

世界名著
双语注释

The Moonstone

月亮宝石



文化艺术出版社

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〔英〕威廉·柯林斯 著

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著 者 [英]威廉·柯林斯

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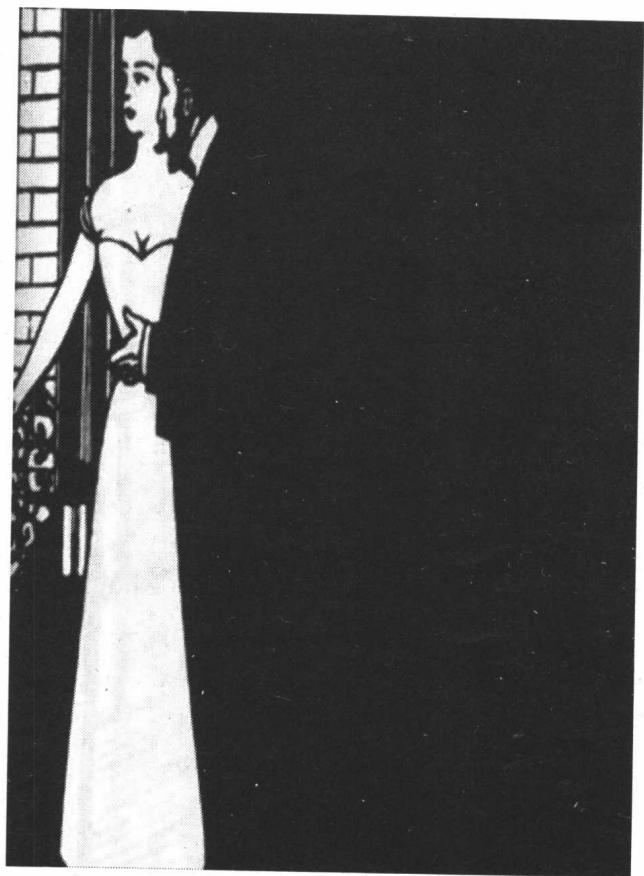
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The Story

First Period

THE LOSS OF THE DIAMOND(1848)

The events related by GABRIEL BETTEREDGE, house-steward in the service of JULIA, LADY VERINDER

Chapter 1

In the first part of Robinson Crusoe, at page one hundred and twenty-nine, you will find it thus written:

"Now I saw, though too late, the Folly of beginning a Work before we count the Cost, and before we judge rightly of our own Strength to go through with it^①." Only yesterday, I opened my Robinson Crusoe at that place. Only this morning (May twenty-first, Eighteen hundred and fifty), came my lady's nephew, Mr. Franklin Blake, and held a short conversation with me^②, as follows:

"Betteredge," says Mr. Franklin, "I have been to the lawyer's about some family matters; and, among other things, we have been talking of the loss of the Indian Diamond, in my aunt's house in Yorkshire^③, two years since. Mr. Bruff thinks as I think, that the whole story ought, in the interests of truth, to be placed on record in writing—and the sooner the better^④."

Not perceiving his drift^⑤ yet, and thinking it always desirable^⑥ for the sake^⑦ of peace and quietness to be on the lawyer's side, I said I thought so too. Mr. Franklin went on.

"In this matter of the Diamond," he said, "the characters of innocent^⑧ people have suffered under suspicion^⑨ already—as you know. The memories of innocent people may suffer, hereafter, for want of a record of the facts to which those who come after us can appeal^⑩. There can be no doubt that this strange family story of ours ought to be told. And I think, Betteredge, Mr. Bruff and I together have hit on^⑪ the right way of telling it."

Very satisfactory to both of them, no doubt. But I failed to see what I myself had to do with it, so far.

"We have certain events to relate^⑫," Mr. Franklin proceeded ^⑬; "and we have certain

① Now I saw ... to go through with it: 我现在才明白,不自量力就轻举妄动实在愚蠢,不过现在明白也太晚了

② to hold a conversation with sb.: 与某人谈话

③ Yorkshire: 约克郡,在英格兰东北部

④ the sooner the better: 越快越好

⑤ drift[drift] *n.* the general meaning 大意,要旨

⑥ desirable[di'zaiərəbl] *adj.* worth having, doing or desiring 称心的,合意的

⑦ for the sake: for the purpose of 为了...目的

⑧ innocent['inəsnt] *adj.* guiltless (人) 清白的,无罪的

⑨ under suspicion (of): 有...的嫌疑

⑩ appeal[ə'pi:l] *v.* to please, attract, or interest 使感兴趣,吸引

⑪ hit on sth.: have a good idea about 想出(好主意)

⑫ relate['ri:leit] *v.* to tell (a story) 叙述,讲述(事件)

⑬ proceed[prə'si:d] *v.* to continue (after stopping) (停顿后)继续进行

persons concerned in those events who are capable of relating them^①. Starting from these plain facts, the idea is that we should all write the story of the Moonstone in turn—as far as our own personal experience extends^②, and no farther. We must begin by showing how the Diamond first fell into the hands of my uncle Hemcastle, when he was serving in India fifty years since. This prefatory narrative I have already got by me in the form of an old family paper, which relates the necessary particulars on the authority of an eye-witness. The next thing to do is to tell how the Diamond found its way into my aunt's house in Yorkshire, two years ago, and how it came to be lost in little more than twelve hours afterwards. Nobody knows as much as you do, Betteredge, about what went on in the house at that time. So you must take the pen in hand, and start the story."

In those terms I was informed of what my personal concern was with the matter of the Diamond. If you are curious^③ to know what course I took under the circumstances, I beg to inform you that I did what you would probably have done in my place. I modestly^④ declared myself to be quite unequal to the task imposed upon me—and I privately felt, all the time, that I was quite clever enough to perform it, if I only gave my own abilities a fair chance. Mr. Franklin, I imagine, must have seen my private sentiments^⑤ in my face. He declined to believe in my modesty; and he insisted on giving my abilities a fair chance.

Two hours have passed since Mr. Franklin left me. As soon as his back was turned, I went to my writing desk to start the story. There I have sat helpless (in spite of my abilities) ever since; seeing what Robinson Crusoe saw^⑥, as quoted^⑦ above—namely, the folly of beginning a work before we count the cost, and before we judge rightly of our own strength to go through with it. Please to remember, I opened the book by accident, at that bit, only the day before I rashly undertook the business now in hand; and, allow me to ask—if that isn't prophecy^⑧, what is?

I am not superstitious; I have read a heap of books^⑨ in my time; I am a scholar in my own way. Though turned seventy, I possess^⑩ an active memory, and legs to correspond^⑪. You are not to take it, if you please, as the saying of an ignorant^⑫ man, when I express my opinion that

① and we have... of relating them: 我们还有几个与此相关的人, 可以把这件事写出来

② as far as ... extends: 我们知道多少就写多少

③ curious ['kjʊəriəs]
adj. eager to know or learn 好奇的, 渴望知道的

④ modestly ['mɒdistli]
adv. not large in quantity, size, value, etc. 有节制地, 不过分地

⑤ sentiment ['sentimənt] n. (a) thought or judgment arising from feeling 情绪, 思想感情

⑥ seeing what Robinson Crusoe saw: 体味到《鲁宾逊漂流记》里面的见解

⑦ quote [kwəʊt] v. to repeat in speech or writing the words of (a book or writer) (在讲话或写作中) 引用, 引证

⑧ prophecy ['prɒfəsi] n. a statement telling sth. that is to happen in the future 天机, 预言

⑨ a heap of books: 好些书

⑩ possess [pə'zes] v. to own, have 占有, 拥有

⑪ legs to correspond: 两条腿也还听使唤

correspond [kə'respɒnd] v. to be in agreement, match 符合, 一致

⑫ ignorant ['ignərənt] adj. lacking knowledge 无知的

such a book as Robinson Crusoe never was written, and never will be written again. I have tried that book for years—generally in combination① with a pipe of tobacco—and I have found it my friend in need in all the necessities of this mortal life. When my spirits are bad—Robinson Crusoe. When I want advice—Robinson Crusoe. In past times when my wife plagued② me; in present times when I have had a drop too much—Robinson Crusoe. I have worn out six stout Robinson Crusoes with hard work in my service③. On my lady's last birthday she gave me a seventh. I took a drop too much on the strength of it; and Robinson Crusoe put me right again. Price four shillings④ and sixpence, bound in blue, with a picture into the bargain⑤.

Still, this don't look much like starting the story of the Diamond—does it? I seem to be wandering off in search of Lord knows what, Lord knows where. We will take a new sheet of paper, if you please, and begin over again, with my best respects to you.

Chapter 2

I spoke of my lady a line or two back. Now the Diamond could never have been in our house, where it was lost, if it had not been made a present of to my lady's daughter; and my lady's daughter would never have been in existence to have the present, if it had not been for my lady who (with pain and travail⑥) produced her into the world. Consequently⑦, if we begin with my lady, we are pretty sure of beginning far enough back. And that, let me tell you, when you have got such a job as mine in hand, is a real comfort at starting.

If you know anything of the fashionable world⑧, you have heard tell of the three beautiful Miss Herncastles. Miss Adelaide; Miss Caroline; and Miss Julia—this last being the youngest and the best of the three sisters, in my opinion; and I had opportunities of judging, as you shall presently see. I went into the service of the old lord⑨, their father (thank God, we have got nothing to do with him, in this business of the Diamond; he had the longest tongue and the shortest temper of any man, high or low, I ever met with)—I say, I went into the service of the old lord, as page-boy in waiting on the three honourable⑩ young ladies, at the age of fifteen years.

① generally in combination with a pipe of tobacco: 我一直在靠这本书解决疑难

combination [kəmbi'neɪʃən] *n.* joining or putting together
与...联合在一起
tobacco [tə'bækəʊ] *n.* 烟叶

② plague [pleɪɡ] *v.* to annoy 烦扰, 麻烦

③ I have worn out ... in my service: 我已经看坏六本精装的《鲁宾逊漂流记》了

④ shilling ['ʃɪlɪŋ] *n.* (英国币名) 先令

⑤ into the bargain: in addition 此外, 另外

⑥ travail ['træveɪl] *n.* hardship 辛苦

⑦ consequently ['kɒnsɪkwəntli] *adv.* therefore, as a result 因而, 所以

⑧ the fashionable world: 上流社会

⑨ lord [lɔːd] *n.* a master 庄园主

⑩ honourable ['ɒnərəbl̩] *adj.* deserving honor 可敬的

years. There I lived till Miss Julia married the late Sir John Verinder. An excellent man, who only wanted somebody to manage him; and, between ourselves, he found somebody to do it; and what is more, he thrrove① on it and grew fat on it, and lived happy and died easy on it, dating from the day when my lady took him to church to be married, to the day when she relieved② him of his last breath, and closed his eyes for ever.

I have omitted③ to state that I went with the bride to the bride's husband's house and lands down here. "Sir John," she says, "I can't do without Gabriel Betteredge." "My lady," says Sir John, "I can't do without him, either." That was his way with her—and that was how I went into④ his service. It was all one to me where I went, so long as my mistress⑤ and I were together.

Seeing that my lady took an interest in⑥ the out-of-door work, and the farms, and such like, I took an interest in them too—with all the more reason that I was a small farmer's seventh son myself. My lady got me put under the bailiff, and I did my best, and gave satisfaction, and got promotion accordingly. Some years later, on the Monday as it might be, my lady says, "Sir John, your bailiff is a stupid old man. Pension him liberally, and let Gabriel Betteredge have his place." On the Tuesday as it might be, Sir John says, "My lady, the bailiff is pensioned⑦ liberally; and Gabriel Betteredge has got his place." You hear more than enough of married people living together miserably. Here is an example to the contrary. Let it be a warning to some of you, and an encouragement to others. In the meantime, I will go on with my story.

Well, there I was in clover, you will say. Placed in a position of trust and honour, with a little cottage of my own to live in, with my rounds on the estate⑧ to occupy me in the morning, and my accounts in the afternoon, and my pipe and my Robinson Crusoe in the evening⑨—what more could I possibly want to make me happy? Remember what Adam wanted when he was alone in the Garden of Eden; and if you don't blame it in Adam, don't blame it in me⑩.

The woman I fixed my eye on, was the woman who kept house for me at my cottage. Her name was Selina Goby. I agree with the late William Cobbett about picking a wife. See that

① thrrove [θraʊv] *v.* thrive 的过去式, (to) be successful, to develop well 成功,致富

② relieve [ri'li:v] *v.* to lessen (pain or trouble) 安慰

③ I have omitted to ... and lands down here: 我才忘了提一笔,我是跟新娘一块到她丈夫本地的公馆和庄园来的

④ that was how I went into his service: 这一来我就替他当差了

⑤ mistress ['mistris] *n.* a woman who is in control 女主人

⑥ take an interest in sth.: be fond of sth. 对...产生兴趣

⑦ pension ['penʃən] *v.* to dismiss from work but continue to pay a pension to 给以养老金

⑧ estate [is'teɪt] *n.* (law) the whole of a person's property 财产

⑨ and my pipe ... in the evening: 到晚上可以抽抽烟,看看《鲁宾逊漂流记》

⑩ don't blame it in me: 别怪我

she chews① her food well and sets her foot down firmly on the ground when she walks, and you're all right. Selina Goby was all right in both these respects, which was one reason for marrying her. I had another reason, likewise, entirely of my own discovering. Selina, being a single woman, made me pay so much a week for her board and services②. Selina, being my wife, couldn't charge for her board, and would have to give me her services for nothing. That was the point of view I looked at it from. Economy—with a dash of love③. I put it to my mistress, as in duty bound, just as I had put it to myself.

"I have been turning Selina Goby over in my mind," I said, "and I think, my lady, it will be cheaper to marry her than to keep her."

My lady burst out laughing, and said she didn't know which to be most shocked at—my language or my principles. Some joke tickled④ her, I suppose, of the sort that you can't take unless you are a person of quality. Understanding nothing myself but that I was free to put it next to Selina, I went and put it accordingly. And what did Selina say? Lord! how little you must know of women, if you ask that. Of course she said, Yes.

As my time drew nearer, and there got to be talk of my having a new coat for the ceremony, my mind began to misgive⑤ me. I have compared notes with other men as to what they felt while they were in my interesting situation; and they have all acknowledged⑥ that, about a week before it happened, they privately wished themselves out of it. I went a trifle⑦ further than that myself; I actually rose up, as it were, and tried to get out of it. Not for nothing! I was too just a man to expect she would let me off for nothing. Compensation⑧ to the woman when the man gets out of it, is one of the laws of England. In obedience to the laws⑨, and after turning it over carefully in my mind, I offered Selina Goby a feather-bed and fifty shillings to be off the bargain. You will hardly believe it, but it is nevertheless⑩ true—she was fool enough to refuse.

After that it was all over with me, of course. I got the new coat as cheap as I could, and I went through all the rest of it as cheap as I could. We were not a happy couple, and not a miserable couple. We were six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. How it was I don't understand,

① chew [tʃu:] *v.* to crush food with the teeth 咀嚼

② made me pay so much a week for her board and services: 少不得要我付她饭钱和工钱

③ with a dash of love: 再加上一点爱情
dash [dæʃ] *n.* a small amount of sth. 少量

④ tickle [ˈtɪkl] *v.* to delight or amuse 逗乐

⑤ my mind began to misgive me: 我却拿不定主意

⑥ acknowledge [əkˈnɒlɪdʒ] *v.* to accept or recognize 承认

⑦ trifle [ˈtraɪfl] *n.* to some degree, rather 稍微

⑧ compensation [kəmˈpenˈseɪʃən] *n.* sth. given to compensate 补偿

⑨ in obedience to the laws: 服从法律
obedience

[əˈbɪdʒəns] *n.* doing what one is ordered to do 服从

⑩ nevertheless [nev əðəˈles] *adv.* in spite of that 仍然, 还是

but we always seemed to be getting, with the best of motives①, in one another's way. When I wanted to go up-stairs, there was my wife coming down; or when my wife wanted to go down, there was I coming up. That is married life, according to my experience of it.

After five years of misunderstandings on the stairs, it pleased an all-wise Providence② to relieve us of each other by taking my wife③. I was left with my little girl Penelope, and with no other child. Shortly afterwards Sir John died, and my lady was left with her little girl, Miss Rachel, and no other child. I have written to very poor purpose of my lady, if you require to be told that my little Penelope was taken care of, under my good mistress's own eye, and was sent to school and taught, and made a sharp girl, and promoted④, when old enough, to be Miss Rachel's own maid⑤.

As for me, I went on with my business as bailiff year after year up to Christmas 1847, when there came a change in my life. On that day, my lady invited herself to a cup of tea alone with me in my cottage. She remarked that, reckoning⑥ from the year when I started as page-boy in the time of the old lord, I had been more than fifty years in her service, and she put into my hands a beautiful waistcoat⑦ of wool that she had worked herself, to keep me warm in the bitter winter weather.

I received this magnificent present quite at a loss to find words to thank my mistress with for the honour she had done me. To my great astonishment, it turned out, however, that the waistcoat was not an honour, but a bribe⑧. My lady had discovered that I was getting old before I had discovered it myself, and she had come to my cottage to wheedle⑨ me (if I may use such an expression) into giving up my hard out-of-door work as bailiff, and taking my ease⑩ for the rest of my days as steward⑪ in the house. I made as good a fight of it against the indignity of taking my ease as I could. But my mistress knew the weak side of me; she put it as a favour to herself. The dispute⑫ between us ended, after that, in my wiping my eyes, like an old fool, with my new woollen waistcoat, and saying I would think about it.

The perturbation in my mind, in regard to⑬ thinking about it, being truly dreadful after my

① motive [ˈməʊtɪv] *n.* a cause of or reason for action 动机

② providence [ˈprɒvɪdəns] *n.* a special event showing God's care 神意, 天佑

③ After five years ... by taking my wife: 我跟我老婆在上楼下楼这个问题上纠缠了五年后, 她就去世了

④ promote [prəˈməʊt] *v.* to advance someone in position or rank 升级

⑤ maid [meɪd] *n.* a female servant 女仆

⑥ reckoning [ˈrekniŋ] *v.* to guess, suppose 断定

⑦ waistcoat [ˈweɪstkəʊt] *n.* 马甲

⑧ To my great astonishment ... but a bribe: 可是大大出乎我的意料, 这件背心原来不是送我的礼物, 而是一个贿赂

⑨ wheedle [ˈwiːdl] *v.* to persuade someone to do what one wants by pleasant words 以甜言蜜语诱骗

⑩ and taking my ease for the rest of my days: 度过我的晚年

ease [iːz] *n.* the state of being comfortable, without anxiety 安逸, 轻松

⑪ steward [ˈstjuəd] *n.* a house keeper 管家

⑫ dispute [dɪsˈpjʊt] *n.* an argument or quarrel 争吵

⑬ in regard to: on the subject of, in connection with 关于

lady had gone away, I applied the remedy① which I have never yet found to fail me in cases of doubt and emergency. I smoked a pipe and took a turn at Robinson Crusoe. Before I had occupied myself with that extraordinary book five minutes, I came on a comforting bit② (page one hundred and fifty-eight), as follows: "To-day we love, what to-morrow we hate." I saw my way clear directly. To-day I was all for continuing to be farm-bailiff; to-morrow, on the authority of Robinson Crusoe, I should be all the other way. Take myself to-morrow while in to-morrow's humour, and the thing was done. My mind being relieved in this manner, I went to sleep that night in the character of Lady Verinder's farm bailiff, and I woke up the next morning in the character of Lady Verinder's house-steward③. All quite comfortable, and all through Robinson Crusoe!

My daughter Penelope has just looked over my shoulder to see what I have done so far. She remarks that it is beautifully written, and every word of it true. But she points out④ one objection. She says what I have done so far isn't in the least what I was wanted to do. I am asked to tell the story of the Diamond and, instead of that, I have been telling the story of my own self. Curious, and quite beyond me to account for. I wonder whether the gentlemen who make a business and a living out of writing books, ever find their own selves getting in the way of their subjects, like me? If they do, I can feel for them. In the meantime, here is another false start, and more waste of good writing-paper. What's to be done now? Nothing that I know of, except for you to keep your temper, and for me to begin it all over again for the third time.

Chapter 3

The question of how I am to start the story properly I have tried to settle in two ways. First, by scratching⑤ my head, which led to nothing⑥. Second, by consulting my daughter Penelope, which has resulted in an entirely new idea.

Penelope's notion is that I should set down⑦ what happened, regularly day by day, beginning with the day when we got the news that Mr. Franklin Blake was expected on a visit to the house. When you come to fix your memory with a date in this way, it is wonderful what your memory will pick up for you upon that compulsion.⑧

① remedy ['remidi]
n. compensation (法律) 补偿

② I came on a comforting bit: 我看到了这么几个字
bit [bit] n. a small piece or quantity 一点, 一些

③ I went to sleep ... house-steward; 那晚我上床睡觉时还是范林达夫人的农庄头, 第二天一早醒来, 却成了她的总管了

④ point out sth. : to draw attention to 指出 (使人注意)

⑤ scratch [skrætʃ]
v. to rub and tear with sth. pointed or rough 抓, 擦伤

⑥ led to nothing: 一筹莫展

⑦ set down : to write, make a record 写, 记下

⑧ compulsion [kəm'pʌljən] n. a story desire that is difficult to control 冲动

The only difficulty is to fetch out the dates, in the first place. This Penelope offers to do for me by looking into her own diary, which she was taught to keep when she was at school, and which she has gone on keeping ever since. In answer to an improvement on this notion, devised by myself, namely, that she should tell the story instead of me, out of her own diary, Penelope observes, with a fierce look① and a red face, that her journal is for her own private eye, and that no living creature shall ever know what is in it but herself. When I inquire what this means, Penelope says, "Fiddlesticks②!" I say, Sweethearts.

Beginning, then, on Penelope's plan, I beg to mention that I was specially called one Wednesday morning into my lady's own sitting-room, the date being the twenty-fourth of May, Eighteen hundred and forty-eight.

"Gabriel," says my lady, "here is news that will surprise you. Franklin Blake has come back from abroad. He has been staying with his father in London, and he is coming to us to-morrow to stop till next month, and keep Rachel's birthday." If I had had a hat in my hand, nothing but respect would have prevented me from throwing that hat up to the ceiling. I had not seen Mr. Franklin since he was a boy, living along with us in this house. He was, out of all sight (as I remember him), the nicest boy that ever spun a top or broke a window. Miss Rachel, who was present, and to whom I made that remark, observed, in return, that she remembered him as the most atrocious③ tyrant④ that ever tortured a doll, and the hardest driver of an exhausted⑤ little girl in string harness that England could produce. "I burn with indignation⑥, and I ache⑦ with fatigue⑧," was the way Miss Rachel summed it up⑨, "when I think of Franklin Blake."

Hearing what I now tell you, you will naturally ask how it was that Mr. Franklin should have passed all the years, from the time when he was a boy to the time when he was a man, out of his own country. I answer, because his father had the misfortune to be next heir⑩ to a Dukedom, and not to be able to prove it.

In two words, this was how the thing happened:

My lady's eldest sister married the celebrated Mr. Blake—equally famous for his great riches,

① fierce [fiəs] *adj.* violent and cruel 凶猛的,野蛮的

② fiddlestick ['fɪdlstɪk] *n.* a thing of little value 琐碎的事

③ atrocious [ə'trəʊʃəs] *adj.* very cruel, shameful, shocking 凶暴的,残忍的

④ tyrant ['taɪənt] *n.* a person with complete power and rules cruelly 暴君,专制君主

⑤ exhausted [ɪg'zɔːstɪd] *adj.* tired out 疲惫的

⑥ indignation [ɪndɪg'neɪʃən] *n.* feelings of anger 愤怒

⑦ ache [eɪk] *v.* to have or suffer a continuous dull pain 疼痛

⑧ fatigue [fə'tɪg] *n.* great tiredness 疲劳

⑨ sum up : to give the main points of 概括,总结

⑩ to be next heir : 成为下一个继承人

and his great suit at law. How many years he went on worrying the tribunals^① of his country to turn out the Duke in possession, and to put himself in the Duke's place—how many lawyer's purses he filled to bursting, and how many otherwise harmless people he set by the ears together disputing whether he was right or wrong—is more by a great deal than I can reckon up. His wife died, and two of his three children died, before the tribunals could make up their minds to show him the door and take no more of his money. When it was all over, and the Duke in possession was left in possession, Mr. Blake discovered that the only way of being even with his country for the manner in which it had treated him, was not to let his country have the honour of educating his son^②. “How can I trust my native institutions,” was the form in which he put it, “after the way in which my native institutions have behaved to me?” Add to this, that Mr. Blake disliked all boys, his own included, and you will admit that it could only end in one way. Master Franklin was taken from us in England, and was sent to institutions which his father could trust, in that superior country, Germany; Mr. Blake himself, you will observe, remaining snug in England, to improve his fellow-countrymen in the Parliament House, and to publish a statement on the subject of the Duke in possession, which has remained an unfinished statement from that day to this.

There! thank God, that's told! Neither you nor I need trouble our heads any more about Mr. Blake, senior^③. Leave him to the Dukedom; and let you and I stick to the Diamond.

The Diamond takes us back to Mr. Franklin, who was the innocent means of bringing that unlucky jewel into the house.

Our nice boy didn't forget us after he went abroad. He wrote every now and then; sometimes to my lady, sometimes to Miss Rachel, and sometimes to me. We had had a transaction^④ together, before he left, which consisted in his borrowing of me a ball of string, a four-bladed^⑤ knife, and seven-and-sixpence in money—the colour of which last I have not seen, and never expect to see again. His letters to me chiefly related to borrowing more. I heard, however, from my lady, how he got on abroad, as he grew in years and stature. After he had learnt what

① tribunal [traɪˈbjʊːnəl] *n.* a court of people officially appointed to deal with special matters 裁判

② was not to let his country have the honor of educating his son: 他不相信本国的学校会教好他的孩子

③ senior [ˈsiːnjə] *n.* a person who is older or higher in rank than another 年长者, 前辈

④ transaction [trænˈzækʃən] *n.* a piece of business (一笔) 交易

⑤ four-bladed [ˈbleɪdɪd] *adj.* 四片叶子的

the institutions of Germany could teach him, he gave the French a turn next, and the Italians a turn after that. They made him among them a sort of universal① genius②, as well as I could understand it. He wrote a little; he painted a little; he sang and played and composed a little—borrowing, as I suspect, in all these cases, just as he had borrowed from me. His mother's fortune (seven hundred a year) fell to him when he came of age, and ran through him, as it might be through a sieve③④. The more money he had, the more he wanted; there was a hole in Mr. Franklin's pocket that nothing would sew up⑤. Wherever he went, the lively, easy way of him made him welcome. He lived here, there, and everywhere; his address (as he used to put it himself) being "Post Office, Europe—to be left till called for." Twice over, he made up his mind to come back to England and see us; and twice over (saving your presence), some unmentionable woman stood in the way and stopped him. His third attempt succeeded, as you know already from what my lady told me. On Thursday the twenty-fifth of May, we were to see for the first time what our nice boy had grown to be as a man. He came of good blood; he had a high courage; and he was five-and-twenty⑥ years of age, by our reckoning. Now you know as much of Mr. Franklin Blake as I did—before Mr. Franklin Blake came down to our house.

The Thursday was as fine a summer's day as ever you saw: and my lady and Miss Rachel (not expecting Mr. Franklin till dinner-time) drove out to lunch with some friends in the neighbourhood.

When they were gone, I went and had a look at the bedroom which had been got ready for our guest, and saw that all was straight. Then, being butler⑦ in my lady's establishment, as well as steward (at my own particular request, mind, and because it vexed⑧ me to see anybody but myself in possession of the key of the late Sir John's cellar)—then, I say, I fetched up some of our famous Latour claret⑨, and set it in the warm summer air to take off the chill before dinner. Concluding to set myself in the warm summer air next—seeing that what is good for old claret is equally good for old age—I took up my beehive chair to go out into the back court, when I was stopped by hearing a sound like the soft

①universal[ˈjʊniːvəl] *adj.* general
一般的, 普遍性的

②genius[ˈdʒiːniəs] *n.* a special ability
天资

③sieve[siv] *n.* a thing used for separating large from small solid bits 筛, 过滤器

④His mother's fortune ... might be through a sieve: 他成年以后, 就继承了他母亲的遗产, 不久就花得精光

⑤sew up: to close or repair by sewing
缝合

⑥five-and-twenty years of age: twenty-five years old 25岁

⑦butler[ˈbʌtlə] *n.* the chief male servant of a house 男管家

⑧vexed[ˈveksɪd] *v.* to cause someone to feel angry 激怒

⑨claret[ˈklærət] *n.* red wine 红葡萄酒