



普通高等教育“十二五”规划教材

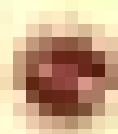
英美经典短篇小说教程

主编 吴泽庆 杨纪平

A Course of Classic
British and American
Short Stories



北京邮电大学出版社
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“十二五”普通高等教育本科国家级规划教材



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王 建 著

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British and American
Short Stories

上海外语教育出版社
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内容简介

《英美经典短篇小说教程》选取英国文学和美国文学中具有代表性的作家的作品,通过作者介绍、作品赏析、文本阅读、讨论和拓展阅读等环节,让读者领会英美文学中的瑰宝,品味文学魅力,启迪人生。

本书共分英国文学和美国文学两个部分,选取 20 位著名小说家及其代表性的经典短篇小说。各章以时间为经,以文学流派为纬,贯穿文学发展的基本脉络。每个单元的编写力求明晰、简洁,方便读者阅读。文章英文注释、课后设置讨论问题和拓展书目,供读者加深对文本的理解。

《英美经典短篇小说教程》是高校英语专业本科生和英美文学方向研究生的教材,也可用作非英语专业高年级学生英美文学鉴赏选修课教材。

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前言

英美文学是高校英语专业一门必不可少的课程,加强文学阅读不仅能够提高读者的文学鉴赏水平,培养他们的语言能力,而且能够增强其人文素养,有助于其谙熟西方文化。作为重要的文学形式,短篇小说以其篇幅短小、形式活泼、主题突出、语言凝练等特色,在文学中占据越来越重要的位置。英美短篇小说的阅读对于学生文学鉴赏能力和文学理论运用能力的培养具有重要作用,从而为他们学习更高级别的英美戏剧、诗歌、散文、英美长篇小说等课程打下坚实的基础。作为英语专业本科生和研究生的教材,本书具有以下特点。

一、选材跨度大,题材多样化

本书主要选取 19—20 世纪具有代表性的英美作家,精选的 20 部短篇小说,涵盖了从 19 世纪小说家华盛顿·欧文到现代意识流文学代表作家威廉·福克纳的作品。包括的重要英国作家有乔治·艾略特、约瑟夫·康拉德、弗吉尼亚·伍尔夫、詹姆斯·乔伊斯、D. H. 劳伦斯、凯瑟琳·曼斯菲尔德;美国代表作家有爱伦·坡、纳撒尼尔·霍桑、马克·吐温、伊迪斯·沃顿、欧·亨利、杰克·伦敦、舍伍德·安德森、玛丽·埃利诺·威尔金斯·弗里曼等。涵盖了浪漫主义、现实主义和现代主义各个时期,同时作品也涉及清教主义、西部文学、自然主义、南方文学、女性文学、少数族裔文学等多方面主题。

二、重点突出,经典名篇主导

精选的 20 部短篇小说被英美文学界公认为经典之作,其中英国康拉德的《秘密的分享者》、伍尔夫的《邱园记事》、乔伊斯的《阿拉比》、D. H. 劳伦斯的《木马赢家》、吉卜林的《芭赫斯夫人》;美国欧文的《瑞普·凡·温克尔》、爱伦·坡的《红死魔的面具》、霍桑的《教长的黑面纱》、马克·吐温的《跳蛙》和伊迪斯·沃顿的《罗马热病》等都是脍炙人口的佳作,作品涉及英美生活的方方面面,作者文笔精妙,文字优美,语言流畅。

三、知识性与审美性的统一

本书所选作品思想性强、艺术性高、知识性与审美性统一。以肖邦的女权主义作品《一个小时的故事》为例,该作品通过人物的话语特征、人物的相互关系以及戏剧式的场景描述,揭示了女主人公失去话语空间、思维空间直至整个生存空间的悲剧性主题。同时,所选其他作品对讽刺、幽默、象征等艺术手法的恰当运用既增长了读者的知识,又培养了其审美观念。

本书具有以下特点:①选读配有英文注释,能够帮助学生更好地理解文本;②选读文本后带有讨论题,能够引发学生深入思考,有利于教师开展启发式、讨论式、探究式教学模式;③文本后配有拓展阅读书目,能够帮助学生进一步对作品进行深入研究,为提高学生的研究能力提供便利。

本书是作者在多年的教学讲义的基础上编撰而成。内容设计和编写体例特别适合教师备课、学生预习、师生课上共同研讨学习、学生课后进一步研读学习。

本书由吴泽庆和杨纪平编写,感谢北京邮电大学出版社编辑的辛勤工作。

限于编者水平,本书在选材和注释方面如有缺点和错误,望读者批评指正。

编 者

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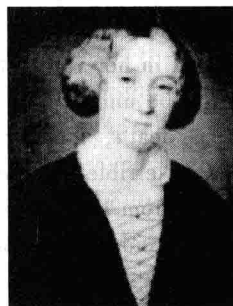
PART ONE BRITISH SHORT STORIES

George Eliot (1819—1880)

The Lifted Veil

Introduction to the author

George Eliot (November 22, 1819—December 22, 1880) was an English novelist, journalist and one of the leading Victorian writers. She is best remembered for her novels, including *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Middlemarch*, *Daniel Deronda*, etc. Eliot depicted rural society in her works and explored the lives of real persons. In the meanwhile, her novels were full of political factors and religious elements including alienation from the church. Eliot's important role in twentieth-century literature can never be ignored.



George Eliot born Mary Ann Evans, the third child of Robert and Christiana Evans. She was born in England on November 22, 1819. George Eliot was very intelligent and loved reading. She boarded at various schools in her childhood, which instilled in her a strong sense of Christian. Eliot carried her self-education by the library of Arbury Hall, where the Greek tragedy she read became themes of her works. After her mother died in 1836, Eliot and her father moved to Foleshill near Coventry, whose society introduced Evans to more liberal theologies and to writers such as David Strauss and Ludwig Feuerbach. Her contact with free-thinking intellectuals led her away from her early beliefs. This resulted in her conflicts with her father and she demonstrated the conflicts in her writing. Her father died in 1849. Eliot moved to London in 1851, where she met more free-thinking intellectuals of her age, including George Henry Lewes, a leading journalist and drama critic of the day. Despite the fact that Lewes was a married man, they developed a romantic relationship. Although they lived together happily and their union lasted for over 20 years until Lewes's death in 1878, Eliot suffered a loss of social status, including complete disaffection from her favorite brother, Isaac. Encouraged by Lewes, George Eliot started to publish under the pseudonym George Eliot in 1858. In 1880, Eliot married John Walter, Cross, who was 20 years her junior. This legal marriage helped to restore her relationship with her brother Isaac. On December 22, 1880, Eliot died, aged 61. She was

buried next to Lewes in Highgate Cemetery, London.

Major works by George Eliot

Novels

Adam Bede, 1859

Silas Marner, 1861

Felix Holt, the Radical, 1866

Daniel Deronda, 1876

Poetry

The Spanish Gypsy (a dramatic poem), 1868

Brother and Sister, 1869

Stradivarius, 1873

Arion, 1874

A College Breakfast Party, 1879

The Mill on the Floss, 1860

Romola, 1863

Middlemarch, 1871—1872

Agatha, 1869

Armigart, 1871

The Legend of Jubal, 1874

A Minor Prophet, 1874

The Death of Moses, 1879

Appreciation

The “Lifted Veil” is a novella, first published in 1859. The tale of horror starts with the confession of the first-person narrator Latimer, a dying man, exactly one month before his death. The story is told in a flashback structure, beginning with Latimer’s childhood, when he first discovers that he has superadded consciousness, an otherworldly ability to see into the future and the thoughts of other people. Latimer becomes fascinated with Bertha, his brother’s fiancée. One day, Latimer has a vision many years into his own future, during which Bertha, now his wife, suggests, with hatred in her voice, that he commit suicide. Latimer can clearly predict that their marriage is doomed to be unhappy and even a disaster, but he cannot resist his desire for the girl. After his brother’s death, Latimer marries Bertha. Bertha’s manipulative and untrustworthy nature does result in a terrible relationship. Latimer’s friend, scientist Charles Meunier, performs a blood transfusion from himself to Bertha’s recently deceased maid. For a few moments the maid comes back to life and accuses Bertha of a plot to poison Latimer. Bertha flees and Latimer soon dies.

The story demonstrates Eliot’s interest in contemporary science and pseudoscience, including physiology, phrenology, mesmerism and clairvoyance. It involves the themes of fate, extrasensory perception, the mystery of life, life after death, the relationship between science and the supernatural, and human desire to play God. It fits well into the Victorian tradition of Gothic horror stories.

Selected reading

The Lifted Veil

Chapter I

The time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of angina pectoris^①; and

① angina pectoris: a disease that repeatedly causes sudden strong pains in the chest because blood containing oxygen is prevented from reaching the heart

in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted^① many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burthen of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true provision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on September 20, 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one will answer my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My housekeeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench; she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases; my lamp goes out with a horrible stench; I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown; the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it; I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber-window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them for ever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness; but I am passing on and on through the darkness; my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward ...

Before that time comes, I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed^② myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some tenderness, some charity, when we are dead; it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence^③ are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist, timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgements, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by and by be still—"ubi saeva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit"; the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honour to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and may consent to bury them.

① protracted: lasting for a long time or made to last longer

② unbosomed: expressed oneself to others

③ reverence: to greatly respect and admire someone or something

That is a trivial schoolboy text; why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honour. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after-years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children: I had all their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow; and I had a tender mother; even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee—her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill I rode my little white pony with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back. Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before; for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember still the mingled trepidation^① and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the groom's voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the courtyard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard—for my father's house lay near a county town where there were large barracks—made me sob and tremble; and yet when they were gone past, I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me; though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five-and-forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence; one of those people who are always like themselves from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits. I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times; a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connexions, of course; my father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But, intrinsically, he had slight esteem for "those dead but sceptred^② spirits"; having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's Aeschylus, and dipping into Francis's Horace. To this negative view he added a positive one, derived from a recent connexion with mining speculations; namely, that a scientific education was the really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr. Letherall had said so very decidedly. Mr.

① trepidation: fear or worry about what is going to happen

② sceptre: a decorated stick that is carried by a queen or king during some official ceremonies as a symbol of their authority

Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, auspicious manner—then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows—

“The deficiency is there, sir—there; and here,” he added, touching the upper sides of my head, “here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep.”

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred—hatred of this big, spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

I am not aware how much Mr. Letherall had to do with the system afterwards adopted towards me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages, were the appliances by which the defects of my organization were to be remedied. I was very stupid about machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoology and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and humane motions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers, the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus; and would, doubtless, have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was, every Thursday, assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy. I read Plutarch, and Shakespeare, and Don Quixote by the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that “an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran downhill.” I had no desire to be this improved man; I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling^① among the pebbles, and bathing the bright green water-plants, by the hour together. I did not want to know why it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial^② medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of Nature in all her awful loveliness. You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to Nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song and believes in the listening ear and answering soul, to which his song will be floated sooner or later. But the poet’s sensibility without his voice—the poet’s sensibility that finds no vent but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye—this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one’s

① gurgling: (of water, especially small streams) to flow quickly while making a low, pleasant sound

② uncongenial: not friendly and pleasant

fellow-men. My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat, at evening, towards the centre of the lake; it seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain-tops, and the wide blue water, surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did—lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain-top after the other, as if the prophet's chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance^①, and was allowed no late wanderings. This disposition of mine was not favourable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made one such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles Meunier; his real surname—an English one, for he was of English extraction—having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a miserable pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange! that with my vague mind, susceptible and unobservant, hating inquiry and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn towards a youth whose strongest passion was science. But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical; it came from community of feeling. Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese gamins, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and, stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances towards him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and in Charles's rare holidays we went up the Saleve together, or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened dreamily to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly in my thought with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds, when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship because of its connexion with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a severe illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly-remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of convalescence^②, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days, my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa.

“When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbours, the Filmores, are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague” ...

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word Prague, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me: a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long-past

① surveillance: the careful watching of a person or place, especially by the police or army, because of a crime that has happened or is expected

② convalescence: recovering from illness

century arrested in its course—unrefreshed for ages by dews of night, or the rushing rain-cloud; scorching the dusty, weary, time-eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated^① kings in their regal gold-inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought, who are the fathers of ancient faded children, in those tanned time-fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual midday, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again: one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again, I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream—this wonderfully distinct vision—minute in its distinctness down to a patch of rainbow light on the pavement, transmitted through a coloured lamp in the shape of a star—of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague: it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely-remembered historical associations—ill-defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking-in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient^② vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr. Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room. No, it was not a dream; was it—the thought was full of tremulous exultation—was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization—given a firmer tension to my nerves—carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects—in works of fiction at least. Nay; in genuine biographies I had read of the subtilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city; I

① superannuated: old, and almost no longer suitable for work

② incipient: just beginning

believed—I hoped it was a picture that my newly liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colours snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place—Venice, for example, which was far more familiar to my imagination than Prague; perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thoughts on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only colouring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labour after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity, such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful^①.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a reawakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in a drive, and a gradually lengthening walk as my powers of walking increased; and one evening he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical box, and other purchases rigorously demanded of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone, just where it leaves the dark-blue lake; but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone: there were two persons with him. Strange! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open; but I saw my father, and at his right hand our neighbour Mrs. Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a commonplace middle-aged woman, in silk and cashmere; but the lady on the left of my father was not more than twenty, a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair, arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small-featured, thin-lipped face they crowned. But the face had not a girlish expression: the features were sharp, the pale grey eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale-green dress, and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her pale blond hair, made me think of a Water-Nixie—for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal-eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a birth from some cold sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

“Well, Latimer, you thought me long,” my father said ...

But while the last word was in my ears, the whole group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese printed folding-screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had

① fitful: often stopping and starting and not happening in a regular or continuous way

manifested itself again... But was it a power? Might it not rather be a disease—a sort of intermittent delirium^①, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively^②, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

“Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien?” he said anxiously.

“I’m tired of waiting, Pierre,” I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could, like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine; “I’m afraid something has happened to my father—he’s usually so punctual. Run to the Hotel des Bergues and see if he is there.”

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing “Bien, Monsieur”; and I felt the better for this scene of simple, waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the salon, and opened a case of eau-de-Cologne^③; took out a bottle; went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead, and under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the scent because I had procured it by slow details of labour, and by no strange sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the salon, but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding-screen there was my father, with Mrs. Filmore on his right hand, and on his left—the slim, blond-haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity.

“Well, Latimer, you thought me long,” my father said...

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying with my head low on the sofa, Pierre, and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived, my father left the room, and presently returned, saying—

“I’ve been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to-day.”

Presently he said, “That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs. Filmore’s orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a neighbour when we go home—perhaps for a near relation; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for her in every way as if she were his daughter. It had not occurred to me that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores.”

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not for the world have told him the reason: I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after-lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence—I think the very next day—I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility, to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental

① delirium: a state of being unable to think or speak clearly because of fever or mental confusion

② convulsively: sudden movements of the muscles in your body that you cannot control

③ eau-de-Cologne: a pleasant-smelling liquid that you put on your body to make yourself smell fresh; perfumes