a little fun; I'm sure we work hard enough to earn it," cried Jo, examining the heels of her shoes in a gentlemanly manner.

"I know I do—teaching those tiresome children nearly all day, when I'm longing to enjoy myself at home," began Meg in the complaining tone again.

"You don't have half such a hard time as I do," said Jo. "How would you like to be shut up for hours with a nervous, fussy old lady, who keeps you trotting, is never satisfied, and worries you till you're ready to fly out of the window or cry?"

"It's naughty to fret; but I do think washing dishes and keeping things tidy is the worst work in the world. It makes me cross; and my hands get so stiff, I can't practice well at all"; and Beth looked at her rough hands with a sigh that anyone could hear that time.

"I don't believe any of you suffer as I do," cried Amy; "for you don't have to go to school with impertinent girls, who plague you if you don't know your lessons, and laugh at your dresses, and *label*^① your father if he isn't rich, and insult you when your nose isn't nice."

"If you mean *libel*, I'd say so, and not talk about *labels*, as if papa was a *pickle bottle*^②," advised Jo, laughing.

"I know what I mean, and you needn't be *statirical* about it. It's proper to use good words, and improve your *vocabulary*^③," returned Amy, with dignity.

"Don't peck at one another, children. Don't you wish we had the money papa lost when we were little, Jo? Dear me, how happy and good we'd be, if we had no worries!" said Meg, who could remember better times.

"You said, the other day, you thought we were a deal happier than the King children, for they were fighting and fretting all the time, in spite of their money."

"So I did, Beth. Well, I think we are; for, although we do have to work, we make fun for ourselves, and are a pretty jolly set, as Jo would say."

"Jo does use such slang words!" observed Amy, with a reproving look

① 此处艾美想说“诽谤”(libel), 却错读成了“标示”(label)。

② 泡菜瓶;腌菜瓶。

③ 此处艾美把“vocabulary”错读成了“vocabulary”。

at the long figure stretched on the rug. Jo immediately sat up, put her hands in her pockets, and began to whistle.

"Don't, Jo; it's so boyish!"

"That's why I do it."

"I detest rude, unladylike girls!"

"I hate *affected, niminy-piminy chits* ①!"

"Birds in their little nests agree," sang Beth, the peacemaker, with such a funny face that both sharp voices softened to a laugh, and the "pecking" ended for that time.

"Really, girls, you are both to be blamed," said Meg, beginning to lecture in her elder-sisterly fashion. "You are old enough to leave off boyish tricks, and to behave better, Josephine. It didn't matter so much when you were a little girl; but now you are so tall, and turn up your hair, you should remember that you are a young lady."

"I'm not! And if turning up my hair makes me one, I'll wear it in two tails till I'm twenty," cried Jo, pulling off her net, and shaking down a chestnut mane. "I hate to think I've got to grow up, and be Miss March, and wear long gowns, and look *as prim as a China aster* ②! It's bad enough to be a girl, anyway, when I like boys' games and work and manners! I can't get over my disappointment in not being a boy; and it's worse than ever now, for I'm dying to go and fight with papa, and I can only stay at home and knit, like a poky old woman!" And Jo shook the blue army sock till *the needles rattled like castanets* ③, and her ball bounded across the room.

"Poor Jo! It's too bad, but it can't be helped; so you must try to be contented with making your name boyish, and playing brother to us girls," said Beth, stroking the rough head at her knee with a hand that all the dishwashing and dusting in the world could not make ungentle in its touch.

"As for you, Amy," continued Meg, "you are altogether too particular and prim. Your airs are funny now; but you'll grow up an affected little goose, if you don't take care. I like your nice manners and refined ways of speaking, when you don't try to be elegant; but your absurd words are as bad as Jo's slang."

"If Jo is a tomboy and Amy a goose, what am I, please?" asked Beth, ready to share the lecture.

① 做作的，装腔作势的黄毛丫头。

② China aster 翠菊，是产于中国的一年生菊科植物，有着引人注目、色彩各异的花冠。此处采用了明喻的修辞格，直译为：端庄地像翠菊一样。形容乔不愿做一个故作正经的漂亮小姐。

③ 针像响板一样嘎嘎作响。





"You're a dear, and nothing else," answered Meg warmly; and no one contradicted her, for the "Mouse" was the pet of the family.

As young readers like to know "how people look," we will take this moment to give them a little sketch of the four sisters, who sat knitting away in the twilight, while the December snow fell quietly without, and the fire crackled cheerfully within. It was a comfortable old room, though the carpet was faded and the furniture very plain; for a good picture or two hung on the walls, books filled the recesses, chrysanthemums and Christmas roses bloomed in the windows, and a pleasant atmosphere of home peace pervaded it.

Margaret, the eldest of the four, was sixteen, and very pretty, being plump and fair, with large eyes, plenty of soft, brown hair, a sweet mouth, and white hands, of which she was rather vain. Fifteen-year-old Jo was very tall, thin, and brown, and reminded one of a colt; for she ever seemed to know what to do with her long limbs, which were very much in her way. She had a decided mouth, a comical nose, and sharp, gray eyes, which appeared to see everything, and were by turns fierce, funny, or thoughtful. Her long, thick hair was her one beauty; but it was usually bundled into a net, to be out of her way. Round shoulders had Jo, big hands and feet, *a flyaway look to her clothes*^①, and the uncomfortable appearance of a girl who was rapidly shooting up into a woman, and didn't like it. Elizabeth—or Beth, as everyone called her—was a rosy, smooth-haired, bright-eyed girl of thirteen, with a shy manner, a timid voice, and a peaceful expression, which was seldom disturbed. Her father called her "Little Tranquillity," and the name suited her excellently; for she seemed to live in a happy world of her own, only venturing out to meet the few whom she trusted and loved. Amy, though the youngest, was a most important person—in her own opinion at least. *A regular snow-maiden*^②, with blue eyes, and yellow hair curling on her shoulders, pale and slender, and always carrying herself like a young lady mindful of her manners. What the characters of the four sisters were we will leave to be found out.

The clock struck six; and, having swept up the hearth, Beth put a pair of slippers down to warm. Somehow the sight of the old shoes had a good effect upon the girls; for mother was coming, and everyone brightened to welcome her. Meg stopped lecturing, and lighted the lamp, Amy got out of the easy chair without being asked, and Jo forgot how tired she was as

① 衣服宽大不合身。

② 指艾美身材匀称,肌肤如雪。