

洛士柴尔特的提琴

WORLD FAMOUS FICTIONS

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ROTHSCHILD'S FIDDLE

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伍光建選譯

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Rothschild's Fiddle

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(本書校對者何德明)

作者傳略

吉柯甫是一八六〇至一九〇四年間人。他的父親是一個田奴的兒子，是個作小生意的人。吉柯甫以一八七九年入莫斯科大學學醫，一八八四年領文憑，他却很少得掛牌行醫。當他做學生的時候就起首研究文學，不久就變作幾家諧報的投稿人。一八八六年他曾刊行一本短篇小說，銷路很廣。一八八七年他的第一本戲劇出版。一八九〇年他旅行到囚禁罪犯的沙克林(Sagkalin)，結果就是他所寫的一本書名沙克林，頗有力量使罪犯所受的痛苦得以減輕。在一八九一與一八九七年間他同母親住在莫斯科郊外他所置的房屋。一八九七年後他犯肺病，幾乎要大半年住在Crimea 及國外。一八九六至一九〇四年他撰了好幾本戲。一九〇一年他曾娶一個女戲子。他以一九〇四年死於德國。他較早的著作，至一八八六年止，居多都是富於諧趣之作，並無什麼特別目的，不過要讀者大笑罷了。此後他才有餘暇，才能獨立，給他的想像的閱歷以有定的發表，所以他的腔調變作嚴肅得多，他的諧趣都含有深意。有人說他的美術是心理的，不過他的心理是不管個人的。他最好寫人的心境，寫世人受了許多無形的與無窮的小不如意事，心境怎樣逐漸隨之而變。他所寫的人物是神經很靈敏的，受了許多不如意事的痛苦，以作煽動讀者的同情。他的短篇小說是流動的，又是確切的；大多數都是富於絃外音，用低調作結局的，是嗚咽，不是撲咚一聲的大

響。他的著作在本國無甚效力，在英國却很有潛力，批評家幾乎衆口一詞說他是近代的最偉大的俄國作者，最偉大的小說家及製劇家。

民國二十五年一月伍光建記

洛士柴爾特的提琴

ROTHSCHILD'S FIDDLE

## ROTHSCHILD'S FIDDLE

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The town was small—no better than a village—and it was inhabited almost entirely by old people who died so seldom that it was positively painful. In the hospital, and even in the prison, coffins were required very seldom. In one word, business was bad. If Yakov Ivanov had been coffin-maker in the government town, he would probably have owned his own house, and called himself Yakov Matveyich; but, as it was, he was known only by the name of Yakov, with the street nickname<sup>1</sup> of “Bronza” given for some obscure<sup>2</sup> reason; and he lived as poorly as a simple muzhik<sup>3</sup> in a little, ancient cabin with only one room; and in this room lived he, Marfa, the stove, a double bed, the coffins, a joiner’s bench, and all the domestic utensils.

Yet Yakov made admirable coffins, durable and good. For muzhiks and petty tradespeople he made them all of one size, taking himself as model; and this method never failed him, for though he was seventy years of age, there was not a taller or stouter man in the town, not even in the prison. For women and for men of good birth he made his coffins to measure, using for this purpose an iron yardwand. Orders for children’s coffins he accepted very unwillingly, made them without measurement, as if in contempt, and every time when paid for his work exclaimed:

“Thanks. But I confess I don’t care much for wasting time on trifles.”

<sup>1</sup> nickname, 綽號. <sup>2</sup> obscure, 暗晦. <sup>3</sup> muzhik, 鄉下人.

## 洛士柴爾特的提琴

這是個小市鎮——不比一個村落大——幾乎全是老人住，他們很少的死，令人實在難受。醫院裏很少用棺材，連監牢裏也很少用。說一句單簡話，買賣不好。假使雅柯甫·伊万諾甫 (Yakov Ivanov) 是在有政府的市鎮當棺材匠，很許早已置了房屋，稱自己爲雅柯甫·瑪維伊治 (Matveyich) 了；可惜不是的，人家只稱他雅柯甫，街上的人給他一個綽號，喊他『卜朗沙』 (Bronza)，無人曉得有什麼理由；他過的是貧窮生活如同一個老實鄉下人一般，住在一間只有一間房的小的古老木屋裏；住在這間屋子的有他，瑪爾法 (Marfa)，一個火爐，一張雙人睡的床，幾個棺材，木匠的長凳，及全數家具。

雅柯甫製的是可以讚美的棺材，又好又經久。他替鄉下人們及做小買賣的人們製棺材，拿自己作模特爾，大小長短全是一律的；這個法子絕不會失敗的，因為他雖然是七十歲，本鎮及監牢裏再沒得比他更高更胖的人。替女人們及好人家的人們製棺材他卻是要量尺寸的，用一條鐵碼量度。有人定他製小孩子棺材，他接定的時候是不甚願意的，他好像看不起這種買賣，不量尺寸就製造，每次有人給他工錢他總是說道：

『謝謝你。我却要供認，我不甚願意爲小事糟塌我的時光。』



## ROTHSCHILD'S FIDDLE

In addition to coffin-making Yakov drew a small income from his skill with the fiddle. At weddings in the town there usually played a Jewish orchestra, the conductor of which was the tinsmith Moses Ilyich Shakhkes, who kept more than half the takings for himself. As Yakov played very well upon the fiddle, being particularly skillful with Russian songs, Shakhkes sometimes employed him in the orchestra, paying him fifty kopecks a day, exclusive<sup>1</sup> of gifts from the guests. When Bronza sat in the orchestra he perspired and his face grew purple; it was always hot, the smell of garlic was suffocating; the fiddle whined, at his right ear snored the double-bass, at his left wept the flute, played by a lanky, red-haired Jew with a whole network of red and blue veins upon his face, who bore the same surname as the famous millionaire Rothschild. And even the merriest tunes this accursed Jew managed to play sadly. Without any tangible<sup>2</sup> cause Yakov had become slowly penetrated with hatred and contempt for Jews, and especially for Rothschild; he began with irritation, then swore at him, and once even was about to hit him; but Rothschild flared up,<sup>3</sup> and, looking at him furiously, said: "If it were not that I respect you for your talents,<sup>4</sup> I should send you flying out of the window."

Then he began to cry. So Bronza was employed in the orchestra very seldom, and only in cases of extreme need when one of the Jews was absent.

Yakov had never been in a good humour.<sup>5</sup> He was always overwhelmed by the sense of the losses which he suffered. For instance, on Sundays and saints' days it

<sup>1</sup> exclusive, 除外. <sup>2</sup> tangible, 實在. <sup>3</sup> flared up, 發怒. <sup>4</sup> talents, 才能. <sup>5</sup> good humour, 高興.

雅柯甫除了製棺材外，還會奏提琴賺幾個錢。當市鎮有人結婚的時候，向來有一班猶太音樂隊奏樂，隊長是一個錫匠，名摩西·伊理治·沙克士（Moses Ilyich Shakhkes），他自己拿一大半的錢。因為雅柯甫奏提琴奏得很好，尤其善於唱俄國歌，沙克士有時僱他在音樂隊裏，每天給他五十個柯貝（俄幣名，譯者註），客人們的賞錢在外。當卜朗沙坐在音樂隊的時候，他出汗，臉色變紫；那裏常是熱的，蒜味令人喘不出氣；提琴在那裏叫，最大的提琴在他的右耳邊發響聲，笛子在他的左耳邊哭，這是一個瘦長條子紅頭髮的猶太人奏的，他滿臉都是紅的與青的血管，他名洛士柴爾特（Rothschild），與有名的百萬富翁同名。這個被天譴的猶太人即使是奏最快樂的調也是奏得很淒慘的。雅柯甫毫無實在理由，慢慢的變作深恨猶太人們，尤其恨洛士柴爾特；他初時對他發脾氣，隨後詛罵他；有一次他幾乎要打他；不料洛士柴爾特發怒，兇兇望着他，說道：

『假使我不是敬重你的才能，我就要從窗口把你摔出去。』

他隨即起首叫喊。所以很少雇卜朗沙在音樂隊裏，惟有遇着缺乏一個猶太人，到萬不得已的時候，才雇用他。

雅柯甫向來不曾高興過。他常被他覺得他所受的損失所打倒。譬如說，星期日及聖賢的誕日是不許做工的，

was a sin to work, Monday was a tiresome day—and so on; so that in one way or another, there were about two hundred days in the year when he was compelled to sit with his hands idle. That was one loss. If anyone in town got married without music, or if Shakhkes did not employ Yakov, that was another loss. The Inspector of Police was ill for two years, and Yakov waited with impatience for his death, yet in the end the Inspector transferred himself to the government town for the purpose of treatment, where he got worse and died. There was another loss, a loss at the very least of ten rubles, as the Inspector's coffin would have been an expensive one lined with brocade. Regrets for his losses generally overtook Yakov at night; he lay in bed with the fiddle beside him, and, with his head full of such speculations,<sup>1</sup> would take the bow, the fiddle giving out through the darkness a melancholy sound which made Yakov feel better.

On the sixth of May last year Marfa was suddenly taken ill. She breathed heavily, drank much water and staggered. Yet next morning she lighted the stove, and even went for water. Towards evening she lay down. All day Yakov had played on the fiddle, and when it grew dark he took the book in which every day he inscribed his losses, and from want of something better to do, began to add them up. The total amounted to more than a thousand rubles. The thought of such losses so horrified him that he threw the book on the floor and stamped his feet. Then he took up the book, snapped his fingers, and sighed heavily. His face was purple, and wet with perspiration. He reflected that if this thousand rubles had been lodged in the bank the interest per annum would have

<sup>1</sup>speculations, 胡思亂想.

做工就是犯了罪孽，星期一是一個討厭的日子——餘做此；所以因為種種理由他一年有二百天總是被逼坐下不做工。這就是一項損失。若是鎮裏有人結婚却不用音樂，或沙克士不用他，這又是一項損失。警察長病了足有兩年，雅柯甫很不耐煩的等他死，後來警察長遷往有政府的市鎮就醫，病更重，就死在那裏。這又是一宗損失，至少損失十個盧布，因為警察長的棺材要一個值錢的，要用花緞作裏子的。雅柯甫居多在晚上就悔恨他的種種損失；他躺在床上，提琴放在身邊，頭腦裝滿了這許多胡思亂想，他就會拿起弓來，提琴在黑夜裏發出一種愁悶聲音，使雅柯甫覺得好些。

去年五月六日瑪爾法忽然得病。

她的呼吸聲很重，喝了許多水，走路腳步不定。翌日早上她還點着火爐，還出去取水。快到傍晚，她就躺下啦。雅柯甫終天奏提琴，等到天黑，他取出他每天登記損失的本子，他因為並無什麼事做，就起首加起他的損失。總損失有一千多盧布。他一想起這樣大的損失他就很震怒，把本子擲在地下，頓腳。隨後他把本子拿起來，彈他的手指，重重的歎氣。他的臉發紫，滿臉是汗珠子，他在那裏反省，假使這一千盧布存在銀行裏，每年的利息至少也有四十

amounted to at least forty rubles. That meant that the forty rubles were also a loss. In one word, wherever you turn, everywhere you meet with loss, and profits none.

"Yakov," cried Marfa unexpectedly, 'I am dying.'

He glanced at his wife. Her face was red from fever and unusually clear and joyful; and Bronza, who was accustomed to see her pale, timid, and unhappy-looking, felt confused. It seemed as if she were indeed dying, and were happy in the knowledge that she was leaving for ever the cabin, the coffins, and Yakov. And now she looked at the ceiling and twitched her lips, as if she had seen Death her deliverer, and were whispering with him.

Morning came: through the window might be seen the rising of the sun. Looking at his old wife, Yakov somehow remembered that all his life he had never treated her kindly, never caressed her, never pitied her, never thought of buying her a kerchief for her head, never carried away from the weddings a piece of tasty food, but only roared at her, abused her for his losses, and rushed at her with shut fists. True, he had never beaten her, but he had often frightened her out of her life and left her rooted to the ground with terror. Yes, and he had forbidden her to drink tea, as the losses without that were great enough; so she drank always hot water. And now, beginning to understand why she had such a strange, enraptured face, he felt uncomfortable.

When the sun had risen high he borrowed a cart from a neighbour, and brought Marfa to the hospital. There were not many patients there, and he had to wait only three hours. To his joy he was received not by the doctor

個盧布。這就是說這四十個盧布也是一筆損失。說一句單簡話，無論你往那裏走，你總遇着損失，無利可得。

瑪爾法出其不意的喊道，『雅柯甫，我快死啦。』

他看看他的女人。她害熱病，臉上通紅，却是異常的清楚與歡樂；卜朗沙習慣看見她臉色灰白，胆怯，與不歡樂的神氣，覺得糊塗了。據他看來，她好像是當真要死啦，她曉得她快要永遠離開這間木屋子，那些棺材，與雅柯甫，所以歡樂，現在她看看天花板，兩唇在那裏動，她好像看見來拯救她的『死神』，在那裏同他附耳低聲說話。

天亮啦；從窗子可以看見太陽出來啦。雅柯甫看見他的年老女人，不曉得怎樣就記得他一生始終不曾好好的待她，始終不曾說愛她，始終不曾憐憫她，不曾想到買一塊頭巾給她，不曾從結婚的喜筵上帶一塊有滋味的東西回來給她吃，只是大聲喝罵她，因為損失怪責她，握着拳頭撲她。他當真始終不曾打過她，但是他曾屢次嚇她，嚇到要死，站着不敢動。他不許她喝茶，因為不算茶在內，他的損失已經夠重的了；所以她只好喝熱水。現在他才起首明白她為什麼有這樣的一副奇異的及歡樂如狂的面目，他覺得不安。

等到太陽升高的時候他同鄰居借了一部兩輪車，送瑪爾法到醫院。院裏並無許多病人，他不過等了三點鐘。接待他的不是醫生，是軍營的外科醫生，名瑪克西木·尼古

but by the feldscher,<sup>1</sup> Maksim Nikolaïch, an old man of whom it was said that, although he was drunken and quarrelsome, he knew more than the doctor.

"May your health be good!" said Yakov, leading the old woman into the dispensary. "Forgive me, Maksim Nikolaïch, for troubling you with my empty affairs. But there, you can see for yourself my object is ill. The companion of my life, as they say, excuse the expression . . ."

Contracting his grey brows and smoothing his whiskers, the feldscher began to examine the old woman, who sat on the tabouret, bent, skinny, sharp-nosed, and with open mouth so that she resembled a bird that is about to drink.

"So . . ." said the feldscher slowly, and then sighed. "Influenza and may be a bit of a fever. There is typhus now in the town . . . What can I do? She is an old woman, glory be to God. . . . How old?"

"Sixty-nine years, Maksim Nikolaïch."

"An old woman. It's high time for her."

"Of course! Your remark is very just," said Yakov, smiling out of politeness. "And I am sincerely grateful for your kindness; but allow me to make one remark; every insect is fond of life."

The feldscher replied in a tone which implied that upon him alone depended her life or death. "I will tell you what you'll do, friend; put on her head a cold compress, and give her these powders twice a day. And good-bye to you."

By the expression of the feldscher's face, Yakov saw that it was a bad business and that no powders would make

<sup>1</sup>feldscher, 軍醫.

來 (Maksim Nikolaich)，他很歡喜，人家說這個老頭子雖然吃醉酒，好與人吵鬧，他的知識卻多過醫生。

雅柯甫領着老婆子入藥室，說道，『我望你身體康健！瑪克西木·尼古來，我因不相干的事來麻煩你，請你莫怪。你能看見我的女人害病。有如人們說，她是我的一生的同伴，請你勿怪我用這樣的句語。……』

這個軍醫縐縐他的灰色眉頭，順順他的鬍子，就起首診視這個老婆子，她坐在凳子上，背是彎曲的，滿身全是骨頭，鼻子很尖，張大嘴，很像一隻快要喝水的鳥。

這個軍醫慢慢的說話，隨後歎一口氣，說道，『哦，重傷風，還許有點發熱。市鎮現在有流行的疹斑傷寒……我能作什麼？謝謝上帝，她是一個年老婦人……多大年紀啦？』

『瑪克西木·尼古來，六十九歲啦。』

『她是一個老婦人。時候到啦。』

雅柯甫要表示禮貌，就微笑說道，『自然呀！你的話說得很公道。我很感激你的慈善；但是我請你讓我說一句話；凡是蟲子無不貪生的。』

這個軍醫用一種腔調答他，意思是要表示她的生死只是靠他。『我的朋友，我告訴你怎樣辦吧；用幾層冷布放在她的頭上，每次給她兩服藥散。我走啦。』

雅柯甫看他的臉色就曉得不是一件好事；無論什麼



it any better; it was quite plain to him that Marfa was beyond repair, and would assuredly die, if not to-day then to-morrow. He touched the feldscher on the arm, blinked his eyes, and said in a whisper:

"Yes, Maksim Nikolaïch, but you will let her blood."

"I have no time, no time, friend. Take your old woman, and God be with you!"

"Do me this one kindness!" implored Yakov. "You yourself know that if she merely had her stomach out of order, or some internal organ wrong, then powders and mixtures would cure; but she has caught cold. In cases of cold the first thing is to bleed the patient."

But the feldscher had already called for the next patient, and into the dispensary came a peasant woman with a little boy.

"Be off!" he said to Yakov, with a frown.

"At least try the effect of leeches. I will pray God eternally for you."

The feldscher lost his temper, and roared:

"Not another word."

Yakov also lost his temper, and grew purple in the face; but he said nothing more and took Marfa under his arm and led her out of the room. As soon as he had got her into the cart, he looked angrily and contemptuously at the hospital and said:

"What an artist! He will let the blood of a rich man, but for a poor man grudges<sup>1</sup> even a leech. Herod!"

When they arrived home, and entered the cabin, Marfa stood for a moment holding on to the stove. She was

<sup>1</sup>grudges, 捨不得.