



外国文学经典

Vanity Fair



名利场

(下)

*William Makepeace Thackeray*

(英) 著

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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V A N I T Y  
F A I R  
名 利 场

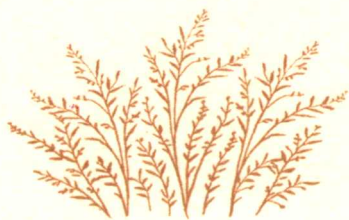
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#### 故事梗概：

小说的题目“名利场”一词取自班扬的寓言小说《天路历程》。本书描写了两个女子截然不同的人生经历：已故穷画师的女儿贝姬不择手段地追求名利，拼命挤入上流社会，却只能孤独终老；纯洁的姑娘阿梅莉亚钟情于轻浮的军官，却遭抛弃。作者在小说中栩栩如生地勾勒出一幅现实中名利场的画面，把生活中尔虞我诈、欺骗背叛、势利虚荣等丑恶行径表现得淋漓尽致。

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**作者介绍：**

威廉·梅克皮斯·萨克雷 William Makepeace Thackeray (1811—1863)

萨克雷认为，败坏人类品性的根源是笼罩着整个社会的自私自利。其作品对当时英国社会的种种势利风气、投机冒险和金钱关系进行了极深刻的揭露。他的作品很多，著名的有特写集《势利人脸谱》(*The Book of Snobs*)和代表作长篇小说《名利场》。

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## CHAPTER 34

### JAMES CRAWLEY'S PIPE IS PUT OUT



he amiable behaviour of Mr. Crawley, and Lady Jane's kind reception of her, highly flattered Miss Briggs, who was enabled to speak a good word for the latter, after the cards of the Southdown family had been presented to Miss Crawley. A countess's card left personally too for her, Briggs, was not a little pleasing to the poor friendless companion. "What could Lady Southdown mean by leaving a card upon *you*, I wonder, Miss Briggs?" said the republican Miss Crawley; upon which the companion meekly said "that she hoped there could be no harm in a lady of rank taking notice of a poor gentlewoman", and she put away this card in her work-box amongst her most cherished personal treasures. Furthermore, Miss Briggs explained how she had met Mr. Crawley walking with his cousin and long-affianced bride the day before: and she told how kind and gentle-looking the lady was, and what a plain, not to say common, dress she had, all the articles of which, from the bonnet down to the boots, she described and estimated with female accuracy.

Miss Crawley allowed Briggs to prattle on without interrupting her too much. As she got well, she was pining for society. Mr. Creamer, her medical man, would not hear of her returning to her old haunts and dissipation in

London. The old spinster was too glad to find any companionship at Brighton, and not only were the cards acknowledged the very next day, but Pitt Crawley was graciously invited to come and see his aunt. He came, bringing with him Lady Southdown and her daughter. The dowager did not say a word about the state of Miss Crawley's soul; but talked with much discretion about the weather: about the war and the downfall of the monster Bonaparte: and above all, about doctors, quacks, and the particular merits of Dr. Podgers, whom she then patronized.

During their interview Pitt Crawley made a great stroke, and one which showed that, had his diplomatic career not been blighted by early neglect, he might have risen to a high rank in his profession. When the Countess Dowager of Southdown fell foul of the Corsican upstart, as the fashion was in those days, and showed that he was a monster stained with every conceivable crime, a coward and a tyrant not fit to live, one whose fall was predicted, &c., Pitt Crawley suddenly took up the cudgels in favour of the man of Destiny. He described the First Consul as he saw him at Paris at the Peace of Amiens; when he, Pitt Crawley, had the gratification of making the acquaintance of the great and good Mr. Fox, a statesman whom, however much he might differ with him, it was impossible not to admire fervently — a statesman who had always had the highest opinion of the Emperor Napoleon. And he spoke in terms of the strongest indignation of the faithless conduct of the allies towards this dethroned monarch, who, after giving himself generously up to their mercy, was consigned to an ignoble and cruel banishment, while a bigoted Popish rabble was tyrannizing over France in his stead.

This orthodox horror of Romish superstition saved Pitt Crawley in Lady Southdown's opinion, whilst his admiration for Fox and Napoleon raised him immeasurably in Miss Crawley's eyes. Her friendship with that defunct British statesman was mentioned when we first introduced her in this history. A true Whig, Miss Crawley had been in opposition all through the war, and though, to be sure, the downfall of the emperor did not very much agitate the old lady, or his ill-treatment tend to shorten her life or natural rest, yet Pitt spoke to her heart when he lauded both her idols; and by that single speech made immense progress in her favour.

"And what do you think, my dear?" Miss Crawley said to the young lady, for whom she had taken a liking at first sight, as she always did for pretty and modest young people; though it must be owned her affections cooled as rapidly as they rose.

Lady Jane blushed very much, and said, "that she did not understand politics, which she left to wiser heads than hers; but though mamma was, no doubt, correct, Mr. Crawley had spoken beautifully." And when the ladies were retiring at the conclusion of their visit, Miss Crawley hoped "Lady Southdown would be so kind as to send her Lady Jane sometimes, if she could be spared to come down and console a poor sick lonely old woman." This promise was graciously accorded, and they separated upon great terms of amity.

"Don't let Lady Southdown come again, Pitt," said the old lady. "She is stupid and pompous, like all your mother's family, whom I never could endure. But bring that nice good-natured little Jane as often as ever you please." Pitt

promised that he would do so. He did not tell the Countess of Southdown what opinion his aunt had formed of her ladyship, who, on the contrary, thought that she had made a most delightful and majestic impression on Miss Crawley.

And so, nothing loath to comfort a sick lady, and perhaps not sorry in her heart to be freed now and again from the dreary spouting of the Reverend Bartholomew Irons, and the serious toadies who gathered round the footstool of the pompous countess, her mamma, Lady Jane became a pretty constant visitor to Miss Crawley, accompanied her in her drives, and solaced many of her evenings. She was so naturally good and soft, that even Firkin was not jealous of her; and the gentle Briggs thought her friend was less cruel to her when kind Lady Jane was by. Towards her ladyship Miss Crawley's manners were charming. The old spinster told her a thousand anecdotes about her youth, talking to her in a very different strain from that in which she had been accustomed to converse with the godless little Rebecca; for there was that in Lady Jane's innocence which rendered light talking impertinence before her, and Miss Crawley was too much of a gentlewoman to offend such purity. The young lady herself had never received kindness except from this old spinster, and her brother and father: and she repaid Miss Crawley's *engouement* by artless sweetness and friendship.

In the autumn evenings (when Rebecca was flaunting at Paris, the gayest among the gay conquerors there, and our Amelia, our dear wounded Amelia, ah! where was she?) Lady Jane would be sitting in Miss Crawley's drawing-room singing sweetly to her, in the twilight, her little simple songs and hymns, while the sun was setting and the

sea was roaring on the beach. The old spinster used to wake up when these ditties ceased, and ask for more. As for Briggs, and the quantity of tears of happiness which she now shed as she pretended to knit, and looked out at the splendid ocean darkling before the windows, and the lamps of heaven beginning more brightly to shine — who, I say, can measure the happiness and sensibility of Briggs?

Pitt meanwhile in the dining-room, with a pamphlet on the Corn Laws or a Missionary Register by his side, took that kind of recreation which suits romantic and unromantic men after dinner. He sipped madeira: built castles in the air: thought himself a fine fellow: felt himself much more in love with Jane than he had been any time these seven years, during which their *liaison* had lasted without the slightest impatience on Pitt's part — and slept a good deal. When the time for coffee came, Mr. Bowls used to enter in a noisy manner, and summon Squire Pitt, who would be found in the dark very busy with his pamphlet.

"I wish, my love, I could get somebody to play piquet with me," Miss Crawley said, one night, when this functionary made his appearance with the candles and the coffee. "Poor Briggs can no more play than an owl, she is so stupid" (the spinster always took an opportunity of abusing Briggs before the servants); "and I think I should sleep better if I had my game."

At this Lady Jane blushed to the tips of her little ears, and down to the ends of her pretty fingers; and when Mr. Bowls had quitted the room, and the door was quite shut, she said:

"Miss Crawley, I can play a little. I used to — to play a



little with poor dear papa.”

“Come and kiss me. Come and kiss me this instant, you dear good little soul,” cried Miss Crawley in an ecstasy: and in this picturesque and friendly occupation Mr. Pitt found the old lady and the young one, when he came upstairs with him pamphlet in his hand. How she did blush all the evening, that poor Lady Jane!

It must not be imagined that Mr. Pitt Crawley’s artifices escaped the attention of his dear relations at the Rectory at Queen’s Crawley. Hampshire and Sussex lie very close together, and Mrs. Bute had friends in the latter county who took care to inform her of all, and a great deal more than all, that passed at Miss Crawley’s house at Brighton. Pitt was there more and more. He did not come for months together to the Hall, where his abominable old father abandoned himself completely to rum-and-water, and the odious society of the Horrocks family. Pitt’s success rendered the rector’s family furious, and Mrs. Bute regretted more (though she confessed less) than ever her monstrous fault in so insulting Miss Briggs, and in being so haughty and parsimonious to Bowls and Firkin, that she had not a single person left in Miss Crawley’s household to give her information of what took place there. “It was all Bute’s collar-bone,” she persisted in saying; “if that had not broke, I never would have left her. I am a martyr to duty and to your odious unclerical habit of hunting, Bute.”

“Hunting; nonsense! It was you that frightened her, Barbara,” the divine interposed. “You’re a clever woman, but you’ve got a devil of a temper; and you’re a screw with your money, Barbara.”