

导读

儒勒·凡尔纳被誉为"科幻小说"之父,但其历史小说 同样精彩有趣。其作品不仅有样洋酒酒的长篇巨著,如《格 半特船长的儿女》、《海底两万里》、《神秘岛》等。同样也有短 小精致的小巧之作、《突破封锁》就是这样一部作品。

美国南北战争爆发后,水陆通路均被严密封锁起来,美国国内的棉花运送不出去,而英国大陆因棉花缺乏而致生产萧条,在这样的背景下,作者讲述了一位年轻勇敢的船长,如何指挥一条英国商船,突破交战双方的重重封锁,从美国运回棉花而大赚一笔,同时更重要的是,获得一段真挚甜蜜的爱情的故事。

尽管故事本身充满艰难险阻,其所发生的年代也是一个愁云密布的时期,但凡尔纳却以一种轻松诙谐的笔调来 叙述整个故事,因而整体小说读来,并不让人觉得沉重枯燥。故事虽然简短,但作者却写得妙趣横生。那位原本重利 轻义,不苛言笔的船长在陷入爱情中后的种种窘迫,那位忠心耿耿,机智乐观的老仆人所施的种种妙计,都令人忍俊不禁,回味悠长。

但仍需承认,凡尔纳对政治持的还是很严肃的态度,南北战争爆发之后,他给予了极大的关注,其多部作品都以这场战争为背景。他亦在这本小说中,借主人公詹妮小姐之口,鲜明地阐述了自己对这场战争的看法。看得出,凡尔纳是位真正而关切人间疾苦的作家。从小说中詹姆斯船长与詹妮小姐的一番争论可以看出这一点。

作品中还传达了面对困难,绝不轻言放弃的精神,这也 是最让读者受启发的一点。正如教授的所说:

"Where there is life, there is hope" 诚然,"生命不息,希望不止。" 中文责编:赵志忠 王怀栋 晨 言 王法亮

英文责编:高 昕 陈力飞

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Chapter 1 The "Dolphin"

The Clyde was the first river whose waters were lashed into foam by a steam-boat. It was in 1812 when the steamer called the Comet ran between Glasgow and Greenock, at the speed of six miles an hour. Since that time more than a million of steamers or packet-boats have plied this Scotch river, and the inhabitants of Glasgow must be as familiar as any people with the wonders of steam navigation.

However, on the 3rd of December, 1862, an immense crowd, composed of shipowners, merchants, manufacturers, workmen, sailors, women, and children, thronged the muddy streets of Glasgow, all going in the direction of Kelvin Dock, the large shipbuilding premises belonging to Messrs. Tod & MacGregor. This last name especially proves that the descendants of the famous Highlanders have become manufacturers, and that they have made workmen of all the vassals of the old clan chieftains.

Kelvin Dock is situated a few minutes' walk from the town, on the right bank of the Clyde. Soon the immense timber-yards were thronged with spectators; not a part of the quay, not a wall of the wharf, not a factory roof showed an unoccupied place; the river itself was covered with craft of all descriptions, and the heights of Govan, on the left bank, swarmed with spectators. There was, however, nothing extraordinary in the event about to take place; it was nothing but the launching of a ship, and this was an everyday affair with the people of Glasgow. Had the Dolphin, then-for that was the name of the ship built by Messrs. Tod & MacGregor-some special peculiarity?

第一章 "苔尔芬"号

克莱德河是第一条为蒸汽船搅起千层白浪的河流。这 是在 1812 年,一条名叫"慧星号"的船只,以每小时 6000 米 的速度在这条河流上航行,往返于格拉斯哥和格勒诺克之 间。从这以后,无数船只整日繁忙地穿梭于这条苏格兰河流 的航道中。居住在大商业城市的人想来都非常熟悉蒸汽船 只航海史上的这段掌故。

1862 年 12 月 3 日,格拉斯哥泥泞的街头拥挤着船主、商贩、手工作坊主、工人、水手、妇女、儿童等各色人等。他们行色匆匆,都直冲着凯尔文船坞而去。凯尔文船坞是属于托德和麦克·格莱葛瑞名下的一座大型造船厂。特别是格莱葛瑞这个姓氏证实了如今的工业家是原先著名的高地人的后代们,而以前的古老的部落的子孙多沦落为工人。

凯尔文船坞位于克莱德河右岸,从城里到此不过几分钟的路程。很快巨大的造船工地就挤满了看热闹的人群,连堤岸两头,码头墙上,商店房顶都再无立锥之地。河面上也密密麻麻地挤满了小艇,其拥挤之情非笔墨可述。左岸的戈旺高地也满是密密麻麻的围观者。可实际上并没什么惊天动地的大事发生,只不过是简单的船舶下水仪式而已。格拉斯哥人对此早已司空见惯。那么这只"苔尔芬"号(就是那艘由托德和麦克·格莱葛瑞造船厂建造的船只)有何与众不同之处呢?说真的,没有。这是一艘1500吨的大型钢船。各方面性能均很优良,因而速度较快。发动机是由朗斯菲尔德

To tell the truth, it had none. It was a large ship, about 1, 500 tons, in which everything combined to obtain superior speed. Her engines, of 500 horse-power, were from the workshops of Lancefield Forge; they worked two screws, one on either side the stern-post, completely independent of each other. As for the depth of water the Dolphin would draw, it must be very inconsiderable; connoisseurs were not deceived, and they concluded rightly that this ship was destined for shallow straits. But all these particulars could not in any way justify the eagerness of the people: taken altogether, the Dolphin was nothing more or less than an ordinary ship. Would her launching present some mechanical difficulty to be overcome? Not any more than usual The Clyde had received many a ship of heavier tonnage, and the launching of the Dolphin would take place in the usual manner

In fact, when the water was calm, the moment the ebb-tide set in, the workmen began to operate. Their mallets kept perfect time falling on the wedges meant to raise the ship's keel: soon a shudder ran through the whole of her massive structure; although she had only been slightly raised, one could see that she shook, and then gradually began to glide down the well greased wedges, and in a few moments she plunged into the Clyde. Her stern struck the muddy bed of the river, then she raised herself on the top of a gigantic wave, and, carried forward by her start, would have been dashed against the quay of the Govan timber-yards, if her anchors had not restrained her.

The launch had been perfectly successful, the Dolphin swayed quietly on the waters of the Clyde, all the spectators clapped their hands when she took possession of her natural element, and loud hurrahs arose from either bank.

But wherefore these cries and this applause? Undoubtedly

车间锻造,有500马力的强大功率。两个双螺旋桨分别安装 在船尾舵柱的两侧。船体的吃水深度也不深,这是非常合理 的。行家们并没有自欺欺人,他们不无道理地指出该船只活 合于中等水深的河道。但是所有这些"苔尔芬"号的独特之 处也不足以让这么多人蜂涌而来啊。说到底,"苔尔芬"号与 别的船只毫无二致。那是不是它的下水标志着某个机械制 造上的技术难关被攻破?也不是。克莱德河迎接讨比它更大 的船舶,"苔尔芬"号的试航是最平常不过的。

当涨起的潮水落下,水波开始平静下来时,船工们开始 试航了。他们手中的木稍有规律地落在楔子上以抬起船的 龙骨。很快它巨大的船身划过一阵颤栗。尽管船身只是升起 了一点点,但人们感觉到船体正摇晃不已。接着它渐渐滑过 涂了一层油脂的滑道,几分钟后就进入了克莱德河。船尾撞 了一下遍布淤泥的河床, 旋即又漂浮在船身上浮时搅起的 巨浪峰顶。要不是它的锚拽住了它,它有可能冲向告船工场 的码头。

试航圆满成功了。"苔尔芬"号静静地飘浮在克莱德河 河面上,悠闲自得。两岸观看的人群中爆发出阵阵掌声和欢 呼声。

人们为什么欢呼鼓掌呢? 无疑是那些情绪激昂的围观

the most eager of the spectators would have been at a loss to explain the reason of his enthusiasm. What was the cause, then, of the lively interest excited by this ship? Simply the mystery which shrouded her destination; it was not known to what kind of commerce she was to be appropriated, and in questioning different groups the diversity of opinion on this important subject was indeed astonishing.

However, the best informed, at least those who pretended to be so, agreed in saying that the steamer was going to take part in the terrible war which was then ravaging the United States of America, but more than this they did not know, and whether the Dolphin was a privateer, a transport ship, or an addition to the Federal marine was what no one could tell.

"Hurrah!" cried one, affirming that the Dolphin had been built for the Southern States.

"Hip! hip!" cried another, swearing that never had a faster boat crossed to the American coasts.

Thus its destination was unknown, and in order to obtain any reliable information one must be an intimate friend, or, at any rate, an acquaintance of Vincent Playfair & Co., of Glasgow.

A rich, powerful, intelligent house of business was that of Vincent Playfair & Co., in a social sense, an old and honourable family, descended from those tobacco lords who built the finest quarters of the town. These clever merchants, by an act of the Union, had founded the first Glasgow warehouse for dealing in tobacco from Virginia and Maryland. Immense fortunes were realised; mills and foundries sprang up in all parts, and in a few years the prosperity of the city attained its height.

The house of Playfair remained faithful to the enterprising spirit of its ancestors, it entered into the most daring schemes,

者以此来表达他们心中的热情。那么,这艘船究竟是哪一点 激起群众这般不同寻常的兴趣? 简单地说,是因其将驶往终 点的神秘莫测而引起的。没人知道它用作何种用途。人们的 答案是千奇百怪, 五花八门的, 这让人大吃一惊, 但并不足 以为怪。

但据知情人或声称知情的人说,"苔尔芬"号此行与美 国大陆上厮杀正酣的那场残酷的战争有关。但他们所知的 也仅此而已。至于这是艘海盗船、运输船还是南部联军或北 军的舰船,这就没人能说个子丑寅卯来了。

"哦!哦!"一个人嚷着,一口咬定"苔尔芬"号是为南部 联军浩的。

"吥! 呸! 吥!"另一人叫喊着,赌咒发誓说再快的船只, 也不可能靠近美洲大陆沿岸城市。

因此它的目的地仍然是个不解之密、除非是格拉斯哥 的万桑・普雷费尔和科的合作伙伴、至少是他们的心腹知 己才可能知晓内情。

万桑・普雷费尔和科商行是一个生意兴隆、权重势大、 经营有方的商行。就社会地位而言,它又是个古老而倍受尊 崇的家族。他们的先祖多巴科老爷修建了本城最漂亮繁华 的城区。《联合法令》颁布后,这些头脑精明的商人成立了格 拉斯哥最早的商行,贩卖维尼吉亚和马里兰的烟草。他们暴 敛巨资。棉纺厂、铸造厂如雨后春笋般从各个地方涌现出 来。这座城市只用几年时间就达到了最鼎盛时期。

普雷费尔和科商行忠实地履行先辈的经营策略、涉足 最富风险的交易,支持英国的商业发展。目前,商行老板是 and maintained the honour of English commerce. The principal, Vincent Playfair, a man of fifty, with a temperament essentially practical and decided, although somewhat daring, was a genuine shipowner. Nothing affected him beyond commercial questions, not even the political side of the transactions, otherwise he was a perfectly loyal and honest man.

However, he could not lay claim to the idea of building and fitting up the Dolphin; she belonged to his nephew, James Playfair, a fine young man of thirty, the boldest skipper of the British merchant marine

It was one day at the Tontine coffee-room under the arcades of the town hall, that James Playfair, after having impatiently scanned the American journal, disclosed to his uncle an adventurous scheme.

"Uncle Vincent," said he, coming to the point at once, "there are two millions of pounds to be gained in less than a month."

"And what to risk?" asked Uncle Vincent.

"A ship and a cargo."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing, except the crew and the captain, and that does not reckon for much."

"Let us see," said Uncle Vincent.

"It is all seen," replied James Playfair "You have read the Tribune, the New York Herald, The Times, the Richmond Inquirer, the American Review?"

"Scores of times, nephew"

"You believe, like me, that the war of the United States will last a long time still?"

"A very long time."

"You know how much this struggle will affect the interests of

文森特・普雷费尔, 他 50 岁左右, 尽管有些冒失恭撞, 但基 本上还是务实果断的。除去生意上的事,平日里他都沉稳持 重,哪怕是生意上的政治倾向问题也不会令他心烦意躁。此 外他的为人还相当诚恳正直。

但是,建造并装备"苔尔芬"号这个设想并不是他首先 提出的,而是他侄子詹姆斯・普雷费尔的主意。詹姆斯・普 雷费尔是位 30 岁的美男子,享有"大不列颠联合王国商队 中的最勇敢的船长"的美誉。

某日,坐在东蒂恩咖啡屋里,詹姆斯·普雷费尔匆匆忙 忙地扫视了一遍美国报纸后,告诉了他叔叔一项风险很大 的计划。

- "文森特叔叔、"他直接了当地说道, "用不了一个月的 时间, 咱们就可以净赚 200 万!"
 - "那用什么去赌?"文森特叔叔问道。
 - "一艘满载货物的船只。"
 - "不用别的了?"
 - "当然少不了船长和船员。但这花不了几个钱。"
 - "等等看吧。"文森特叔叔答道。
- "一切早就清楚了。"詹姆斯·普雷费尔接着说道,"您 看过《论坛报》、《纽约先驱报》、《泰晤士报》、《里乞蒙调查》 还有《美国评论》吗?"
 - "早就烂熟于心了, 侄儿。"
 - "您跟我一样认为美国这场战争会打很久吗?"
 - "很长时间。"
 - "您清楚这场战争对英国,特别是格拉斯哥的利益会有

England, and especially those of Glasgow?"

"And more especially still the house of Playfair & Co.," replied Uncle Vincent.

"Theirs especially," added the young Captain.

"I worry myself about it every day, James, and I cannot think without terror of the commercial disasters which this war may produce; not but that the house of Playfair is firmly established, at the same time it has correspondents which may fail. Ah! those Americans, slave-holders or Abolitionists, I have no faith in them!"

If Vincent Playfair was wrong in thus speaking with respect to the great principles of humanity, always and everywhere superior to personal interests, he was, nevertheless, right from a commercial point of view. The most important material was failing at Glasgow, the cotton famine became every day more threatening, thousands of workmen were reduced to living upon public charity. Glasgow possessed 25, 000 looms, by which 625, 000 yards of cotton were spun daily; that is to say, fifty millions of pounds yearly. From these numbers it may be guessed what disturbances were caused in the commercial part of the town when the raw material failed altogether. Failures were hourly taking place, the manufactories were closed, and the workmen were dying of starvation.

It was the sight of this great misery which had put the idea of his bold enterprise into James Playfair's head.

"I will go for cotton, and will get it, cost what it may."

But, as he also was a merchant as well as his uncle Vincent, he resolved to carry out his plan by way of exchange, and to make his proposition under the guise of a commercial enterprise.

"Uncle Vincent," said he, "this is my idea."

多大影响吗?"

"尤其是对我们普雷费尔和科商行。"文森特叔叔答道。

"对。"年轻船长表示赞同。

"詹姆斯,我每日为此忧愁不安,想到这场战争会给我们的生意造成重大灾难,我不是毫无惧意的。这倒不是说普雷费尔和科商号实力不够强大,而是它的一些生意伙伴会因此破产倒闭。啊!这伙美国佬,不管他们是拥护奴隶制还是废奴分子,都给我统统见鬼去吧!"

人道主义始终高于个人利益,文森特·普雷费尔此番话确实有失公允。但考虑到纯粹的商业利益,他又不无道理。格拉斯哥市场上最重要的原料,棉花极度匮乏。"棉花饥荒"日益严重,成千上万的工人沦落为乞丐,靠着施舍过日。格拉斯哥拥有25000台机动棉纺机,美国内战爆发前,每天可纺棉625万米,即每年五亿镑棉纱。通过这些数字不难看出,原料供应断绝后,对城市工业造成了多大的冲击。每时每刻都有公司破产倒闭。许多工厂被迫关闭停产,工人们挣扎在死亡线上。

就是这幅凄惨悲凉的情景使詹姆斯·普雷费尔产生了 这个大胆的想法。

"我要去寻找棉花,不惜任何代价都要运回棉花。"

但因为他与文森特叔叔一样同为商人, 所以他决定通 过商品交换的方式,以买卖来达成。

"文森特叔叔,"他说,"这就是我的想法。"

"Well, James?"

"It is simply this: we will have a ship built of superior sailing qualities and great bulk."

"That is quite possible"

"We will load her with ammunition of war, provisions, and clothes."

"Just so."

"I will take the command of this steamer, I will defy all the ships of the Federal marine for speed, and I will run the blockade of one of the southern ports."

. "You must make a good bargain for your cargo with the Confederates, who will be in need of it," said his uncle

"And I shall return laden with cotton."

"Which they will give you for nothing."

"As you say, Uncle. Will it answer?"

"It will; but shall you be able to get there?"

"I shall, if I have a good ship."

"One can be made on purpose. But the crew?"

"Oh, I will find them. I do not want many men; enough to work with, that is all It is not a question of fighting with the Federals, but distancing them."

"They shall be distanced," said Uncle Vincent, in a peremptory tone, "but now, tell me, James, to what port of the American coast do you think of going?"

"Up to now, Uncle, ships have run the blockade of New Orleans, Wilmington, and Savannah, but I think of going straight to Charleston, no English boat has yet been able to penetrate into the harbour, except the Bermuda. I will do like her, and, if my ship draws but very little water, I shall be able to go where the Federalists will not be able to follow."

- "怎么做呢,詹姆士?"
- "事情很简单。我们只需建造一艘容积大、速度快的船 只。"
 - "这倒可能做到。"
 - "我们在船上装满军需品、粮食及衣物。"
 - "就这样。"
- "我负责指挥,快速航行以避免与北军遭遇。我要突破某一个南部港口的封锁线。"
 - "你向物资紧缺的南军高价兜售货物。"叔叔说道。
 - "我会满载棉花胜利返航!"
 - "他们会毫不吝啬地用棉花塞满你的船舱。"
 - "恰如您所说,叔叔,您觉得如何?"
 - "不错,但你能到达那吗?"
 - "没问题,但得有艘好船。"
 - "我们会专为此造一艘的。船员呢?"
- "哦!我会想办法的。我并不需要太多的人手。够用即可了。我们此行不是与北军正面冲突。而是要远远地避开他们。"
- "你们必须甩开他们。"文森特叔叔以不容置疑的口吻说道。"好了,詹姆斯,告诉我你打算驶往美国海岸的哪一处?"
- "瞧这条线, 叔叔, 已经有船只突破了新奥尔良、维明顿和萨瓦拉的封锁。但我想直接驶向查理斯顿。除了"百慕达"号,还没有英国船只驶进过那片水域。我要像"百慕达"号那样, 如果我的船吃水浅的话, 我们可以去的地方, 北军船只无法追踪。"

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