

18. THE HANDBOOK OF HYMEN

【十八】月老通鑿手冊

'Tis the opinion of myself, Sanderson Pratt, who sets this down, that the educational system of the United States should be in the hands of the weather bureau. I can give you good reasons for it; and you can't tell me why our college professors shouldn't be transferred to the meteorological department. They have been learned to read; and they could very easily glance at the morning papers and then wire in to the main office what kind of weather to expect. But there's the other side of the proposition. I am going on to tell you how the weather furnished me and Idaho Green with an elegant education.

敝姓皮，小名善德。我有這麼一個想法，也就是說美國的教育系統還不如交給氣象局來負責。爲什麼呢？我的道理如下。你看了便會同意把我們的大學教授們都乾脆轉到氣象局去算了。他們學會怎麼閱讀；他們只要看一眼晨報便能電報通知辦公室的值班人員今天的天氣將是怎麼樣。但是呢，這是我講的故事的反面。我真正要講的是天氣怎麼把我和任達和先生教育成功的。

We was up in the Bitter Root Mountains over the Montana line prospecting for gold. A chin-whiskered man in Walla-Walla, carrying a line of hope as excess baggage, had grubstaked us; and there we was in the foothills pecking away, with enough grub on hand to last an army through a peace conference.

我們那時候在懷塔納山脈的苦根山區尋金。在瓦拉瓦拉鎮，有一位下巴長鬍鬚的，他老兄認爲懷抱希望是額外的負擔，所以嘛，把我們兩個著實地供應得充足；於是乎，我們兩個在那山腳下拿十字鎬敲開石頭尋金的時候，所帶的供應品足足能供應一個軍團渡過一場拖拖拉拉的和平會議。

Along one day comes a mail-rider over the mountains from Carlos, and stops to eat three cans of greengages, and leave us a newspaper of modern date. This paper prints a system of premonitions of the weather, and the card it dealt Bitter Root Mountains from the bottom of the deck was "warmer and fair, with light westerly breezes."

有那麼一天，從卡洛斯來了一位送郵件的老兄來到山區，他停下來吃了三罐子青梅，然後留給了我們一份還不是古董的報紙之後離去。報紙上刊出氣象預報，苦根山區的預報簽文是這麼寫的“氣溫少增，天氣變晴，微西風。”

That evening it began to snow, with the wind strong in the east. Me and Idaho moved camp into an old empty cabin higher up the mountain, thinking it was only a November flurry. But after falling three foot on a level it went to work in earnest; and we knew we was snowed in. We got in plenty of firewood before it got deep, and we had grub enough for two months, so we let the elements rage and cut up all they thought proper.

當晚天氣開始下雪，刮著強勢的東風。我和達和把營地搬到山裏較高的一處空木屋裏，我們一面想這只不過是十一月的一場小雪。但是呢，下了三尺之後，卻越下越大起來；我們才知道被雪困住了。我們趁著雪還沒下的太深的時候搬進了大量柴火，糧食足夠兩個月，雪就讓它去下吧，管它的。

If you want to instigate the art of manslaughter just shut two men up in a eighteen by twenty-foot cabin for a month. Human nature won't stand it.

假如你有意挑撥人來自相殘殺，只要把兩個人關到十個榻榻米大的屋子，讓他們過一個月。人性是無法容忍的。

When the first snowflakes fell me and Idaho Green laughed at each other's jokes and praised the stuff we turned out of a skillet and called bread. At the end of three weeks Idaho makes this kind of a edict to me. Says he:

剛開始飄雪的時候，我和任達和爲了彼此說的笑話嬉笑，彼此讚美由煎鍋攪出來稱爲麵包的東西。三個星期之後，達和開始這麼跟我宣讀聖旨似的：

"I never exactly heard sour milk dropping out of a balloon on the bottom of a tin pan, but I have an idea it would be music of the spears compared to this attenuated stream of asphyxiated thought that emanates out of your organs of conversation. The kind of half-masticated noises that you emit every day puts me in mind of a cow's cud, only she's lady enough to keep hers to herself, and you ain't."

“我沒有真正聽過酸奶從天空飄的氣球落下來被接到煎盤底的聲音，但是呢，我相信，比起經由你的說話器官所發出來被綁了小腳的思想轉化成那團稀薄空氣，一定比嫩芽般的音樂還美妙。你每天發出的半嚼半吐的響聲令我想起一頭母牛把胃裏的東西吐回到嘴巴裏咀嚼，唯一的差別是呢，她懂得禮貌，還自我收斂，你呢，可是稀里嘩啦的，聽得令人噁心。”

"Mr. Green," says I, "you having been a friend of mine once, I have some hesitations in confessing to you that if I had my choice for society between you and a common yellow, three-legged cur pup, one of the inmates of this here cabin would be wagging a tail just at present."

“任先生，”我這麼說，“老哥，你曾是我的朋友，所以呢，不便直截了當地跟你說，假如我有福氣能這麼選擇，看是要選擇你，或者是一隻三條腿的小母狗的話，現在這一刻，這個小木屋的居住者其中之一呢，此刻在搖牠的尾巴。”

This way we goes on for two or three days, and then we quits speaking to one another. We divides up the cooking implements, and Idaho cooks his grub on one side of the fireplace, and me on the other. The snow is up to the windows, and we have to keep a fire all day.

就是這樣，我們又拖延了兩三天，之後呢，乾脆都不開口說話了。我們把炊具平分，達和在爐臺那邊煮他的，我在另一邊。雪已經下到窗臺那麼高，我們必須整天二十四小時點著火才擋的了寒。

You see me and Idaho never had any education beyond reading and doing "if John had three apples and James five" on a slate. We never felt any special need for a university degree, though we had acquired a species of intrinsic intelligence in knocking around the world that we could use in emergencies. But, snowbound in that cabin in the Bitter Roots, we felt for the first time that if we had studied Homer or Greek and fractions and the higher branches of information, we'd have had some resources in the line of meditation and private thought. I've seen them Eastern college fellows working in camps all through the West, and I never noticed but what education was less of a drawback to 'em than you would think. Why, once over on Snake River, when Andrew McWilliams' saddle horse got the botts, he sent a buckboard ten miles for one of these strangers that claimed to be a botanist. But that horse died.

你瞧，我和達和從來沒上過學，除了自己看點什麼，和在學校老師在黑板上這麼寫“約翰有三支蘋果，詹姆有五支。總共多少支？”我們從來不覺得大學學位有什麼特別的必要，相反的，在這個世界混的這麼久，多多少少學得了一些應急的直覺常識系統。巧不巧，被雪困在苦根山區，是我們這輩子首次領悟到假如我們學過寫史詩的侯莫或者希臘文，或者數學裏面比較高深的分數啦，什麼的，至少在沉思默想的時候能夠想點比較有營養的東西。你看，我在整個大西部多少地方淘金這麼大半輩子的經驗是這麼樣，可能你不知道，那些東部大學出身的傢伙，他們的教育除了替他們造成妨礙之外，有什麼屁用。你看，在蛇河，麥安覺用來當坐騎用的馬得了馬蠅症。他派了平板車走了十哩路巴巴地叫了一個自稱為植物學家的陌生人來。結果馬死了。

One morning Idaho was poking around with a stick on top of a little shelf that was too high to reach. Two books fell down to the floor. I started toward 'em, but caught Idaho's eye. He speaks for the first time in a week.

一天，達和拿一根棍子撈一支原來夠不着的高高架子。有兩本書掉到地板上。我一看就直覺地往它們走，不巧看到達和的眼色就住了腳。這是一星期以來首次，他開口說話。

“Don't burn your fingers,” says he. “In spite of the fact that you're only fit to be the companion of a sleeping mud-turtle, I'll give you a square deal. And that's more than your parents did when they turned you loose in the world with the sociability of a rattle-snake and the bedside manner of a frozen turnip. I'll play you a game of seven-up, the winner to pick up his choice of the book, the loser to take the other.”

“別燙傷了手指頭，”他這麼說。“儘管你只適合當個泥烏龜的同伴，我給你個公平的買賣吧。給你個優待；看你爹娘是怎麼把你給帶大的，出來到這個社會混，言行舉止好比一條響尾蛇，床邊規矩簡直是北極凍壞的一支白蘿蔔。我和你賭一場七比一，贏家選擇，輸家拿那本剩下的。”

We played; and Idaho won. He picked up his book; and I took mine. Then each of us got on his side of the house and went to reading.

於是我們賭，達和贏了。他拿他的書，我拿我的。之後，我們各就原位，開始閱讀。

I never was as glad to see a ten-ounce nugget as I was that book. And Idaho took at his like a kid looks at a stick of candy.

我淘金淘了這麼久，看到一塊十盎士的金塊，也沒有看到這本書那麼高興的。達和呢，可是看到他的書，好比一個小鬼看到一支棒棒糖一樣。

Mine was a little book about five by six inches called “Herkimer's Handbook of Indispensable Information.” I may be wrong, but I think that was the greatest book that ever was written. I've got it today; and I can stump you or any man fifty times in five minutes with the information in it. Talk about Solomon or the New York Tribune! Herkimer had cases on both of 'em. That man must have put in fifty years and travelled a million miles to find out all that stuff. There was the population of all cities in it, and the way to tell a girl's age, and the number of teeth a camel has. It told you the longest tunnel in the world, the number of the stars, how long it takes for chicken pox to break out, what a lady's neck ought to measure, the veto powers of Governors, the dates of the Roman aqueducts, how many pounds of rice going without three beers a day would buy, the average annual temperature of Augusta, Maine, the quantity of seed required to plant an acre of carrots in drills, antidotes for poisons, the number of hairs on a blond lady's head, how to preserve eggs, the height of all the mountains in the world, and the dates

of all wars and battles, and how to restore drowned persons, and sunstroke, and the number of tacks in a pound, and how to make dynamite and flowers and beds, and what to do before the doctor comes—and a hundred times as many things besides. If there was anything Herkimer didn't know I didn't miss it out of the book

我的那本書大約六吋，寬約五吋，名叫“賀奇美不可或缺常識手冊。”我可能不對，但是呢，我認為那是有人類以來最偉大的一本書。到如今我還擁有它；我給你這麼講吧，我可以在五分鐘之內，把你或者任何人嚇壞五十次，就把這本書當成引經據典的根據就足夠了。還提什麼所羅門知識多廣，什麼紐約箴言報！賀奇美把它們逼都逼死了。那傢伙必定花了五十年的功夫，縱橫百萬英里來發掘這些知識。每個城市有多少人口都在裏面，怎麼樣能衡量一個女孩的年齡，一頭駱駝有多少隻牙齒。世界上最長的隧道是哪條，宇宙有多少星星，麻疹由潛伏到發作要經過多少時間，衡量一位女士的脖子有多長該怎麼量才對，州長的否決權，羅馬排水道的年紀有多大，一個人一天不喝三瓶啤酒的話，那些錢能買多少磅白米，緬因州奧古斯年平均溫度是多少，一英畝的田地要種成排的紅蘿蔔的話，要多少種子，中毒的時候怎麼解毒，一位金髮女士頭髮到底有多少根，怎麼醃蛋，全世界的山有多高，歷史上所有大小戰爭發生的日子，怎麼來拯救一位溺水者，中暑者又怎麼救，一磅重的大頭釘到底有多少支在裏頭，怎麼調製火藥，怎麼整理花園種花，我們叫醫生來，醫生到達以前我們該如何處置—如此類推大約成百的實例在內。假如賀奇美有任何事情不通曉，我從那本書完全看不出來。

I sat and read that book for four hours. All the wonders of education was compressed in it. I forgot the snow, and I forgot that me and old Idaho was on the outs. He was sitting still on a stool reading away with a kind of partly soft and partly mysterious look shining through his tan-bark whiskers.

我坐在那裏，一閱讀就是四小時。世間所有教育的精華都緊藏其中。我把天在下雪忘了。也忘記我和達和鬧彗扭。他呢，坐在一支板凳上，一面全神貫注地閱讀，一面經由樹皮顏色的鬍鬚發煥出半溫和，半神秘的神情。

“Idaho,” says I, “what kind of a book is yours?”

“達和，”我說，“你看的是什麼書？”

Idaho must have forgot, too, for he answered moderate, without any slander or malignity.

達和必定也忘了，因為他就這麼平靜，無邪無譏地回答。

“Why,” says he, “this here seems to be a volume by Homer K. M.”

“這個，”他說，“這本似乎是由侯莫〈一〉寫的書。”

“Homer K. M. what?” I asks.

“何莫〈一〉什麼？”我問。

“Why, just Homer K. M.,” says he.

“這個，就是何莫〈一〉。”他說。

“You’re a liar,” says I, a little riled that Idaho should try to put me up a tree. “No man is going ’round signing books with his initials. If it’s Homer K. M. Spoopendyke, or Homer K. M. McSweeney, or Homer K. M. Jones, why don’t you say so like a man instead of biting off the end of it like a calf chewing off the tail of a shirt on a clothes-line?”

“騙人，”我說，有點惱了，達和要跟我擡杠子。“沒有人會只拿象徵性的注音符號為自己的著作簽名的。假如是，何莫ㄍ一狗屎，或者何莫ㄍ一貓尿，或者何莫ㄍ一瓊斯先生，能不能麻煩尊嘴就男子漢大丈夫一樣明明白白地這麼個說清楚，少來這樣子有頭沒尾的，像一隻小牛從曬衣繩咬掉半截的襯衫一樣？”

“I put it to you straight, Sandy,” says Idaho, quiet. “It’s a poem book,” says he, “by Homer K. M. I couldn’t get colour out of it at first, but there’s a vein if you follow it up. I wouldn’t have missed this book for a pair of red blankets.”

“我沒講錯，善小弟，”達和平平靜靜地說。“是本詩集，”他說，“由何莫ㄍ一寫的。開始的時候我也讀不出味道，但是呢，假如你左右尋思，慢慢體味，便有點意思。我寧可要這本書，而不要兩張紅毯子。”

“You’re welcome to it,” says I. “What I want is a disinterested statement of facts for the mind to work on, and that’s what I seem to find in the book I’ve drawn.”

“請由尊便，”我說。“我要的是一本不偏不倚，不參雜感情，敘述事實，提供腦筋來思想工作的書。我從我抽籤抽到的，看起來就是這麼的一本書。”

“What you’ve got,” says Idaho, “is statistics, the lowest grade of information that exists. They’ll poison your mind. Give me old K. M.’s system of surmises. He seems to be a kind of a wine agent. His regular toast is ‘nothing doing,’ and he seems to have a grouch, but he keeps it so well lubricated with booze that his worst kicks sound like an invitation to split a quart. But it’s poetry,” says Idaho, “and I have sensations of scorn for that truck of yours that tries to convey sense in feet and inches. When it comes to explaining the instinct of philosophy through the art of nature, old K. M. has got your man beat by drills, rows, paragraphs, chest measurement, and average annual rainfall.”

“你拿到的是統計數字，世間所有存在的知識中最低層的。它們會毒壞你的心。給我老ㄍ一的想象臆測力。他好像是賣酒的。他有老子的‘無為’，好像有什麼牢騷，但是呢，又把它們拿酒當成滑潤油一樣，保持的油光，所以呢，最糟的字句都變成了割開一枚銅板的犀利勾引力。但是嘛，詩就是這樣，”達和說道，“我呢，滿肚子就瞧不起你那堆垃圾，要把感情用尺寸量度出來。我們呢，要經由自然的藝術來解釋哲學的直覺，我的老ㄍ一把你那個寫作的人整得支離破碎，體無完膚，不論是成排的，成列的，成段的，還是比胸圍的，或者在講什麼年降雨量的。”

So that’s the way me and Idaho had it. Day and night all the excitement we got was studying our books. That snowstorm sure fixed us with a fine lot of attainments apiece. By the time the snow melted, if you had stepped up to me suddenly and said: “Sanderson Pratt, what would it cost per square foot to lay a roof with twenty by twenty-eight tin at nine dollars and fifty cents per box?” I’d have told you as quick as light could travel the length of a spade handle at the rate of one hundred and ninety-two thousand miles per second. How many can do it? You wake up ’most any man you know in the middle of the night, and

ask him quick to tell you the number of bones in the human skeleton exclusive of the teeth, or what percentage of the vote of the Nebraska Legislature overrules a veto. Will he tell you? Try him and see.

我和達和就是這樣子，成天，我們的新鮮刺激來自各自讀各自的書。那場雪真的給我們兩個每個人都造就的胸有成竹。雪融之前，假如你冒然跟我說，“皮善德，要拿二十吋乘二十八吋的鐵皮，價錢是九塊半一盒，拿來鋪屋頂的話，每平方呎要多少錢？”我回答你的速度你知道了都要嚇死：光綫走一支圓鋸柄長度距離的時間，你拿光速算一算也知道，那是每秒九萬兩千英里。有幾個人能這麼做的？或者呢，把一個熟識的人三更半夜搖醒，巴巴地問他快快告訴你一個人除了牙齒之外有多少塊骨頭，或者尼佈拉斯加州議會要否決一款議案，要多高比例的票數。他能告訴你嗎？不妨試試看就知道。

About what benefit Idaho got out of his poetry book I didn't exactly know. Idaho boosted the wine-agent every time he opened his mouth; but I wasn't so sure.

達和如何受益於他的詩集我不很清楚。他不開口也罷，一開口就是在稱道他的賣酒經紀人有多麼棒；可是呢，我可沒這麼把握。

This Homer K. M., from what leaked out of his libretto through Idaho, seemed to me to be a kind of a dog who looked at life like it was a tin can tied to his tail. After running himself half to death, he sits down, hangs his tongue out, and looks at the can and says:

這位何莫〈一〉，經由達和在看的那本書所透露的，在我看來，是尾巴綁著一支空罐頭，然後把生命放在裏面，一直望著尾巴團團轉的狗。跑得累的要死，坐下來，吐出舌頭，然後向著罐頭說：

“Oh, well, since we can't shake the growler, let's get it filled at the corner, and all have a drink on me.”

“啊，算了，既然擺脫不了這叮叮噹噹響的大聲公，我們到牆角給它泡泡尿，然後大家都喝一口，我請客。”

Besides that, it seems he was a Persian; and I never hear of Persia producing anything worth mentioning unless it was Turkish rugs and Maltese cats.

除此之外，這老兄看起來是位波斯人；但是嘛，除了土耳其地毯和馬爾地斯貓之外，據我的經驗，我還不知道波斯人出產過什麼值得一提的東西。

That spring me and Idaho struck pay ore. It was a habit of ours to sell out quick and keep moving. We unloaded our grubstaker for eight thousand dollars apiece; and then we drifted down to this little town of Rosa, on the Salmon river, to rest up, and get some human grub, and have our whiskers harvested.

那年春天，我和達和挖到了中獎的金礦。我們的慣常動作是快快賣斷，急急上路。我們把吃飯的傢夥讓給別人，每人得到八千塊錢的本錢；之後，我們像以色列人出埃及一樣，漂流似地來到這個名為玫瑰的小鎮，它坐落蛙魚河畔。在這裏，我們好好休息休息，吃點人樣的東西，而且把長得亂七八糟的鬍鬚也收拾一下。

Rosa was no mining-camp. It laid in the valley, and was as free of uproar and pestilence as one of them rural towns in the country. There was a three-mile trolley line champing its bit in the environs; and me and Idaho spent a week riding on one of the cars, dropping off at nights at the Sunset View Hotel. Being now well read as well as travelled, we was soon pro re nata with the best society in Rosa, and was invited

out to the most dressed-up and high-toned entertainments. It was at a piano recital and quail-eating contest in the city hall, for the benefit of the fire company, that me and Idaho first met Mrs. De Ormond Sampson, the queen of Rosa society.

玫瑰鎮並非淘金營。坐落山谷中，就好比國內許多鄉下的小鎮，遠離喧囂與瘟疫。鎮周圍由三哩長的纜車綫所圍繞，就好比一隻馬啣著口啣一樣。我和達和整整一星期像小孩子一樣，坐在這些纜車上玩耍，向晚便下車到夕景旅館休息。現在嘛，經過飽飽地閱讀，和透透地旅行，我們搖身一變成爲玫瑰鎮的最受歡迎人物，此地最豪華，最高格調的娛樂活動，都會自動邀請我們去。那次是在市鎮府舉辦為消防隊募款的鋼琴演奏和吃鶉鳥比賽的宴會上，我和達和首次被介紹給辛普生迪蒙太太，也就是玫瑰鎮的交際女王。

Mrs. Sampson was a widow, and owned the only two-story house in town. It was painted yellow, and whichever way you looked from you could see it as plain as egg on the chin of an O'Grady on a Friday. Twenty-two men in Rosa besides me and Idaho was trying to stake a claim on that yellow house.

辛太太是位寡婦，鎮內唯一的那棟兩層樓房子就是她的。房子油漆成黃色，不管從哪個角度看，它明明顯顯地站在那裏，就像每星期五，老阿公把鬍子刮乾淨，下巴長的那團雞蛋似的圓球肉看起來明明白白的一樣。除了我和達和之外，玫瑰鎮有二十一個人排好隊，企圖要把這棟黃色建築占爲己有。

There was a dance after the song books and quail bones had been raked out of the Hall. Twenty-three of the bunch galloped over to Mrs. Sampson and asked for a dance. I side-stepped the two-step, and asked permission to escort her home. That's where I made a hit.

歌譜和鶉鳥骨頭都收拾乾淨之後，他們安排了一場舞會。就有二十三位驍勇的男士一湧向前，邀請辛太太跳舞。我倒是繞了一個圈子，沒有邀請她跳舞，而是自動自發地請求她的許可來送她回家。就是在回家的路上，我大大地出風頭。

On the way home says she:

回家的路上，她說：

"Ain't the stars lovely and bright to-night, Mr. Pratt?"

“皮先生，天空的星星今晚不是又亮又可愛嗎？”

"For the chance they've got," says I, "they're humping themselves in a mighty creditable way. That big one you see is sixty-six million miles distant. It took thirty-six years for its light to reach us. With an eighteen-foot telescope you can see forty-three millions of 'em, including them of the thirteenth magnitude, which, if one was to go out now, you would keep on seeing it for twenty-seven hundred years."

“就它們的機運來講，”我說道，“它們努力工作，值得大大地讚揚一番。妳看到那顆大大的，距離我們六千六百萬英里。它的光綫要三十六年才到達得了我們。拿一支十八呎焦距的望眼鏡來觀察，你能看到四千三百萬顆，其中包括十三級光度的。它們呢，假如任何其中一顆現在滅掉了，妳還能繼續看到它的餘光，達兩千七百年之久。”

“My!” says Mrs. Sampson. “I never knew that before. How warm it is! I’m as damp as I can be from dancing so much.”

“老天！”辛太太說。“我從來就不知道這些。真熱！跳舞跳得我都濕透了。”

“That’s easy to account for,” says I, “when you happen to know that you’ve got two million sweat-glands working all at once. If every one of your perspiratory ducts, which are a quarter of an inch long, was placed end to end, they would reach a distance of seven miles.”

“這個簡單，”我說，“假如妳曉得在同一瞬間，妳有兩百萬支汗腺在同時工作著。假如把所有排汗管頭尾連接起來，它們是每支長四分之一吋，能夠達到七哩的長度。”

“Lawsy!” says Mrs. Sampson. “It sounds like an irrigation ditch you was describing, Mr. Pratt. How do you get all this knowledge of information?”

“要命！”辛太太說。“你所說的聽起來像灌溉溝渠一樣，皮先生。你是怎麼得到這些知識的？”

“From observation, Mrs. Sampson,” I tells her. “I keep my eyes open when I go about the world.”

“觀察來的，辛太太，”我跟她說。“我在世間混的時候，睜大眼睛。”

“Mr. Pratt,” says she, “I always did admire a man of education. There are so few scholars among the sap-headed plug-uglies of this town that it is a real pleasure to converse with a gentleman of culture. I’d be gratified to have you call at my house whenever you feel so inclined.”

“皮先生，”她說，“我一向尊羨一位有教育的男人。這個鎮裏的人腦袋瓜子空空，棍子條條，找不到幾位有學問的人，能跟一位有文化的紳士交談，是真的樂趣。”

And that was the way I got the goodwill of the lady in the yellow house. Every Tuesday and Friday evening I used to go there and tell her about the wonders of the universe as discovered, tabulated, and compiled from nature by Herkimer. Idaho and the other gay Lutherans of the town got every minute of the rest of the week that they could.

我就是這麼得到黃色房女士的好感。在那時候，每逢星期二和星期五晚上，我就去那裏跟她講述由賀其美發現，列表，編輯的宇宙間自然奇觀。達和和鎮裏其他路德教會的信徒，只有去平分剩餘時間的份。

I never imagined that Idaho was trying to work on Mrs. Sampson with old K. M.’s rules of courtship till one afternoon when I was on my way over to take her a basket of wild hog-plums. I met the lady coming down the lane that led to her house. Her eyes was snapping, and her hat made a dangerous dip over one eye.

達和企圖用《一》的追求指導原則來追求辛太太的事我一直都不敢想象，直到有一天下午我提了一籃野豬梅子來拜訪她。走到半路，辛太太一路從那條巷子走過來。她的眼睛氣的一張一合的，帽沿蓋住一隻眼睛，看起來真危險。

“Mr. Pratt,” she opens up, “this Mr. Green is a friend of yours, I believe.”

“皮先生，”她開口，“這個任先生是你的朋友，我相信。”

“For nine years,” says I.

“九年之交了，”我說。

“Cut him out,” says she. “He’s no gentleman!”

“別再理他，”她說。“他不是個尖頭鰻。”

“Why ma’am,” says I, “he’s a plain incumbent of the mountains, with asperities and the usual failings of a spendthrift and a liar, but I never on the most momentous occasion had the heart to deny that he was a gentleman. It may be that in haberdashery and the sense of arrogance and display Idaho offends the eye, but inside, ma’am, I’ve found him impervious to the lower grades of crime and obesity. After nine years of Idaho’s society, Mrs. Sampson,” I winds up, “I should hate to impute him, and I should hate to see him imputed.”

“怎麼了，女士，”我說，“他是樸樸實實住在山裏頭的，小氣嗒嗒的，偶爾會騙人，但是呢，即使是最嚴重的時機，我也沒有這個心意來否定他是個尖頭鰻。可能是他哈巴瓜似的外表，在有點魯莽的氣質裏，他得罪了你的眼睛；但是呢，就內在而論，我看他連最低級的罪都不會犯。我跟他一起都九年了，辛太太，”我下結論說，“我不願歸罪他，也不願意看到人家來歸罪他。”

“It’s right plausible of you, Mr. Pratt,” says Mrs. Sampson, “to take up the curmudgeons in your friend’s behalf; but it don’t alter the fact that he has made proposals to me sufficiently obnoxious to ruffle the ignominy of any lady.”

“真的是宰相肚子能撐船，皮先生，”辛太太這麼說，“爲了朋友這麼擔死擔活的；但是呢，你所做的不能改變他跟我求婚求得那麼討厭，任何女士的名譽都要受損的這件事實。”

“Why, now, now, now!” says I. “Old Idaho do that! I could believe it of myself, sooner. I never knew but one thing to deride in him; and a blizzard was responsible for that. Once while we was snow-bound in the mountains he became a prey to a kind of spurious and uneven poetry, which may have corrupted his demeanour.”

“啊，這個，這個，這個！”我這麼說道。“老達和這麼做？我自己這麼做的話，我還更相信呢。他從來無懈可擊，唯有一件事；那又是由於一場風暴而起的。我們有一次在山裏頭被雪困住的時候，他被一種偽造的邪詩所侵犯了，造成了他言行舉止的不良影響。”

“It has,” says Mrs. Sampson. “Ever since I knew him he has been reciting to me a lot of irreligious rhymes by some person he calls Ruby Ott, and who is no better than she should be, if you judge by her poetry.”

“是這麼樣，”辛太太說。“打從認識他開始，他就一直跟我念誦一位叫什麼歐如必所寫的邪詩，假如我能從她寫的詩來判斷，她真的很糟糕。”

“Then Idaho has struck a new book,” says I, “for the one he had was by a man who writes under the nom de plume of K. M.”

“這麼說的話，達和找到了一本新書，”我這麼說，“他以前的那本是署名K. M.的。”

“He’d better have stuck to it,” says Mrs. Sampson, “whatever it was. And to-day he caps the vortex. I get a bunch of flowers from him, and on ’em is pinned a note. Now, Mr. Pratt, you know a lady when you see

her; and you know how I stand in Rosa society. Do you think for a moment that I'd skip out to the woods with a man along with a jug of wine and a loaf of bread, and go singing and cavorting up and down under the trees with him? I take a little claret with my meals, but I'm not in the habit of packing a jug of it into the brush and raising Cain in any such style as that. And of course he'd bring his book of verses along, too. He said so. Let him go on his scandalous picnics alone! Or let him take his Ruby Ott with him. I reckon she wouldn't kick unless it was on account of there being too much bread along. And what do you think of your gentleman friend now, Mr. Pratt?"

“他早該堅持原來那本書，”辛太太說，“不管是什麼書。今天他把胡鬧做了總結。我從他拿到一束花，上面釘著一個條子。這個，皮先生，你看到一位女士的時候心裏有數；也知道我在玫瑰鎮的地位。你看我是那樣的人嗎？跟著一個男人帶著一瓶酒，一條麵包，逃到林子裏去，跟他在樹下唱唱跳跳的？我吃飯的時候喝點卡瑞酒，但是從來沒有收拾一瓶酒帶到林子裏頭，去養小鬼頭的那種風格。當然，他要把那本詩集也一起帶來。他就是這麼說的。讓他自己單獨一個去野他的野餐去吧！或者呢，讓他帶他的如必一起去。我打量她要不是跟著吃了太多麵包，不會得趣地踢腳。怎麼樣，皮先生，你現在對你的紳士朋友的看法怎麼樣？”

“Well, 'm,” says I, “it may be that Idaho's invitation was a kind of poetry, and meant no harm. May be it belonged to the class of rhymes they call figurative. They offend law and order, but they get sent through the mails on the grounds that they mean something that they don't say. I'd be glad on Idaho's account if you'd overlook it,” says I, “and let us extricate our minds from the low regions of poetry to the higher planes of fact and fancy. On a beautiful afternoon like this, Mrs. Sampson,” I goes on, “we should let our thoughts dwell accordingly. Though it is warm here, we should remember that at the equator the line of perpetual frost is at an altitude of fifteen thousand feet. Between the latitudes of forty degrees and forty-nine degrees it is from four thousand to nine thousand feet.”

“這個，嗯，”我說，“可能是達和的邀請只是一種詩意，沒有惡意的。可能是他們稱為譬喻式的韻角一類的詩。他們侵犯法律秩序，但是呢，因為它們顧左右而言他，從郵局的狹縫送出去了。敬請尊婦人高擡貴眼忽視他，”我這麼說，“讓我們從詩歌這個卑微的領域，提升到事實與想象的崇高層面。好比今天這麼美麗的一個下午，辛太太，”我這麼說，“我們應該把思想同樣地歸順到相應的適宜地方。雖然這裏蠻熱的，我們必須記得在赤道，常年生長林木長在一萬五千呎高度的山林地帶。在緯度四十和四十九度之間呢，常年生長林木的地方在水平綫以上四千到九千呎的高度。”

“Oh, Mr. Pratt,” says Mrs. Sampson, “it's such a comfort to hear you say them beautiful facts after getting such a jar from that minx of a Ruby's poetry!”

“啊，皮先生，”辛太太這麼說道，“被那個如必騷女孩寫的詩胡鬧了一陣，聽你講述這些美麗的事實，有多欣慰啊！”

“Let us sit on this log at the roadside,” says I, “and forget the inhumanity and ribaldry of the poets. It is in the glorious columns of ascertained facts and legalised measures that beauty is to be found. In this very log we sit upon, Mrs. Sampson,” says I, “is statistics more wonderful than any poem. The rings show it was sixty years old. At the depth of two thousand feet it would become coal in three thousand years. The deepest coal mine in the world is at Killingworth, near Newcastle. A box four feet long, three feet

wide, and two feet eight inches deep will hold one ton of coal. If an artery is cut, compress it above the wound. A man's leg contains thirty bones. The Tower of London was burned in 1841."

“我們還不如就坐在這根路旁邊的大木頭，”我說，“來忘記那些詩人啦什麼鬼東西的無禮和沒人性。好比數字一般，榮耀地排列整齊，清楚載明的事實，從其中才能找到美這件事實。就舉我們坐著的這根木頭為例，辛太太，”我說，“就有比任何詩歌更為美妙的統計數字。由年輪看得出它有六十年的年紀，假如埋在兩千呎深度，三千年之內會變成煤炭。全世界最深的煤礦坑是在紐開索臨近的吉林沃那地方。一個長四呎，寬三呎，深兩呎八吋的盒子能夠容得下一噸重的煤炭。假如大血脈割破了，要壓住傷口往上的地方。一個人的腿有三十根骨頭。倫敦塔是西元 1841 年被燒掉的。”

"Go on, Mr. Pratt," says Mrs. Sampson. "Them ideas is so original and soothing. I think statistics are just as lovely as they can be."

“繼續說下去，皮先生，”辛太太說。“這些念頭是多麼的創新又令人心平氣和的啊。我想統計數字真的是太可愛，太棒了。”

But it wasn't till two weeks later that I got all that was coming to me out of Herkimer.

但是呢，又過了兩星期之後，我才從賀其美得到了福有應得的最大好處。

One night I was waked up by folks hollering "Fire!" all around. I jumped up and dressed and went out of the hotel to enjoy the scene. When I see it was Mrs. Sampson's house, I gave forth a kind of yell, and I was there in two minutes.

有天晚上，我從睡夢中被人呼喚“火災！”的嘈雜聲中喚醒。我跳出床來，穿上衣服，跑到旅館外頭本來要觀賞一下這情景。我一看是辛太太的房子，大叫了一聲，兩分鐘之內便跑到那裏。

The whole lower story of the yellow house was in flames, and every masculine, feminine, and canine in Rosa was there, screeching and barking and getting in the way of the firemen. I saw Idaho trying to get away from six firemen who were holding him. They was telling him the whole place was on fire down-stairs, and no man could go in it and come out alive.

黃色房子的整個下半都燒着，玫瑰鎮每個男人，女人，和狗狗都跑來看，也有尖叫的，也有狗吠的，反正鬧得消防隊沒辦法工作。我看見達和有六位消防隊員抓著他，不讓他進去。他們跟他說，整個樓下都着火了，沒有人能進得去，出的來。

"Where's Mrs. Sampson?" I asks.

“辛太太在哪裏？”我問他們。

"She hasn't been seen," says one of the firemen. "She sleeps up-stairs. We've tried to get in, but we can't, and our company hasn't got any ladders yet."

“還沒有人看到她，”一個消防隊員說。“她睡在樓上。我們企圖進去，但是沒有辦法，我們隊裏還沒有任何的梯子。”

I runs around to the light of the big blaze, and pulls the Handbook out of my inside pocket. I kind of laughed when I felt it in my hands — I reckon I was some daffy with the sensation of excitement.

我跑了半圈，到一個火光照亮的地方，把那本通鑒手冊從口袋裏拿出。我把它拿在手裏的時候，真的有點神經地笑了 – 我想我真的是變成了呆子，內心有點狂亂。

“Herky, old boy,” I says to it, as I flipped over the pages, “you ain’t ever lied to me yet, and you ain’t ever throwed me down at a scratch yet. Tell me what, old boy, tell me what!” says I.

“小賀老小子，”我跟他說，一面翻頁，“你還沒騙過我，也沒有令我失望過。這麼樣，老相好，這麼樣！”我自言自語地說。

I turned to “What to do in Case of Accidents,” on page 117. I run my finger down the page, and struck it. Good old Herkimer, he never overlooked anything! It said:

我翻到一一七頁“萬一有意外事件時怎麼辦，”我順著指頭往下看，真的找到了。好賀其美，真的觀察緊密，沒漏過任何東西！書上這麼寫：

Suffocation from Inhaling Smoke or Gas.—There is nothing better than flaxseed. Place a few seed in the outer corner of the eye.

吸到烟霧或有毒氣體窒息的時候。-- 最有效的是亞麻籽。把幾粒亞麻籽放在眼睛外端。

I shoved the Handbook back in my pocket, and grabbed a boy that was running by.

我把通鑒手冊一把塞回口袋，抓住一個跑過我身邊的小男孩。

“Here,” says I, giving him some money, “run to the drug store and bring a dollar’s worth of flaxseed. Hurry, and you’ll get another one for yourself. Now,” I sings out to the crowd, “we’ll have Mrs. Sampson!” And I throws away my coat and hat.

“這個，”我說，給了他一點錢，“快跑到藥房給我買一塊錢的亞麻仔來。快跑，你回來之後會得到另一塊錢。快去，”我跟群眾們大聲說，“我們能救出辛太太！”一邊說，一邊把外套和帽子脫掉。

Four of the firemen and citizens grabs hold of me. It’s sure death, they say, to go in the house, for the floors was beginning to fall through.

四個消防隊員和市民抓住我。他們說，進那個房子是準死無疑，因為整個地板開始燒塌了。

“How in blazes,” I sings out, kind of laughing yet, but not feeling like it, “do you expect me to put flaxseed in a eye without the eye?”

“在火舌之中，”我說，一邊沉不住氣地笑，雖然真的想哭，“如何叫我把亞麻仔放在一個眼睛裏面，卻沒有眼睛可以看！”

I jabbed each elbow in a fireman’s face, kicked the bark off of one citizen’s shin, and tripped the other one with a side hold. And then I busted into the house. If I die first I’ll write you a letter and tell you if it’s any worse down there than the inside of that yellow house was; but don’t believe it yet. I was a heap more cooked than the hurry-up orders of broiled chicken that you get in restaurants. The fire and smoke had me down on the floor twice, and was about to shame Herkimer, but the firemen helped me with their little stream of water, and I got to Mrs. Sampson’s room. She’d lost conscientiousness from the

smoke, so I wrapped her in the bed clothes and got her on my shoulder. Well, the floors wasn't as bad as they said, or I never could have done it—not by no means.

我把兩隻手肘各自戳向兩位消防隊的臉，把一位市民的小腿踢破皮膚，把另一位市民像跆拳道一樣地剪倒了。然後我衝進房子裏面。假如我的命該絕，我會跟你寫封信，告訴你到底地獄比較好還是那棟黃屋子裏面比較好；但是，暫且不要相信。我那時候，被煮的比起餐廳裏點的快快燒雞還熟。火和煙把我燻倒在地板上兩次，就要加辱於賀其美了，幸好消防隊拿水管澆水，幫了一點忙，我終於到達辛太太的房間。她已經被烟霧燻得昏迷不省人事，所以我拿床單把她包起來，擡到肩膀上。地板並沒有他們講的那麼糟，否則我不可能活著回來—怎樣也不可能。

I carried her out fifty yards from the house and laid her on the grass. Then, of course, every one of them other twenty-two plaintiff's to the lady's hand crowded around with tin dippers of water ready to save her. And up runs the boy with the flaxseed.

我把她擡到離屋子五十碼的地方，把她放在草地上。之後，當然，那二十二位追求那女士的每一位告訴人，都聚攏來，拿著錫鐵水罐子準備來救醒她。嘿，那個小孩子拿著亞麻籽跑過來。

I unwrapped the covers from Mrs. Sampson's head. She opened her eyes and says:

我把蓋住辛太太頭臉的床單拿掉。她睜開眼睛說：

“Is that you, Mr. Pratt?”

“是你嗎，皮先生？”

“S-s-sh,” says I. “Don't talk till you've had the remedy.”

“噓--，”我說。“救了妳之後才來說話。”

I runs my arm around her neck and raises her head, gentle, and breaks the bag of flaxseed with the other hand; and as easy as I could I bends over and slips three or four of the seeds in the outer corner of her eye.

我把手臂繞到她脖子下，把她的頭稍微地擡高，拿另一隻手把亞麻籽的包裝紙撥開；以最輕柔的動作，我彎下身，然後把三四顆亞麻籽滑落她的眼睛外端。

Up gallops the village doc by this time, and snorts around, and grabs at Mrs. Sampson's pulse, and wants to know what I mean by any such sandblasted nonsense.

這時候，村莊的醫生像一頭野馬一樣一骨碌地跑來，鼻子四處噴了一下氣，抓了辛太太的脈搏，然後要知道我在搞的鬼到底是什麼意思。

“Well, old Jalap and Jerusalem oakseed,” says I, “I'm no regular practitioner, but I'll show you my authority, anyway.”

“這個，老辣椒和耶路撒冷的橡樹籽，”我說，“我不是一個尋常行醫的，但是呢，我可以給你看看我的權威在哪裏。”

They fetched my coat, and I gets out the Handbook.

他們把我的外套拿來，我把通鑿手冊拿出來。

“Look on page 117,” says I, “at the remedy for suffocation by smoke or gas. Flaxseed in the outer corner of the eye, it says. I don’t know whether it works as a smoke consumer or whether it hikes the compound gastro-hippopotamus nerve into action, but Herkimer says it, and he was called to the case first. If you want to make it a consultation, there’s no objection.”

“請看一一七頁，”我說，“烟霧或毒氣窒息如何解救。書上說，把幾粒亞麻籽放在眼睛外端。我不知道它的作用是什麼，是把煙消除掉，還是刺激複雜的消化—河馬神經讓它活動，但是賀其美說的，他是第一個我們求助的對象。假如你要拿他當個參考，我也不反對。”

Old doc takes the book and looks at it by means of his specs and a fireman’s lantern.

老蒙古拿過那本書，向著消防隊的燈和自己的眼鏡開始讀。

“Well, Mr. Pratt,” says he, “you evidently got on the wrong line in reading your diagnosis. The recipe for suffocation says: ‘Get the patient into fresh air as quickly as possible, and place in a reclining position.’ The flaxseed remedy is for ‘Dust and Cinders in the Eye,’ on the line above. But, after all—”

“這個，皮先生，”他說，“你顯然在閱讀的時候跳了行。窒息的救法是這麼寫的：‘快快把病人移至空氣新鮮的地方，讓她斜斜躺著。’那個亞麻籽的救方是要來救‘灰塵和火煙掉進眼睛’的，寫在上一行。但是不管怎麼樣--”

“See here,” interrupts Mrs. Sampson, “I reckon I’ve got something to say in this consultation. That flaxseed done me more good than anything I ever tried.” And then she raises up her head and lays it back on my arm again, and says: “Put some in the other eye, Sandy dear.”

“這個嘛，”辛太太插嘴說，“我想我在這場醫術顧問比賽有點發言權。那幾粒亞麻籽比我用過的任何東西都有效。”她擡起頭，又躺回我的手臂，然後說，“把另外一隻眼睛也放一些，親親善弟弟。”

And so if you was to stop off at Rosa to-morrow, or any other day, you’d see a fine new yellow house with Mrs. Pratt, that was Mrs. Sampson, embellishing and adorning it. And if you was to step inside you’d see on the marble-top centre table in the parlour “Herkimer’s Handbook of Indispensable Information,” all rebound in red morocco, and ready to be consulted on any subject pertaining to human happiness and wisdom.

所以說嘛，假如你明天，或者任何一天，來到玫瑰鎮，你便能看見一棟很好的簇新黃屋子，有皮太太，也就是以前的辛太太，在那裏自在地整理修飾。進到裏面，一眼便能看到大廳中間放的那張大理石桌面的臺桌，上面擺著“賀其美不可或缺常識手冊，”現在用紅色絨布重新裝訂好，準備讓任何人對於有關生命之中幸福，快樂，與智慧的課題，提供顧問與解答。