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ONE AUTUMN NIGHT

M.高爾基作·胡仲持譯

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英漢對照文藝叢刊之一

秋 夜

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前 記

在近代的世界文學中間，再沒有一個名字比麥克沁·高爾基(Maksim Gorky)更響亮了。這一名字在俄語裏有着『最大的苦』的意義。從小生長於工人和農民中間的高爾基，的確是受盡了人世間『最大的苦』的。他那凄苦的生涯使他徹底認識了舊社會所開放的一切美麗的花朵，如法律和道德之類，都是偽善的，騙人的，從而他懷抱了革命者最大的熱情，借文字的藝術對舊社會作着無情的鬥爭。他走着十九世紀以來一切偉大的作家們所走的人道主義的道路，然而由於他那獨特的生活體驗，他對被壓迫者的同情，他對舊社會鬥爭的情緒卻比誰都更深，更高。他的天才的輝煌早就在二十世紀初頭獲得了全世界的公認。十月革命以後，他一方面領導了蘇聯新興作家，盡力於文化建設，一方面約集了全世界最優秀的作家和思想家如蕭伯納、羅曼羅蘭、巴比塞、愛因斯坦等等推展着反法西斯運動；直到他被法西斯爪牙暗殺了為止，他的努力始終不懈，無怪蘇聯人民把他推崇為『革命文學之父』了。

這里所選譯的兩個短篇傑作不過是高爾基一生豐富的著作中間的一鱗一爪，然而從這里卻也多少可以看出那位革命文學家的藝術的造詣和思想的本質來。『秋夜』所刻畫的是一個受虐待的窮苦少女的魂靈。那個少女做着有錢人家的使女，被她那『流氓』型的班夫打得臉上起了烏青的傷疤，而且外衣也被撕破了，回不得主人家，便淒涼地飄泊在荒蕪的

鼻河的碼頭邊。在一個秋風秋雨的晚上，她偶然和一個異鄉來的窮苦少年——作者用着第一人稱——會面了。於是兩人在一隻翻轉的小木船底下躲避着風雨。那少女原是抱着憎惡一切男性的心理的，可是漸漸兒愛憐那索索抖着的沉默的少年了。她甚至把自己的身體貼近他，使他暖和一些。這一個粗獷的羅曼斯經過了那樣細膩生動的描寫，淨化而為純正的藝術品了。『她的情人』描寫着一個失戀的醜女子的一種變態心理。她幻想自己有一個情人在遠地，請住在她鄰室的一個大學生代寫了一封情書給那假想的情人，再請他替那假想的情人寫一封回信給她，目的無非是要追求幻想中的戀愛生活的愉快。這裏的女主人公和『秋夜』裏的都是社會上認為道德有些問題的墮落的女子。然而作者對於她們的深摯的同情卻使這類故事最易沾染的輕薄的情味，完全排除了。

爲了讀者加深了解高爾基的方便，現在把高爾基的生平概括地來敘述一番：

高爾基本名彼什可夫 (Alexey Maximovich Peshkov)，生於中部俄羅斯的尼斯尼·諾佛哥洛特。(Nizhni-Novgorod) 他的父親是做室內裝飾生意的，他的母親則是染坊伙計的女兒。高爾基四歲時候喪掉了父親，他的母親便再嫁了。這不幸的少年被留養在他的外祖父家裏。那外祖父送他進了小學校，但他在那里只讀了五個月書就書上天花症輟學了。過後他的母親害肺病去世，外祖父也破了產。九歲，他到一家皮鞋店裏當學徒，過了兩個月，便因熱水燙壞手歇了生意。等到手弄好了，他的遠親，一個神像畫家便收了他做徒弟。因爲受着虐待的緣故，他逃出去，做輪船上的廚子的徒弟。這廚子原是皇宮衛隊的退職士官，收藏着不少的小說書。高爾基拿了那些書一本一本讀着，從此養成了文學的興味。

十五歲，他到喀山（Kazan）去，因為貧窮的緣故，達不到進學校求學的目的，只得在一家麵包廠充當三盧布一月的小夥計。不久，他同他的友人夏里賓進一所小劇場做音樂隊隊員。但這也只是暫時的事。後來他跑過許多地方做着蘋果筒，鐵路職員，律師書記，製鹽廠及製鐵廠職工。一八九二年，他在蒂弗里斯（Tiflis）住下。那時候他二十三歲，開始文學創作。他的處女作瑪加·丘特拉（Makar Chudra）在高加索日報上發表後，便即得到了文壇的好評。此後，他移居下那甫哥羅，繼續寫作，把他的作品發表於伏爾加報和俄國新聞。

一八九三年他和當時俄國文壇巨子科洛連珂（V.G. Korolenko）相識。科洛連珂賞識着高爾基的文學天才，將高爾基所作的契爾卡士（Chekash）登載於他所主編的文藝雜誌，一八九八年又把高爾基所作的短篇小說編成兩卷出版。因此高爾基是深深地感激着科洛連珂的提攜的。『我的第一個教師是廚子斯莫利，第二個教師是律師拉寧，第三個教師是加留裘努，第四個教師是科洛連珂。』高爾基這樣地自白着。

高爾基在文學上的成功是可驚的。二十世紀初頭，除卻托爾斯泰以外，他是最受歡迎的作家了。國際間的聲名也傳播得很快。一九〇一年，巴黎舉行着雨果（Victor Hugo 1802—1885）百年祭，當時充任着俄國文壇的代表而受招待的就是高爾基。他在德國尤其受着非常的推重。一九〇三年，他所作的名劇沈淵竟在柏林接連不斷地開演了五百天。

高爾基的社會革命思想在他一切作品裏表現得很分明，而一九〇一年所作的海燕之歌尤其可說是俄國大革命的預言。他實際參加着革命，他的著作收入有一大部分是幫助着革命運動的。

一九〇五年，他因參加革命運動的緣故被捕，監禁於佩特羅利佛得克要塞。美德各大報的主筆爲此聯名電請俄皇將高爾基開釋。出獄後，他漫遊美國，爲革命運動募款。後來轉到意大利，在那不勒斯附近的喀普里（Capri）島上住下，療養肺病。一九一四年，他回到莫斯科。在一九一七年的革命中，他成了文化方面的領導者。一九三二年十月蘇聯全國爲他文學生活四十年紀念舉行空前盛大的慶祝。一九三七年他在病中爲希特勒的第五縱隊所謀殺，成了社會主義革命和反法西斯運動的殉道者。

在當今全世界反法西斯侵略的白熱化的鬥爭中間，這位殉道者的名字是愈益顯得煥赫了。

——譯者

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ed to regard my fellow-travelers as a
 one very...
 ONE-AUTUMN-NIGHT:
 of the...
 One in the Autumn I happened to be in a
 very unpleasant and inconvenient position. In the
 town where I had just arrived and where I know
 not at all, I found myself without a farthing in
 my pocket and without a night's lodging.
 of Having sold during the first few days every
 part of my costume, without which it was still
 possible to go about, I passed from the town into
 the quarter called "Ysta," where were the steamer
 shops... a quarter which during the naviga-
 tion season, for many years, was a laborious
 life, but now was silent and deserted, for we
 were in the last days of October.
 out Dragging my feet along the moist sand, and
 obstinately scrutinizing it with the desire to dis-
 cover in any sort of fragment of food I wan-
 dered among the deserted buildings and
 and thought how good it would be to
 in our present state of culture, hunger of the



(南)

mind is more quickly satisfied than hunger of the body. You wander about the streets, you are surrounded by buildings not bad-looking from the outside and—you may safely say it—not so badly furnished inside, and the sight of them may excite within you stimulating ideas about architecture, hygiene, and many other wise and high-flying subjects. You may meet warmly and neatly dressed folks—very polite, and turning away from you tactfully, not wishing offensively to notice the lamentable fact of your existence. Well, well, the mind of a hungry man is always better nourished and healthier than the mind of a well-fed man, and there you have a situation from which you may draw a very ingenious conclusion in favor of the ill fed.

The evening was approaching, the rain was falling, and the wind blew violently from the north. It whistled in the empty booths and shops, blew into the plastered window-panes of the taverns, and whipped into foam the waveslets of the river which splashed noisily on the grassy shore, casting high their white crests, and scattering another into the distance, and heaping

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impetuously shoved one another's shoulders. It
 seemed as if the river felt the proximity of winter,
 and was running as random away from the fet-
 ters of ice which the north wind might well have
 flung upon her that very night. The sky was
 heavy and dark; down from it swept incessantly
 scarcely visible drops of rain, and the melancholy
 elegy in nature all around me was emphasized by
 a couple of battered and misshapen willow trees
 and a boat's bottom upwards, that was fastened
 to their roots. One end had worked its way up and
 the other overturned canoe with its battered keel
 and the miserable old trees filled by the cold wind
 — everything around me was bankrupt, barren,
 and dead, and the sky flowed with undryable
 tears. Everything around was waste and gloomy
 and it seemed as if everything were dead, leaving
 me alone among the living, and for me also a
 cold death waited. I was then eighteen years old —
 now I was then eighteen years old — a good time!
 and I walked and walked along the cold wet sand,
 making my shattering teeth warble in honor of
 cold and hunger, when suddenly, as I was care-
 fully searching for something to eat behind one of

The empty crates; I perceived behind it, crouching on the ground, a figure in woman's clothes dark with the rain and clinging fast to her stooping shoulders. Standing over her, I watched to see what she was doing. It appeared that she was digging a trench in the sand with her hands—digging away under one of the crates. I cried out: "Why are you doing that?" I asked, crouching down on my heels quite close to her. She gave a little scream and was quickly on her legs again. Now that she stood there staring at me with her wide open green eyes full of terror, I perceived that it was a girl of my own age, with a very pleasant face embellished unfortunately by three large blue marks. This spoiled her, although these blue marks had been distributed with a remarkable sense of proportion—one at a time, and all were of equal size—two under the eyes, and one a little bigger on the forehead just over the bridge of the nose. This symmetry was evidently the work of an artist well-versed in the business of spoiling the human physiognomy. The girl looked at me and the terror in her eyes gradually died out. She shook the sand from

her hands, adjusted her cotton head-gear, cowered
down, and said:

"I suppose you, too, want something to eat?"

"Dig away then! My hands are tired." Over there

she nodded her head in the direction of a

booth— "there is bread for certain... and sausage,

too.... That booth is still carrying on business."

I began to dig. She, after waiting a little

and looking at me, sat down beside me and began

to help me.

We worked in silence. I cannot say now

whether I thought at that moment of the

criminal code, of morality, of proprietorship,

and all the other things about which, in the

opinion of many experienced persons, one ought

to think every moment of one's life. Wishing to

keep as close to the truth as possible, I must

confess that apparently I was so deeply engaged

in digging under the crate that I completely

forgot about everything else except this one

thing: What could be inside that crate?

The evening drew on. The gray, mouldy,

cold fog grew thicker and thicker around us.
The waves roared with a hollow sound than

before, and the rain pattered down on the boards of that crate more loudly and more frequently. Some where or other the night watchman began springing his rattle.

"Has it got a bottom or not?" softly inquired my assistant. I did not understand what she was talking about, and I kept silence.

"I say, has the crate got a bottom? If it has we shall try in vain to break into it. Here we are digging a trench, and we may, after all, come upon nothing but solid boards. How shall we take them off? Better smash the lock; it is a wretched lock."

Good ideas rarely visit the heads of women, but, as you see, they do visit them sometimes. I have always valued good ideas, and have always tried to utilize them as far as possible.

Having found the lock, I tugged at it and wrenched off the whole thing. My accomplice immediately stooped down and wriggled like a serpent into the gaping open four-cornered cover of the crate whence she called to me approvingly, in a low tone:

"You're a brick!"

Nowadays a little crumb of praise from a woman is dearer to me than a whole dithyramb from a man, even though he be more eloquent than all the ancient and modern orators put together. Then, however, I was less amiably disposed than I am now, and, paying no attention to the compliment of my comrade, I asked her curtly and anxiously:

"Is there anything?"

In a monotonous tone she set about calculating our discoveries.

"A basketful of bottles, thick furs, a sunshade, an iron nail,"

All this was ungrateful, I felt that my hopes had vanished, but suddenly she exclaimed

vivaciously:

"Aha! here it is!"

"What?"

"Bread, a loaf, it's only wet, we take it!"

A loaf flew to my feet and after it herself, my valiant comrade. I had already bitten off a morsel, stuffed it in my mouth and was chewing it

“Come, give me some food!” And we
must stay here. Where shall we go? She
looked inquiringly about on all sides. It was
dark, wet, and boisterous.
“Look! there’s an upset canoe yonder... let
us go there.”
“Let us go then!” And off we set, dem-
olishing our booty as we went, and filling our
mouths with large portions of it. The rain
grew more violent, the river roared, from some-
where or other resounded a prolonged whistle—
just as if someone great who feared nobody
was whistling down all earthly institutions and
along with them this horrid autumnal wind and
upstarts horses. This whistling made my heart
throb painfully, in spite of which I greedily
went on eating, and in this respect the girl,
walking on my left, kept even pace with me.
“What do they call you?” I asked her—
why I know not.
“Natasha,” she answered shortly, muttering
loudly.
I stared at her. My heart ached within me,
and then I stared into the mist before me.

it seemed to me as if the clinical countenance
of my Destiny was smiling at me enigmatically
and softly, amidst all the noise and
The rain scoured the planks of the skiff
incessantly, and its soft patter induced me
melancholy thoughts, and the wind whistled as it
flowed down into the boat's battered bottom
through the rift, whence some loose splinters of
wood were rattling together—a disquieting and
depressing sound. The waves of the river were
splashing on the shore, and sounded so mono-
tonous and hopeless, just as if they were telling
something unbearably dull and heavy, which was
driving them into utter disgust, something from
which they wanted to run away and yet were
obliged to talk about all the same. The sound
of the rain blended with their splashing, and a
long-drawn sigh seemed to be floating above the
overturned skiff—the endless, laboring sigh of
the earth, injured and exhausted by the eternal
changes, from the bright and warm summer to
the cold, misty and damp autumn. The wind
blew continually toward the desolate shore and the

foaming river mumbled and sang its melancholy songs...

Our position beneath the shelter of the cliff was utterly devoid of comfort; it was narrow and damp; tiny cold drops of rain dribbled through the damaged bottom; gusts of wind penetrated. We sat in silence and shivered with cold. I remembered that I wanted to go to sleep. Natasha leaned her back against the hull of the boat and curled herself up into a tiny ball, embracing her knees with her hands, and resting her chin upon them; she stared doggedly at the river with wide open eyes; for the pale patch of her face they seemed immense, because of the blue marks below them. She never moved, and this immobility and silence—I felt it—gradually produced within me a terror of my neighbor; I wanted to talk to her, but I knew not how to begin.

It was she herself who spoke.
 "What a cursed thing life is!" she exclaimed plainly, abstractedly, and in a tone of deep conviction. But this was no complaint. In these words

there was too much of indifference for a complaint. This simple soul, thought according to her understanding—thought and proceeded to form a certain conclusion which she expressed aloud, and which I could not confute for fear of contradicting myself. Therefore I was silent, and she, as if she had not noticed me, continued to sit there immoveable.

“Even if we croaked, what then?”

Natasha began again, this time quietly and reflectively, and still there was not one note of complaint in her words. It was plain that this person, in the course of her reflections on life, was regarding her own case, and arrived at the conviction that in order to preserve herself from the mockeries of life, she was not in a position to do anything else but simply “croak”—to use her own expression.

The clearness of this line of thought was inexpressibly sad and painful to me, and I felt that if I kept silence any longer I was really bound to weep.... And it would have been shameful to have done this before a woman, especially as she was not weeping herself. I resolved to

... speak to her.

Who was it that knocked you about?" I asked. For the moment I could not think of anything more sensible or more delicate.

"Pashka did it all," she answered in a dull and level tone.

"And who is he?"

"My lover..... He was a baker."

"Did he beat you often?"

"Whenever he was drunk he beat me. Often!"

And suddenly, turning towards me, she began to talk about herself, Pashka, and their mutual relations. He was a baker with red mustaches and played very well on the banjo. He came to see her and greatly pleased her, for he was a merry chap and wore nice clean clothes. He had a vest which cost fifteen rubles and boots with dress tops. For these reasons she had fallen in love with him; and he became her creditor. And when he became her creditor, he made it his business to take away from her the money which her other friends gave to her for bouquets, and, getting drunk on this money, he would fall to beating her; but that would have been nothing

if he hadn't also begun to "run after" other girls before her very eyes. "Now, wasn't that an insult? I am not worse than the others. Of course that meant that he was laughing at me, the blackguard. The day before yesterday I asked Leye of my mistress to go out for a bit, when to him, and there I found Dinka sitting beside him, drunk. And he too was half seas over. I said, 'You scoundrel, you!' And he gave me a thorough hiding. He kicked me and dragged me by the hair. But that was nothing to what came after. He spoiled everything I had or left me just as I am now. How could I appear before my mistress? He spoiled everything, my dress and my jacket too—it was quite a new one; I gave a fiver for it—and tore my kerchief from my head. Oh, Lord! What will become of me now?" She suddenly whined in a lamentable, overstrained voice. The wind howled, and became ever colder and more boisterous. Again my teeth began to dance up and down, and she huddled up to avoid the cold, pressed as closely to me as she

could, so that I could see the gleam of her eyes through the darkness. "What wretches all you men are! I'd burn you all in an oven; I'd cut you in pieces; if any one of you was dying I'd spit in his mouth, and not pity him a bit. Mean skunks! You wheedle and wheedle; you wag your tails like cringing dogs, and we fools give ourselves up to you, and it's all up with us! Immediately you trample us underfoot.... Miserable loafers!" She cursed us up and down, but there was no vigor, no malice, no hatred of these miserable loafers in her cursing that I could hear. The tone of her language by no means corresponded with its subject-matter, for it was calm enough, and the gamut of her vocs was terribly poor. Yet all this made a stronger impression on me than the most eloquent and convincing pessimistic books and speeches, of which I had read a good many and which I still read to this day. And this, you see, was because the agony of a dying person is much more natural and violent than the most minute and picturesque hiss-

criptions of death. Cold oil flew into my eyes.

I felt really wretched—more from cold than from the words of my neighbor. I groaned softly and ground my teeth.

Almost at the same moment I felt two little arms about me—one of them touched my neck and the other lay upon my face—and at the same time an anxious, gentle, friendly voice uttered the question: "What ails you?"

I was ready to believe that someone else was asking me this and not Natasha, who had just declared that all men were scoundrels and expressed a wish for their destruction. But she it was and now she began speaking quickly and hurriedly. "What ails you, dear? Are you cold? Are you frozen? Ah, what a lone you are, sitting there so silent like a little owl! Why, you should have told me long ago that you were cold. Come, lie down on the ground—stretch yourself out and I will lie with you. How's that? Now put your arms round me. Tighter! How's that? You shall be warm very soon now."

.....And then we'll lie back ~~to~~ back. The night will pass so quickly, see if it won't! I say, have you ~~for~~ been drinking? Turned out of your place, eh?..... It doesn't matter. And she comforted me. She encouraged me. May I be thrice accursed! What a world of irony was in this single fact for me! Just imagine! Here was I, seriously occupied at this very time with the destiny of humanity, thinking of the reorganization of the social system, of political revolutions, reading all sorts of devilishly wise books whose abysmal profundity was certainly unfathomable by their very authors. At this very time, I say, I was trying with all my might to make of myself "a potent, active social force." It even seemed to me that I had partially accomplished my object; anyhow, at this time, in my ideas about myself, I had gone so far as to recognize that I had an exclusive right to exist, that I had the necessary greatness to deserve to live my life. And that I was fully competent to play a great historical part therein. And a woman was now warping

me with her body, a wretched, battered, hunted creature, who had no place and no value in life, and whom I had never thought of helping till she helped me herself, and whom I really would not have known how to help in any way even if the thought of it had occurred to me.

Ah! I was ready to think that all this was happening to me in a dream—in a disagreeable, an oppressive dream.

But, ugh! it was impossible for me to think that, for cold drops of rain were dripping down upon me, the woman was pressing close to me, her warm breath was fanning my face, and—despite a slight odor of vodka—it did me good. The wind howled and raged, the rain smote upon the skiff, the waves splashed, and both of us, embracing each other convulsively, nevertheless shivered with cold. All this was only too real, and I am certain that nobody ever dreamed such an oppressive and horrid dream as that reality.

But Natasha was talking all the time of something or other, talking kindly and sympathetically, as only women can talk. Beneath the

influence of her voice and kindly words, a little fire began to burn up within me, and something inside my heart thawed in consequence.

Then tears poured from my eyes like a hail-torm, washing away from my heart muck that was evil, much that was stupid, much sorrow and dirt, which had fastened upon it before that night. Natasha comforted me.

"Come, come, that will do, little one! Don't take on! That'll do! God will give you another chance.....you will right yourself and stand in your proper place again.....and it will be...I right.....?"

And she kept kissing me.....many kisses did she give me.....burning kisses.....and all for nothing.....

Those were the first kisses from a woman that had ever been bestowed upon me, and they were the best kisses too, for all the subsequent kisses cost me frightfully dear, and really gave me nothing at all in exchange.

"Come, don't take on so, funny one! I'll manage for you tomorrow if you cannot find a place." Her quiet, persuasive whispering sound-

ed in my ears as if it came through a dream...

There we lay till dawn....

And when the dawn came, we crept from behind the skiff and went into the town.... Then we took friendly leave of each other and never met again, although for half a year I searched in every hole and corner for that kind Natasha, with whom I spent the autumn night just described.

If she be already dead—and well for her, if it were so—may she rest in peace! And if she be alive.....still I say “Peace to her soul!” And may the consciousness of her fall never enter her soul...for that would be a superfluous and fruitless suffering if life is to be lived....

HER LOVE.

An acquaintance of mine once told me the following story.

When I was a student at Moscow I happened to live alongside one of those ladies whose reputation is questionable. She was a Pole, and they called her Teresa. She was a tallish, powerfully-built brunette, with black, bushy eyebrows and a large coarse face as if carved out by a hatchet—the bestial gleam of her dark eyes, her thick bass voice, her cabman-like gait and her immense muscular vigour, worthy of a fishwife, inspired me with horror. I lived on the top flight and her garret was opposite to mine. I never left my door open when I knew her to be at home. But this, after all, was a very rare occurrence. Some times I chanced to meet her on the staircase or in the yard, and she would smile upon me with a smile which seemed to me to be sly and cynical. Occasionally, I saw her drunk, with

heavy eyes, tangled hair, and a particularly hideous grin. On such occasions she would speak to me.

"How d'ye do, Mr. Student!" and her stupid laugh would still further intensify my loathing of her. I should have liked to have changed my quarters in order to have avoided such encounters and greetings; but my little chamber was a nice one, and there was such a wide view from the window, and it was always so quiet in the street below—so I endured.

And one morning I was sprawling on my couch, trying to find some sort of excuse for not attending my class, when the door opened, and the bass voice of Teresa the loathsome resounded from my threshold:

"Good health to you, Mr. Student!"

"What do you want?" I said. I saw that her face was confused and supplicatory..... It was a very unusual sort of face for her.

"Sir! I want to beg a favour of you. Will you grant it me?"

I lay there silent, and thought to myself:

"Gracious!... Courage, my boy!"

"I want to send a letter home, that's what it is," she said; her voice was beseeching, soft, timid.

"Duce take you," I thought; but up I jumped, sat down at my table, took a sheet of paper, and said:

"Come here, sit down, and dictate!"

She came, sat down very gingerly on a chair, and looked at me with a guilty look.

"Well, to whom do you want to write?"

"To Boleslav Kashput, at the town of Sziptziana, on the Warsaw Road....."

"Well, fire away!"

"My dear Boleslav... my darling... my faithful lover. May the Mother of God protect thee! Thou heart of gold, why hast thou not written for such a long time to thy sorrowing little dove, Teresa?"

I very nearly burst out laughing. "A sorrowing little dove!" more than five feet high, with fists a stone and more in weight, and as black a face as if the little dove had lived all its life in a chimney, and had never once washed itself! Restraining myself somehow, I asked:

"Who is this Boles?"
"Boles, Mr. Student," she said, as if offended with me for blundering over the name, "he is Boles—my young man."

"Young man!"

"Why are you so surprised, sir? Cannot I, a girl, have a young man?"

She? A girl? Well!

"Oh, why not?" I said. "All things are possible. And has he been your young man long?"

"Six years."

"Oh, ho!" I thought. "Well, let us write your letter"

And I tell you plainly that I would willingly have changed places with this Boles if his fair correspondent had been not Teresa but something less than she.

"I thank you most heartily, sir, for your kind service," said Teresa to me, with a curtsey. "Perhaps I can show you some service, eh?"

"No, I most humbly thank you all the same."

"Perhaps, sir, your shirts or your trousers may want a little mending?"

I felt that this mastodon in petticoats had

made me grow quite red with shame, and I told her pretty sharply that I had no need whatever of her services.

She departed.

A week or two passed away. It was evening. I was sitting at my window whistling and thinking of some expedient for enabling me to get away from myself. I was bored; the weather was dirty. I didn't want to get out, and out of sheer ennui I began a course of self-analysis and reflection. This also was dull enough work, but I didn't care about doing anything else. Then the door opened. Heaven be praised! Some one came in.

"Oh, Mr. Student, you have no pressing business, I hope?"

"It was Teresa. Humph!"

"No. What is it?"

"I was going to ask you, sir, to write me another letter."

"Very well! To Boles, eh?"

"No, this time it is from him."

"Wha-at?"

"Stupid that I am! It is not for me, Mr.

Student, I beg your pardon. It is for a friend of mine, that is to say, not a friend but an acquaintance a man acquaintance. He has a sweetheart just like me here, Teresa. That's how it is. Will you, write a letter to this Teresa?"

I looked at her—her face was troubled, her fingers were trembling. I was a bit fogged at first—and then I guessed how it was.

"Look here, my lady," I said, "there are no Boleses or Teresas at all, and you've been telling me a pack of lies. Don't you come sneaking about me any longer. I have no wish whatever to cultivate your acquaintance. Do you understand?"

And suddenly she grew strangely terrified and distraught; she began to shift from foot to foot without moving from the place, and spluttered comically, as if she wanted to say something and couldn't. I waited to see what would come of all this, and I saw and felt that, apparently, I had made a great mistake in suspecting her of wishing to draw me from the path of righteousness. It was evidently something very different.

"Mr. Student!" she began, and suddenly, waving her hand, she turned abruptly towards the door and went out. I remained with a very unpleasant feeling in my mind. I listened. Her door was flung violently to—plainly the poor wench was very angry.....I thought it over, and resolved to go to her, and, inviting her to come in here, write everything she wanted.

I entered her apartment. I looked round. She was sitting at the table, leaning on her elbows, with her head in her hands.

"Listen to me," I said.

Now, whenever I come to this point in my story, I always feel horribly awkward and idiotic. Well, well!

"Listen to me." I said.

She leaped from her seat, came towards me with flashing eyes, and laying her hands on my shoulders, began to whisper, or rather to hum in her peculiar bass voice:

"Look you, now! It's like this. The Boles at all, and there's no Teresa either. But what's that to you? Is it a hard thing for you to draw your pen over paper? Eh? Ah, and

you, too! Still such a little fair-haired boy! There's nobody at all, neither Boles nor Teresa, only me. There you have it, and much good may it do you!"

"Pardon me!" said I, altogether flabbergasted by such a reception, "what is it all about? There's no Boles, you say?"

"No. So it is."

"And no Teresa either?"

"And no Teresa. I am Teresa."

I didn't understand it at all. I fixed my eyes upon her, and tried to make out which of us was taking leave of his or her senses. But she went again to the table, searched about for something, came back to me, and said in an offended tone:

"If it was so hard for you to write to Boles, look, there's your letter, take it! Others will write for me."

I looked. In her hand was my letter to Boles. Phew!

"Listen, Teresa! What is the meaning of all this? Why must you get others to write for you when I have already written it, and you haven't

sent it?"

"Sent it where?"

"Why, to this—Boles."

"There's no such person."

I absolutely did not understand it. There was nothing for me but to spit and go. Then she explained.

"What is it?" she said, still offended. "There's no such person, I tell you," and she extended her arms as if she herself did not understand why there should be no such persons. "But I wanted him to be..... Am I then not a human creature like the rest of them? Yes, yes, I know, I know, of course..... Yet no harm was done to any one by my writing to him that I can see....."

"Pardon me—to whom?"

"To Boles, of course."

"But he doesn't exist."

"Alas! alas! But what if he doesn't? He doesn't exist but he *might*! I write to him, and it looks as if he did exist. And Teresa—that's me, and he replies to me, and then I write to him again....."

I understood at last. And I felt so sick, so

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miserable, so ashamed, somehow. Alongside of me, not three yards away, lived a human creature who had nobody in the world to treat her kindly, affectionately, and this human being had invented a friend for herself!

"Look, now! you wrote me a letter to Boles, and I gave it to some one else to read it to me; and when they read it to me I listened and fancied that Boles was there. And I asked you to write me a letter from Boles to Teresa—that is to me. When they write such a letter for me, and read it to me, I feel quite sure that Boles is there. And life grows easier for me in consequence."

"Deuce take you for a blackhead!" said I to myself when I heard this.

And from thenceforth, regularly, twice a week, I wrote a letter to Boles, and an answer from Boles to Teresa. I wrote these answers well. She, of course, listened to them, and wept like anything; roared, I should say, with her bass voice. And in return for my thus moving her to tears by real letters from the imaginary Boles, she began to mend the holes I had in my socks.

shirts, and other articles of clothing. Subsequently, about three months after this history began, they put her in prison for something or other. No doubt by this time she is dead.

My acquaintance shock (the best) from his cigarette, looked pensively up at the sky and then concluded: "Not for the sake and name of Jesus I beg of you! Well, well, if there were a human creature who had tasted of bitter things, the more it is agitated by the sweet things of life. And we, wrapped round in the rags of our virtues, and regarding others through the mist of our self-sufficiency, and persuaded of our universal impeccability, do not understand this.

And the whole thing turns out pretty stupidly—and very cruelly. The fallen classes, we say. And who are the fallen classes? I should like to know? They are, first of all, people with the same bones, flesh, and blood, and nerves as ourselves. We have been told this day after day for ages. And we actually listen—and the devil only knows how hideous the whole thing is. Or are we completely depraved by the loud sermons of humanism? In reality, we also are

fallen folks, and, so far as I can see, very deeply fallen into the abyss of self-sufficiency and the conviction of our own superiority. But enough of this. It is all as old as the hills--so old that it is a shame to speak of it. Very old indeed--yes, that's what it is!

秋 夜

有一年秋天，我落到了很尷尬的地步，在一個熟人也沒有的我初到的市鎮里，我靠得口袋裏沒有一個錢，晚上又沒有宿處。

頭幾天，把我那一部分可穿可不穿的衣服全都賣掉了，我從那市鎮走到叫做 YSTE 的區域去，那地方有着好些輪船碼頭，在通航季節充溢着嘈雜的勞工生活，但是當時卻在十月盡頭，沈寂而且荒涼了。

沿着潮潤的沙地慢騰騰走去，兩眼細看着地面，只想在沙地發現一些食物的殘片，我這樣地一個子飄泊在荒涼的房屋和貨棧中間，心裏想着，如果有一頓飽飯可以吃那就多麼好！

在我們現今的文化狀態之下，精神的飢餓可以比肉體的飢餓滿足得更快些。你在街上踟躕着，周圍是各式各樣的房屋，這些房屋從外邊看去都是不壞的——你又儘可以說——裏面的陳設也都並不怎麼壞。這些房屋的光景會在你內心中激發起關於建築，衛生及其他許多聰明的高尚的問題的新鮮澀刺的思想來。你會遇到衣服穿得溫暖整潔的人們——全都很有文雅，一看見你就伶俐地別轉頭，不肯發心注意一下你的存在這一個淒涼的事實。哪！哪！俄人的心總比猶人的心更充實更健康；你這才把握了一種風勢，從這情勢你可以引出同情於俄人的真率的結論來。

夜近來了，雨下着，北風猛烈地刮着。它在空落落的攤棚和店鋪裏，哨着，它吹進酒館的玻璃窗去，它又把河裏的

細波蕩漾了回去。那裏翻滾着幾塊地覆沒在溪灘上，把白色的浪花發得最高的，一個接着一個同樣驕的躍處奔跑着；這個從那個肩上升過過去，那河彷彿感到了寒爽的臨近似的大概亂地跑着，要逃避當晚的颶風也許會給她套上的那些冰的鐵絲網天空陰鬱着，雨從雲底不住地灑下幾乎看不見的小雨點來，而使我周圍自然界的悲涼清味加重的則是兩棵傾斜的枯敗的柳樹和繫在它們根腳的一條底部朝天的小船。

『那條體格歪斜的翻轉的木船，和給冷風割斷過的兩棵萎瘠的老樹——攪周圍的一切破敗了，荒涼了，死了，簡矣空呢，流着不會乾的眼淚……周圍的一切荒廢着，陰鬱着——彷彿是——死了，只留我一個子在荒廢的世界裏，而等候着我的也是冷冷的死。』

『我當得十八歲——太好的際遇！』

『我沿着冷而且濕的沙地一路走，我那副發癢的牙齒，為着滿喉嚨地唱着。緊攙我在一隻空着的柳條箱後面——那兒有着好些柳條箱——搜尋着可吃的東西的時候，忽然在那後頭，我看見了一個形體，蜷伏在地上，穿的是溼透了雨的女人衣服，緊貼着她那俯着的肩膀。我站在她身邊，定睛看着她臉孔處——她舉了兩手在沙裏挖着溝，——在一隻柳條箱底下挖開去。』

『你這麼着幹麼？』我靠緊歪斜的身子，腳跟着力，俯下去問道。

她細細地驚叫了一聲，急忙直起兩條腿來。於是她踏在那兒，呆滯地睜着我。她那雙睜得太暗而灰澀的眼睛充滿了恐懼。我着明白還是年紀跟我相仿的少女，生着大副很鮮豔的臉孔，髮辮裝着三個青色的小傷疤。這損壞了她的面貌，可是這些青色的傷疤倒也是用了顯著的整齊——這副

着，大小都一樣——兩個在兩隻眼睛底下，略略大些的一個，在恰恰鼻梁上頭的額角。這一種對稱美分明是精於毀損人的面相的藝術家的創作。

那少女對我看了會，她那雙眼睛裏的恐怖漸漸兒消失了……她抖去了手上的沙，把她那布頭帕整一整，俯着頭說道：

『我想你也要找些東西吃吃罷？那麼，挖掘開去！我的手乏了。那邊過去』——她朝着一個攤棚點點頭——『有着麵包，預備給一些——臘腸也有……那攤棚還做着生意呢。』

我動手挖掘了，她等了一會，並且對我看了好久之後，在我身邊坐下來，開始來幫助我。

我們默默地工作着。刑法呀，道德呀，所有權呀以及據許多有經驗的人們的意見，人在一生中間每時每刻都應該想一想的其他問題呀，當時我可曾想到過麼？現在我說不出來。力求率真的我應當招認，當時我顯然一心一意在那柳條箱底下挖掘着，除卻『柳條箱裏邊會有什麼？』這一個問題之外，我是把其他一切都忘卻了。

夜色上來了。我們周圍灰濛濛霧騰騰的冷霧愈來愈濃。波浪的吼響比先前更澎湃，雨灑落在柳條箱上，更響亮更急驟。不知什麼地方，更夫開始敲着柝了。

『這有着底板沒有？』我的助手柔聲問道。我沒有懂得她談着什麼，我只是沉默着。

『我說這柳條箱有着底板麼？如果有着底板罷，那我們就是竭力挖進去也不濟事呢。我們在這裏掘着溝，我們也許到頭會碰到硬板的。我們怎麼拿得掉這些板？還是掘斷那部額的好；那是爛鐵了。』

出好的主意在女子們的頭腦裏是很少發生的，但是，你瞧，有的時候倒也發生着；我老是實愛着各種好的主意，老是打算着儘可能來利用那些主意。

我看了那鎖，我用手攥住它，便整個兒把它扭斷了。我的同謀犯當即俯下了身子，像蛇一般鑽進那御條箱上裂着縫的四隻角的蓋子裏去，她從那兒費許着似地低聲對我叫道：

『你真是好漢！』

近來我覺得從一個女子嘴裏發出來的一句半句稱贊的話也比一個男子所高唱的整部熱烈的頌歌來得可貴，即使那男子的口才比古代和近代一切演說家合在一起還好些。然而，當時我的心情卻沒有現在這樣的洒脱，我沒有注意到我的同伴的好話，卻直率而且焦躁地問她道：

『有些什麼東西呢？』

她用單調的聲音開始點算我們所發見的東西。

『一籃瓶子——厚毛皮——一把洋傘——一隻鐵桶。』

這一切都是不能吃的。我覺得我的希望已經消失了……但是忽然間，她却興興頭頭地嚷道：

『啊哈！有了！』

『什麼？』

『麵包……一大塊……只不過濕了……拿着！』

一塊麵包飛到了我的腳邊，接着飛到的是她自己，我那豪放的同伴。我就咬掉了一些兒，塞在我的嘴裏，嚼着……

『拿過來，給我也吃些……我們不可留在這裏了……我們到什麼地方去？』她考察着似地四下裏望望……天暗，地濕，風雨颯颯響着。

『看哪：那邊有着一隻翻轉的小船。我們走過去。』

『那麼，我們去罷！』於是我們出發了，一面走着，一面

瀟瀟着我們的賊物兒，西瓜冬瓜地把它裝滿了我們的嘴巴。忽然，雨不再要繼續，靜靜地，不知從什麼地方傳來了一陣較長的傲慢的嗚哨聲——好像一個無所畏懼的偉大的東西要用嗚哨的聲音把地上的那一切制度，連同這可怕的秋風，以及我們兩個孤獨的葉都壓伏了似的。這嗚哨聲使我們的心苦痛地抖擻着；雖然如此，我卻饒饒地繼續吃著，因而我左邊走着的那少女也保持着跟我齊一的腳步。

葉探家叫你什麼名字？我問着她——這我竟沒有知道。

葉奈太頑固地直截地回答道：一面噴噴地咀嚼着。

我呆滯地望着她：我的心在我內部發痛了；於是，我向前面的霧裏呆滯地望着，我彷彿覺得我的產翁的一副凶相對我神祕地冷冷地微笑着。

雨不住地鞭打着小船的板條，它那柔和的濺聲引起凄涼的思緒來，風唳哨着鑽進了翻轉的船底上的裂縫，那邊有些鬆弛的木片嗚呀嗚地碰着響——一種使人不快使人沈悶的響聲，河的就浪潑潑在沙灘上，發着單調的淒音，彷彿它們告訴着一種惹得它們十分厭惡的非常鬱悶的事情。雨聲和它們的潑潑聲夾雜起來，於是那條翻轉的小船上似乎浮着一種拖長的嘆息——大地的無盡的辛勞的嘆息——原來從晴朗的溫暖的夏天到寒冷多霧而且潮濕的秋天這一種永恆的變化使大地傷損而且累乏了，風繼續地吹過了荒涼的沙灘和滾着白沫的河原——吹唱它那凄清的歌曲……

……在小船的擁蔽之下，我們的地位是全不舒服的；濕淋淋的冷冷的小雨點從破爛的船底滴瀝着；從那兒又鑽進一陣陣的風來。我們默默地坐在那兒冷得索索抖。我想到自己要睡覺了。奈太背靠着船體，把身子縮成一個小圓球。用兩手抱住了兩膝，把下巴嚙在上頭，她睜大了眼睛呆滯地看着

那河，在她那蒼白的臉頰上，兩隻眼睛裡淚水湧流的原因是在眼睛底下青色的瘀痕。她並沒動靜，這一種不動和靜默——我是感覺到了一種漸漸兒在我內心中造成了無窮對於我的驚人的恐怖。我想要對她談話，卻不知怎樣開頭。而此時是她自己開口了。

『生命真是可厭的東西！』她用了深情的聲調明白地抽象地嘆道。

然而這卻不是訴什麼苦。這些話裏含着很多無意訴苦的情味。這單純的魂靈照她的理解思索着——思索着——從而形成着一個結論。這她聰明地表現出來，我呢，因為怕怕怕怕矛盾的緣故，不能加以反駁。因此我沉默着，她彷彿沒有注意到我似的，繼續不動坐在那裏。

『即使我們咕嚕着……那怎麼樣呢……』奈木沙又復開口了，這時候說得安閑而且用心了，但她的話裏還是沒有那種訴苦的調子。顯然這個人在她思慮着生活的問題。一味顧了她自己的事例，她已經到達了一個信念，這就是為了要擺脫生活的嘲弄，她是除了單單的咕嚕咕嚕——用一句她自己的話——之外，不能幹其他的什麼事了。這只——這——這——這思路的清晰，我認爲悲苦得無可形容。我覺得如果我再保持着沉默，我真不啻得哭喪了。然而在那個女子前面哭起來，尤其是當她自己沒有哭喪的時候，是可羞的事。我決定對她講話了。

『是誰打過你？』我問道。我一時忘記了更響亮更宛轉的話來。

『是柏什加。』她用了平淡的聲調回答道。

『他是誰？』

『我的敵人……他是麵包師傅。』

『他時常打你麼？』

『每逢他喝醉了，他就打我……時常打我。』

忽然間，她轉過臉來朝着我，開始談着她自己，柏什加和他們的相互關係了。他是紅鬍子的麵包師傅，五絃琴彈得很好。他曾經來看她，使她很歡喜，因為他是快活的傢伙，穿着整潔的衣服。她有一件價值十五盧布的背心，和一雙頭裏切花的靴子。爲了這些理由，她愛上了他了，於是他成了她的『債主』。等到他做了她的債主，他毫不留情，把別的朋友們給她買糖菓的錢，從她手裏奪了去，他用這錢喝了酒便發脾氣打她了；然而如果他沒有恰恰在她眼前又『追求』起別的女孩子來，那也算不了什麼。

『哪！這可不是侮辱麼？我並不比人家壞。這意思不消說，就是指他這渾蛋笑着我。前天，我向我的女主人請假出來一會，走到他那裏，便見到了狄謨加坐在他旁邊，喝醉了。他呢，也醉得神魂顛倒了。我說道，「你這流氓，你！」於是他把我狠狠地打了一頓。他踢我，扭我的頭髮。然而比起以後的情形來，這還算不得什麼。他弄破了我身上的一切衣服——只留了我現在穿着的這些！我怎麼能再見我女主人的面呢？他弄破了一切……我的上衣和我的外裙——這還全新；我用五盧布買的……他又撕破了我頭上的布帽，……哦，主啊！現在我要落到怎樣地步呢？』她忽然用了淒涼的嗚咽的聲音哭着。

風呼呼地變着，變得更冷更緊了……我的牙齒又復一上一下地跳舞起來，縮着身子避冷的她儘量地偎近我，我這才從暗裏見得到她的兩眼的光芒了。

『你們男子都是糟透了！我恨不得把你們全都放在爐灶裏燒掉，我恨不得把你們切做了碎片。如果你們中間那一個

快死了，我就要在他嘴裏吐一口痰，一點也不憐憫他。卑鄙的男子們……你們說些甜言蜜語，你們像狗一般搖搖尾巴，於是我們這種傻子把自身交給了你們，一切完結了！你們馬上把我們踏在腳底下……你們這些可憐的流氓！』

她徹頭徹尾咀咒着我們，然而在她的咀咒中間，我却聽不出一點勇氣，一點惡意，一點對於這些『可惡的流氓』的憎恨來。她的語調並不配合着那主題，因為它十分平和，而聲音又非常軟弱。

可是這一切在我心上所造成的印象卻比最雄辯最有說服力的悲觀主義的書籍和演說詞——這一類的東西我讀得很多，到今日我還是讀着——還強烈。這是因為一個將死的人的呻吟是比最粗獷最精彩的關於死的描寫真率得多，強烈得多的緣故。

我覺到真是糟透了——多半是由於天冷而不是由於我的鄰人的話語。我低聲呻吟了一會，磨磨我的牙齒。

差不多就在這一刻，我覺着兩隻小臂膀落在我身上——其中一隻碰着我的額頭，又一隻放在我的臉上——同時一個焦躁、柔和友愛的聲音發出這句問話來。

『什麼事惹得你不好過呢？』

我少不得心裏想到，問我這句話的該不是奈太沙而是別的什麼人罷，因為她剛才聲明過一切男子都是流氓，而且表示過一個願望要把他們除滅。殊不料發問的竟是她；現在她急快的談講了。

『什麼事惹得你不好過，暖！你覺着冷麼？你凍着麼？唉唉，你像小貓頭腦一般，這麼沈默地坐在那裏多麼怪！哪！你覺着冷了，早就應該告訴我『過來……躺在地面……』自在地躺着，我也要躺在那兒了！這麼着好麼？現在把你兩條

瑪勝挽住我罷！快——緊些兒！這變着好麼？現在你馬上可以暖熱了……那麼，我們可以背貼背躺着……夜很快就可以過去了。你看可不足？我說……你可也喝酒麼……？從你的地方轉過身來，暖？……這不要緊。

於是她安撫着我……她鼓勵着我……

但願我受着痛鍊的責備。這一個事實沒有着幾多對戰的冷嘲。想像一下罷！這時候的我正在嚴肅地操心於人類的宿命，想着社會制度的改造，想着政治革命，玩味着各種聰明的書籍。那些書籍上難測的高深，尚難連原作者也不能探索到頂的——就在這時候，我竭力打算使我自己變成一種有力的積極的社會力量。』幾時竟覺得我已經部分地成就了我的自願了。無論如何，這時候，在我關於我自己的觀念裏，我總之已經能夠承認，我有着獨特的生存權，我有着應當過活的必要的偉大性；我又有着充分的資格在這中間盡一種偉大的歷史職分。現在一個女子，用她的肉體來給我溫暖了，她是被打被侮辱的苦命人，在生活上沒有什麼地位，什麼價值。直到她親自幫助着我為止，我從來沒有想到過幫助她，即使我有了幫助她的念頭，我算也不會知道怎樣幫助她。

唉！我少不得想到這一切是在一個夢裏——這一個壓抑的惡夢裏發生着。

然而，呢！我卻不能這麼想了，因為冷冷的雨點滴落到我的身上，那女子挨緊着我，她那溫暖的呼吸揚着我的臉，這雖有些伏特加酒的氣味——終究還是使我爽適的。風怒號着，雨在小船上覆着，波浪濺襲着而彼此摩挲擁抱着的我們兩個人卻冷得索索抖。這一切太真切了，我確信着誰也不會做過像這一種現實似的壓抑的可怖的夢。

然而奈太紗卻一直談着種種的事，和着她同情地談着。

她的情人

我所熟識的一個朋友曾經對我講過如下的故事。

當我在莫斯科做着學生的時候，我的鄰近恰巧住着一個女子，像她那一類的女子是名譽成着問題的。她是波爾人，大家叫她德萊薩。她是體格壯健的高高的黑皮膚姑娘，濃黑的眉毛，粗糙的大臉盤——她那黑眼睛的獸性的閃光，她那粗濁的低音，她那車夫一般的步態和她那適於做漁婆的男性的蠻力，喚起我的恐怖來。我住在頂樓上，她的小房間，正和我的相對。我每逢知道她在家的時候，總不讓我的門開着。然而這等時候終究是很稀罕的。有的時候，我偶然在扶梯上，或是天井裏遇見她了，她往往對我笑一臉，那一種笑臉，我覺得是狡猾而且促狹的。間或我看見到她喝醉酒，兩眼迷糊，頭髮蓬鬆，作着一種特別可怕的瘳笑。這等時機，她往往對我講話。

『你好麼，學生少爺！』於是她那惡毒的笑使我對於她厭惡得更深切了。我本想遷移住所，避開這樣的遭遇和招呼，然而我的小房間卻好得很，從窗口可以看望那麼廣闊的景色，下邊的街道又老是那麼清靜着——因此我忍耐下去。

一天早晨，我全身靠在榻牀上，想要找尋一種缺課的口實，忽然門開了，從我的房間門口傳過德萊薩這狀物的低音來。

『祝你健康，學生少爺！』

『你要什麼？』我說道。我看見她的臉惶惑着，有着央

求的神色。……這在她是一種很不平常的臉。

『先生！我要請求一件事。你可以應許我麼？』

我躺在那里沉默着。心裏對我自己說道：

『喂！……勇敢些，青年人！』

『我要發一封信到家鄉去，就是這件事。』她說道；她的聲音是求懇着的，柔和的，怯生生的。

『討厭透了。』我心裏想，然而我却跳起身，在我的桌邊坐下，拿了一張紙，說道：

『走過來，請坐，你唸着！』

她走過來，很小心地坐到椅子上，便用一個慚愧的眼色看看我。

『嘿！你打算寫給誰？』

『給波勒斯拉夫·喀什布德，華沙大道上的斯微普濟那鎮……』

『嘿！快說下去！』

『我親愛的波爾斯……我的寶賚……我忠實的情人。願聖母保佑你！你這黃金的心，爲什麼這麼長久，你沒有寫信給你那悲哀的小鴿子德萊薩呢？』

我幾乎要大聲笑出來，『悲哀的小鴿子，』高過了五尺，拳頭有十來斤重，臉孔黑得好像這小鴿子一輩子住在烟窗裏，從來沒有洗過一次澡。我自己略略抑制了一番，問道：

『這波萊斯德是誰？』

『波爾斯，學生少爺。』她說道，彷彿怪我弄錯了那名字似的，『他是波爾斯——我的小鴿子。』

『小鴿子！』

『你何必怎麼着驚呢，先生？我是個姑娘，不能有一個小鴿子麼？』

她！一個姑娘？」

「哦！當然，」我說道：「什麼事都是可能的。他做你的小夥子已經長遠了麼？」

「六年了。」

「喔，呵！」我心裏想。「哦！我們來給你寫信罷……」

現在我老實告訴你：我本也情願和這個波爾斯打捧一個地位的，如果他那女發信人不是德萊薩卻是一個比她小巧些的。

「先生，承你的情，我萬分感謝你，」德萊薩向我行了一個禮，說道。「也許我可以給你効些勞，麼？」

「不，謝謝你的好意。」

「先生，也許你的襯衫或是褲子要略略縫補縫補罷？」

我覺得這個母大蟲已經使我羞得滿臉通紅了，於是我很直率地對他說，我用不著她無論怎樣的効勞。

她離去了。

一兩個星期過去了。是晚上，我坐在窗口，吹着唿哨，想着一種足以消遣的方法。我累了，天氣悶得很，我沒有打算出去；在純粹的煩悶中間，我開始把自己分析着，省察着。這又是十分沉悶的工作，然而我却無意於做其他的事了。於是門開了。天呵！有人進來了。

「哦！學生少爺，你沒有要緊的事罷？」

這是德萊薩。呃！

「沒有。怎麼啦？」

「先生，我要請你給我再寫一封信。」

「很好！給波爾斯罷，麼？」

「不！這會子是他發信了。」

本報記者問：「

『我真笨！學生少爺，這不是爲我寫的，請你原諒。這爲着我的一個朋友，這就是說，一個熟識的人——一個熟識的男人。她有着一個恰像這裏的我一樣的愛人，德萊薩。事情就如此，你可以寫一封信給這個德萊薩麼？』

我對她看了一會，——她的臉惶窘着，她的指頭抖動着。我起初有些兒糊塗——後來我猜想到這是怎樣一回事了。

『喔！小姐，』我說道，『原來什麼波爾斯呀，德萊薩呀，都是沒有的，你是對我扯着一大篇的謊。你不要再來我這裏搗鬼了。我一點沒有跟你開調的意思，你懂麼？』

忽然間，她變得怪樣地慌張而且惶恐了；她開始擺動着兩隻腳，却沒有把身子移動一下；她滑稽地囉囉着，彷彿她要說一番話卻說不出來似的；我等齊着這一切會有怎樣的究竟，於是看出而且感覺到：顯然，我疑心到她有意把我從前路拋開去，這在我是大大地弄錯了。這分明是很不同的一回事。

『學生少爺！』她開始說道，忽然間，她揮一揮手立即轉身走到門口，出去了。我留在房間裏，心裏抱着很不愉快的情緒，我靜聽着，她的門猛地推開，——那可憐的姑娘分明是很氣忿的……我把這事情想了一想，便決計到她那兒去，把她邀到這兒來給她寫她所要寫的一切。

我進了她的房間。我四下裏望了一望。她坐在桌子邊斜靠着她的臂肘，用兩手托着頭。

『請聽我的話。』我說道。

現在每逢我想到了我的故事中間這一點，我總覺着非常慚愧非常惡毒。也罷，也罷！

『請聽我的話，』我說道。

她從她的坐位跳起身，兩眼亮閃閃的走向我這兒來，於是把她兩手搭在我的肩膀上，低聲開口說，或者還不如說，開始用她那特殊的低音哼着：

『現在，你聽着！事情是這樣的。沒有什麼波爾斯？又沒有什麼德萊薩。但是你怎麼憑着呢？要你在紙上寫些字，是一件難事罷？噯？唉！而且你呢！也還是這樣一個秀髮的男孩子！什麼波爾斯呀，德萊薩呀，一個也沒有，有的只是我。你這才可以明白了，這於你多麼好！』

『對不起，我要問問！』在這樣的一番招待之下十分驚呆的我說道：『究竟是怎樣一回事？你說，沒有波爾斯這個人麼？』

『沒有，正是如此。』

『又沒有德萊薩這個人麼？』

『沒有德萊薩。我是德萊薩。』

這在我一點弄不明白。我兩眼盯住了她，想要究明我們中間是那一個喪失了神智。然而她又復走到桌子邊，尋檢了一件東西，走回到我這兒，使用氣惱的聲氣說道：

『如果要你寫信給波爾斯這麼難，那麼，你瞧，你的信在這裏，拿去吧。別人會給我寫的。』

我看着。她手裏是我寫的給波爾斯的信。吁！

『聽着，德萊薩！這一切是什麼意思？我早就寫好這信了，怎麼你一定要叫別人來給你寫呢？你沒有把這信寄發了麼？』

『寄到什麼地方去？』

『怎麼？寄給波爾斯這個人。』

『沒有這樣的一個人。』

這我完全弄不明白。我除了啞的響一聲走掉，沒有什麼

辦法。於是她解釋了。

『怎麼啦？』她還是氣惱着說道。『這樣的一個人是沒有的，我告訴你。』於是她伸出臂膀來，彷彿她自己沒有懂得這樣的人們為什麼不應當存在的道理似的。『然而我却要他存在着……那麼，我可不是像其他的人們一樣了麼？對啦，對啦，我知道，我當然知道。……可是我寫信給一個什麼人，也不會於他有害的，這我可以相信……』

『對不起，要問你一聲——寫信給誰呢？』

『給波爾斯，不消說得。』

『但是他沒有存在着。』

『唉喲喲！唉喲喲！他沒有存在怎樣麼？他雖是沒有存在着，但他原也可以存在的。我寫信給他，這光景彷彿是同他存在着一樣。而且德萊薩——這就是我，他寫回信給我，於是我再寫信給他……』

我終於明白了。我覺得有些納悶，淒然，而且羞愧。在我的近鄰，相隔不到三碼，住着一個苦命女子，她在這世界上得不到一個和善地，親熱地待她的人，這苦命女子給她自己創造了一個朋友了！

『現在，你瞧！你爲我寫了一封信給波爾斯，我把這封信交給另外一個人讀給我聽，當他們對我讀信的時候。我聽着我幻想着波爾斯是在那地方。我又請你爲我寫一封從波爾斯寫給德萊薩的信——這就是給我的。等他們寫了這樣的一封信給我的信，讀給我聽的時候，我十分確然地感覺到波爾斯是在那地方。這一來，我的生活可以暢適些了。』

當我聽到這話的時候，我自心裏說道：『撞着癡人了，唉唉！』

從此以後，一星期兩次，我經常寫一封給波爾斯的信，

又寫一封從波爾斯寄給意萊薩的回信。我把那些信寫得疑難叢生。當然，她聽着那些再信上的話，大哭着，用她的低音號啕着。爲了報答我用想像的波爾斯所寄的真切的信！使她感動得流淚，她把我在襪子上，襯衫上，及其他服裝上所有的破洞縫補起來。從這篇歷史開頭，過了一二個月光景，不知爲了什麼事，他們把她關禁在監獄裏了。無疑的，現在她已經死了。

我的朋友把他香烟上的烟灰拍落了，拾起頭來，沉思着看看天空，於是作了這樣的結論：

哪哪！一個人苦的事情嘗得愈多，他就愈渴求着人生方面甜蜜的事情。我們四面裹着我們道德的被索，從我們自足的霧里蒙着羞別的入們，而且聽信着我們普遍的清白無罪。因此我們對於上面所說的一點是弄不明白的。

於是這整個問題很愚蠢——很殘酷地發生了。我們談的是墮落階級。誰是墮落階級呢，我少不得想弄個明白，他們首先第一就是有着同我們自己一樣的骨肉和血和神經的人們。這一點，歷代以來，天天有人告訴着我們。而我們實際是親自聽聞着——這整個問題多麼可怕。就另一方面來想，魯朋伯人道主義說教使我們完全變壞了罷？實際上，我們也是墮落的入們，據我的見解，我們是深深地，墮落到自足的深淵中間，我們自己的優越感的信念中關守。然而這也儘夠了。這至是同一樣古老的——古老得講出來是可羞的事。的確很苦老了——對離了事實就是如此。

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