

The Invisible Man

✧ 隐身人 ✧

H. G. Wells 赫·乔·威尔斯



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黄源深 注释



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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2000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,蠡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,逐年推出,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

前言

在科幻小说领域,H. G. 威尔斯是一位施予世界以极大影响的作家。评论家认为“他改变了不止一代人的思想观念,而且并不局限于他自己的国家^①”;“他的科学浪漫小说至今仍无人能企及^②”;“在现代作家中,没有人产生过像威尔斯那样的影响^③”。因而,即令在他故世五十年后的今天,出版他的科幻小说也有着十分积极的意义。

威尔斯出生于1866年,生活在英国维多利亚时代。他家境贫寒,母亲替人作女佣,父亲曾为职业棒球手,后做小生意度日。威尔斯自幼嗜书如命,广泛涉猎各类书籍使他超越家庭的局限,进入生命的新境界,确立了尔后观察人生的宏阔视野。1880年他进入药店当学徒,不很成功,次年转而成为布店伙计,后于1883年离去。店员生活虽然枯燥而琐细,却为他后来的创作提供了丰富的素材。1884年,他获得奖学金,进入伦敦一所大学的理科深造。在那里的三年是他一生中至关重要的时期,他对人生和社会的看法基本上是在这时形成的。尤值一提的是,他与达尔文主义者赫胥黎相遇,受其宇宙进化论和生物进化论的影响,初步确立了他社会小说和科幻小说的创意。离校后他担任过短期教职,1893年因健康原因弃而从事专业创作。早在十九世纪八十年代,威尔斯已开始创作散文,但1891年才发表第一篇作品。同年他与表妹结婚,后于1895年离异。是年,他发表了第一部轰动全国的科学幻想小说《时间机器》,一夜之间成为文坛名人。与此同时,他同伦敦作家中的领袖人物们建立了密切联系,并受到了他们的思想影响。在十九世纪的最后五年里,他创作了一系列独具特色的科幻小说,引起普遍瞩目,也为二十世纪世界科幻小说的发展奠定了基础。此后,他又向小说的其他领域拓展,同时还出版了一些学术著作,直至1946年去世。

威尔斯的创作经历大致可分三个阶段:1900年之前主要撰写科

① 斯托姆·詹姆斯,《亚当》,1941年11月,第1~2页。 ② 沃尔特·艾伦,《英国小说》,纽约达登出版社,1958年,第376~377页。 ③ 哈里斯·威尔逊,《阿诺德·贝内特和H·G·威尔斯:两人的私交和文字之交》,1960年版,第17~18页。

幻小说,如《时间机器》(1895)、《摩若博士岛》(1896)、《隐身人》(1897)、《星球大战》(1898)、《沉睡者醒来》(1899)。1900—1910年除了创作科幻小说如《月球历险记》(1901)、《神食》(1904)等外,更把注意力集中在喜剧性小说上,刻划身居城市中下层的小人物,笔调轻松,语多幽默,甚至不乏讥讽,写出了贫富悬殊的社会中普通人的辛酸。这些作品包括《爱情和路易先姆先生》(1900)、《基普斯》(1905)、《托诺—邦盖》(1909)、《波利先生的历史》(1910)等。1910年后,他致力于创作社会批判小说,内中贯串了他淡化小说娱乐功能、强调政治宣传作用的文学主张以及社会改良主义的理想。主要作品有《新马基雅弗利主义》(1911)、《勃列特里先生看穿了它》(1916)、《象神一样的人们》(1923)、《梦》(1924)、《帕特勒姆先生的独裁统治》(1930)、《未来事物的面貌》(1933)、《怎么小心都不会过分》(1941)等。与此同时,他还撰写了诸如《世界史纲》(1920)一类学术著作。就内容而言,上述小说也可归纳为三类,与他三个创作时期基本相对应,即科学幻想小说、喜剧人物小说和政论小说。

当然,威尔斯写得最成功、影响最大的是科幻小说,代表作有《时间机器》、《摩若博士岛》、《隐身人》、《星球大战》、《月球历险记》、《神食》和《在彗星出现的日子》等七部,而《隐身人》是其中评价最高、最为脍炙人口的作品。

威尔斯科幻小说的主要特点是把科学幻想和社会批判结合起来,寓深刻的社会批判于丰富的科学幻想之中,从而使他的作品既生动好读而又不乏深邃的思想内涵。

几乎每一本威尔斯的科幻小说都折射出社会批判的锋芒。《时间机器》通过生活在地上和地下的两种不同的人,即一种寄生虫和一种自食其力的劳动者,影射了现实生活中不劳而获的资产阶级和用双手创造人类财富的无产者。《摩若博士岛》刻划的虽然是一种似人非人的动物,却勾勒出了人类自相残杀的丑恶本性。《隐身人》严厉地批判了某些人试图利用科学发明来达到称霸世界的野心,指出了其必然遭到毁灭的结局。《星球大战》所描绘的是火星人人主地球、奴役人类而最后导致彻底灭亡的命运,暗示现代殖民主义者的可耻下场。《月球历险记》中那个阶级界限分明、人沦为机器的月球世界是人类社会的缩影。《神食》歌颂了吃神食长大并富有斗争精神的巨人,鞭挞了以贵族政客为代表的资产阶级社会。《在彗星出现的日子》呈现了一个在战争阴影笼罩下充满饥饿、贫穷、失业和危机的世界,它是

第一次世界大战爆发前夕西方资本主义社会的真实写照。

威尔斯把社会批判注入科幻小说的做法,多少受到了十八世纪小说家斯威夫特的启发。斯威夫特的杰作《格列佛游记》构建了一个与现代生活相距甚远的陌生世界,并采用夸张手法,通过诸如为鸡蛋从大端还是小端打开而发动战争、因在绳上跳舞出色而升官等荒诞细节,对现实社会作了辛辣的讽刺。威尔斯运用科学的想象创造了一个个光怪陆离的幻想世界,通过暗示和比拟再现世象,以扭曲的方式来反映和批判现实。威尔斯作品中的月球世界和吃神食长大的巨人,与斯威夫特笔下的大人国和小人国,有异曲同工之妙。这些在人世间闻所未闻的奇妙景象,把读者引进了一个多姿多彩的新天地,让人得到了美的享受,也在不经意中感受到了作品的批判力量。

威尔斯的社会批判精神与他的出身和遭际有着密不可分的联系。父母低微的社会地位和他自己早期作小店员的经历,使他切身体会到下层人民生存的艰难和无奈,对贫富悬殊和人剥削人的现象深感不平,对在殖民统治下遭受苦难的人民分外同情。这种屈辱感、同情心和愤懑情绪,激发了他批判不合理社会的愿望,而大学理科教育的熏陶又使他能驾轻就熟地营建科学幻想世界,将其作为社会批判的载体,巧妙地表达自己对人生的看法。威尔斯小说所透出的对现实的关注和批判意识,使他的作品明显不同于法国科幻作家凡尔纳的小说,后者主要着眼于对科学的预言,通过生动的故事,向读者展示一幅未来世界科技发展的蓝图。

在表现技巧上,威尔斯同样也受到了斯威夫特的影响。斯威夫特的《格列佛游记》以准确的细节塑造了“大人国”和“小人国”,按严格比例刻划了这两个国度中的一切动物、植物和建筑等,使人觉得它们都确有其事而深信不疑。这种真实感让读者得到了审美的愉悦,并不知不觉地被导入了作者所描绘的境界。于是,在这个想象的世界中所发生的种种荒唐的事情,便令人感到合乎彼时彼地的情理,而被理所当然地接受了。读者所面对的是一个熟悉而又陌生的世界,那些为人所熟悉的东西创造了小说的真实感,那些陌生的东西引起了读者的兴趣,深深地吸引着他们。威尔斯继承了斯威夫特的传统,又根据现代科学的发展和科幻小说的具体特点,把细节处理得更更为严密,更符合科学原理,更逼真可信。在情节设计上,则环环相扣,互为因果,具有很强的逻辑性,对读者有着不可抗拒的吸引力。

威尔斯的科幻小说尽管以其社会批判而见长,但从科学的角度

看,它们对人类科技的发展也不乏预见性,至今仍如此。《月球历险记》中登月用的球体,就是今天普遍使用的登月舱,主人公返回地球时在海中溅落的方法,一直到今天仍被美国宇航员采用着;《星球大战》中使用的“热线”近乎于今天的激光;《时间机器》中关于四维空间原理的运用和《摩若博士岛》器官移植等尝试都称得上是“先见之明”。这种科学的预见性也是威尔斯科幻小说具有经久不衰的魅力的原因之一。

《隐身人》是威尔斯的作品在我国影响最大的一部,无论是外国文学研究者还是普通的读书人,一提起威尔斯都不由得想起《隐身人》。在广大的少年儿童中,它更是拥有众多的读者。这部作品的内在魅力是很值得我们探究的。

《隐身人》的最成功之处在于其独特的构思,把一个隐形的人作为小说的主人公,而他,又是我们的同类。这一方面使读者产生了一种新鲜感和好奇心,激起了阅读的欲望;另一方面又使人觉得亲切,因为隐身人和我们一样是有血有肉的人,而不是离我们很远的仙人或魔鬼。读者对隐身人既熟悉而又感到新奇,正是这种被描写对象和读者之间所保持的恰到好处的距离,产生了一种艺术美。小说精心塑造了一个隐身人,并刻划了广大普通人与他之间的殊死搏斗。在力量的对比上,斗争双方互有优劣。隐身人有隐形的优势,可以先发制人而不被发现,躲避别人的还击,从而有效地保存自己。但在人数上,他单枪匹马,明显处于劣势。而普通人则人多势众,且又众志成城,围歼共同的敌人,理论上说应有更大的胜机。但因为敌手是隐形的,人们要实施攻击,很难找到目标,而要退却,又因为一切都暴露在敌方面前,很难保护自己,所以并无完全取胜的把握。这就使对垒双方的形势变得迷离恍惚,斗争的结果究竟谁胜谁负,构成了一个揪心的悬念,牢牢地抓住了读者,使小说具有很强的可读性和吸引力。把小说的主角塑造成一个隐身人,让隐身人和非隐身人之间惊心动魄的斗争构成小说的主要情节,这不能不说是一个巧妙的构思。

科幻小说既有幻想的成分,又有科学的依据,两者相辅相成。没有科学的根据,小说会显得虚假而不可信,而缺少幻想,便不成其为小说,成了故事体的科普著作。这两者的关系必须妥然处理。《隐身人》把世界上不可能有的隐形者,绘声绘影地描绘得确有其事,确实是一种大胆的幻想。但作者深知这种幻想必须以科学的根据为支撑,否则就会失之荒唐和不真。因此在具体处理上,他始终高扬科学精

神,战战兢兢、细致缜密地营造一个逼真可信的幻想世界。

隐身人原是大学里的一位高材生,毕业后又从事相关研究工作,所以他的隐身术实验绝不是空穴来风,而是有科学根据的。他到达偏僻的小镇伊滨后不久,便一头扎进房间,闭门进行试验。室内摆满了大大小小、奇形怪状的玻璃瓶和试管,以及化学粉末和天平。从门窗的缝隙不时透出刺鼻的化学药品的气味,传来玻璃器皿相撞的声音和化学试验中常见的爆响。这是个道地的化学实验室,那么生动、那么逼真地展现在面前,读者很快被导入了作家所着力渲染的想象世界,对后来发生的一切也信而不疑了。

然而,作者并没有就此止步。在刻划“隐身”这一关键问题的时候,作者是以严格的科学原理为根据的。他通过隐身人格里芬的嘴,阐述了物体隐形的科学道理。“显形性决定于显形物体对光的作用。该物体或是吸收光,或是反射光,或是折射光,或是三者都有。如果既不反射,也不折射,又不吸收,其自身也就不显形了。以你所看到的一个不透明的红盒子为例,它吸收了部分光,把剩余部分,也就是全部红光,反射了给你。如果不吸收某一部分的光,而把全部光都反射出来,那它就成了闪闪发光的白金了,成了银子!钻石盒子既不吸收也不反射许许多多表面的光,而只是零零散散地反射和折射,凡是表面容易与光作用的地方,光便被反射和折射出去,所以你看到了它灿烂的外表,闪闪的反光和半透明状态——光的组合……如果你把一片普通的玻璃放进水里,同时再放进一些比水更稠的液体,这片玻璃就几乎全看不见了,因为水射向玻璃的光很少被折射和反射,很少受到影响,所以那片玻璃几乎就像空气中的煤气和氢气那样隐形了。其他物质也完全可以用同样原理来解释!”“白色油纸中的油把微粒间的空隙垫满了,所以除表面层之外,它不再产生折射或反射,结果就像玻璃一样透明。不仅是纸,而且还有棉纤维、麻纤维、毛纤维、木纤维,还有骨头、肉、头发、指甲和神经。其实,整个人的纤维,除了红色的血和黑色的头发,都是由透明无色的组织构成的……”这简直是一堂生动的物理课,叙述者不厌其烦地列举了种种物体对光的折射和反射,来说明其显形的原理和隐形的可能性,语气之肯定、思路之明晰、分析之透彻、逻辑之严密,使你不得不对他的论证表示信服和赞同,也使人看到,作者在小说的科学性上,的确无处不在用工夫。

作者还巧妙地处理了隐身人隐形之得失的辩证关系,及其导致的后果。作者通过隐身人自己的叙述,把不同物体受光的差别以及可以

用化学药品使人体隐去,却无法同时使衣服脱色的原理,交代得清清楚楚,雄辩地向读者指明,隐身人如果要隐形则必须赤身露体,而要穿戴衣帽则势必显形;同样,由于人体和食物受光性的不同,要隐形就不能进食,要进食就不能隐形。其结果,隐身人便陷入了“穿衣要显形,不穿衣则挨冻,不进食不能生存,一进食就暴露自己”的两难境地。这给他的正常生活和严冬季节的活动造成了难以克服的障碍,也为人们发现和捕捉他创造了有利条件,同时还构成了他最终灭亡的重要原因。这些都为情节发展的合理性提供了充分的依据。

独特的构思、建立在科学基础上的幻想、正确的细节描写和情节发展的严密逻辑,使读者感到,作者所描绘的这个奇幻诡秘的世界,是那么生动真切,从而得到了充分的艺术享受。

像威尔斯的其他科幻小说一样,《隐身人》包含着深刻的社会批判。隐身人是位才华横溢的科学家,但是他走入了歧途,非但没有把他的科学实验和发现用于为人类造福,而且企图以此来实现自己称霸世界的野心,刻意与人类为敌。他说“我们要干的正是杀人”,用他自己的话说,隐身术“对杀人特别有用。不管别人使用什么武器,我都可以绕过它,选择落点,爱在哪里下手就在哪里下手。”他要用杀人来“建立恐怖统治”,确立“隐身人的新纪元”,并自称“隐身人一世”。他的朋友肯普曾苦口婆心地劝说他“相信世界”,“出版试验的结果”。而他却一意孤行,落得个众叛亲离,成了“一条孤僻的狼”,最后在人人喊打声中被剿灭。小说告诉人们,科学发明要为人类谋福利,那些凭借暂时所取得的优势来危害人类者,是没有好下场的。作者正是在十九世纪末看到了利用科学反人类的潜在危险,才采用科幻小说的形式向世人提出了适时的警告。在这里,读者又一次看到了威尔斯科幻小说的预见性。

威尔斯把反映社会现实和描绘奇妙的科学现象相结合的科幻小说创作模式,对世界科幻小说的发展产生了巨大的影响,尤其是本世纪二三十年所形成的欧洲和美国两大流派,都不同程度地受到了他的启示。以捷克的恰佩克、英国的斯特普莱顿和赫胥黎为代表的欧洲派,强调通过塑造生动多姿的科学幻想世界来反映现实,寄托自己的理想,并在手法上渗入了政治讽刺和影射。另一派以美国的根斯巴克和坎贝尔为代表,突出了科幻小说中的奇异、怪诞和恐怖。欧洲派是在威尔斯科幻小说模式基础上的发展,而美国派则把威尔斯小说中丰富的科学幻想的特点推到了极致。由此可见,评论家所说的威尔斯科

幻小说至今仍无人能企及的话,并非虚言。

建立在科学基础上的幻想,以及想象力的运用,是科学发明和创造所必备的素质。阅读充满想象的威尔斯科幻小说,无疑有助于培养和启发人们的科学想象能力,无论对成长中的青少年还是其他一般读者都有所裨益。今天出版威尔斯的科幻作品,除了能达到艺术欣赏的目的外,对科学人才的培养,也有着不可低估的现实意义。

黄源深

2000年10月

VII

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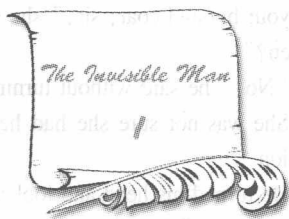
THE INVISIBLE MAN

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The Strange Man's Arrival



The stranger came early in February, one wintry day, through a biting wind and a driving snow, the last snowfall of the year, over the down,^① walking as it seemed from Bramblehurst railway station, and carrying a little black portmanteau in his thickly gloved hand. He was wrapped up from head to foot, and the brim of his soft felt hat hid every inch of his face but the shiny tip of his nose; the snow had piled itself against his shoulders and chest, and added a white crest to the burden he carried. He staggered into the Coach and Horses,^② more dead than alive as it seemed, and flung his portmanteau down. “A fire,” he cried, “in the name of human charity!^③ A room and a fire!” He stamped and shook the snow from off himself in the bar, and followed Mrs. Hall into her guest parlour to strike his bargain.^④ And with that much introduction, that and a ready acquiescence to terms and a couple of sovereigns flung upon the table, he took up his quarters in the inn.

Mrs. Hall lit the fire and left him there while she went to prepare him a meal with her own hands. A guest to stop at Iping in the winter-time was an unheard-of piece of luck, let alone a guest who was no “haggler,” and she was resolved to show herself worthy of her good fortune. As soon as the bacon was well under way, and Millie, her lymphatic^⑤ aid, had been brisked up a bit by a few deftly chosen expressions of contempt, she carried the cloth, plates, and glasses into the parlour and began to lay them with the utmost *éclat*.^⑥ Although the fire was burning up briskly, she was surprised to see that her visitor still wore his hat and coat, standing with his back to her and staring out of the window

① down: 丘陵 ② Coach and Horses: “车马旅馆”, 旅店名 ③ in the name of human charity!: 发发善心吧 ④ to strike his bargain: 讲价钱 ⑤ lymphatic: [lim'fætik] 迟钝的 ⑥ with the utmost *éclat*: 非常得意地

at the falling snow in the yard. His gloved hands were clasped behind him, and he seemed to be lost in thought. She noticed that the melted snow that still sprinkled his shoulders dripped upon her carpet. "Can I take your hat and coat, sir," she said, "and give them a good dry in the kitchen?"

"No," he said without turning.

She was not sure she had heard him, and was about to repeat her question.

He turned his head and looked at her over his shoulder. "I prefer to keep them on," he said with emphasis, and she noticed that he wore big blue spectacles with side-lights^① and had a bushy side-whisker over his coat-collar that completely hid his cheeks and face.

"Very well, sir," she said. "As you like. In a bit the room will be warmer."

He made no answer and had turned his face away from her again; and Mrs. Hall, feeling that her conversational advances were ill-timed,^② laid the rest of the table things in a quick staccato and whisked out of the room.^③ When she returned he was still standing there like a man of stone, his back hunched, his collar turned up, his dripping hat-brim turned down, hiding his face and ears completely. She put down the eggs and bacon with considerable emphasis, and called rather than said to him, "Your lunch is served, sir."

"Thank you," he said at the same time, and did not stir until she was closing the door. Then he swung round and approached the table with a certain eager quickness.

As she went behind the bar to the kitchen she heard a sound repeated at regular intervals. Chirk, chirk, chirk, it went, the sound of a spoon being rapidly whisked round a basin. "That girl!" she said. "There! I clean forgot it. It's her being so long!" And while she herself finished mixing the mustard, she gave Millie a few verbal stabs for her excessive slowness.^④ She had cooked the ham and eggs, laid the table, and done everything, while Millie (help indeed!) had only succeeded in delaying the mustard. And him a new guest and wanting to stay! Then she filled

① with side-lights: 带侧光的 ② her conversational ... ill-timed: 她的友好交谈不合时宜

③ laid the rest ... out of the room: 乒乒乓乓摆好其余的餐具,溜出房间

④ ... she gave Millie ... excessive slowness: 她狠狠地数落了米丽几句,嫌她慢手慢脚

the mustard pot, and, putting it with a certain stateliness upon a gold and black tea-tray, carried it into the parlour.

She rapped and entered promptly. As she did so her visitor moved quickly, so that she got but a glimpse of a white object disappearing behind the table. It would seem he was picking something from the floor. She rapped down the mustard pot on the table, and then she noticed the overcoat and hat had been taken off and put over a chair in front of the fire. A pair of wet boots threatened rust to her steel fender.^① She went to these things resolutely. "I suppose I may have them to dry now," she said in a voice that brooked no denial.

"Leave the hat," said her visitor in a muffled voice, and turning she saw he had raised his head and was sitting and looking at her.

For a moment she stood gaping at him, too surprised to speak.

He held a white cloth — it was a serviette he had brought with him — over the lower part of his face, so that his mouth and jaws were completely hidden, and that was the reason of his muffled voice. But it was not that which startled Mrs. Hall. It was the fact that all his forehead above his blue glasses was covered by a white bandage, and that another covered his ears, leaving not a scrap of his face exposed excepting only his pink, peaked nose. It was bright pink, and shiny just as it had been at first. He wore a dark-brown velvet jacket with a high black linen lined collar turned up about his neck. The thick black hair, escaping as it could below and between the cross bandages, projected in curious tails and horns,^② giving him the strangest appearance conceivable. This muffled and bandaged head was so unlike what she had anticipated, that for a moment she was rigid.

He did not remove the serviette, but remained holding it, as she saw now, with a brown gloved hand, and regarding her with his inscrutable blue glasses. "Leave the hat," he said, speaking very distinctly through the white cloth.

Her nerves began to recover from the shock they had received. She placed the hat on the chair again by the fire. "I didn't know, sir," she began, "that —" and she stopped embarrassed.

"Thank you," he said drily, glancing from her to the door and then

① A pair of wet boots ... steel fender: 那双湿靴子很可能会锈蚀钢制火炉围栏 ② ... projected in curious tails and horns: ……怪怪地钻出来,既似尾巴又似尖角

at her again.

"I'll have them nicely dried, sir, at once," she said, and carried his clothes out of the room. She glanced at his white-swathed head and blue goggles again as she was going out of the door; but his napkin was still in front of his face. She shivered a little as she closed the door behind her, and her face was eloquent of her surprise and perplexity. ① "I never," she whispered. "There!" She went quite softly to the kitchen, and was too preoccupied to ask Millie what she was messing about with now, when she got there.

The visitor sat and listened to her retreating feet. He glanced inquiringly at the window before he removed his serviette and resumed his meal. He took a mouthful, glanced suspiciously at the window, took another mouthful, then rose and, taking the serviette in his hand, walked across the room and pulled the blind down to the top of the white muslin that obscured the lower panes. This left the room in twilight. This done, he returned with an easier air to the table and his meal.

"The poor soul's ② had an accident or an op'ration or something," said Mrs. Hall. "What a turn them bandages did give me, to be sure!"

She put on some more coal, unfolded the clothes-horse, and extended the traveller's coat upon this. "And they goggles! ③ Why, he looked more like a divin' helmet ④ than a human man!" She hung his muffler on a corner of the horse. "And holding that handkerchief over his mouth all the time. Talkin' through it! ... Perhaps his mouth was hurt too — maybe."

She turned round, as one who suddenly remembers. "Bless my soul alive!" she said, going off at a tangent; "ain't you done them taters yet, ⑤ Millie?"

When Mrs. Hall went to clear away the stranger's lunch, her idea that his mouth must also have been cut or disfigured in the accident she supposed him to have suffered, was confirmed, for he was smoking a pipe, and all the time that she was in the room he never loosened the silk muffler he had wrapped round the lower part of his face to put the mouth-

① ... her face was ... surprise and perplexity: 她露出一脸惊诧和迷惑不解的样子

② The poor soul: 这可怜虫 ③ And they goggles: 还有那副眼镜 ④ a divin' helmet: 潜水用的头盔 ⑤ ain't you ... taters yet ...?: ……土豆整好了吗? taters: potatoes