

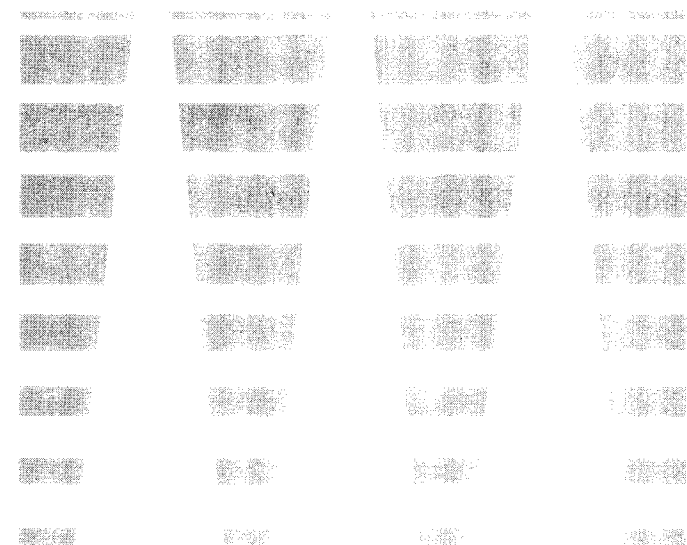
新编全国师范大学英语教学丛书

A CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF
BRITISH SHORT STORIES

英国 短篇小说赏析

主编 王军

新华出版社



英国短篇小说赏析

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前 言

19 世纪下半叶，以 90 年代为标志，通常被认为是英国短篇小说最为全盛和发达的时代。英国短篇小说作为一种独立的、新颖的艺术形式，在 19、20 世纪之交，在国外影响的推动和现代意识形成的条件下获得完善的发展。

《英国短篇小说赏析》选用了 19 世纪以后英国不同时期具有代表性作家的短篇小说，通过对人物性格、写作手法、时代背景、语言特点的分析，引导读者领略各具特色的语言魅力、思想精髓。在这里，我们可以与小说大家一起回味人生，与小说中形形色色的人物诉说衷肠，正确地认识英国社会及社会的众生相。

《英国短篇小说赏析》共选收 17 篇短篇小说，其编写体例如下：

1. 每篇小说前均有英文的作者简介，以帮助读者清楚地了解作家的生平和他们的创作历程。
2. 在小说部分，每页的右边都有中文的生词解释，以帮助读者更好地阅读与欣赏。
3. 每篇小说后面我们都给出对小说家和作品的评价，也是我们了解作家和作品的注脚。对作家的评价，可以说是众说纷纭，我们



主要采用公认的说法，当然也不乏新的视角和新的观点。

我们怀着为广大学生和文学爱好者服务的真诚目的编写了此书，但我们深知我们的水平有限，难免会有遗珠之憾，我们渴望此书会对广大爱好文学的读者有所裨益。


编 者

2006 年 8 月于吉林师范大学



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Libbie Marsh's Three Eras

By Elizabeth Gaskell

作者简介

Elizabeth Gaskell (1810—1865) was born as Elizabeth Stevenson to a former Unitarian minister as his youngest daughter in London. After the loss of her mother at the age of one, she was brought up by her aunt, Hannah Lamb, who lived in Knutsford, a country town in the suburb of Manchester. From an early age she loved books, and at thirteen was sent to Avonbank Boarding School, at Stratford upon Avon, where she spent enjoyable schooldays. After she married William Gaskell, a young junior minister, for the first time, Elizabeth saw the dreadful hovels and cellars in which many workers lived amongst soot and grime, and she was deeply shocked by the poverty she witnessed in Manchester.

When she was twenty eight, Elizabeth wrote an article about an old country house, which was printed in a magazine. After losing her baby son to scarlet fever at ten months old, her husband suggested that she write a book. It took her three years to write, because she always put her other duties to family and friends and those in need, before anything else. The book appeared as *Mary Barton*《玛丽·巴顿》(1848), which marked Elizabeth's debut as a novelist. The novel also served to address key social issues such as urban poverty, Chartism and the emerging trade union movement. Gaskell's novel shocked Victorian society, however it was greatly admired by other writers and she began to associate with Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, and George

Eliot.

Elizabeth Gaskell was an acclaimed and prominent Victorian novelist. She would write 48 more works including *Ruth*《鲁思》(1853), *North and South*《北方与南方》(1855), *Wives and Daughters*《妻子与女儿》(1866), and approximately forty shorter fictions such as *Cranford*《克兰福特》(1853) and *Cousin Phillis*《表兄菲利斯》(1863). In her books Gaskell expressed a deep sympathy for the poor and suggested the need for large-scale social reform. Gaskell also wrote a controversial biography of Charlotte Bronte.

Elizabeth Gaskell developed a style in her work that possessed both insight and sympathy. An awareness of social concerns led her to treat these with a frankness and boldness that some found uncomfortable but difficult to ignore. Her range of subject matter is impressive, from evocations of nature through to graphic representation of starving factory hands, always with a gentle humour and steady narrative pace. The everyday existence of small, close-knit community life was conveyed in a very readable form with understanding.

Elizabeth Gaskell passed away in 1865 in the company of her daughters at the age of fifty-five in the country house she purchased in Hampshire.



故事:莉比·玛什一生的三段时间

ERA I VALENTINE'S DAY

注释:

Valentine's Day

圣瓦伦丁节

Last November but one, there was a flitting in our neighbourhood; hardly a flitting, after all, for it was only a single person changing her place of abode from one lodging to another; and instead of a cartload of drawers and baskets, dressers and beds, with old king clock at the top of all, it was only one large wooden chest to be carried after the girl, who moved slowly and heavily along the streets, listless and depressed, more from the state of her mind than of her body. It was Libbie Marsh, who had been obliged to quit her room in Dean Street, because the acquaintances whom she had been living with were leaving Manchester. She tried to think herself fortunate in having met with lodgings rather more out of the town, and with those who were known to be respectable; she did indeed try to be contented, but in spite of her reason, the old feeling of desolation came over her, as she was now about to be thrown again entirely among strangers.

No. 2. -Court, Albemarle Street, was reached at last, and the pace, slow as it was, slackened as she drew near the spot where she was to be left by the man who carried her box, for, trivial as her acquaintance with him was, he was not quite a stranger, as everyone else was, peering out of their open doors, and satisfying themselves it was only "Dixon's new lodger."



Dixon's house was the last on the left-hand side of the court. A high dead brick wall connected it with its opposite neighbour. All the dwellings were of the same monotonous pattern, and one side of the court looked at its exact likeness opposite, as if it were seeing itself in a looking-glass.

Dixon's house was shut up, and the key left next door; but the woman in whose charge it was left knew that Libbie was expected, and came forward to say a few explanatory words, to unlock the door, and stir the dull grey ashes that were lazily burning in the grate; and then she returned to her own house, leaving poor Libbie standing alone with the great big chest in the middle of the house-place floor, with no one to say a word to (even a commonplace remark would have been better than this dull silence), that could help her to repel the fast-coming tears.

Dixon and his wife, and their eldest girl, worked in factories, and were absent all day from the house; the youngest child, also a little girl, was boarded out on the week-days at the neighbour's where the door-key was deposited, but although busy making dirt-pies, at the entrance to the court, when Libbie came in, she was too young to care much about her parents' new lodger. Libbie knew that she was to sleep with the elder girl in the front bedroom, but, as you may fancy, it seemed a liberty even to go upstairs to take off her things, when no one was at home to marshal the way up the ladder-like steps. So she could only take off her bonnet, and sit down, and gaze at the now blazing fire, and think sadly on the past, and on the lonely creature she was in this wide world—father and mother gone, her little brother long since

liberty 冒昧

dead—he would have been more than nineteen had he been alive, but she only thought of him as the darling baby; her only friends (to call friends) living far away at their new house; her employers, kind enough people in their way, but too rapidly twirling round on this bustling earth to have leisure to think of the little work-woman, excepting when they wanted gowns turned, carpets mended, or household linen darned; and hardly even the natural though hidden hope of a young girl's heart, to cheer her on with the bright visions of a home of her own at some future day, where, loving and beloved, she might fulfil a woman's dearest duties.

For Libbie was very plain, as she had known so long that the consciousness of it had ceased to mortify her. You can hardly live in Manchester without having some idea of your personal appearance: the factory lads and lasses take good care of that; and if you meet them at the hours when they are pouring out of the mills, you are sure to hear a good number of truths, some of them combined with such a spirit of impudent fun, that you can scarcely keep from laughing, even at the joke against yourself. Libbie had often and often been greeted by such questions as—"How long is it since you were a beauty?"—"What would you take a day to stand in the fields to scare away the birds?" &c., for her to linger under any impression as to her looks.

mortify 使受辱，
伤感情

impudent 冒失的，
粗鲁的

While she was thus musing, and quietly crying, under the pictures her fancy had conjured up, the Dixons came dropping in, and surprised her with her wet cheeks and quivering lips.

She almost wished to have the stillness again that had so



oppressed her an hour ago, they talked and laughed so loudly and so much, and bustled about so noisily over everything they did. Dixon took hold of one iron handle of her box, and helped her to bump it upstairs, while his daughter Anne followed to see the unpacking, and what sort of clothes “little sewing body had gotten.” Mrs Dixon rattled out her tea-things, and put the kettle on, fetched home her youngest child, which added to the commotion. Then she called Anne downstairs, and sent her for this thing and that; eggs to put to the cream, it was so thin; ham, to give a relish to the bread and butter; some new bread, hot, if she could get it. Libbie heard all these orders, given at full pitch of Mrs Dixon’s voice, and wondered at their extravagance, so different from the habits of the place where she had last lodged. But they were fine spinners, in the receipt of good wages, and confined all day in an atmosphere ranging from seventy-five to eighty degrees. They had lost all natural, healthy appetite for simple food, and, having no higher tastes, found their greatest enjoyment in their luxurious meals.

When tea was ready, Libbie was called downstairs, with a rough but hearty invitation, to share their meal; she sat mutely at the corner of the tea-table, while they went on with their own conversation about people and things she knew nothing about, till at length she ventured to ask for a candle, to go and finish her unpacking before bedtime, as she had to go out sewing for several succeeding days. But once in the comparative peace of her bedroom, her energy failed her, and she contented herself with locking her Noah’s ark of a chest, and put out her candle, and went to sit by the

Noah’s ark 挪亚方舟,是基督教《圣经》中挪亚为避洪水而造的大船。



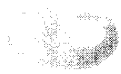
window, and gaze out at the bright heavens; for ever and ever “the blue sky, that bends over all,” sheds down a feeling of sympathy with the sorrowful at the solemn hours when, the ceaseless stars are seen to pace its depths.

By-and-by her eye fell down to gazing at the corresponding window to her own, on the opposite side of the court. It was lighted, but the blind was drawn down; upon the blind she saw, first unconsciously, the constant weary motion of a little spectral shadow, a child's hand and arm-no more; long, thin fingers hanging down from the wrist, while the arm moved up and down, as if keeping time to the heavy pulses of dull pain. She could not help hoping that sleep would soon come to still that incessant, feeble motion; and now and then it did cease, as if the little creature had dropped into a slumber from very weariness; but presently the arm jerked up with the fingers clenched, as if with a sudden start of agony. When Anne came up to bed, Libbie was still sitting, watching the shadow, and she directly asked to whom it belonged.

“It will be Margaret Hall's lad. Last summer, when it was so hot, there was no biding with the window shut at night, and theirs was open too, and many's the time he has waked me with his moans; they say he's been better sin' cold weather came.”

“Is he always in bed? Whatten ails him?” asked Libbie.

“Summat's amiss wi' his backbone, folks say; he's amiss 有毛病的 better and worse, like. He's a nice little chap enough, and his mother's nor that bad either; only my mother and her had words, so now we don't speak.”



Libbie went on watching, and when she next spoke, to ask who and what his mother was, Anne Dixon was fast asleep.

Time passed away, and as usual unveiled the hidden things. Libbie found out that Margaret Hall was a widow, who earned her living as a washerwoman; that the little suffering lad was her only child, her dearly beloved. That while she scolded, pretty nearly, everybody else, “till her name was up” in the neighbourhood for a termagant, to him she was evidently most tender and gentle. He lay alone on his little bed, near the window, through the day, while she was away toiling for a livelihood. But when Libbie had plain sewing to do at her lodgings, instead of going out to sew, she used to watch from her bedroom window for the time when the shadows opposite, by their mute gestures, told that the mother had returned to bend over her child, to smooth his pillow, to alter his position, to get him his nightly cup of tea. And often in the night Libbie could not help rising gently from bed, to see if the little arm was waving up and down, as was his accustomed habit when sleepless from pain.

termagant 泼妇，
好吵架的女人

Libbie had a good deal of sewing to do at home that winter, and whenever it was not so cold as to benumb her fingers, she took it upstairs, in order to watch the little lad in her few odd moments of pause. On his better days he could sit up enough to peep out of his window, and she found he liked to look at her. Presently she ventured to nod to him across the court; and his faint smile, and ready nod back again, showed that this gave him pleasure. I think she would