

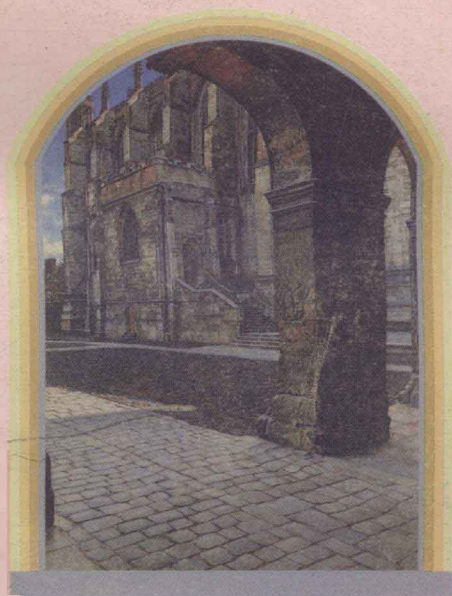
The Castle of Otranto

英美文学精品详注丛书

第三辑 第二册

奥特朗托堡

〔英〕霍勒斯·华尔浦尔 著



中国对外翻译出版公司

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[英] Horace Walpole 著
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Horace Walpole

THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO

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《奥特朗托堡》

霍勒斯·华尔浦尔(1717-1797) 生于伦敦,兄弟排行第四,父亲是罗伯特·华尔浦尔爵士。他曾就读于伊顿公学和剑桥大学的国王学院。1739年至1741年前往欧洲大陆漫游,之后返回伦敦担任国会议员。1791年袭封奥福德伯爵。1747年购买了一幢别墅,后来把它改建成了一座小型哥特式城堡,在那里安装了印刷机,从而开始了自己的文学生涯。他创作的哥特式恐怖小说《奥特朗托堡》,于1764年面世,开创了英国恐怖小说的先河。他还创作了《理查三世疑案》和《神秘的母亲》,二者均于1768年出版。

华尔浦尔的作品,都有其优点,不过都不及他的通信。他的通信就是一部自传,反映了他对现实世界的无限好奇,详细记录了他60年的人生经历。

Horace Walpole

The Castle of Otranto

Horace Walpole (1717-1797), the fourth son of Sir Robert Walpole, was born in London. He was educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge. After making the grand tour (1739-1741) he returned to London to become a Member of Parliament. He became Earl of Orford in 1791.

In 1747 he bought a villa which he turned into a little Gothic castle and where he installed a printing press, thus beginning his literary career. His Gothic horror story, *The Castle of Otranto* was first published in 1764 and was the first novel of terror in English fiction. He also wrote *Historic Doubts on Richard III* and *The Mysterious Mother*, both published in 1768.

In spite of their virtues, all of Walpole's works take second place to his correspondence which is an autobiography by a man of boundless curiosity about the world in which he lived, and a detailed history of sixty years.

CHAPTER I

MANFRED, prince of Otranto, had one son and one daughter: the latter, a most beautiful virgin, aged eighteen, was called Matilda. Conrad, the son, was three years younger, a homely youth, sickly, and of no promising disposition; yet he was the darling of his father, who never showed any symptoms of affection to Matilda. Manfred had contracted a marriage for his son with the marquis of Vicenza's daughter, Isabella; and she had already been delivered by her guardians into the hands of Manfred, that he might celebrate the wedding as soon as Conrad's infirm state of health would permit. Manfred's impatience for this ceremonial was remarked by his family and neighbours. The former, indeed, apprehending the severity of their prince's disposition, did not dare to utter their surmises on this precipitation. Hippolita, his wife, an amiable lady, did sometimes venture to represent the danger of marrying their only son so early, considering his great youth, and greater infirmities; but she never received any other answer than reflections on her own sterility, who had given him but one heir. His tenants and subjects were less cautious in their discourses: they attributed this hasty wedding to the prince's dread of seeing accomplished an ancient prophecy, which was said to have pronounced, *That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it.* It was difficult to make any sense of this prophecy; and still less easy to conceive what it had to do with the marriage in question. Yet these mysteries, or contradictions, did not make the populace adhere the less to their opinion.

Young Conrad's birth-day was fixed for his espousals. The company was assembled in the chapel of the castle, and every thing ready for beginning the divine office, when Conrad himself was missing. Manfred, impatient of the least delay, and who had not observed his son retire, dispatched one of his attendants to summon the young prince. The servant, who had not staid long enough to have crossed the court to Conrad's apartment, came running back breath-

virgin: person who has never had sexual intercourse. **aged eighteen**: eighteen years old. **homely**: rather ugly, not attractive. **youth**: young man. **sickly**: frequently ill. **disposition**: temperament, character. **darling**: favourite. **contracted**: organized. **marquis**: title of nobility.

guardians: people who are responsible for the care of a young person. **wedding**: marriage. **infirm**: not secure.

remarked: noticed.

former: i.e. his family. **apprehending**: understanding.

disposition: character. **did not dare**: did not have the courage.

utter: speak about. **surmises**: conjectures, opinions.

did ... venture: dared, had the courage. **represent**: explain, state.

but: only.

heir: person who is legally entitled to succeed to the property when the owner dies. **tenants**: people who rented property from owner. **his subjects**: people under his rule. **attributed**: regarded as resulting. **hasty**: quick. **dread**: terror. **accomplished**: carried out. **lordship**: state of being in the position of a lord.

make any sense: understand.

conceive: think.

Yet: but.

populace: common people. **adhere**: remain faithful to.

espousals: marriage.

was missing: was not there.

least: smallest. **retire**: go away.

dispatched: sent. **attendants**: servants. **summon**: call.

staid: *obsolete past participle of stay*.

court: area of ground partly or completely surrounded by walls or buildings.

less, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring, and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing, but pointed to the court. The company were struck with terror and amazement. The princess Hippolita, without knowing what was the matter, but anxious for her son, swooned away. Manfred, less apprehensive than enraged at the procrastination of the nuptials, and at the folly of his domestic, asked imperiously, what was the matter? The fellow made no answer, but continued pointing towards the court-yard; and at last, after repeated questions put to him, cried out, Oh, the helmet! the helmet! In the mean time some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror, and surprise. Manfred, who began to be alarmed at not seeing his son, went himself to get information of what occasioned this strange confusion. Matilda remained endeavouring to assist her mother, and Isabella staid for the same purpose, and to avoid showing any impatience for the bridegroom, for whom, in truth, she had conceived little affection.

The first thing that struck Manfred's eyes was a group of his servants endeavouring to raise something that appeared to him a mountain of sable plumes. He gazed without believing his sight. What are ye doing? cried Manfred, wrathfully: Where is my son? A volley of voices replied, Oh, my lord! the prince! the prince! the helmet! the helmet! Shocked with these lamentable sounds, and dreading he knew not what, he advanced hastily—But what a sight for a father's eyes!—He beheld his child dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being, and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.

The horror of the spectacle, the ignorance of all around how this misfortune happened, and above all, the tremendous phaenomenon before him, took away the prince's speech. Yet his silence lasted longer than even grief could occasion. He fixed his eyes on what he wished in vain to believe a vision; and seemed less attentive to his loss, than buried in meditation on the stupendous object that had occasioned it. He touched, he examined the fatal casque; nor

breathless: out of breath, breathing hard. **frantic**: very excited. **manner**: way. **staring**: fixed and wide open. **foaming**: with a mass of small air bubbles. **pointed**: directed attention. **company**: *here*, number of guests. **struck**: afflicted, suddenly filled. **amazement**: surprise. **swooned away**: fainted, lost consciousness. **apprehensive**: worried, preoccupied. **enraged**: furiously angry. **procrastinations**: delays. **nuptials**: marriage. **folly**: stupidity. **imperiously**: commandingly. **fellow**: man. **made no answer**: did not answer.

helmet: protective head covering worn by soldiers. **mean time**: meanwhile, in the time between. **whence**: where.

shrieks: screams, cries.

alarmed: worried, preoccupied.

occasioned: caused.

endeavouring: trying. **assist**: help.

purpose: reason.

bridegroom: man on his wedding day.

conceived: formed, had.

raise: lift.

sable: black. **plumes**: feathers (covering of birds). **gazed**: looked long. **sight**: what a person sees. **ye**: you.

wrathfully: with great anger and indignation. **volley**: a great number.

lamentable: *here*, loud and terrible. **dreading**: fearing.

hastily: quickly.

beheld: saw. **dashed**: broken, destroyed.

buried: placed under the ground, *here*, hidden from sight, covered by. **casque**: helmet.

shaded: covered. **feathers**: protective covering for birds.

misfortune: calamity, terrible event.

Yet: but. **grief**: sorrow, sadness.

occasion: cause.

attentive to: caring about. **loss**: fact of having no longer. **buried**: *here*, absorbed, lost. **stupendous**: tremendous, amazing.

could even the bleeding mangled remains of the young prince divert the eyes of Manfred from the portent before him. All who had known his partial fondness for young Conrad, were as much surprised at their prince's insensibility, as thunderstruck themselves at the miracle of the helmet. They conveyed the disfigured corpse into the hall, without receiving the least direction from Manfred. As little was he attentive to the ladies who remained in the chapel: on the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy princesses his wife and daughter, the first sounds that dropped from Manfred's lips were, Take care of the lady Isabella.

The domestics, without observing the singularity of this direction, were guided by their affection to their mistress to consider it as peculiarly addressed to her situation, and flew to her assistance. They conveyed her to her chamber more dead than alive, and indifferent to all the strange circumstances she heard, except the death of her son. Matilda, who doted on her mother, smothered her own grief and amazement, and thought of nothing but assisting and comforting her afflicted parent. Isabella, who had been treated by Hippolita like a daughter, and who returned that tenderness with equal duty and affection, was scarce less assiduous about the princess; at the same time endeavouring to partake and lessen the weight of sorrow which she saw Matilda strove to suppress, for whom she had conceived the warmest sympathy of friendship. Yet her own situation could not help finding its place in her thoughts. She felt no concern for the death of young Conrad, except commiseration; and she was not sorry to be delivered from a marriage which had promised her little felicity, either from her destined bridegroom, or from the severe temper of Manfred, who, though he had distinguished her by great indulgence, had imprinted her mind with terror, from his causeless rigour to such amiable princesses as Hippolita and Matilda.

While the ladies were conveying the wretched mother to her bed, Manfred remained in the court, gazing on the ominous casque, and regardless of the crowd which the strangeness of the event had now assembled round him. The few words he articulated tended solely to enquiries, whether

bleeding: losing blood (liquid of the body).
mangled: broken. **remains**: what is left. **divert**: turn in another direction. **portent**: sign of a future event.
partial: showing too much favour to one person or side. **fondness**: love. **thunderstruck**: amazed, surprised.
conveyed: carried. **disfigured**: spoiled, ruined. **corpse**: dead body. **least**: smallest. **direction**: *here*, command.
attentive: courteous, kind.
mentioning: referring to.

dropped from ... lips: Manfred spoke. **Take care of**: look after.
singularity: strangeness.
direction: order. **mistress**: woman at the head of a family.
peculiarly: particularly. **flew**: went quickly.
conveyed: carried.
indifferent to: without interest in.
doted on: loved very much. **smothered**: suppressed, kept to herself. **grief**: sorrow, pain. **amazement**: great surprise.
nothing but: only. **afflicted**: suffering. **parent**: *here*, mother.
treated: considered, acted towards.
tenderness: love and attention.
scarce less: not less. **assiduous**: persevering, diligent.
endeavouring: trying. **partake**: take part in, share. **lessen**: make smaller. **sorrow**: sadness. **strove**: tried. **suppress**: keep to herself. **conceived**: formed, developed.
sympathy: *here*, feeling.
concern: anxiety, sorrow.
commiseration: pity, compassion.
delivered: freed.
felicity: happiness. **destined**: decided for her. **bridegroom**: husband. **temper**: *here*, temperament, character. **distinguished**: *here*, treated as different. **imprinted**: fixed, marked deeply. **causeless**: without real cause. **rigour**: strictness, severe behavior. **amiable**: kind, pleasant. **conveying**: carrying.
wretched: miserable, unhappy.
gazing on: looking fixedly at. **ominous**: of bad sign, suggesting future trouble. **casque**: helmet. **regardless**: *here*, paying no attention to. **crowd**: mass of people. **assembled**: collected, come together. **articulated**: spoke. **tended**: *here*, were limited.
solely: only. **enquiries**: questions.

any man knew from whence it could have come? Nobody could give him the least information. However, as it seemed to be the sole object of his curiosity, it soon became so to the rest of the spectators, whose conjectures were as absurd and improbable as the catastrophe itself was unprecedented. In the midst of their senseless guesses a young peasant, whom rumour had drawn thither from a neighbouring village, observed that the miraculous helmet was exactly like that on the figure in black marble of Alfonso the Good, one of their former princes, in the church of St. Nicholas. Villain! What sayest thou? cried Manfred, starting from his trance in a tempest of rage, and seizing the young man by the collar: How darest thou utter such treason? Thy life shall pay for it.

The spectators, who as little comprehended the cause of the prince's fury as all the rest they had seen, were at a loss to unravel this new circumstance. The young peasant himself was still more astonished, not conceiving how he had offended the prince: yet recollecting himself, with a mixture of grace and humility, he disengaged himself from Manfred's gripe, and then, with an obeisance which discovered more jealousy of innocence, than dismay, he asked with respect, of what he was guilty! Manfred, more enraged at the vigour, however decently exerted, with which the young man had shaken off his hold, than appeased by his submission, ordered his attendants to seize him, and, if he had not been withheld by his friends whom he had invited to the nuptials, would have poignarded the peasant in their arms.

During this altercation some of the vulgar spectators had run to the great church which stood near the castle, and came back open-mouthed, declaring the helmet was missing from Alfonso's statue. Manfred, at this news, grew perfectly frantic; and, as if he sought a subject on which to vent the tempest within him, he rushed again on the young peasant, crying, Villain! monster! sorcerer! 'tis thou hast slain my son! The mob, who wanted some object within the scope of their capacities on whom they might discharge their bewildered reasonings, caught the words from the mouth of their lord, and re-echoed, Ay, ay, 'tis he, 'tis he: he has stolen the helmet from good Alfonso's tomb, and dashed out the

whence: where.

sole: one and only.

conjectures: guesses, ideas, opinions.

unprecedented: never done or known before. **In the midst:** in the middle. **senseless:** foolish, without sense. **guesses:** ideas, opinions. **peasant:** one who works and lives on the land. **rumour:** general talk. **drawn:** attracted, pulled. **thither:** there. **neighbouring:** nearby. **marble:** kind of stone used for statues. **former:** of an earlier period. **Villain:** bad, wicked man. **What sayest thou?:** What do you say? **starting:** making a sudden movement. **trance:** hypnotic state. **tempest of rage:** violently angry. **seizing:** taking hold of. **darest:** dare, have the courage to. **thou:** you. **utter:** say. **treason:** disloyalty, treachery. **Thy:** Your. **comprehended:** understood. **fury:** anger. **at a loss:** did not understand. **unravel:** make clear. **still:** even. **astonished:** surprised. **conceiving:** *here*, understanding. **yet:** but.

recollecting himself: recovering composure, collecting his thoughts. **disengaged:** made free. **gripe:** (*archaic*) grip, hold. **obeisance:** bending of the head and body in sign of respect. **discovered:** *here*, showed. **dismay:** feeling of fear. **guilty:** condition of having done wrong. **enraged:** angry. **vigour:** energy. **decently:** in a right, suitable manner. **exerted:** brought into action. **shaken off:** made himself free of. **appeased:** made quiet and calm. **attendants:** servants. **seize:** take, capture. **withheld:** held back. **nuptials:** marriage ceremony.

poignarded: hit with a dagger (knife-like weapon).

altercation: quarrel, loud and angry discussion. **vulgar:** common. **stood:** was.

open-mouthed: with mouths open in surprise. **declaring:** stating, saying. **missing:** *here*, not in the place it should be.

frantic: mad. **sought:** looked for. **subject:** person or thing. **vent:** let out, express. **within:** inside. **rushed ... on:** went quickly towards. **sorcerer:** man who practices magic with the help of evil spirits. **'tis:** it is. **thou:** you. **hast:** have. **slain:** killed, murdered. **mob:** the masses, crowd. **scope:** range, area. **discharge:** let out, give expression to. **bewildered:** confused. **reasonings:** processes of reaching conclusions by using reason. **caught the words:** heard. **re-echoed:** repeated. **Ay:** Yes. **stolen:** taken without right. **dashed out:** smashed, let out with violence.

brains of our young prince with it:—never reflecting how enormous the disproportion was between the marble helmet that had been in the church, and that of steel before their eyes; nor how impossible it was for a youth, seemingly not twenty, to wield a piece of armour of so prodigious a weight.

The folly of these ejaculations brought Manfred to himself: yet whether provoked at the peasant having observed the resemblance between the two helmets, and thereby led to the farther discovery of the absence of that in the church; or wishing to bury any fresh rumour under so impertinent a supposition; he gravely pronounced that the young man was certainly a necromancer, and that till the church could take cognizance of the affair, he would have the magician, whom they had thus detected, kept prisoner under the helmet itself, which he ordered his attendants to raise, and place the young man under it; declaring he should be kept there without food, with which his own infernal art might furnish him.

It was in vain for the youth to represent against this preposterous sentence: in vain did Manfred's friends endeavour to divert him from this savage and ill-grounded resolution. The generality were charmed with their lord's decision, which to their apprehensions carried great appearance of justice, as the magician was to be punished by the very instrument with which he had offended: nor were they struck with the least compunction at the probability of the youth being starved, for they firmly believed that by his diabolical skill he could easily supply himself with nutriment.

Manfred thus saw his commands even cheerfully obeyed; and appointing a guard with strict orders to prevent any food being conveyed to the prisoner, he dismissed his friends and attendants, and retired to his own chamber, after locking the gates of the castle, in which he suffered none but his domestics to remain.

In the mean time, the care and zeal of the young ladies had brought the princess Hippolita to herself, who amidst the transports of her own sorrow frequently demanded news of her lord, would have dismissed her attendants to watch over him, and at last enjoined Matilda to leave her, and visit

disproportion: state of being out of proportion.

steel: hard metal.

youth: young man. **seemingly**: in appearance. **wield**: use.

armour: metal covering used as protection for the body.

folly: absurdity, foolishness. **ejaculations**: exclamations.

brought ... himself: made him return to normal. **provoked**: angered. **peasant**: person who works and lives on the land.

resemblance: similarity. **thereby**: by that means. **farther**: successive. **bury**: here, cover. **impertinent**: imprudent, rude.

gravely: seriously.

necromancer: person who communicates with the dead to learn about the future. **cognizance**: knowledge, consideration. **affair**: matter, subject. **thus**: in this way. **detected**: discovered.

raise: lift.

furnish: supply, give.

represent: protest.

preposterous: absurd.

did ... endeavour: tried (*note inversion after negative*).

divert him: change his mind. **ill-grounded**: not based on facts.

resolution: decision. **generality**: here, common people.

charmed: pleased. **apprehensions**: fears.

very: here, same.

nor were they struck. (*note inversion*) they were not shocked.

least: smallest. **compunction**: remorse. **starved**: killed by hunger. **skill**: ability. **supply himself with nutriment**: get food for himself. **thus**: in this way. **cheerfully**: happily.

appointing: naming. **prevent**: stop.

conveyed: taken. **dismissed**: sent away.

retired: went. **locking**: closing with a key.

suffered: allowed.

zeal: here, attention.

brought ... to herself: made her recover. **amidst**: in the middle of. **transports**: emotions.

watch over: take care of. **enjoined**: commanded.