

英美近代散文选读

英汉对照

READINGS IN ENGLISH PROSE

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Readings in English Prose

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高 健 编译

商 务 印 书 馆

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内 容 简 介

本书选了十九世纪末叶至二十世纪中叶的三十五位作家的三十九篇散文加以译注。此书可供大专院校英语专业学生及相当英语程度的读者阅读和参考。

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英 美 近 代 散 文 选 读

(英 汉 对 照)

高 健 编 译

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1 Egdon Heath'

Thomas Hardy (1840—1928)

A Saturday afternoon in November was approaching the time of twilight, and the vast tract of unenclosed wild known as Egdon Heath embrowned itself moment by moment. Overhead the hollow stretch of whitish cloud shutting out the sky was as a tent which had the whole heath for its floor.

The heaven being spread with this pallid screen and the earth with the darkest vegetation, their meeting line at the horizon was clearly marked. In such contrast the heath wore the appearance of an instalment of night² which had taken up its place before its astronomical hour³ was come: darkness had to a great extent arrived hereon, while day stood distinct in the sky. Looking upwards, a furze-cutter would have been inclined to continue work; looking down, he would have decided to finish his faggot and go home. The distant rims of the world and of the firmament seemed to be a division in time no less than a division in matter. The face of the heath by its mere complexion added half an hour to evening; it could in like manner retard the dawn, sadden noon, anticipate the frowning of storms scarcely generated, and intensify the opacity of a moonless midnight to a cause of shaking and dread.

In fact, precisely at this transitional point of its nightly roll into darkness the great and particular glory of the Egdon waste began,⁴ and nobody could be said to understand the heath who had not been there at such a time. It could best be felt when it could not

clearly be seen, its complete effect and explanation lying in this and the succeeding hours before the next dawn: then, and only then, did it tell its true tale. The spot was, indeed, a near relation of night, and when night showed itself an apparent tendency to gravitate together could be perceived in its shades and the scene. The sombre stretch of rounds and hollows seemed to rise and meet the evening gloom in pure sympathy, the heath exhaling darkness as rapidly as the heavens precipitated it.⁴ And so the obscurity in the air and the obscurity in the land closed together in a black fraternization⁵ towards which each advanced half-way.

The place became full of a watchful intentness now; for when other things sank brooding to sleep the heath appeared slowly to awake and listen. Every night its Titanic form seemed to await something; but it had waited thus, unmoved, during so many centuries, through the crises of so many things, that it could only be imagined to await one last crisis — the final overthrow.

It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity. Smiling champagnes⁶ of flowers and fruit hardly do this, for they are permanently harmonious only with an existence of better reputation as to its issues than the present. Twilight combined with the scenery of Egdon Heath to involve a thing majestic without severity, impressive without showiness, emphatic in its admonitions, grand in its simplicity. The qualifications which frequently invest the façade of a prison with far more dignity than is found in the façade of a palace double its size lent to this heath a sublimity in which spots renowned for beauty of the accepted kind are utterly wanting. Fair prospects wed happily with fair times; but alas, if times be not fair! Men have oftener suffered from the mockery of a place too smiling for their reason than from the oppression of surroundings oversadly tinged. Haggard Egdon appealed to a subtler and scarcer instinct, to a more recently learnt emotion, than that which responds to the sort of beauty called charming and fair.

Indeed, it is a question if the exclusive reign of this orthodox

beauty is not approaching its last quarter. The new Vale of Tempe⁷ may be a gaunt waste in Thule:⁸ human souls may find themselves in closer and closer harmony with external things wearing a sombreness distasteful to our race when it was young. The time seems near, if it has not actually arrived, when the chastened sublimity of a moor, a sea, or a mountain will be all of nature that is absolutely in keeping with the moods of the more thinking among mankind. And ultimately, to the commonest tourist, spots like Iceland may become what the vineyards and myrtle-gardens of South Europe are to him now; and Heidelberg and Baden⁹ be passed unheeded as he hastens from the Alps to the sand-dunes of Scheveningen.¹⁰

The most thorough-going ascetic could feel that he had a natural right to wander on Edgon: he was keeping within the line of legitimate indulgence when he laid himself open to influences such as these. Colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birthright of all. Only in summer days of highest feather¹¹ did its mood touch the level of gaiety. Intensity was more usually reached by way of the solemn than by way of the brilliant, and such a sort of intensity was often arrived at during winter darkness, tempests, and mists. Then Edgon was aroused to reciprocity; for the storm was its lover, and the wind its friend. Then it became the home of strange phantoms; and it was found to be the hitherto unrecognized original of those wild regions of obscurity which are vaguely felt to be compassing us about in midnight dreams of flight and disaster, and are never thought of after the dream till revived by scenes like this.

It was at present a place perfectly accordant with man's nature — neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, like man, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly colossal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities.

1

伊 登 荒 原

托马斯·哈代

(1840—1928)

十一月一个星期六的下午，已是薄暮时分。当地人管它叫伊登荒原的那一片地势辽阔、没有树篱的旷野上面，溟濛的紫霭正一阵阵使荒原暗了下来。头顶上方，夺据了天际上无尽空荡的白云，宛如高悬的帐篷一般，把整个荒原做了它的地面。

高空既蒙覆了这层苍白的帷幕，大地又笼罩着最浓厚的暗绿，它们在远方天际的会合界线因而清晰可辨。相形之下，荒原已经有几分夜色，黑暗在它的天文时刻之前已先期降临，而白昼却依然杲杲天际。这时，一个割荆豆的人如果仰头望天，可能还想继续干上一阵；如果低头看地，就会觉得该是收拾柴火回家的时候了。下界与穹苍在远处的相交一线看来不仅是物质上，同时也是时间上的分野。这时荒原仅凭它的外貌就已经使傍晚早到半个小时；同样，它会推迟黎明的破晓，使中午黯淡无光，使人们凭空产生风雨将至的幻觉，并且还会使没有月光的午夜显得格外苍白，阴森可怕，让人感到惴惴不安。

事实上，从傍晚将黑到夜色渐浓的这个转折时刻才是伊登荒原的伟大而特殊的魅力开始出现的时刻，没有在此时到过此地的人，是说不上对荒原有所理解的。人们只有在不能清楚地看到它时才能最深刻地体会它，它的全部效果与真谛正存在于这个时刻，以及从此到黎明前的几个小时里；这时，而且也只有此时此刻，荒原才真正道出了它的底细。这块地方的确成了黑夜的近亲，而当黑夜来临时人们可以在它的阴影与那景物之间看到一种明显的想要靠拢的倾向。一片片颜色阴暗的埕垛洞穴仿佛从地升起，满腔同情地去迎接暮霭；荒原此时正迅速地吐放着黑暗，而天空也正同

样迅速地催促着它的到来。于是天空中的朦胧与地面上的朦胧遂互相迁就，各走一半，聚合在一起，结成黑暗的联盟。

这时一种翘企注盼的心情正歆歆于这块地面之上；当其它万物倦憩欲睡之时，荒原却仿佛正在慢慢醒来，侧耳谛听。每个夜晚它庞大的形影都好似在等待着什么；但是它就是这样地一直等待着，不管经历多少世纪，多少劫数，毫不动情地等待着，因此人们只能认为它是在等待一次最后劫数——最终的覆灭。

对于眷恋于这块土地的人们来说，萦回在他们记忆中的景象乃是一种异样而亲切的和谐。花果繁茂的明媚郊原是携带不来这种感觉的，因为就其所产生的效果而言，这种丽景只能和某种更高贵的存在融合一致。薄暮却能与伊登荒原相结合而呈现这样一种景象，尊严而不峻切，动人而不炫耀，寓意深而表达有力，俭朴之中而庄严雄伟。往往有这种情形，某一特征可以赋予一座监狱的外貌以某种壮观，较它高大倍蓰的宫殿反而不能与之相比。正是这种特点给荒原带来了一种特有的壮丽，这是普通那种号称为美的地方所完全缺乏的。良辰与美景的结合诚大佳事，然而，可惜时不逢辰！人们从一个欣喜过望的地方所受到的揶揄，较之他们从充满忧患的环境中所受到的压迫，往往更难喻之于怀。贫瘠的伊登所诉诸的对象仍是一种更为精妙更为罕见的天性，一种向所未闻的新鲜感情，这与从来那种但以明艳与佳丽为美是不同的。

的确，这种正统之美的绝对统治是否已日益频近它的终期，很是疑问。新檀坡谷的胜景对休里的人们可能无异于一片浇薄的荒芜：人们的灵魂对于带着阴郁面貌的外界景物也许愈来愈会感到契密，而阴郁面貌恰是我们种族在幼年时期所厌恶的。终有一天，沼泽、海洋或山岳中峻洁的雄伟壮丽景色将成为自然界中最能与人类中最有思想的人们的心境息息相通的事物；这种时期如果现在还没到来，似已不太远了。那时，即使在一个最普通的旅行者的眼中，冰岛这类地带所留给他的印象将不亚于目前南欧的葡萄园

与桃金娘花园；而当他从阿尔卑斯山匆匆驰赴施文宁格沙丘的路途当中，对海德堡与巴登竟不屑一顾。

一个彻底的苦行者很可能认为他有一种天然的权利来伊登一游：如果他听凭自己去接受这类影响也是一种放纵的话，那么这点放纵委实不算过分。享受这样低沉的色泽与华美至少是一切人们生来就有的权利。只有在最欢畅的夏日里它的情调才稍稍接近了快乐的边缘。浓烈的感情往往不是来自光辉夺目而是来自庄严的气氛，这在冬天的夜晚，在暴风雨当中，在雾霭纷纷的时候，最是淋漓尽致。这时伊登被激发着，它作出反应；因为暴雨是它的情人，狂风是它的朋友。它此时成了一切千姿百态幻景的故乡；而人们也才察觉到，这里原来是那种种迄今还很陌生的，隐幽之境的渊源，它们在午夜中险象环生的恶梦里，对人似有围逼之感。虽然醒后也就忘却，但当这类景象重现时，却又不免令人心有余悸。

但目前这块地方却与人的天性完全吻合——既不狰狞可憎，也不丑陋；既不平淡无奇，缺乏意义，也不枯燥；而是象人一样，隐忍而坚毅；而且在其黯暗的单调之中更显得出奇地庞大与神秘。这正象长期离群索居的人们那样，一种孤零之感仿佛溢于他们的眉宇之间。这是一张孤寂的面孔，种种悲剧都将由此而生。

【作者简介】 本篇出自托马斯·哈代所著 1878 年出版的《还乡记》(*The Return of the Native*) 的开篇部分，是近代英国文学中一节写景名作，可作为独立的散文来读。

哈代是十九世纪后期与梅里蒂斯齐名的大小说家，生长于南部 Dorset 郡的一个营造师家庭。稍长，随其父习建筑，二十二至二十七岁期间去伦敦工作，兼以余暇听课读书，兴趣逐渐转入文学。由此时至九十年代初期，为他的小说创作时期，计成长篇十四部，其中以 *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895) 等为最有名。后两书以触及基督教伦理，受攻击甚烈，致使他绝笔不再作小说。此后三十余年间他主要写诗，其

中代表作为史诗 *The Dynasts* 三卷,出版于1904—08年,内容以拿破仑侵俄事为背景,是一部规模宏伟的诗歌巨著。

哈代的小说主要以英国南部他所熟悉的 Dorset 附近诸郡为主。当时,农村的衰落现象,贫苦农民背井离乡、惨遭压榨的悲苦境遇,在他的作品中多有反映,对他的人生观影响很深。他对造成这一切的真正原因完全缺乏正确的理解能力,于是通过幻想,把种种社会现象通通归诿于命运的作怪,这样命运的诨人遂成了贯穿他全部作品始终的中心主题,给他的小说与诗歌蒙上了一层浓厚的悲观主义色彩。他的长处是布局周密,在情节人物的描绘与刻画上准确工细,写景尤其是他的特长。另外,想象的丰富与诗才的瞻蔚,以及得之于他职业训练的精密观察,都大大增添了他作品的文学价值与艺术力量。他的文章体格深沉郁积,繁缛浓丽,哀感顽艳。他的词汇也很丰富,但在造语用字上稍嫌偏文偏旧,宏美典重有余而自然轻快不足,文章的进行比较迟缓,不少地方做作与经营的痕迹也未尽除,不过这些比起他的成就来仅仅是次要的。

【注释】

1. Egdon Heath: 伊登荒原,在哈代出生地 Dorchester 附近。

2. an instalment of night: 这里作者借用连载故事的一期,以譬喻黑夜的一部分。

3. astronomical hour: 这里 astronomical 不过指时辰上的先后时间,属于大词小用。

4. precipitated it = hastened it. Precipitate, to cause to happen before expected or desired.

5. black fraternization: fraternization, 兄弟情谊;和睦关系。Black 这里指天色的黝黑。

6. campaign ['tʃæmpeɪn]: 平原,原野。

7. Vale of Tempe: Tempe 读 ['tempi], 古希腊 Thessaly 地的溪谷名,诗人多歌咏之。转义为美丽的溪谷。

8. Thule ['θju:li]: 语源不详。有人认为来自哥特语的 *Tiule*, 意为“极遥远的地域”。罗马史家 Pliny, Sotinus, Mela 等人认为系指冰岛 (Iceland)。

9. Heidelberg and Baden: 均德国城市名,以周围环境幽美秀丽闻名。后者亦称 Baden-Baden (德语,意为 baths),以温泉著称。

10. Scheveningen: 荷兰滨海渔村名,地距海牙西北三英里处,为避暑胜地。

11. of highest feather = of the most exuberant spirits; most joyous. 按鸟类换新羽毛后,精神格外振奋,故有此语。

2 Birds

William Henry Hudson (1841—1922)

For some time past I had been ascending a low, broad, flat-topped hill, and on forcing my way through the undergrowth into the open I found myself on the level plateau, an unenclosed spot overgrown with heather and scattered furze bushes, with clumps of fir and birch trees. Before me and on either hand at this elevation a vast extent of country was disclosed. The surface was everywhere broken, but there was no break in the wonderful greenness, which the recent rain had intensified. There is too much green, to my thinking, with too much uniformity in its soft, bright tone, in South Devon.¹ After gazing on such a landscape the brown, harsh, scanty vegetation of the hill-top seemed all the more grateful. The heath was an oasis and a refuge; I rambled about in it until my feet and legs were wet; then I sat down to let them dry and altogether spent several agreeable hours at that sopt, pleased at the thought that no human fellow-creature would intrude upon me. Feathered companions were, however, not wanting. The crowing of cock pheasants from the thicket beside the old road warned me that I was on preserved grounds.² Not too strictly preserved, however, for there was my old friend the carrion-crow out foraging for his young.³ He dropped down over the trees, swept past me, and was gone. At this season, in the early summer, he may be easily distinguished, when flying, from his relation the rook.⁴ When on the prowl the crow glides smoothly and rapidly through the air, often changing his direction, now flying close to the surface, anon mount-

ing high,⁵ but oftenest keeping nearly on a level with the tree tops. His gliding and curving motions are somewhat like those of the herring-gull, but the wings in gliding are carried stiff and straight, the tips of the long flight-feathers⁶ showing a slight upward curve. But the greatest difference is in the way the head is carried. The rook, like the heron and stork, carries his beak pointing lance-like straight before him. He knows his destination, and makes for it⁷; he follows his nose, so to speak, turning neither to the right nor the left. The foraging crow continually turns his head, gull-like and harrier-like, from side to side, as if to search the ground thoroughly or to concentrate his vision on some vaguely seen object.

Not only the crow was there: a magpie chattered as I came from the brake, but refused to show himself; and a little later a jay screamed at me, as only a jay can. There are times when I am intensely in sympathy with the feeling expressed in this ear-splitting warning and execration, the startled solitary's outburst of uncontrolled rage at the abhorred sight of a fellow-being in his woodland haunt.

Small birds were numerous at that spot, as if for them also its wildness and infertility had an attraction. Tits, warblers, pipits, finches, all were busy ranging from place to place, emitting their various notes now from the tree tops, then from near the ground; now close at hand, then far off; each change in the height, distance, and position of the singer giving the sound a different character, so that the effect produced was one of infinite variety. Only the yellow-hammer remained constant in one spot, in one position, and the song at each repetition was the same. Nevertheless this bird is not so monotonous a singer as he is reputed⁸ ...

By and by I had a better bird to listen to — a redstart. A female flew down within fifteen yards of me; her mate followed and perched on a dry twig, where he remained a long time for so shy and restless a creature. He was in perfect plumage, and sitting there, motionless in the strong sunlight, was wonderfully conspicuous, the gayest, most exotic-looking bird of his family in England. Quit-

ting his perch, he flew up into a tree close by and began singing; and for half an hour thereafter I continued intently listening to his brief strain, repeated at short intervals — a song which I think has never been perfectly described. “Practice makes perfect” is an axiom that does not apply to the art of song in the bird world; since the redstart, a member of a highly melodious family, with a good voice to start with,⁹ has never attained to excellence in spite of much practising. The song is interesting both on account of its exceptional inferiority and of its character. A distinguished ornithologist has said that little birds have two ways of making themselves attractive — by melody and by bright plumage; and that most species excel in one or the other way; and that the acquisition of gay colours by a species of a sober-coloured¹⁰ melodious family will cause it to degenerate as a songster. He is speaking of the redstart. Unfortunately for the rule there are too many exceptions. Thus confining ourselves to a single family — that of the finches — in our own islands, the most modest coloured have the least melody, while those that have the gayest plumage are the best singers — the goldfinch, chaffinch, siskin, and linnet. Nevertheless it is impossible to listen for any length of time¹¹ to the redstart, and to many redstarts, without feeling, almost with irritation, that its strain is only the prelude of a song — a promise never performed; that once upon a time in the remote past it was a sweet, copious, and varied singer, and that only a fragment of its melody now remains. The opening rapidly warbled notes are so charming that the attention is instantly attracted by them. They are composed of two sounds, both beautiful — the bright pure gushing robin-like note, and the ~~more tender expressive~~ swallow-like note. And that is all; the song ~~scarcely begins before~~ it ends, or collapses¹²; for in most cases the pure sweet opening strain is followed by a curious little farrago¹³ of gurgling and squeaking sounds, and little fragments of varied ~~notes, often so low as to be audible only at a few yards’ distance.~~ It is curious that these slight fragments of notes at the end vary in different individuals, in strength and character and in number,

from a single faintest squeal to half a dozen or a dozen distinct sounds. In all cases they are emitted with apparent effort, as if the bird strained its pipe in the vain attempt to continue the song.

2

林 鸟

威廉·亨利·哈德逊

(1841—1922)

相当一段时间以来，我一直在攀登一座低矮宽阔的平顶小山；当我从灌木丛中挣脱出来，又出现在空地时，我已上了一片平坦高地，一片周围空旷、到处石楠与荆豆丛生的地方，其间也有几处稠密的冷杉与桦木之类。在我面前以及高地两侧，望去尽是广袤的田野。地面景物时有中断，但这蔚为大观的青葱翠绿则绵延不断，这点与新近降雨丰沛有关。依我看来，南德文郡里的绿色实在未免过多，而就其色调的柔和与亮度而言，也未免过趋单一。在饱览这种景色之后，山顶上那些棕褐刺目的稀疏草木反而有爽心怡目之感。这片石楠丛生之地宛如一片绿洲与趋避之地；我在这里漫步许久，直到腿脚淋湿；然后我又坐下让它们晾干，就这样在那里愉快地度过了几个小时，高兴的是这里没有我们的同类前来打扰。然而，鸟类友伴并不缺乏。古道附近的丛薄间雄雉的啼叫声警告我，我已进入禁猎地带。然而，禁猎并不严格，因为我所熟识的食腐肉乌鸦不就在那里为它的幼雏觅食。它低飞树梢间，掠我而过，随即逝去。在目前这个节季，早夏时期，当它飞起来时，人们是很容易将它与它的近亲白嘴鸭辨别的。在四出觅食时，这种乌鸦在空中平稳、迅速地滑翔着，常常改变着方向，时而贴近地面，继而又升腾很高，但一般保持着与树梢略为相齐的高度。它的滑翔与转弯动作大体与鲱鱼鸥相似，但滑动时翅膀挺得直直地，那修长的翎翮尖端呈现一种轻翘曲线。但最主要的区别还在飞行