

生
火

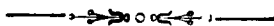


Jack London 著
译



英文小叢書之一

生 火



Jack London著

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Jack London

(1876—1916)

少時聽人說大話，說從前有個說書人叫柳敬亭，他有一次講武松打虎，那天初一已講到武松擎起拳頭，一直講到十五才把拳頭打下——換言之，單單描寫拳頭的一起一落，便已足足說了十五天。這樣的說書，我還沒有聽見過，不曉得真有這種本領沒有，但我們識了

Jack London 的這篇小說，不禁要想起柳敬亭說書的故事來。你看他單單做‘生火’一個題目，描寫得如何細緻，如何變化，就只劃火柴那一動作，已有將近千字的刻劃。這樣的描寫是短篇小說所最相宜的，也就是 London 的作風的長處之一。

這篇小說還有一點特色，就是裏面不用一句對話，盡是第三人稱的間接敘述，而却能寫得奕奕有生氣。

他的英文風格很平穩，而却並不乾燥；他能把許多 idiomatic phrases 運用起來，使得全篇都透踢玲瓏，却又絕對不能找出一點文法上的疵病來。

原來，要有真切的文章，必先有真切的經驗。這種寒帶生活的描

寫，是作者親身經驗來的。

他是美國的 California 省人。少時很貧苦，流浪爲人作短工，受學校教育甚少。但他正因這樣的境遇而有機會獲得極豐富的下層階級的生活經驗，而這些經驗就都成爲他的作品·的原料了。他曾數次參加工人的運動，曾經一度被政府所拘囚。中年以後，他就成爲一個澈底的社會主義者。

本篇係從他的題爲 Lost Face 的短篇小說集中錄出。他最初得名的著作是 The Call of the Wild, 自從這書出版後，他在美國作家當中的地位就確定了。他的其餘的小說和短篇小說集，著名的有 The Son of the Wolf, Children of the Frost, Love of Life, The Sea Wolf, The God of His Fathers, 及 The Faith

of Men 等。

TO BUILD A FIRE

生 火

TO BUILD A FIRE

Day had broken cold and gray,¹ exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon² trail and climbed the high earth bank, where a dim and little-traveled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath

1. 句中“cold and gray”是 intransitive verb “had broken” 的 complements-英語中此等句式極爲經濟，演出來就是 “as

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天已冷冰冰的灰騰騰的發亮了，極端的寒冷而灰色，當其時，那人離開育空的主道而爬到高的土隄上去，其上有一條暗昧而少人行的鳥道，向東通過豐饒的金樅樹林。這是一個高峻的河隄，他在頂上停着

day broke, it was cold and gray.”

2. Yukon—the name of a river and district in Alaska.

at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch.' It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days must pass before that cheerful orb, due² south, would just peep above the skyline and dip immediately from view.

The man flung a look back along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice

1. 他實在是轉氣,却裝做看錶的樣子,藉以掩飾。

轉氣，却借着看錶對自己辯解這行爲。那時是九點鐘。沒有太陽，也沒有太陽的消息，雖則天上並無一點雲。這是一個清明的日子，然而似有一種不可捉摸的大衣罩在萬物的面上，一種使天黑暗的深微的朦朧，那是由於沒有太陽而起的。這個事實並不使那人煩惱。他是慣於沒有太陽的。自從他最後看見太陽，於今已有數日了，他曉得必須再過幾天那在正南的愉快的圓輪纔會在天邊上窺探一下便立即沒去不見。

那人向他走來的路上回頭瞥了一眼。那育空河有一哩闊，藏在三尺厚的冰底下。這冰的上面，則有

2. due——exactly.

were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle undulations where the ice-jams of the freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hair-line that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island. This dark hair-line was the trail—the main trail—that led south five hundred miles to the Chilcoot Pass, Dyea, and salt water; and that led north seventy miles to Dawson, and still on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

But all this—the mysterious, far-reaching hair-line trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous

那麼多尺厚的雪。這是完全的純白，以輕微的波動滾着，在那裏形成凍結的冰膏。向北向南，窮目力所能屆，是一片不斷的白，只除一條黑暗的細線，彎曲屈折，從金樅掩蓋的島的周圍以達於南，又彎曲屈折，以達於北，這才從另一金樅掩蓋的島的後面隱去。這條黑暗的細線就是鳥道——主要的鳥道——迤南五百哩達於帶亞之支爾古脫峽及鹽山；迤北一千哩達於奴拉多，而終屆於白令海上之聖米格爾，計凡一千有五百哩。

但是這一切——這神祕而遠屆的細線的鳥道，這天上的沒有太

cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all—made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a newcomer in the land, a *chechaquo*,¹ and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe.

1. *chechaque*, 或 *chechawco* — one

陽，這新寒，酷冷，這一切的奇異和妖妄——對於那個人却都沒有造成印象。這並非因他久慣之故。他是這地面的新來者，是一個“切查哥”而且這是他的第一個冬季。他的毛病是在他是沒有想像的。他對於人生的事情是敏捷的，警覺的，但只是對於事情，並不對於事情的意義。零下五十度意思就是八十幾度的結冰。這樣的事實所給他的印象，就是寒冷和不舒服，那就完了。這不會引起他默想到他是一種溫度的生物的脆弱，及想到只能生活在某種冷熱界限內的一般人類的脆弱；又不曾從此而引他想到不死的臆測的

newly arrived (Alaska 的俗語。)

原书空白

境界和人類在宇宙中的地位。零下五十度就是代表寒冷的痛噬，但知那是要傷人的，必須用手套，耳套，暖熱的柔皮靴和厚襪子來防衛着的。

當他轉身前進時，他投機地吐了口痰。有一種尖銳的炸裂的聲音使他吃驚。他又吐。那痰未到地之前又在空氣中作響了。他曉得在零下五十度時，痰吐在雪上是會作響的，可是這口痰在空中就作響了。無疑的，如今必是更冷於零下五十度了——至於更冷幾何，他並不知道。不過溫度是無關緊要的。他是

2. 此言痰結冰時的作響。