



An English-chinese Collation

The Scarlet Letter

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(英)霍桑

中国戏剧出版社

英汉对照全译本

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The Collected Masterworks of the Foreign Literature

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I THE PRISON - DOOR.

A THRONG of bearded men, in sad-coloured garments, and grey, steeple-crowned hats, intermixed with women, some wearing hoods, and others bareheaded, was assembled in front of a wooden edifice, the door of which was heavily timbered with oak, and studded with iron spikes.

The founders of a new colony, whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognised it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison. In accordance with this rule, it may safely be assumed that the forefathers of Boston had built the first prison-house somewhere in the vicinity of Cornhill, almost as seasonably as they marked out the first burial-ground, on Isaac Johnson's lot, and round about his grave, which subsequently became the nucleus of all the congregated sepulchres in the old churchyard of King's Chapel. Certain it is that, some fifteen or twenty years after the settlement of the town, the wooden jail was already marked with weather-stains and other indications of age, which gave a yet darker aspect to its beetle-browed and gloomy front. The rust on the

第一章 狱 门

一群身穿黯色长袍、头戴灰色尖顶高帽、蓄着胡须的男人，混杂着一些蒙着兜头帽或光着脑袋的女人，聚在一所木头大房子前面。房门是用厚实的橡木做的，上面密密麻麻地钉满大铁钉。

新殖民地的开拓者们，不管他们的头脑中起初有什么关于人类品德和幸福的美妙理想，总要在各种实际需要的草创之中，忘不了划出一片未开垦的处女地充当墓地，再划出另一片土地来修建监狱。根据这一惯例，我们可以有把握地推断：波士顿的先民们在谷山一带的某处地方修建第一座监狱，同在艾萨克·约翰逊地段标出头一块莹地几乎是在同一时期。后来便以他的坟墓为核心，扩展成王家教堂的那一片累累墓群的古老墓地。可以确定无疑地说，早在镇子建立十五年或二十年之际，那座木造监狱就已经因风吹日晒雨淋和岁月的流逝而为它那狰狞和阴森的门面增加了几分晦暗凄楚的景象，使它那橡木大门上沉重的铁活的斑斑锈痕显得比新大陆的任何陈迹都益发古老。象一切与罪恶二字息息相关的事物一样，这座监狱似

ponderous ironwork of its oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the new world. Like all that pertains to crime, it seemed never to have known a youthful era. Before this ugly edifice, and between it and the wheel-track of the street, was a grass-plot, much overgrown with burdock, pig-weed, apple-peru, and such unsightly vegetation, which evidently found something congenial in the soil that had so early borne the black flower of civilised society, a prison. But, on one side of the portal, and rooted almost at the threshold, was a wild rose-bush, covered, in this month of June, with its delicate gems, which might be imagined to offer their fragrance and fragile beauty to the prisoner as he went in, and to the condemned criminal as he came forth to his doom, in token that the deep heart of Nature could pity and be kind to him.

This rose-bush, by a strange chance, has been kept alive in history; but whether it had merely survived out of the stem old wilderness, so long after the fall of the gigantic pines and oaks that originally overshadowed it, - or whether, as there is fair authority for believing, it had sprung up under the footsteps of the sainted Ann Hutchinson, as she entered the prison-door - we shall not take upon us to determine. Finding it so directly on the threshold of our narrative, which is now about to issue

乎从来不曾经历过自己的青春韶华。从这座丑陋的大房子门前,一直到轧着车辙的街道,有一片草地,上面过于繁茂地簇生着牛蒡、茨藜、毒莠等等这类不堪入目的杂草。这些杂草显然在这块土地上找到了共通的东西,因为正是在这块土地上早早便诞生了文明社会的那株黑花——监狱。然而,在大门的一侧,几乎就在门限处,有一丛野玫瑰挺然而立,在这六月的时分,盛开着精致的宝石般的花朵,这会使人想像,它们是在向步入牢门的囚犯或跨出阴暗的刑徒奉献着自己的芬芳和妩媚,借以表示在大自然的深深的心扉中,对他们仍存着一丝怜悯和仁慈。

由于某种奇异的机缘,这一丛野玫瑰得以历劫而永生;至于这丛野玫瑰,是否仅仅因为原先严严实实地遮蔽着它的巨松和伟橡早已倒落,才得以在古老而苛刻的原野中侥幸存活,抑或如为人深信不疑的确凿证据所说,当年圣徒安妮·哈钦逊踏进狱门时,它便从她脚下破土而出,我们不必费神去确定。既然我们要讲述的故事要从这一不祥的门口开篇,而恰恰在门限处一眼便可望见这丛野玫瑰,我们怎能不摘下一朵玫瑰花,将

from that inauspicious portal, we could hardly do otherwise than pluck one of its flowers, and present it to the reader. It may serve, let us hope, to symbolise some sweet moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow.

II

THE MARKET - PLACE.

THE grass - plot before the jail, in Prison Lane, on a certain summer morning, not less than two centuries ago, was occupied by a pretty large number of the inhabitants of Boston; all with their eyes intently fastened on the iron - clamped oaken door. Amongst any other population, or at a later period in the history of New England, the grim rigidity that petrified the bearded physiognomies of these good people would have augured some awful business in hand. It could have betokened nothing short of the anticipated execution of some noted culprit, on whom the sentence of a legal tribunal had but confirmed the verdict of public sentiment. But, in that early severity of the Puritan character, an inference of this kind could not so indubitably be drawn. It might be, that a sluggish bond - servant, or an undutiful child, whom his parents had given over to the civil authority, was to be corrected at the whipping - post. It might be, that an

其呈献给读者呢!但愿这株玫瑰花,在叙述这篇人性脆弱和人生悲哀的故事的进程中,能够象征道德之花的馥郁,而在读完故事阴霾凄惨的结局时,仍可以得到一些慰藉。

第二章 市场

二百多年前一个夏日的上午,狱前街上牢房门前的草地上,满满地站着好大一群波士顿的居民,他们一个个都紧盯着布满铁钉的橡木牢门。如若换成其他百姓,或是推迟到新英格兰后来的历史阶段,这些蓄着胡须的好心肠的居民们板着的冷冰冰的面孔,可能是面临凶险的征兆,至少也预示着某个臭名昭著的罪犯即将受到人们期待已久的制裁,因为在那时,法庭的判决无非是认可公众舆论的裁处。但是,由于早年清教徒性格严峻,这种推测未免过于武断。也许,是一个慵懶的奴隶或是被家长送交给当局的一名逆子要在这笞刑柱上受到管教。也许,是一位唯信仰论者、一位教友派的教友或信仰其他异端的教徒被鞭挞出城,或是一个闲散的印第安游民,因为喝了白人的烈酒满街胡闹,要挨着鞭子给赶进树林。也许,那是地方官的遗

Antinomian, a Quaker, or other heterodox religionist, was to be scourged out of the town, or an idle and vagrant Indian, whom the white man's fire-water had made riotous about the streets, was to be driven with stripes into the shadow of the forest. It might be, too, that a witch, like old Mistress Hibbins, the bitter-tempered widow of the magistrate, was to die upon the gallows. In either case, there was very much the same solemnity of demeanour on the part of the spectators; as befitted a people amongst whom religion and law were almost identical, and in whose character both were so thoroughly interfused, that the mildest and the severest acts of public discipline were alike made venerable and awful. Meagre, indeed, and cold, was the sympathy that a transgressor might look for, from such bystanders, at the scaffold. On the other hand, a penalty which, in our days, would infer a degree of mocking infamy and ridicule, might then be invested with almost as stern a dignity as the punishment of death itself.

It was a circumstance to be noted, on the summer morning when our story begins its course, that the women, of whom there were several in the crowd, appeared to take a peculiar interest in whatever penal infliction might be expected to ensue. The age had not so much refinement, that any sense of impropriety restrained the wearers of petticoat and farthingale from stepping forth in-

孀西宾斯老夫人那样生性恶毒的巫婆,将要给吊死在绞架上。无论属于哪种情况,围观者总是摆出分毫不爽的庄严姿态;这倒十分符合早期移民的身份,因为他们将宗教和法律视为一体,二者在他们的品性中融溶为一,凡涉及公共纪律的条款,不管是最轻微的还是最严重的,都同样令他们肃然起敬和望而生畏。确实,一个站在刑台上的罪人能够从这样一些旁观者身上谋得的同情是少而又少、冷而又冷的。另外,如今只意味着某种令人冷嘲热讽的惩罚,在当时却可能被赋予同死刑一样严厉的色彩。

就在我们的故事发生的那个夏天的早晨,有一情况颇值一书:挤在人群中的好几位妇女,看来对可能出现的任何刑罚都抱有特殊的兴趣。那年月没有那么多文明讲究,身着衬裙和撑裙的女人们公然出入于大庭广众之中,只要有可能会,便要扭动她们那并不娇弱的躯体,挤进最靠近刑台的人群中去,

to the public ways, and wedging their not unsubstantial persons, if occasion were, into the throng nearest to the scaffold at an execution. Morally, as well as materially, there was a coarser fibre in those wives and maidens of old English birth and breeding, than in their fair descendants, separated from them by a series of six or seven generations; for, throughout that chain of ancestry, every successive mother has transmitted to her child a fainter bloom, a more delicate and briefer beauty, and a slighter, physical frame, if not a character of less force and solidity, than her own. The women who were now standing about the prison - door stood within less than half a century of the period when the man - like Elizabeth had been the not altogether unsuitable representative of the sex. They were her country - women; and the beef and ale of their native land, with a moral diet not a whit more refined, entered largely into their composition. The bright morning sun, therefore, shone oil broad shoulders and well - developed busts, and on round and ruddy cheeks, that had ripened in the faroff island, and had hardly yet grown paler or thinner in the atmosphere of New England. There was, moreover, a boldness and roundness of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone.

也不会给人什么不成体统的感觉。那些在英伦故土上出生和成长的媳妇和姑娘们,比起她们六七代之后的漂亮的后裔来,身体要粗壮些,精神也要粗犷些;因为通过家系承袭的链条,每代母亲遗传给她女儿的,即使不是较她为少的坚实有力的性格,总会是比较柔弱的体质、更加娇小和短暂的美貌和更加纤细的身材。当时在牢门附近站着的妇女们,和那位堪称代表女性的男子气概的伊丽莎白相距不足半个世纪。她们是那位女王的乡亲:她们家乡的牛肉和麦酒,佐以未经提炼的精神食粮,大量充实进她们的躯体。因此,明亮的晨曦所照射着的,是宽阔的肩膀、发育丰满的胸脯和又圆又红的双颊——她们都是在遥远的祖国本岛上长大成人的,远还没有在新英格兰的气氛中变得白皙与瘦削些。尤其令人瞩目的是,这些主妇们多数人一开口便是粗喉咙、大嗓门,要是在今天,她们的言谈无论是含义还是音量,都足以使我们瞠目结舌。

“Goodwives,” said a hard - featured dame of fifty, “I’ ll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church - members in good repute, should have the handling of such malefactresses as this Hester Prynne. What think ye, gossips? If the hussy stood up for judgment before us five, that are now here in a knot together, would she come off with such a sentence as the worshipful magistrates have awarded? Marry, I trow not!”

“People say,” said another, “that the Reverend Master Dimmesdale, her godly pastor, takes it very grievously to heart that such a scandal should have come upon his congregation.”

“The magistrates are God - fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch, —that is a truth,” added a third autumnal matron “At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne’s forehead. Madam Hester would have winced at that, I warrant me. But she, —the naughty baggage, —little will she care what they put upon the bodice of her gown! Why, look you, she may cover it with a brooch, or such like heathenish adornment, and so walk the streets as brave as ever!”

“Ah, but,” interposed, more softly, a young wife, holding a child by the hand, “Let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will be always in her heart.”

“婆娘们,”一个满脸横肉的五十岁的老婆子说,“我跟你们说说我的想法。要是我们这些上了一把年纪、名声又好的教会会友,能够处置海丝特·白兰那种坏女人,倒是给大伙办了件好事。你们觉得怎么样,婆娘们?要是那个破鞋站在眼下咱们这五个姐们儿跟前听候判决,她能够带着那些可敬的官老爷们赏给她的判决溜过去吗?老天爷,我才不信呢!”

“听人说,”另一个女人说,“尊敬的丁梅斯代尔教长,就是她的牧师,为了在他的教众中出了这桩丑事,简直伤心透顶啦。”

“那帮官老爷都是敬神的先生,可惜慈悲心太重喽——这可是真事,”第三个人老珠黄的婆娘补充说。“最起码,他们应该在海丝特·白兰的脑门上烙个记号。那总能让海丝特太太有点怕,我敢这么说。可她——那个破烂货——她才不在乎他们在她前襟上贴个什么呢!哼,你们等着瞧吧,她准会别上个胸针,或者是异教徒的什么首饰,挡住胸口,照样招摇过市!”

“啊,不过,”一个手里领着孩子的年轻媳妇轻声插嘴说,“她要是想挡着那记号就随她去吧,反正她心里总会受折磨的。”

“What do we talk of marks and brands, whether on the bodice of her gown, or the flesh of her forehead?” cried another female, the ugliest as well as the most pitiless of these self-constituted judges. “This woman has brought shame upon us all, and ought to die. Is there not law for it? Truly there is, both in the Scripture and the statute-book. Then let the magistrates, who have made it of no effect, thank themselves if their own wives and daughters go astray!”

“Mercy on us, goodwife,” exclaimed a man in the crowd, “is there no virtue in woman, save what springs from a wholesome fear of the gallows? That is the hardest word yet! Hush, now, gossips! for the lock is turning in the prison-door, and here comes Mistress Prynne herself.”

The door of the jail being flung open from within, there appeared, in the first place, like a black shadow emerging into sunshine, the grim and grisly presence of the town-beadle, with a sword by his side, and his staff of office in his hand. This personage prefigured and represented in his aspect the whole dismal severity of the Puritanic code of law, which it was his business to administer in its final and closest application to the offender. Stretching forth the official staff in his left hand, he laid his right hand upon the shoulder of a young woman, whom he thus drew forward; until,

“我们扯什么记号不记号的，管它是在她前襟上还是脑门上呢？”另一个女人叫嚷着，她在这几个自命的法官中长相最丑，也最不留情。“这女人给我们大伙都丢了脸，她就该死。难道说没有管这种事的法律吗？明明有嘛，圣经里和法典上全都写着呢。那就请这些不照章办事的官老爷们的太太小姐们去走邪路吧，那才叫自作自受呢！”

“天哪，婆娘们，”人群中一个男人惊呼道，“女人看到绞刑架就害怕，除去这种廉耻之心，她们身上难道就没有德性了吗？别把话说得太重了！轻点，喂，婆娘们！牢门的锁在转呢，海丝特太太本人就要出来了。”

牢门从里面给一下子打开了，最先露面的是狱吏，他腰侧挎着剑，手中握着权杖，那副阴森可怖的模样像个暗影似的出现在日光之中。这个角色的尊容便是清教徒法典全部冷酷无情的象征和代表，对触犯法律的人最终和最直接执法则是他的差事。此时他伸出左手举着权杖，右手抓着一个年轻妇女的肩头，拽着她向前走；到了牢门口，她用了一个颇能说明她个性的力量和天生的尊严的动作，推开狱吏，像是出于她自主的意志一般走进露天地。她怀里抱着一个

on the threshold of the prison - door, she repelled him, by an action marked with natural dignity and force of character, and stepped into the open air, as if by her own free will. She bore in her arms a child, a baby of some three months old, who winked and turned aside its little face from the too vivid light of day; bemuse its existence, heretofore, had brought it acquainted only with the grey twilight of a dungeon, or other darksome apartment of the prison.

When the young woman - the mother of this child - stood fully revealed before the crowd, it seemed to be her first impulse to clasp the infant closely to her bosom; not so much by an impulse of motherly affection, as that she might thereby conceal a certain token, which was wrought or fastened into her dress. In a moment, however, wisely judging that one token of her shame would but poorly serve to hide another, she took the baby on her arm, and, with a burning blush, and yet a haughty smile, and a glance that would not be abashed, looked around at her townspeople and neighbours. On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A. It was so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxuriance of fancy, that it had all the effect of a last and fitting decoration to the apparel which she wore; and

三个月左右的婴儿,那孩子眨着眼睛,转动她的小脸躲避着过分耀眼的阳光——自从她降生以来,还只习惯于监狱中的土牢或其他暗室那种昏晦的光线呢。

当那年轻的妇女——就是婴儿的母亲——全身伫立在人群面前时,她的第一个冲动似乎就是把孩子抱在胸前;她这么做与其说是出于母爱的激情,不如说可以借此掩盖钉在她衣裙上的标记。然而,她很快就醒悟过来了,用她的耻辱的一个标记来掩盖另一个标记是无济于事的,于是,索性用一条胳膊架着孩子,她虽然面孔红得发烧,却露出高傲的微笑,用毫无愧色的目光环视着她的同镇居民和街坊邻里。她的裙袍的前胸上露出了一个用红色细布做就、周围用金丝线精心绣成奇巧花边的一个字母A。这个字母制作别致,体现了丰富而华美的匠心,佩在衣服上构成尽善尽美的装饰,而她的衣服把她那年月的情趣衬托得恰到好处,只是其艳丽程度大大超出了殖民地俭朴标准的规定。

which was of a splendour in accordance with the taste of the age, but greatly beyond what was allowed by the sumptuary regulations of the colony.

The young woman was tall, with a figure of perfect elegance on a large scale. She had dark and abundant hair, so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam, and a face which, besides being beautiful from regularity of feature and richness of complexion, had the impressiveness belonging to a marked brow and deep black eyes. She was lady-like, too, after the manner of the feminine gentility of those days; characterised by a certain state and dignity, rather than by the delicate, evanescent, and indescribable grace, which is now recognised as its indication. And never had Hester Prynne appeared more lady-like, in the antique interpretation of the term, than as she issued from the prison. Those who had before known her, and had expected to behold her dimmed and obscured by a disastrous cloud, were astonished, and even startled, to perceive how her beauty shone out, and made a halo of the misfortune and ignominy in which she was enveloped. It may be true, that, to a sensitive observer, there was something exquisitely painful in it. Her attire, which, indeed, she had wrought for the occasion, in prison, and had modelled much after her own fancy, seemed to express the attitude of her spirit, the desperate recklessness of her mood, by its wild and pic-

那年轻妇女身材颀长,体态优美之极。她头上乌黑的浓发光彩夺目,在阳光下熠熠生辉。她的面孔不仅皮肤滋润、五官端正、容貌秀丽,而且还有一对鲜明的眉毛和一双漆黑的深目,十分楚楚动人。就那个时代女性举止优雅的风范而论,她也属贵妇之列;她自有一种端庄的风韵,并不同于如今人们心目中的那种纤巧、轻盈和不可言喻的优雅。即使以当年的概念而言,海丝特·白兰也从来没有像步出监狱的此时此刻这样更像贵妇。那些本来就认识她的人,原先满以为她经历过这一磨难,会黯然失色,结果却惊得都发呆了,因为他们所看到的,是她焕发的美丽,竟把笼罩着她的不幸和耻辱凝成一轮光环。不过,目光敏锐的旁观者无疑能从中觉察出一种微妙的痛楚。她在狱中按照自己的想像,专门为这场合制作的服饰,以其特有的任性和别致,似乎表达了她的精神境界和由绝望而无所顾忌的心情。但是,吸引了所有的人的目光而且事实上使海丝特·白兰焕然一新的,则是在她胸前闪光的绣得妙不可言的那个红字,以致那些与她熟识的男男女女简直感到是第一

turesque peculiarity. But the point which drew all eyes, and, as it were, transfigured the wearer—so that both men and women, who had been familiarly acquainted with Hester Prynne, were now impressed as if they beheld her for the first time,—was that SCARLET LETTER, so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom. It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself.

“She hath good skill at her needle, that’s certain,” remarked one of her female spectators; “but did ever a woman, before this brazen hussy, contrive such a way of showing it! Why, gossips, what is it but to laugh in the faces of our godly magistrates, and make a pride out of what they, worthy gentlemen, meant for a punishment?”

“It were well,” muttered the most iron-visaged of the old dames, “if we stripped Madam Hester’s rich gown off her dainty shoulders; and as for the red letter, which she hath stitched so curiously, I’ll bestow a rag of mine own rheumatic flannel, to make a fitter one!”

“Oh, peace, neighbours, peace!” whispered their youngest companion; “Do not let her hear you! Not a stitch in that embroidered letter, but she has felt it in her heart.”

The grim beadle now made a gesture

次与她谋面。这个红字具有一种震慑的力量,竟然把她从普通的人间关系中超脱出来,紧裹在白身的氛围里。

“她倒做得一手好针线,这是不用说的,”一个旁观的女人说,“这个厚脸皮的淫妇居然想到用这一手来显白自己,可真是从来没见过!我说,婆娘们,这纯粹是当面笑话我们那些规规矩矩的官老爷,这不是借大人先生们判的刑罚来大出风头吗?”

“我看啊,”一个面孔板得最紧的老太婆咕哝着,“要是我们能把海丝特太太那件讲究的衣袍从她秀气的肩膀上扒下来,倒挺不错;至于她绣得稀奇古怪的那个红字嘛,我倒愿意赏给她一块我害风湿病用过的法兰绒破布片,做出来才更合适呢!”

“噢,安静点,街坊们,安静点!”她们当中最年轻的同伴悄声说;“别让她听见你们的话!她绣的那个字,针针线线全都扎到她心口上呢。”

狱吏此时用权杖做了个姿势。

with his staff.

“Make way, good people, make way, in the King's name!” cried he. “Open a passage; and, I promise ye, Mistress Prynne shall be set where man, woman, and child, may have a fair sight of her brave apparel, from this time till an hour past meridian. A blessing on the righteous Colony of the Massachusetts, where iniquity is dragged out into the sunshine! Come a-long, Madam Hester, and show your scarlet letter in the market - place!”

A lane was forthwith opened through the crowd of spectators. Preceded by the beadle, and attended by an irregular procession of stern - browed men and unkindly - visaged women, Hester Prynne set forth towards the place appointed for her punishment. A crowd of eager and curious school-boys, understanding little of the matter in hand, except that it gave them a half - holiday, ran before her progress, turning their heads continually to stare into her face, and at the winking baby in her arms, and at the ignominious letter on her breast. It was no great distance, in those days, from the prison - door to the market - place. Measured by the prisoner's experience, however, it might be reckoned a journey of some length; for, haughty as her demeanour was, she perchance underwent an agony from every footstep of those that thronged to see her, as if her heart had been flung into the

“让开路,好心的人们,让开路,看在国王的分上!”他叫嚷着。“让开一条路;我向诸位保证,白兰太太要站的地方,无论男女老少都可以看清她的漂亮的衣服,从现在起直到午后一点,保你们看个够。祝福光明正大的马萨诸塞殖民地,一切罪恶都得拉出来见见太阳!过来,海丝特太太,在这市场上亮亮你那鲜红的字母吧!”

围观的人群中挤开了一条通路。海丝特·白兰跟着在前面开路的狱吏,身后尾随着拧眉攒目的男人和心狠面恶的女人的不成形的队伍,走向指定让她示众的地方。一大群怀着好奇心来凑热闹的小男孩,对眼前的事态不明所以,只晓得学校放了他们半天假,他们一边在头前跑着,一边不时回过头来盯着她的脸,她怀中抱着的眨着眼的婴儿,还有她胸前那个丢人现眼的红字。当年,从牢门到市场没有几步路。然而,要是以囚犯的体验来测量,恐怕是一个路途迢迢的旅程;因为她虽说是高视阔步,但在人们逼视的目光下,每迈出一步都要经历一番痛苦,似乎她的心已经给抛到街心,任凭所有的人碾踪践踏。然而,在我们人类的本性中,原有一条既绝妙又慈悲的先天准备:遭受苦难的人在承受痛楚的当

street for them all to spurn and trample upon. In our nature, however, there is a provision alike marvellous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pang that rankles after it. With almost a serene deportment, therefore, Hester Prynne passed through this portion of her ordeal, and came to a sort of scaffold, at the western extremity of the market - place. It stood nearly beneath the eaves of Boston's earliest church, and appeared to be a fixture there.

In fact, this scaffold constituted a portion of a penal machine, which now, for two or three generations past, has been merely historical and traditionary among us, but was held, in the old time, to be as effectual an agent, in the promotion of good citizenship, as ever was the guillotine among the terrorists of France. It was, in short, the platform of the pillory; and above it rose the framework of that instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to the public gaze. The very ideal of ignominy was embodied and made manifest in this contrivance of wood and iron. There can be no outrage, methinks, against our common nature, — whatever be the delinquencies of the individual, — no outrage more flagrant than to forbid the culprit to hide his face for shame; as it was the essence of this punish-

时并不能觉察到其剧烈的程度,反倒是过后延绵的折磨最能使其撕心裂肺。因此,海丝特·白兰简直是以一种安详的举止,度过了此时的磨难,来到市场西端的刑台跟前。这座刑台几乎就竖在波士顿最早的教堂的檐下,看上去像是教堂的附属建筑。

事实上,这座刑台是构成整个惩罚机器的一个组成部分,时隔二、三代人的今天,它在我们的心目中只不过是一个历史和传统的纪念,但在当年,却如同法国大革命时期恐怖党人的断头台一样,被视为教化劝善的有效动力。简言之,这座刑台是一座枷号示众的台子,上面竖着那个惩罚用的套枷,做得刚好把人头紧紧卡住,以便引颈翘首供人观瞻。设计这样一个用铁和木制成的家伙显然极尽羞辱之能事。依我看来,无论犯有何等过失,再没有比这种暴行更违背我们的人性的了,其不准罪人隐藏他那羞惭的面容的险恶用心实在无以复加;而这恰恰是这一刑罚的本意所在。不过,就海丝特·白兰的例子而论,倒和多数其他案子相仿,她所受到的惩处是要在刑台上