

世界名家哲理散文



四季随笔

〔英〕乔治·吉辛 著 小达 译

今天我散步行至很远，在路的尽头，我看到了开着白色小花的车叶草。它们生长在一小片幼嫩的树丛中。当我长时间地注视着这些花的时候，我感受到了它们那优雅细长的枝叶所带给我的喜悦——那闪烁着光芒的滑润质感，那橄榄色的光泽。旁边还有几棵无毛榆树，树皮斑驳，枝杈交错，像是以某种未知文字胡乱涂写的作品，将幼嫩的树衬托得更加美丽……小径通幽，春草萋萋，到处充满了春日的气息，我觉得似乎必须沿着在我眼前铺开的每条蜿蜒小径走上一遍。春天使我恢复了遗忘已久的青春活力，我不知疲倦地走着，像个孩子似的对自己唱着一首童年时学过的歌。

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The Private Papers of Henry James

英汉对照

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四季随笔

The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft

[英] 乔治·吉辛 著 小达 译

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著 者 [英] 乔治·吉辛

译 者 小 达

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译序

乔治·吉辛(George Gissing, 1857—1903), 英国小说家、散文家, 被认为是维多利亚时期对文学最有贡献的作家之一。他出生于约克郡威克维尔特一户药剂师家庭, 从小就酷爱读书, 父亲的大量藏书帮助他打下了坚实的文学根基。1870年, 父亲的去世是他人生中遭受的第一次打击, 他略显消极、晦暗的人生观与之不无关系。后来, 吉辛进入欧文大学学习, 成绩十分优异, 并于1874年通过了伦敦大学英语及拉丁语文学学士学位的考试。

然而, 此时前景一片大好的吉辛却因同情爱上了一个妓女, 甚至为了帮助她不惜铤而走险去偷窃。结果, 事情败露后, 吉辛不但被欧文大学开除, 还被判入狱一个月。他的美好希望破灭、名誉扫地。这是吉辛悲剧人生的开端。后来, 他在朋友的帮助下前往美国, 希望能摆脱过去的阴影, 开始新的生活。然而, 吉辛在芝加哥的生活却是潦倒而痛苦的, 只能以教书和给报社投稿勉强维持生计, 他一无所成, 不得不返回英国。在这之后, 吉辛又经历了两次不幸的婚姻。诸多痛苦的经历使得这位颇有天赋的作家无法走出悲观绝望的人生观, 也无法走出为生计而疲于奔命的困窘处境。直到晚年, 吉辛的生活境况才稍有好转, 但长期的劳苦和抑郁已经摧毁了他的身体, 没过多久他便因病离开了人世。

吉辛一生主要从事小说创作, 主要作品有《日出而作》、《新格拉布街》、《地狱的世界》等, 但由于所选素材的具体而冷酷以及其中流露出的悲观主义情结, 吉辛的小说作品并不受欢迎, 当时的销量也不尽如人意。吉辛还著有文学评论著作《狄更斯的研究》, 这本见解独到的著作至

今仍被认为是有关作家生平的优秀作品。除此之外，吉辛最广为人知的，也是确立其文坛地位的作品，就是这本散文小品集《四季随笔》。

《四季随笔》是吉辛最为成功的一部作品，是其不幸一生的唯一安慰，同时也是其痛苦经历和心境的真实写照。这本原名为《亨利·莱克罗夫特杂记》(The Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft)的半自传体散文集出版于吉辛逝世前。在书中，他虚构了亨利·莱克罗夫特这个人物，并以汇编其生前杂记的形式影射自己的人生经历，将自己的人生态度和感悟融入其中。亨利·莱克罗夫特一直处于窘迫的生活境况中，贫穷剥夺了他追求理想抱负的权利，他只能靠卖文艰难度日。他在50岁时，却有幸得到了一笔巨额的遗产，自此，他隐居乡间，过上了梦寐以求的宁静而安逸的生活。

在这个人物身上，我们不难看到吉辛的影子，吉辛将自己的思想、情感、经历和渴求都赋予了他。在一则则文风清新但又隐隐流动着忧郁气息的短记中，你可以看到一位纯真而又绝望的文人对于大自然和恬静生活的向往，以及对于书籍和文化的热爱与追求。吉辛内心敏感，笔触细腻，对于美好景色和惬意心境的描写让读者与他共同进入理想中的世界——在鸟鸣中悠悠转醒，踏着朝露怡然漫步，在夕阳的柔和光辉中倚窗而坐、潜心阅读。无论时代如何变迁，这样的生活永远让人们感觉虽近在咫尺，但现实中却总是有种种不可抗拒的力量而使其遥不可及。它是如此的亲切，哪怕是短暂的拥有也能让人们的心灵得到抚慰——在吉辛创造的文字世界中，人们无疑能够触摸到这种生活、寻找到这种抚慰，这或许就是这部作品广为流传的最重要的原因吧。

吉辛本人也非常珍视这本书，他在动笔前酝酿了十年之久，花了两年时间才完稿，他甚至预言“在我的其他无益的作品随着我无益的生命逝去时，这部作品多半还会留存”。时间证明了吉辛的预言，也证明了这部作品的价值，希望每一位读者都能跟随这部于命运和时间的洗礼中诞生的隽永之作，远离尘世喧嚣，寻找到心灵的宁静和生活的真谛。

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我已经有一周没有动笔了；整整七天，我甚至连一封信都没有写过。除了有一两回因为生病而暂时搁笔外，还从未出现过这样的情况。在我的一生中，在我那以令人忧虑焦灼的辛劳苦苦支撑的一生中，生活偏离了正常生活所应沿袭的轨迹，不再以其本身为目的，而是终日在恐惧中残喘挣扎。赚钱本应是达到目的的手段，可是三十多年来——我从十六岁起就开始自力更生——我却不得不把赚钱本身当做目的。

我能够想象得到，我的老笔杆一定在责备我。难道它没有尽心尽力地服务于我吗？为什么我在幸福的时候，却对它不闻不问，任其落满尘埃呢？这支每日于我的指间工作的笔杆已经伴随我多少年了呢？至少有二十年了。我记得还是在托特纳姆法院路上的一家商店里买下它的。出于和买这支笔相同的原因，那天我还买了一个镇纸，花了整整一个先令——对于当时的我来说，这真是穷奢极欲之举，令我浑身颤抖不已。刚买下它的时候，这支笔还闪耀着新漆的光泽，而现在它的两端均已磨损，呈现出原本的棕色木料。我的食指上也被它磨出了一层老茧。

它是我的故友，但也是我的宿敌！有多少次当我为了生计而被迫拿起它时，真是头重心沉、双手颤抖、目眩眼花！我是多么害怕用墨水去弄污白纸啊！特别是在像今天这样的好日子里：在玫瑰色的云朵间，春天那碧蓝色的双眼展露笑意，阳光铺洒在我的书桌上，光斑跳跃闪耀，这令我发狂般地渴望百花吐艳的大地的芬芳，以及山坡上落叶松的翠绿，还有高地上云雀的鸣啭。在似乎比童年还遥远的某一个时期，我总是受到内心之中的渴望的驱使而提笔；如果我的手在颤抖，那也是因为我满怀希望。然而，这希望欺骗了我，因为我所写的东西没有一页值得留存世间。如今的我已经可以平静地说出这番话而丝毫不感到痛苦了。那是年轻时犯下的错误，但后来在环境的逼迫下，这种错

误被延续了下来。这个世界并没有不公平地对待我；感谢上苍，我已经成熟到不再去为此怨天尤人了！为什么一个写作的人要对世人的忽视心存怒意呢？难道写出了不朽的作品就该如此吗？谁要求他出版作品了吗？谁承诺过倾听他的心声吗？谁违背了与他之间的承诺吗？如果我的鞋匠为我做出了一双非常好的靴子，而我却有些无理取闹地将靴子扔回到他的手中，那么，他会抱怨也是情有可原的。然而，谁为你的诗文和小说与你达成协议了呢？如果因为你的作品的确是平庸之作而没有买主，那么你最多也只能自认是个倒霉的商人；如果它们是博大精深之作，你却为没有得到重金回报而焦虑、恼怒，这是否应该呢？对于用心灵创作的作品，有一种，而且也只有一种检验标准，那就是让后世的人去评判。如果你所写出的真的是一部伟大的作品，它自然会流传后世。但流芳百世并非你心中所求，你只想坐在舒适的扶手椅上享受有生之年的名望。哈，那就得另当别论了。鼓起勇气，去满足自己的欲望吧！承认自己是一个商人，向诸神与世人提出抗议，说你的商品比许多高价兜售的货物更优质。如果这样做了，你的货品也没能风行一时，那么对你来说，的确是有些过分了，这时，你也就有理由去抱怨了。

* * *

For more than a week my pen has lain untouched. I have written nothing for seven whole days, not even a letter. Except during one or two bouts of illness, such a thing never happened in my life before. In my life; the life, that is, which had to be supported by anxious toil; the life which was not lived for living's sake, as all life should be, but under the goad of fear. The earning of money should be a means to an end; for more than thirty years — I began to support myself at sixteen — I had to regard it as the end itself.

I could imagine that my old penholder feels reproachfully towards me. Has it not served me well? Why do I, in my happiness, let it lie there neglected, gathering dust? The same penholder that has lain against my forefinger day after day for — how many years? Twenty, at least; I remember buying it at a shop in Tottenham Court Road. By the same token I bought that day a paper-weight, which cost me a whole shilling — an extravagance which made me tremble. The penholder shone with its new varnish, now it is plain brown wood from end to end. On my forefinger it has made a callosity.

Old companion, yet old enemy! How many a time have I taken it up, loathing the necessity, heavy in head and heart, my hand shaking, my eyes sick-dazzled! How I dreaded the white page I had to foul with ink! Above all, on days such as this, when

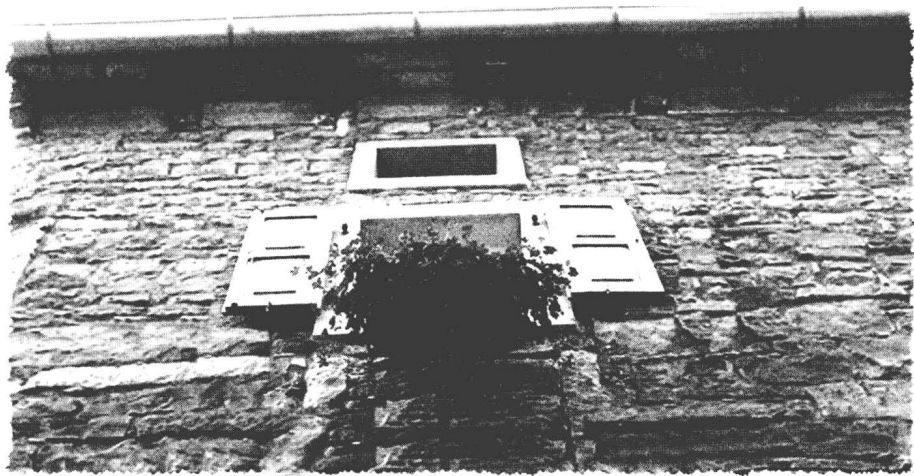
the blue eyes of spring laughed from between rosy clouds, when the sunlight shimmered upon my table and made me long, long all but to madness, for the scent of the flowering earth, for the green of hillside larches, for the singing of the skylark above the downs. There was a time — it seems further away than childhood — when I took up my pen with eagerness; if my hand trembled it was with hope. But a hope that fooled me, for never a page of my writing deserved to live. I can say that now without bitterness. It was youthful error, and only the force of circumstance prolonged it. The world has done me no injustice; thank heaven I have grown wise enough not to rail at it for this! And why should any man who writes, even if he write things immortal, nurse anger at the world's neglect? Who asked him to publish? Who promised him a hearing? Who has broken faith with him? If my shoemaker turn me out an excellent pair of boots, and I, in some mood of cantankerous unreason, throw them back upon his hands, the man has just cause of complaint. But your poem, your novel, who bargained with you for it? If it is honest journey-work, yet lacks purchasers, at most you may call yourself a hapless tradesman. If it come from on high, with what decency do you fret and fume because it is not paid for in heavy cash? For the work of man's mind there is one test, and one alone, the judgment of generations yet unborn. If you have written a great book, the world to come will know of it. But you don't care for posthumous glory. You want to enjoy fame in a comfortable arm-chair. Ah, that is quite another thing. Have the courage of your desire. Admit yourself a merchant, and protest to gods and men that the merchandise you offer is of better quality than much which sells for a high price. You may be right, and indeed it is hard upon you that fashion does not turn to your stall.

多么宁静的房间啊！我一直非常悠闲地坐在那里仰望天空，看着金色的阳光在地毯上洒下的瞬息万变的光影，有时也让目光从一幅镶框版画跃至另一幅，或沿着一排排心爱的书籍游移而过。屋内寂然无声，我能听见花园里鸟儿的鸣唱和它们拍打翅膀的沙沙声。只要我愿意，我可以这样坐一整天，直到夜深人静。

我的房子如此完美，因为我非常幸运地找到了一位合意的管家。她是一位语调轻柔、步履轻盈的中年妇女，她身体强健，心灵手巧，足以提供我所需要的一切服务，而且也可以与我做伴，使我不必再害怕孤单。她通常很早就起床了，等到我吃早餐的时候，除了加调料之外，几乎就没有什么事情可做了。我没怎么听到过杯盘碰撞发出的脆响，更不用说关闭门窗的声音了。啊，多么幸福的宁静啊！

不可能有人来拜访我，我也从未想过去拜访别人。我还要给一个朋友回信，或许我会在睡前写这封信，也可能会留到明天早晨再说。只有在心情很好的时候，我才会给朋友写信。我还没有看报纸，通常我都把读报时间安排在散步归来、身体疲倦的时候——看看这个喧闹的世界在上演着什么好戏，人们又发现了哪些新的自我折磨的方法，有什么新形式的无聊的争斗，发生了什么新的险情与纠纷。对我来说，这些只是一种消遣，我不会在清晨头脑清醒的时候，去看这些可悲、愚蠢的东西。

我的房子如此完美，因为它的大小恰好足够使家中的环境被布置得井然有序，而且室内刚好有一块富余的空间，正是这里让整个居室更显舒适。房子结构合理，木工活儿和涂抹灰浆的做工都表明，建造房子的那个时代要比现在更加从容、诚实。我脚下的楼梯不会发出吱吱嘎嘎的声音；我不会遭到寒风毫不客气的侵袭；开关窗户的时候，不会使我感到肌肉酸痛。至于墙纸的颜色



和图案这样的小事,我承认自己并不太关心,只要墙壁看起来不惹人生厌,我就心满意足了。对于一个家来说,最重要的就是舒适。如果资金充裕,而且有耐心、有眼光的话,你也可以在细节上美化一番。

这间小小的书房在我的眼中美好至极,主要因为它是我的家。我大半生都无家可归。我在许多地方居住过,有些地方让我感到厌恶,有些地方让我非常满意,但没有一处能够给予我那种家的安全感。那时的我,随时都可能遭逢厄运或陷入缺衣少食的窘境。我一直都在心中对自己说:有一天,我可能也会有一个家。但随着日子一天天过去,这个“可能”在我心中也变得越来越沉重了,当命运垂青于我的时候,我已经快要放弃这个希望了。现在,我终于得偿所愿,有了自己的家。当我将一本新书放到书架上时,我说:待在那里吧,我会时时来看你的。那样的时刻,一种欣喜之情使我激动不已。根据租约,我可以拥有这所房子二十年。我当然不会如此长寿,但即使我能活到那时候,我也有足够的钱来支付日后的房租及维持衣食住行。

世界上免不了有一些一生都与幸运之光无缘的不幸之人,我对他们满怀同情。我很想在新的祈祷词中加上这样一句:“为大城市里的所有居民,尤其是为那些住在租借房、寄宿处、公寓中的人,以及每一位因穷困或愚蠢而被迫以脏污之处为家的人。”

我思索着斯多葛派哲学所提倡的高尚品德,但却一无所获。我知道,在这短暂的生命历程中,为了寻找一处栖身之所而烦恼,是非常愚蠢的行为。

上帝的目光所及之地，
都是智者的避风港湾与逍遥乐土。

然而，我一直都崇尚远古的智慧。在哲学家那句句深入人心的话语中，在诗人的黄金准则中，我发现一切都那么美好；但我永远无法达到那样的境界。假装拥有自己无力具备的美德，对我有什么益处呢？对于我来说，居住地点及生活方式具有最重要的意义；我要坦白承认，那就是我的目标。我从来没有考虑过什么四海为家。只要一想到要在英国以外的地方结束生命的旅程，我就会感到不寒而栗。英格兰是我选择的居住之所，这里就是我的家。

* * *

The exquisite quiet of this room! I have been sitting in utter idleness, watching the sky, viewing the shape of golden sunlight upon the carpet, which changes as the minutes pass, letting my eye wander from one framed print to another, and along the ranks of my beloved books. Within the house nothing stirs. In the garden I can hear singing of birds, I can hear the rustle of their wings. And thus, if it please me, I may sit all day long and into the profounder quiet of the night.

My house is perfect. By great good fortune I have found a housekeeper no less to my mind, a low-voiced, light-footed woman of discreet age, strong and deft enough to render me all the service I require, and not afraid of solitude. She rises very early. By my breakfast-time there remains little to be done under the roof save dressing of meals. Very rarely do I hear even a clink of crockery; never the closing of a door or window. Oh, blessed silence!

There is not the remotest possibility of any one's calling upon me, and that I should call upon any one else is a thing undreamed of. I owe a letter to a friend; perhaps I shall write it before bedtime; perhaps I shall leave it till tomorrow morning. A letter of friendship should never be written save when the spirit prompts. I have not yet looked at the newspaper. Generally I leave it till I come back tired from my walk; it amuses me then to see what the noisy world is doing, what new self-torments men have discovered, what new forms of vain toil, what new occasions of peril and of strife. I grudge to give the first freshness of the morning mind to things so sad and foolish.

My house is perfect. Just large enough to allow the grace of order in domestic circumstance; just that superfluity of intramural space to lack which is to be less than at one's ease. The fabric is sound; the work in wood and plaster tells of a more leisurely

and a more honest age than ours. The stairs do not creak under my step; I am waylaid by no unkindly draught; I can open or close a window without muscle-ache. As to such trifles as the tint and device of wall-paper, I confess my indifference; be the walls only unobtrusive and I am satisfied. The first thing in one's home is comfort; let beauty of detail be added if one has the means, the patience, the eye.

To me this little book-room is beautiful, and chiefly because it is home. Through the greater part of life I was homeless. Many places have I inhabited, some which my soul loathed and some which pleased me well; but never till now with that sense of security which makes a home. At any moment I might have been driven forth by evil hap, by nagging necessity. For all that time did I say within myself: Someday, perchance, I shall have a home; yet the "perchance" had more and more of emphasis as life went on, and at the moment when fate was secretly smiling on me, I had all but abandoned hope. I have my home at last. When I place a new volume on my shelves, I say: Stand there whilst I have eyes to see you; and a joyous tremor thrills me. This house is mine on a lease of a score of years. So long I certainly shall not live; but if I did, even so long should I have the wherewithal to pay my rent and buy food.

I think with compassion of the unhappy mortals for whom no such sun will ever rise. I should like to add to the litany a new petition: "For all inhabitants of great towns, and especially for all such as dwell in lodgings, boarding-houses, flats, or any other sordid substitute for home which need or foolishness may have contrived."

In vain I have pondered the stoic virtues. I know that it is folly to fret about the spot of one's abode on this little earth.

*All places that the eye of heaven visits
Are to the wise man ports and happy havens.*

But I have always worshipped wisdom afar off. In the sonorous period of the philosopher, in the golden measure of the poet, I find it of all things lovely. To its possession I shall never attain. What will it serve me to pretend a virtue of which I am incapable? To me the place and manner of my abode is of supreme import; let it be confessed, and there an end of it. I am no cosmopolite. Were I to think I should die away from England, the thought would be dreadful to me. And in England, this is the dwelling of my choice; this is my home.



我并非植物学家,但却一直能在采集花草中找到乐趣。我喜欢遇到自己从未见过的植物,然后求助于书本,以此来认识它,当下一次看到它在路边摇曳时,我就可以叫着它的名字来问候它了。如果这种植物很罕见,那么这个发现会令我更加愉悦。大自然是个伟大的艺术家,以质朴的美感创造出了这些质朴的花,即使是被我们称为杂草的植物,也没有一种人类的语言能够形容出它们的奇妙与美好。这还只是就路人所常见的那些品种而言;稀有的花草则是这位艺术家以非常精妙的手法另行创造出来的,一般生长在隐秘之处。找到它们,便可享受到进入神圣之地的快感,连这种快感也可以让我心生敬畏。

今天我散步行至很远,在路的尽头,我看到了开着白色小花的车叶草。它们生长在一小片幼嫩的桦树丛中。当我长时间地注视着这些花的时候,感受到了它们那优雅细长的枝叶所带给我的喜悦——那闪烁着光芒的滑润质感,那橄榄色的光泽。旁边还有几棵无毛榆树,树皮斑驳,枝杈交错,像是以某种未知文字胡乱涂写的作品,将幼嫩的桦树衬托得更加美丽。

无论漫步多久,我都无所谓。并没有什么事等着我回去处理,也不会有人为我的迟迟不归而焦急不安。小径通幽,春草萋萋,到处充满了春日的气息,我觉得似乎必须沿着在我眼前铺开的每条蜿蜒小径走上一遍。春天使我恢复了遗忘已久的青春活力,我不知疲倦地走着,像个孩子似的对自己唱着一首童年时学过的歌。

这令我想起了一件事。在一个小村庄附近的树林边缘的偏僻处,我遇到了一个十岁左右的小男孩儿,他正靠着树干,把头埋在臂弯里哭泣。我问他发生了什么事,颇费了一番周折之后——他比一个纯粹的乡下孩子要好一些——我才明白了是怎么回事:他的家人让他去还六便士的债,但他却把钱

弄丢了。这个可怜的小家伙当时的心情,简直无异于一个稳重的成年人身处绝境时的痛苦。他一定已经哭了很长时间;他脸上的每一块肌肉都扭曲着,仿佛在经受拷打一样;他的四肢抑制不住地颤抖;他的眼睛和声音都表露出那种只有十恶不赦的罪犯才应该遭受的痛苦。而这一切,只是因为他弄丢了六便士!

我几乎要和他一起流泪了——这是怜悯与激愤的泪水,为此番场景而流。在这样一个无限美好的日子里,当大地和天空赐福于人类的灵魂之际,一个孩子——他的天性本应使他享受到只有孩子才会拥有的快乐——却因为弄丢了六便士而伤心流泪!他很清楚这是一个巨大的损失,他害怕面对父母,但想到给父母带来的伤害,他更加痛苦万分。只是因为路上丢了六便士,便令整个家庭陷入困境!我该如何形容一个存在着这样的事情却自诩“文明”的国家呢?

于是,我把手伸进口袋,创造了一个六便士的奇迹。

我用了半个小时来平复自己的心情。毕竟,为一个人的愚蠢而发怒,或希望他不要如此愚昧,都是毫无用处的。对我来说,那个六便士的奇迹才是件重要的事。唉,我知道有一天我会完全没有这样做的能力,或者为此就要花去一顿饭钱。因此,让我再一次体验这种欣喜和感恩的情怀吧。

* * *

I am no botanist, but I have long found pleasure in herb-gathering. I love to come upon a plant which is unknown to me, to identify it with the help of my book, to greet it by name when next it shines beside my path. If the plant be rare, its discovery gives me joy. Nature, the great artist, makes her common flowers in the common view; no word in human language can express the marvel and the loveliness even of what we call the vulgarest weed, but these are fashioned under the gaze of every passerby. The rare flower is shaped apart, in places secret, in the artist's subtler mood; to find it is to enjoy the sense of admission to a holier precinct. Even in my gladness I am awed.

Today I have walked far, and at the end of my walk I found the little white-flowered woodruff. It grew in a copse of young ash. When I had looked long at the flower, I delighted myself with the grace of the slim trees about it — their shining smoothness, their olive hue. Hard by stood a bush of wych elm; its tettered bark, overlined as if with the character of some unknown tongue, made the young ashes yet more beautiful.

It matters not how long I wander. There is no task to bring me back; no one will be vexed or uneasy, linger I ever so late. Spring is shining upon these lanes and meadows; I feel as if I must follow every winding track that opens by my way. Spring has restored to me something of the long-forgotten vigour of youth; I walk without weariness; I sing to myself like a boy, and the song is one I knew in boyhood.

That reminds me of an incident. Near a hamlet, in a lonely spot by a woodside, I came upon a little lad of perhaps ten years old, who, his head hidden in his arms against a tree trunk, was crying bitterly. I asked him what was the matter, and after a little trouble — he was better than a mere bumpkin — I learned that, having been sent with sixpence to pay a debt, he had lost the money. The poor little fellow was in a state of mind which in a grave man would be called the anguish of despair; he must have been crying for a long time; every muscle in his face quivered as if under torture, his limbs shook; his eyes, his voice, uttered such misery as only the vilest criminal should be made to suffer. And it was because he had lost sixpence!

I could have shed tears with him — tears of pity and of rage at all this spectacle implied. On a day of indescribable glory, when earth and heaven shed benedictions upon the soul of man, a child, whose nature would have bidden him rejoice as only childhood may, wept his heart out because his hand had dropped a sixpenny piece! The loss was a very serious one, and he knew it; he was less afraid to face his parents, than overcome by misery at the thought of the harm he had done them. Sixpence dropped by the wayside, and a whole family made wretched! What are the due descriptive terms for a state of “civilization” in which such a thing as this is possible?

I put my hand into my pocket, and wrought sixpenny-worth of miracle.

It took me half an hour to recover my quiet mind. After all, it is as idle to rage against man's fatuity as to hope that he will ever be less a fool. For me, the great thing was my sixpenny miracle. Why, I have known the day when it would have been beyond my power altogether, or else would have cost me a meal. Wherefore, let me again be glad and thankful.