

THE WORLD'S BEST SHORT STORIES

SELECTED AND EDITED WITH INTRODUCTIONS,
NOTES, QUESTIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS
FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

BY

HENRY HUIZINGA, M.A., PH.D.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH IN SHANGHAI COLLEGE

FORMERLY MEMBER MADRAS GOVERNMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVING
CERTIFICATE BOARD, AND CHIEF EXAMINER IN ENGLISH; AUTHOR OF
MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN INDIA; COMPILER OF "MODERN SHORT STORIES"

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PREFACE

Teachers of English in senior middle schools in China feel the need of suitable reading material for their classes. The writer has always found that short stories furnish the best reading matter for young students who are trying to learn English as a foreign language. At the same time many teachers and all students require the aid of notes and questions in this work.

The collection of stories herewith presented gives some of the best short stories in the English language and aims to give such detailed help as will be welcomed by both teachers and students. In the case of the earlier stories there is perhaps more than students need to use, and selection of the material may be made by the teacher.

Special acknowledgments are due to the following publishers and authors for their kind permission to include their stories in this volume : to Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, for *The Great Stone Face* ; to Charles Scribners' Sons, New York, and Chatto and Windus, London, for *The Sire De Malétroit's Door* ; to Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, for *God Sees the Truth but Waits* ; to Doubleday Page and Company, Garden City, New York, for *A Retrieved Reformation* ; to George H. Doran and Company, New York, and to the author, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, for *The Man with the Twisted Lip* ; to Harcourt Brace and Company, New York, for the selection from Papini's *Life of Christ, The Prodigal Son* ; to The Grolier Society, New York, publishers of *The Book of Knowledge*, for *The Telltale Screen* ; and to the Asia Publishing Company, New York, for *Left-Handed Jingoro and theirate Landlord*.

This volume of the WORLD'S BEST SHORT STORIES is affectionately dedicated to my fellow teachers of English in China.

HENRY HUIZINGA.

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WHAT ARE GOOD STORIES?

• (*For Teachers*)

The Short Story is the most popular form of literature today. That it has always been popular can easily be seen from such books as the Old Testament, Homer, the *Arabian Nights*, the *Hitopadesa*, the *Liao Chai*, and other collections of all lands. But in recent years the critical estimate of the Short Story as a form of art has risen, and it is now more than ever seriously studied in schools and colleges in the West, especially in America.

An amazing number of short stories is produced every week, and they appear in books, magazines, and newspapers. How to select for one's own reading is often problem enough, but when it comes to advising students and young people, there are always two considerations of great importance. First, is the subject matter of a story worth while? Second, is the story well written? The subject should be such as to give one a healthy feeling to dwell upon it. This may be a feeling of merriment over what is laughable, or a feeling of sympathy for sorrow and suffering; a feeling of resentment against what is low and mean, or a feeling of admiration for what is noble and true.

To be well written a story must present both the characters and the action with clearness and strength. There will be no doubt in our minds about the appearance and qualities of the persons introduced in the story and about the nature of the things they do. The story must be told vividly and in an interesting manner. A student wrote about *The Last of the Mohicans*: "The description is so lively that it seems as if the rifles and the warriors are active on the pages of the book."

Cultivating a taste for good literature means to find pleasure in good stories, rather than in poor ones. The pity is that often we have to read a story before we can tell if it is good or bad. But just as in foods we can select a cook or a grocer who, we know by experience or by reputation, provides us with good stuff; so in literature we can choose our authors, editors, or publishers even, whom we can in a manner trust. But it is quite necessary for us who are teachers that we provide our students with the right kind of reading material, and so help them to form right habits of reading, and cultivate in them a taste for those things which are highest and best.

It is well that all should begin with the old stories, what are known as the classics. One thing must be guarded against: not all that is old or called classic is suitable, especially to students in China. And in the second place, there is no time for even all that is good among the classics, for there is, at least, an equal need for a knowledge of modern life that can only be obtained from the literature that is being produced right now.

It is specially unfortunate that even the writers of the greatest reputation cannot always be safely recommended to the young. The editor at first thought of including the works of such masters of entertainment as Kipling, Poe, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain. We have carefully perused the larger part of their writings, but regret to say that, for various reasons, we find them unsuitable for a work of this sort.

The inimitable stories of Kipling deal largely with English military life in India, and in them drink, swearing, deceit, and adultery prevail; told in a racy style that is full of local color and dialect. Bret Harte is like Kipling in finding good and admirable qualities in otherwise evil characters, and to American readers his stories should be of greater interest because they tell of people and things nearer home. The dialect and the extreme local color, also the surfeit of gambling,

drink, profanity, and loose living, make most of his stories unsuitable to youthful minds. Both these authors are out of date, for the life that is portrayed in their stories has been swept away with the ravages of time.

Mark Twain's "*Best Humorous Story*" of the *Jumping Frog*, instead of pleasure or fun, gives us disgust and pain as we contemplate the cruel torture and death to which a harmless creature is subjected for the brutal sport of a few hoodlums. The ideals of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, recommended highly for juvenile reading, are low enough.

And what shall be said about Edgar Allan Poe, who is perhaps justly regarded as the greatest technician in the art of short story-telling, whose critical exposition of the subject is both sound and illuminating? If Poe's diseased mind had not been so morbidly engrossed with repulsive horrors, undiluted and heightened to the *n*th degree, we might enjoy his stories more. There is no wholesome moral teaching in any of his stories. "The men and women who appear in these tales are all phantoms without warmth, passion, or character; they and the realm in which they move are stamped with unreality."—*New International Encyclopedia*.

Fortunately there are many good stories, so that doubtful ones need not be regarded. One is, in fact, bewildered by the multitude of excellent stories, and the only reason for not including in this volume, some that will occur to readers, is the lack of room. The editor claims to have presented herewith a collection of the most popular, the most wholesome, and the most useful stories, both from an artistic standpoint, and for the purpose of teaching either language or literature. Nearly all are such that every high school student should be acquainted with them. The editor has cut out considerable sections of some of the longer stories, which even now are quite long enough, thereby greatly improving them for class, and also (he thinks) for general use. For the rest the words of the authors have been nearly always preserved.

A list of additional short stories, many of them equally as good as some that are included here, is added, for the sake of teachers and for some students who may be interested in reading more literature of this sort. No such list can be complete, for much depends upon individual viewpoint or taste, and in any case the list is endless.

AMERICAN AUTHORS

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE: *The Great Stone Face*; *The Ambitious Guest*; *David Swan*; *The Minister's Black Veil*; *The Golden Touch*.

WASHINGTON IRVING: *Rip Van Winkle*; *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*; *The Devil and Tom Walker*.

WILLIAM SYDNEY PORTER (O. HENRY): *A Retrieved Reformation*; *The Gift of the Magi*; *A Municipal Report*; *An Unfinished Story*; *Phœbe*.

HENRY JAMES: *An International Episode*; *Four Meetings*.

BRET HARTE: *How Santa Claus Came to Sandy Bar*; *Left Out on Lone Star Mountain*; *Tennessee's Partner*; *The Luck of Roaring Camp*.

EDGAR ALLAN POE: *The Fall of the House of Usher*; *The Gold Bug*; *A Descent into a Maelstrom*; *The Purloined Letter*.

HAMLIN GARLAND: *The Return of a Private*; *Among the Corn Rows*.

JACK LONDON: *To Build a Fire*; *Love of Life*.

FRANK STOCKTON: *The Lady or the Tiger*.

ALICE BROWN: *The Lantern*.

ENGLISH AUTHORS

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON: *The Sire De Maletroit's Door*; *Markheim*; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

ANTHONY TROLLOPE: *Malachi's Cove*.

THOMAS HARDY: *The Three Strangers*.

CHARLES DICKENS: *A Christmas Carol*; *The Signal Man*.

RUDYARD KIPLING: *Without Benefit of Clergy*; *Miss Youghal's Sais*; *Wee Willie Winkie*; *The Rout of the White Hussars*.

ISRAEL ZANGWILL: *A Rose of the Ghetto.*
 H. G. WELLS: *The Country of the Blind.*
 A. CONAN DOYLE: *A Scandal in Bohemia; The Red-headed League; The Speckled Band.*

SCANDINAVIAN AUTHORS

SELMA LAGERLÖF: *A Christmas Guest; Uncle Reuben.*
 BJÖRNSTJERNE BJÖRNSSON: *The Father.*

FRENCH AUTHORS

ÉMILE ZOLA: *The Attack on the Mill.*
 FRANÇOIS COPPÉE: *The Substitute; A Piece of Bread.*
 GUY DE MAUPASSANT: *The Necklace; A Piece of String.*
 ALPHONSE DAUDET: *The Last Class.*
 ANATOLE FRANCE: *Our Lady's Juggler; or The Juggler of Notre Dame.*

RUSSIAN AUTHORS

LEV NIKOLAEVICH TOLSTOY: *God Sees the Truth but Waits; Two Old Men; What Men Live By; How Much Land Does a Man Want; Master and Man.*
 IVAN SERGEEVICH TURGENEV: *A Living Relic; The District Doctor.*
 MAKSIM GORKI: *Her Lover.*
 VSEVOLOD M. GARSHIN: *The Signal.*
 NIKOLAY VASILEVICH GOGOL: *The Cloak.*
 ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV: *The Bet; The Darling.*

See also *Stories from the Arabian Nights*. A useful edition with Chinese Notes is published by the Commercial Press.

COLLECTIONS OF SHORT STORIES

Modern Short Stories, by Margaret Ashmun. Published by Macmillan. A very good collection with valuable biographical notes; also lists of authors and stories other than those found in her volume. The title *Modern* is misleading, as the book contains stories that are more than a hundred years old.

Short Stories Old and New, by C. Alphonso Smith. Published by Ginn. A handy volume for school use, with brief introductions.

Selected English Short Stotries. Two volumes, First and Second Series. Published by the Oxford University Press in the "World's Classics."

A Book of Short Stories, by Stuart P. Sherman. Published by Holt. A good introduction with notes on the stories.

Short Stories, by Leonard B. Moulton, "Riverside Literature Series." Published by Houghton. Good stories by somewhat lesser known authors.

Best Russian Stories, by Thomas Seltzer in "The Modern Library." Published by Boni and Liveright. A good introduction.

English Short Stories from the Fifteenth to the Twentieth Century. "Everyman's Library." Many old and somewhat less known stories.

Short Stories of America, by Robert L. Ramsay. Houghton Mifflin Company. A good collection, many of the stories being somewhat less known. Also an excellent Introductory Essay, Course Outline, and Reading Lists, which are helpful to teachers who wish to equip themselves with a knowledge of the best methods.

Modern Short Stories, by Henry Huizinga. Published by the Commercial Press. A collection of the Best Short Stories all written within the last five or six years. Edited with Introductions, Notes, Questions, and Suggestions for Teaching and Learning, especially for Chinese students.

After reading short stories, students will want to read long stories, or novels. The field is a large one and it is hard to prescribe the essential ones. Foremost, both for the sake of ease and of worth, every student should read *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*.

The following are somewhat more difficult, but they can be read by the average middle-school student, and are highly recommended:

Treasure Island and *Kidnapped*, by Robert Louis Stevenson.

David Copperfield and *Oliver Twist*, by Charles Dickens.

The Vicar of Wakefield, by Oliver Goldsmith.

Pilgrim's Progress, by John Bunyan.

The Talisman and Ivanhoe, by Sir Walter Scott.
Lorna Doone, by Richard Blackmore.
Pride and Prejudice, by Jane Austen.
John Halifax, Gentleman, by Dinah Maria Craik (or Miss Mulock).

The following are perhaps still a little harder:

Henry Esmond, by W. M. Thackeray.
A Tale of Two Cities, by Charles Dickens.
Silas Marner, by George Eliot.
The Last of the Mohicans, by J. Fenimore Cooper.
Les Miserables, by Victor Hugo (preferably the abridged form in Macmillan's "Pocket Classic Series").
The Last Days of Pompeii, by Bulwer-Lytton.

In addition to the old novels, the Chinese student should be encouraged to read the best modern fiction. Let him begin with the following:

Penrod; Penrod and Sam; Seventeen, by Booth Tarkington.
The Man of the Forest, by Zane Grey.
The River's End, by James Oliver Curwood.
The Rose Dawn; Gold; The Gray Dawn, by Stewart Edward White.

The Cathedral, by Hugh Walpole.
The Virginian, by Owen Wister.
Twin Fires, by Walter Eaton.
A Minister of Grace, by Margaret Widdemer.
Slippy McGee, by Marie Conway Oemler.
Freckles; Laddie; Michael O'Halloran, by Gene Stratton Porter.

Oh Money, Money; Just David, by Eleanor H. Porter.
The Sky Pilot; The Doctor, by Ralph Connor.
The Bent Twig, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher.
The Winning of Barbara Worth, by Harold Bell Wright.
The Trail of the Lonesome Pine, by John Fox.

Try also stories by the following authors:

Margaret Deland, Ethel Dell, Grace Richmond, Edith Wharton, William A. White, Joseph Lincoln, Mary Roberts Rhinehart, William J. Locke, James M. Barrie, Baroness

D'Orczy, Basil King, Joseph Conrad, Robert Hichens, Joseph Hocking.

The above lists are not complete. It is not necessary to read the very latest fiction as soon as it is published. Usually a very high price is demanded for the most recent fiction; while if we wait a year or two we can get the same book at a greatly reduced price.

Publishers like the Commercial Press are always glad to advise any student or teacher regarding the real value of books.

HOW TO STUDY AND HOW TO TEACH SHORT STORIES

(For Teachers)

The language of short stories is generally very simple. There may be sentences that need untangling, but ordinarily very little time should be given to parsing and grammar. The meaning of words should not be overlooked. For this purpose each student should have a fairly good dictionary in his own possession. A Webster's Unabridged is not to be advised. For most purposes it is too clumsy, and but wastes the time of the student. A dictionary that translates words into Chinese is bad for students in the last two years of the middle school. Students must learn to think in English, and this they do not learn from translations. Nor should a small pocket dictionary be used, which merely gives one word for another. This often has a pernicious effect on the understanding of words.

Any of the following dictionaries will be found useful, and all that is really necessary for every purpose: *Webster's Secondary School Dictionary* (\$4.40); *Webster's Academic Dictionary* (\$4.40); *Webster's High School Dictionary* (\$2.40); *Chambers's Twentieth Century Dictionary* (\$3.60); *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (\$3.60). These can all be obtained from the Commercial Press at the prices named.

But not all difficult words should be looked up in the dictionary. It is a good exercise for students to judge the meaning of words from the context, and this becomes especially safe and easy where the same word is used a number of times. For example, in the story of *The Great Stone Face*, near the beginning, the word *prophecy* comes four times. It ought not to be difficult for even the dullest student to make out the meaning of this word, even if he has never heard it before. And even when a word is used but once, it is often possible to guess the right meaning; and students should be encouraged to do this under the careful direction of the teacher. The editor has indicated in the notes to some of the stories the words whose meaning may be guessed by the students, rather than looked up in the dictionary. Teachers, of course, should have the matter well in hand, and both help the students in their guessing and also see to it that the matter of guessing is not abused and that students at all times make a proper use of their dictionaries. Remarks about students' notebooks will be made later.

As to the technical points of the short story, students in middle schools cannot be asked to do much. The main attention must be given to the story itself. Can they read a story? Can they understand it? Can they enjoy the fun of it? Can they sigh with the sadness of it? Can they get angry at the evil things and bad characters in it? Can they love and honor the good people in the story? Can they tell the story to others (not only to the teacher) in a way to bring out all these points?

The first step is to read the story. It may often be best for the teacher to read the whole story to the class with proper expression and with a minimum of comment. If the teacher can recite the story approximately in the language of the book, so much the better. Then students should read the story for themselves, if possible at one sitting; and usually the mere reading of the story should be enough preparation for

one lesson. The teacher can easily satisfy himself that his laziest student has really read the story, by getting the whole class to write briefly an answer to such a question as can easily be answered by any one who has read the story, and cannot be answered by one who has not.

A whole class period may then be given to students' questions about difficult parts of the story, to be answered either by the teacher or by other students. A good method is to select three or four students for each story, to prepare lists of questions to be read in class, or put on the blackboard, and answered by other students. One may be asked to prepare questions beginning with "What?" another with "How?" another with "Why?" or "Where?"

The second lesson will deal orally with points raised by the *General Outline*, which is given below. This Outline is in the form of questions, which are numbered for convenience in class use. Teachers can assign different questions to different students, or the same question to the whole class for written work. Sometimes the teacher will have to help students find material for some of the questions, or point out where the answers may be found.

For the next one or two lessons students may be required to bring written reports of the story based on the Outline. Some of these may be read in class. The General Outline has been tested by many years of use with many hundreds of students, and has been frequently and carefully revised. The whole Outline should be carefully gone over in connection with each story.

Notes and Questions have been added, more fully to the first few stories. It will be a good exercise for students and teachers to work out their own questions and notes for some of the later stories.

Teachers do not need to follow the exact order of the book in their use of these stories in the classroom. Rip Van Winkle is difficult and may be reserved till after one or two

others have been read. It is put first because it is the oldest in the book and probably the best short story in the English language.

Regarding the Poetry selections, do not leave these till the end of the course, but try one after one or two prose stories. It is a good plan to read a story in verse after each story in prose, thus alternating the two. Poetry is somewhat of an experiment in China, but a taste for it should be cultivated in our pupils.

NOTEBOOKS AND THEMES

(For Teachers)

Here let us consider students' notebooks. There are two forms, the bound notebook and the loose-leaf. The latter is preferable, especially for the reason that it will not be all out of the students' hands when the teacher is working on them for correction. But it must be insisted on that a perfect and neat file be kept by each student of all his written work, at least till the end of the year. It is very desirable that the paper be uniform, and that all written work in English be done on one kind of paper. Everything that a student writes in the way of themes or summaries, notes on difficult words, or questions for class discussion, should be carefully examined from time to time, corrections indicated, and dated and initialed by the teacher. Corrections should be indicated, but it is seldom necessary for the teacher to correct the students' papers. He should see to it, however, that the students *always* correct their own work. Sometimes it will be enough if corrections are made in the places where the mistakes occur, sometimes (especially if the work is poor) the teacher will require the whole theme, or whatever it is, to be rewritten.

All the work of the year should be preserved in a loose-leaf binder, into which it should be put after it is returned by the teacher. The teacher will inspect this occasionally and at the end of the year,

The teacher will do well to make a note of wrong sentences, especially such as are typical or common to a number of students. It will be a valuable exercise to take ten or twenty of these sentences, chosen from as many different papers and not all chosen from one student's work, and put them on the blackboard, and let all the students write them correctly on paper. After the papers are collected the sentences should be gone over orally, and one by one the students be asked to correct them, with the help of the teacher or of classmates if necessary. After marking these papers wrong or right, with the percentages right, etc., they will be returned to the students and be put by them into their files. Students should then be asked to write correctly all those sentences which they wrote wrong.

The teacher also should have a loose-leaf file, in which he keeps his notes, with separate pages for each student. The wrong sentences spoken of in the preceding paragraph can be entered under each student's name. Then later it may be found out both what are the most common faults of each student, and also how much he improves from time to time.

A word of explanation may be necessary as to the editorial part of this book, including this Introduction, the Notes and Questions, Biographies, etc. Everything is written with the Chinese student in mind, and so the simplest language is used, and learned discussions are avoided. While it is hoped that students will enjoy the reading of this introduction, it would be better that they should not read it at all than that they should be made to read it laboriously.

The biographical notes contain only as much as is interesting to students, and must not be looked upon as complete Lives. The explanations of words and phrases may have to be supplemented by teachers, according to the needs of their students. Good use should be made of the numerous questions at the end of the first stories. Students may be asked

to prepare written answers at home to selected questions, or they may be used in class both for oral and written work.

SUGGESTIONS TO STUDENTS

In each short story a student should answer completely three questions: *Who? Where? What?* First, who are the persons named or taking part in the story? These are called *characters*. A character in this sense is a person, man, woman, or child, that appears, or is written about, in a story. Do not confuse this word with *character*, which means the nature or quality of a person as seen in his conduct. (The latter word is never used in the plural.) Thus we may speak of the character of a character, meaning the moral nature or disposition of a person in a story. *Characteristic* means one separate point or quality in a person's character, such as courage, laziness, pride, selfishness, ambition. Some of these are good characteristics, some are bad characteristics. Sometimes a person will have some good characteristics and some bad ones. A large number of good characteristics make up a good character; though often one bad characteristic will spoil a good character.

There is usually one chief person, or character, in a story, called the hero, or heroine. How does the author describe the characters to us, their personal appearance, their habits, their characteristics? He may tell us just what kind of people they are, informing us of their facial and bodily appearance, their clothing, and also the qualities of their minds and souls. Thus he may say that a character is brave and noble, kind and charitable, honest and true. Or he may let us discover and infer all these things from what a character says and does in the story. The former is called the analytic method, the latter, the dramatic.

The answer to the question, *Where*, tells us about the *Setting* of the story. Is the place America, England, Russia, or China? Is it a big city or a village, a desert or an ocean?