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THE THREE STRANGERS

FOLLOWED BY A
TRADITION OF EIGHTEEN
HUNDRED AND FOUR

英美文学精品译注丛书



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《三个陌生人》

托马斯·哈代(1840—1928)生在多塞特郡上博克汉普顿村。父亲是当地的一个小营造商。哈代曾干过6年的建筑工作,之后决定献身创作。他写了许多诗,大多数直到1898年以后才发表。他认为这些诗是真实表达他思想作品的作品。但是他名垂后世,主要是凭借他1871年至1895年间创作的系列长篇小说和短篇小说,包括《远离尘嚣》、《德伯家的苔丝》、《无名的裘德》、《还乡》及其它以英格兰南部和西南部的威塞克斯地区为背景的作品。他描绘了一幅19世纪乡村生活的生动画面,再现了乡村生活的欢乐与痛苦,勾勒出了一个相信宿命论、充满迷信与不公的世界。

本书中的两篇故事选自他的第一部短篇小说集《威塞克斯的故事》。该小说集于19世纪80年代首次出版。哈代在其中试图记录一个正在消失的、富于地方传统的世界。

哈代至今依然是最受人喜爱的英国作家之一,这也多亏了根据他的作品改编的令人难忘的影片。

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THE THREE STRANGERS

Among the few features of agricultural England which retain an appearance but little modified by the lapse of centuries may be reckoned the long, grassy and furzy downs, coombs, or eweleases, as they are called according to their kind, that fill a large area of certain counties in the south and south-west. If any mark of human occupation is met with hereon it usually takes the form of the solitary cottage of some shepherd.

Fifty years ago such a lonely cottage stood on such a down and may possibly be standing there now. In spite of its loneliness, however, the spot, by actual measurement, was not more than three miles from a county town. Yet that affected it little. Three miles of irregular upland, during the long inimical seasons, with their sleets, snows, rains, and mists, afford withdrawing space enough to isolate a Timon or Nebuchadnezzar; much less, in fair weather, to please that less repellent tribe, the poets, philosophers, artists, and others, who "conceive and meditate of pleasant things." Some old earthen camp or barrow, some clump of trees, at least some starved fragment of ancient hedge, is usually taken advantage of in the erection of these forlorn dwel-

features: characteristics.

retain: keep. **but:** only. **lapse:** passing.

centuries: intervals of a hundred years. **reckoned:** considered.

furzy: covered with furze, a type of plant. **downs:** hills. **coombs:** valleys. **eweleases:** land where sheep are kept. **counties:** administrative districts.

hereon: on this type of land. **solitary:** lonely, isolated.

shepherd: man who looks after sheep.

lonely: isolated. **cottage:** simple house in the country. **down:** hill.

In spite of its loneliness: although it was lonely. **spot:** place.

actual: real. **county town:** main town in a county. **Yet:** but.

upland: hilly land.

inimical: difficult, dangerous. **seasons:** times of year. **sleets:** mixture of rain and snow. **mists:** condensed water vapour, type of fog. **afford:** offer. **withdrawing:** retiring. **Timon or Nebuchadnezzar:** *Timon of Athens and Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon; both people who did not love humanity.*

fair weather: good weather. **repellent:** horrible. **conceive:** think of. **earthen:** made of earth. **barrow:** very old tomb. **clump:** small group.

starved: small. **ancient:** very old. **hedge:** kind of tree forming boundary of fields. **forlorn:** sad, miserable.

lings. But in the present case such a kind of shelter had been disregarded. Higher Crowstairs, as the house was called, stood quite detached and undefended. The only reason for its precise situation seemed to be the crossing of two footpaths at right angles hard by, which may have crossed there and thus for a good five hundred years. Hence the house was exposed to the elements on all sides. But though the wind up here blew unmistakeably when it did blow, and the rain hit hard whenever it fell, the various weathers of the winter season were not quite so formidable on the down as they were imagined to be by dwellers on low ground. The raw rimes were not so pernicious as in the hollows, and the frosts were scarcely so severe. When the shepherd and his family who tenanted the house were pitied for their sufferings from the exposure, they said that upon the whole they were less inconvenienced by "wuzzes and flames" (hoarses and phlegms) than when they had lived by the stream of a snug neighbouring valley.

The night of the twenty eighth of March 182- was precisely one of the nights that were wont to call forth these expressions of commiseration. The level rain-storm smote walls, slopes, and hedges, like the cloth-yard shafts of Senlac and Crecy. Such sheep and out-door animals as had no shelter stood with their buttocks to the wind; while the tails of little birds trying to roost on some scraggy thorn were blown inside-out like umbrellas. The gable-end of the cottage was stained with wet, and the eaves-droppings flapped against the wall. Yet never was commiseration for the shepherd more misplaced. For that cheerful rustic was entertaining a large party in glorification of the christening of his second girl.

The guests had arrived before the rain began to fall, and

dwellings: living places. **shelter**: refuge, protection from the elements. **disregarded**: ignored.

quite: completely. **detached**: isolated. **undefended**: without protection. **crossing**: junction.

footpaths: paths for walking on. **right angles**: 90 degree angles.

hard by: very near. **thus**: like this. **a good five hundred years**: at least five hundred years. **Hence**: so.

though: even if. **blew unmistakably**: definitely blew, blew hard.

formidable: terrible.

down: hill. **dwellers**: people who lived.

raw: severe. **rimes**: water condensing in early morning. **pernicious**: terrible. **hollows**: valleys. **frosts**: freezing. **scarcely**: not. **tenanted**: rented, lived.

upon the whole: in general. **inconvenienced**: disturbed.

hoarses and phlegms: sore throats and bronchial infections.

stream: small river. **snug**: warm and comfortable. **neighbouring**: near.

wont: probable. **call forth**: call out, summon

level: horizontal. **smote**: hit, struck.

slopes: inclines, hills. **hedges**: low trees used for boundary.

cloth-yard shafts: arrows. **Senlac and Crecy**: two battles (1066 and 1346 respectively) where arrows were used. **shelter**: refuge.

buttocks: back end. **roost**: sleep. **scraggy**: not well developed

thorn: type of tree. **gable-end**: triangular wall below roof.

stained: marked. **eaves**: part of roof.

cheerful: happy. **rustic**: country person.

christening: baptizing.

guests: those invited.

they were all now assembled in the chief or living-room of the dwelling. A glance into the apartment at eight o'clock on this eventful evening would have resulted in the opinion that it was as cosy and comfortable a nook as could be wished for in boisterous weather. The calling of its inhabitant was proclaimed by a number of highly polished sheep-crooks without stems, that were hung ornamentally over the fireplace, the curl of each shining crook varying from the antiquated type engraved in the patriarchal pictures of old family bibles to the most approved fashion of the last local sheep-fair. The room was lighted by half a dozen candles, having wicks only a trifle smaller than the grease which enveloped them, in candlesticks that were never used but at high-days, holy-days, and family feasts. The lights were scattered about the room, two of them standing on the chimney-piece. This position of candles was in itself significant. Candles on the chimney-piece always meant a party.

On the hearth, in front of a back-brand to give substance, blazed a fire of thorns, that crackled "like the laughter of the fool."

Nineteen persons were gathered. Of these, five women, wearing gowns of various bright hues, sat in chairs along the wall; girls shy and not shy filled the window bench; four men including Charley Jake the hedge-carpenter, Elijah New, the parish-clerk and John Pitcher, a neighbouring dairyman, the shepherd's father-in-law, lolled in the settle; a young man and maid, who were blushing over tentative *pourparlers* on a lifecompanionship, sat beneath the corner-cupboard; and an elderly engaged man of fifty or upwards moved restlessly about from spots where his betrothed was not to the spot where she was. Enjoyment

assembled: together. **chief:** main.

dwelling: house. **glance:** look. **apartment:** house.

eventful: with lots of things happening.

cosy: small and warm. **nook:** small space.

boisterous: rough, tempestuous. **calling:** profession.

proclaimed: announced. **polished:** cleaned, shining.

sheep-crooks: curved stick used to manipulate sheep. **stems:**

long sticks supporting the crook. **hung:** suspended. **ornamentally:**

in decoration. **curl:** curve. **engraved:** cut into the wood.

patriarchal: traditional.

sheep-fair: market for buying and selling sheep. **half a dozen:**

six. **wicks:** the part of a candle that burns. **trifle:** little. **grease:**

the white part of a candle. **enveloped:** covered, surrounded.

candlestick: support for candle. **never used but:** only used.

high days: days of high celebration. **scattered:** in various positions.

chimney-piece: area above the fireplace.

hearth: fireplace. **back-brand:** large piece of wood at back of

fire. **blazed:** burnt brightly. **thorns:** type of tree. **crackled:** made

a noise. **fool:** idiot.

gathered: assembled, met.

gowns: dresses. **hues:** colours.

shy: timid. **window bench:** place to sit under the window.

hedge-carpenter: man working with hedges.

parish-clerk: local church official.

neighbouring: who lived near. **dairyman:** man working with

milk, butter and cheese. **father-in-law:** father of husband or wife.

lollid: lay comfortably. **settle:** sofa. **maid:** girl. **blushing:** going

red in the face. **tentative:** shy, timid. **pourparlers (French):**

preliminary discussion. **lifecompanionship:** relationship (*marriage*)

for life. **beneath:** under. **engaged:** engaged to be married.

upwards: more. **restlessly:** without peace. **spots:** places.

was pretty general, and so much the more prevailed in being unhampered by conventional restrictions. Absolute confidence in each other's good opinion begat perfect ease, while the finishing stroke of manner, amounting to a truly princely serenity, was lent to the majority by the absence of any expression or trait denoting that they wished to get on in the world, enlarge their minds, or do any eclipsing thing whatever which nowadays so generally nips the bloom and *bonhomie* of all except the two extremes of the social scale.

Shepherd Fennel had married well, his wife being a dairyman's daughter from a vale at a distance, who brought fifty guineas in her pocket—and kept them there, till they should be required for administering to the needs of a coming family. This frugal woman had been somewhat exercised as to the character that should be given to the gathering. A sit-still party had its advantages; but an undisturbed position of ease in chairs and settles was apt to lead on the men to such an unconscionable deal of toping that they would sometimes fairly drink the house dry. A dancing-party was the alternative; but this, while avoiding the foregoing objection on the score of good drink, had a counterbalancing disadvantage in the matter of good victuals, the ravenous appetites engendered by the exercise causing immense havoc in the buttery. Shepherdess Fennel fell back upon the intermediate plan of mingling short dances with short periods of talk and singing, so as to hinder any ungovernable rage in either. But this scheme was entirely confined to her own gentle mind: the shepherd himself was in the mood to exhibit the most reckless phases of hospitality.

The fiddler was a boy of those parts, about twelve years of

pretty: quite. **prevailed**: was strong.

unhampered: not interfered with.

confidence: being sure of something. **begat**: led to, caused.

ease: feeling at home, relaxed. **stroke**: touch. **manner**: etiquette. **amounting to**: equivalent to. **princely**: royal. **serenity**: peacefulness. **lent**: given. **trait**: characteristic. **denoting**: signifying. **get on**: make progress, improve life. **enlarge**: make bigger. **eclipsing**: destructive.

nips the bloom: destroys the flower. **bonhomie** (*French*): good feeling. **the two extremes of the social scale**: the very rich and the very poor. **Shepherd**: man looking after sheep.

dairyman: man working with milk, butter and cheese. **vale**: valley.

fifty guineas: a pound and a shilling. **in her pocket**: as dowry, *marriage gift from woman's family*.

frugal: not extravagant. **somewhat**: quite.

exercised: involved in complicated calculations.

gathering: party. **sit-still party**: where everyone sits in their place and does not move. **ease**: comfort. **settles**: sofas. **apt**: probable. **lead on**: stimulate. **unconscionable**: unthinkable.

toping: drinking. **fairly**: almost.

foregoing: preceding. **on the score of**: concerning.

victuals: food. **ravenous**: very strong. **engendered**: caused.

havoc: confusion, destruction. **buttery**: food-store.

fell back upon: chose. **mingling**: mixing.

so as to: in order to.

hinder: prevent. **ungovernable**: uncontrollable. **rage**: excess, exaggeration. **confined**: limited.

reckless: dangerous, thoughtless.

fiddler: violin player.

age, who had a wonderful dexterity in jigs and reels, though his fingers were so small and short as to necessitate a constant shifting for the high notes, from which he scrambled back to the first position with sounds not of unmixed purity of tone. At seven the shrill tweedle-dee of this youngster had begun, accompanied by a booming ground-bass from Elijah New, the parish-clerk, who had thoughtfully brought with him his favourite musical instrument, the serpent. Dancing was instantaneous, Mrs Fennel privately enjoining the players on no account to let the dance exceed the length of a quarter of an hour.

But Elijah and the boy, in the excitement of their position, quite forgot the injunction. Moreover Oliver Giles, a man of seventeen, one of the dancers, who was enamoured of his partner, a fair girl of thirty-three rolling years, had recklessly handed a new crown-piece to the musicians, as a bribe to keep going as long as they had muscle and wind. Mrs Fennel, seeing the steam begin to generate on the countenances of her guests, crossed over and touched the fiddler's elbow and put her hand on the serpent's mouth. But they took no notice, and fearing she might lose her character of genial hostess if she were to interfere too markedly she retired and sat down helpless. And so the dance whizzed on with cumulative fury, the performers moving in their planet-like courses, direct and retrograde, from apogee to perigee, till the hand of the well kicked clock at the bottom of the room had travelled over the circumference of an hour.

While these cheerful events were in course of enactment within Fennel's pastoral dwelling an incident having considerable bearing on the party had occurred in the gloomy night without. Mrs Fennel's concern about the