

CHAPTER VIII

ERE the half-hour ended, five o'clock struck; school was dismissed, and all were gone into the refectory to tea. I now ventured to descend: it was deep dusk; I retired into a corner and sat down on the floor. The spell by which I had been so far supported began to dissolve; reaction took place, and soon, so overwhelming was the grief that seized me, I sank prostrate with my face to the ground. Now I wept: Helen Burns was not here; nothing sustained me; left to myself I abandoned myself, and my tears watered the boards. I had meant to be so good, and to do so much at Lowood: to make so many friends, to earn respect and win affection. Already I had made visible progress; that very morning I had reached the head of my class; Miss Miller had praised me warmly; Miss Temple had smiled approbation; she had promised to teach me drawing, and to let me learn French, if I continued to make similar improvement two months longer: and then I was well received by my fellow-pupils; treated as an equal by those of my own age, and not molested by any; now, here I lay again crushed and trodden on; and could I ever rise more?

'Never,' I thought; and ardently I wished to die. While sobbing out this wish in broken accents, some one approached: I started up- again Helen Burns was near me; the fading fires just showed her coming up the long, vacant room; she brought my coffee and bread.

'Come, eat something,' she said; but I put both away from me, feeling as if a drop or a crumb would have choked me in my present condition. Helen regarded me, probably with surprise: I could not now abate my agitation, though I tried hard; I continued to weep aloud. She sat down on the ground near me, embraced her knees with her arms, and rested her head upon them; in that attitude she remained silent as an Indian. I was the first who spoke-

'Helen, why do you stay with a girl whom everybody believes to be a liar?'

'Everybody, Jane? Why, there are only eighty people who have heard you called so, and the world contains hundreds of millions.'

'But what have I to do with millions? The eighty, I know, despise me.'

'Jane, you are mistaken: probably not one in the school either despises or dislikes you: many, I am sure, pity you much.'

'How can they pity me after what Mr. Brocklehurst has said?'

'Mr. Brocklehurst is not a god: nor is he even a great and admired man; he is little liked here; he never took steps to make himself liked. Had he treated you as an especial favourite, you would have found enemies, declared or covert, all around you; as it is, the greater number would offer you sympathy if they dared.

Teachers and pupils may look coldly on you for a day or two, but friendly feelings are concealed in their hearts; and if you persevere in doing well, these feelings will ere long appear so much the

more evidently for their temporary suppression. Besides, Jane'- she paused.

'Well, Helen?' said I, putting my hand into hers: she chafed my fingers gently to warm them, and went on-'If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved you, and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends.'

'No; I know I should think well of myself; but that is not enough: if others don't love me I would rather die than live- I cannot bear to be solitary and hated, Helen. Look here; to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest-'

'Hush, Jane! you think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement; the sovereign hand that created your frame, and put life into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you.

Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us; and if we were dying in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognise our innocence (if innocent we be: as I know you are of this charge which Mr. Brocklehurst has weakly and pompously repeated at secondhand from Mrs. Reed; for I read a sincere nature in your ardent eyes and on your clear front), and God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness- to glory?'

I was silent; Helen had calmed me; but in the tranquillity she imparted there was an alloy of inexpressible sadness. I felt the impression of woe as she spoke, but I could not tell whence it came; and when, having done speaking, she breathed a little fast and coughed a short cough, I momentarily forgot my own sorrows to yield to a vague concern for her.

Resting my head on Helen's shoulder, I put my arms round her waist; she drew me to her, and we reposed in silence. We had not sat long thus, when another person came in. Some heavy clouds, swept from the sky by a rising wind, had left the moon bare; and her light, streaming in through a window near, shone full both on us and on the approaching figure, which we at once recognised as Miss Temple.

'I came on purpose to find you, Jane Eyre,' said she; 'I want you in my room; and as Helen Burns is with you, she may come too.'

We went; following the superintendent's guidance, we had to thread some intricate passages, and mount a staircase before we reached her apartment; it contained a good fire, and looked cheerful. Miss Temple told Helen Burns to be seated in a low arm-chair on one side of the hearth, and herself taking another, she called me to her side.

'Is it all over?' she asked, looking down at my face. 'Have you cried your grief away?'

'I am afraid I never shall do that.'

'Why?'

'Because I have been wrongly accused; and you, ma'am, and everybody else, will now think me wicked.'

'We shall think you what you prove yourself to be, my child.'

Continue to act as a good girl, and you will satisfy us.'

'Shall I, Miss Temple?'

'You will,' said she, passing her arm round me. 'And now tell me who is the lady whom Mr. Brocklehurst called your benefactress?'

'Mrs. Reed, my uncle's wife. My uncle is dead, and he left me to her care.'

'Did she not, then, adopt you of her own accord?'

'No, ma'am; she was sorry to have to do it: but my uncle, as I have often heard the servants say, got her to promise before he died that she would always keep me.'

'Well now, Jane, you know, or at least I will tell you, that when a criminal is accused, he is always allowed to speak in his own defence.'

You have been charged with falsehood; defend yourself to me as well as you can. Say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing.'

I resolved, in the depth of my heart, that I would be most moderate- most correct; and, having reflected a few minutes in order to arrange coherently what I had to say, I told her all the story of my sad childhood. Exhausted by emotion, my language was more subdued than it generally was when it developed that sad theme; and mindful of Helen's warnings against the indulgence of resentment, I infused into the narrative far less of gall and wormwood than ordinary. Thus restrained and simplified, it sounded more credible: I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me.

In the course of the tale I had mentioned Mr. Lloyd as having come to see me after the fit: for I never forgot the, to me, frightful episode of the red-room: in detailing which, my excitement was sure, in some degree, to break bounds; for nothing could soften in my recollection the spasm of agony which clutched my heart when Mrs. Reed spurned my wild supplication for pardon, and

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locked me a second time in the dark and haunted chamber.

I had finished: Miss Temple regarded me a few minutes in silence;

she then said-

'I know something of Mr. Lloyd; I shall write to him; if his reply agrees with your statement, you shall be publicly cleared from every imputation; to me, Jane, you are clear now.'

She kissed me, and still keeping me at her side (where I was well contented to stand for I derived a child's pleasure from the contemplation of her face, her dress, her one or two ornaments, her white forehead, her clustered and shining curls, and beaming dark eyes), she proceeded to address Helen Burns.

'How are you to-night, Helen? Have you coughed much to-day?'

'Not quite so much, I think, ma'am.'

'And the pain in your chest?'

'It is a little better.'

Miss Temple got up, took her hand and examined her pulse; then she returned to her own seat: as she resumed it, I heard her sigh low. She was pensive a few minutes, then rousing herself, she said cheerfully-

'But you two are my visitors to-night; I must treat you as such.' She rang her bell.

'Barbara,' she said to the servant who answered it, 'I have not yet had tea; bring the tray and place cups for these two young ladies.'

And a tray was soon brought. How pretty, to my eyes, did the china cups and bright teapot look, placed on the little round table near the fire! How fragrant was the steam of the beverage, and the scent of the toast! of which, however, I, to my dismay (for I was beginning to be hungry), discerned only a very small portion: Miss Temple discerned it too.

'Barbara,' said she, 'can you not bring a little more bread and butter? There is not enough for three.'

Barbara went out: she returned soon-

'Madam, Mrs. Harden says she has sent up the usual quantity.' Mrs. Harden, be it observed, was the housekeeper: a woman after Mr. Brocklehurst's own heart, made up of equal parts of whalebone and iron.

'Oh, very well!' returned Miss Temple; 'we must make it do, Barbara, I suppose.' And as the girl withdrew she added, smiling, 'Fortunately, I have it in my power to supply deficiencies for this once.'

Having invited Helen and me to approach the table, and placed before each of us a cup of tea with one delicious but thin morsel of toast, she got up, unlocked a drawer, and taking from it a parcel wrapped in paper, disclosed presently to our eyes a good-sized seed-cake.

'I meant to give each of you some of this to take with you,' said she, 'but as there is so little toast, you must have it now,' and she proceeded to cut slices with a generous hand.

We feasted that evening as on nectar and ambrosia; and not the least delight of the entertainment was the smile of gratification with which our hostess regarded us, as we satisfied our famished appetites on the delicate fare she liberally supplied.

Tea over and the tray removed, she again summoned us to the fire; we sat one on each side of her, and now a conversation followed between her and Helen, which it was indeed a privilege to be admitted to hear.

Miss Temple had always something of serenity in her air, of state in her mien, of refined propriety in her language, which precluded deviation into the ardent, the excited, the eager: something which chastened the pleasure of those who looked on her and listened to her, by a controlling sense of awe; and such was my feeling now: but as to Helen Burns, I was struck with wonder.

The refreshing meal, the brilliant fire, the presence and kindness of her beloved instructress, or, perhaps, more than all these, something in her own unique mind, had roused her powers within her. They woke, they kindled: first, they glowed in the bright tint of her cheek, which till this hour I had never seen but pale and bloodless; then they shone in the liquid lustre of her eyes, which had suddenly acquired a beauty more singular than that of Miss Temple's- a beauty neither of fine colour nor long eyelash, nor pencilled brow, but of meaning, of movement, of radiance. Then her soul sat on her lips, and language flowed, from what source I cannot tell. Has a girl of fourteen a heart large enough, vigorous enough, to hold the swelling spring of pure, full, fervid eloquence? Such was the characteristic of Helen's discourse on that, to me, memorable evening; her spirit seemed hastening to live within a very brief span as much as many live during a protracted existence.

They conversed of things I had never heard of; of nations and times past; of countries far away; of secrets of nature discovered or guessed at: they spoke of books: how many they had read! What stores of knowledge they possessed! Then they seemed so familiar with French names and French authors: but my amazement reached its climax when Miss Temple asked Helen if she sometimes snatched a moment to recall the Latin her father had taught her, and taking a book from a shelf, bade her read and construe a page of Virgil; and Helen obeyed, my organ of veneration expanding at every sounding line. She had scarcely finished ere the bell announced bedtime! no delay could be admitted; Miss Temple embraced us both, saying, as she drew us to her heart-

'God bless you, my children!'

Helen she held a little longer than me: she let her go more reluctantly; it was Helen her eye followed to the door; it was for her she a second time breathed a sad sigh; for her she wiped a tear from her cheek.

On reaching the bedroom, we heard the voice of Miss Scatcherd: she was examining drawers; she had just pulled out Helen Burns's, and when we entered Helen was greeted with a sharp reprimand, and told that to-morrow she should have half a dozen of untidily folded articles pinned to her shoulder.

'My things were indeed in shameful disorder,' murmured Helen to me, in a low voice: 'I intended to have arranged them, but I forgot.'

Next morning, Miss Scatcherd wrote in conspicuous characters on a piece of pasteboard the word 'Slattern,' and bound it like a phylactery round Helen's large, mild, intelligent, and benign-looking forehead. She wore it till evening, patient, unresentful, regarding it as a deserved punishment. The moment Miss Scatcherd withdrew after afternoon school, I ran to Helen, tore it off, and thrust it into the fire: the fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day, and tears, hot and large, had continually been scalding my cheek; for the spectacle of her sad resignation gave me an intolerable pain at the heart.

About a week subsequently to the incidents above narrated, Miss Temple, who had written to Mr. Lloyd, received his answer: it appeared that what he said went to corroborate my account. Miss Temple, having assembled the whole school, announced that inquiry had been made into the charges alleged against Jane Eyre, and that she was most happy to be able to pronounce her completely cleared from every imputation. The teachers then shook hands with me and kissed me, and a murmur of pleasure ran through the ranks of my companions.

Thus relieved of a grievous load, I from that hour set to work afresh, resolved to pioneer my way through every difficulty: I toiled hard, and my success was proportionate to my efforts; my memory, not naturally tenacious, improved with practice; exercise sharpened my wits; in a few weeks I was promoted to a higher class; in less than two months I was allowed to commence French and drawing. I learned the first two tenses of the verb Etre, and sketched my first cottage (whose walls, by the bye, outrivalled in slope those of the leaning tower of Pisa), on the same day. That night, on going to bed, I forgot to prepare in imagination the Barmecide supper of hot roast potatoes, or white bread and new milk, with which I was wont to amuse my inward cravings: I feasted instead on the spectacle of ideal drawings, which I saw in the dark; all the work of my own hands: freely pencilled houses and trees, picturesque rocks and ruins, Cuyper-like groups of cattle, sweet paintings of butterflies hovering over unblown roses, of birds picking at ripe cherries, of wrens' nests enclosing pearl-like eggs, wreathed about with young ivy sprays. I examined, too, in thought, the possibility of my ever being able to translate currently a certain little French story which Madame Pierrot had that day shown me; nor was that problem solved to my satisfaction ere I fell sweetly

asleep.

Well has Solomon said- 'Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.'

I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations for Gateshead and its daily luxuries.

第八章

半个小时不到，钟就敲响了五点。散课了，大家都进饭厅去吃茶点，我这才大着胆走下凳子。这时暮色正浓，我躲进一个角落，在地板上坐了下来。一直支撑着我的魔力消失了，被不良反应所取代。我伤心不已，脸朝下扑倒在地，嚎啕大哭起来。海伦·彭斯不在，没有东西支撑我。孤身独处，我难以自制，眼泪洒到了地板上。我曾打算在罗沃德表现那么出色，做那么多事情，交那么多朋友，博得别人的尊敬，赢得大家的爱护，而且已经取得了明显的进步。就在那天早上，我在班上已经名列前茅，米勒小姐热情夸奖我，坦普尔小姐微笑着表示赞许，还答应教我绘画，让我学法文、只要我在两个月之内继续取得同样的进步，此外，我也深受同学们的欢迎，同我年龄相仿的人也对我平等相待，我已不再受人欺侮。然而此刻，我又被打倒在地，遭人践踏。我还有翻身之日吗？

“永远没有了，”我想，满心希望自己死掉。正当我泣不成声地吐出了这个心愿时，有人走近了我，我惊跳了起来，又是海伦·彭斯靠近了我，渐暗的炉火恰好照亮她走过空空荡荡的长房间她给我端来了咖啡和面包。

“来，吃点东西，”她说，可是我们把咖啡和面包都从我面前推开了，只觉得仿佛眼下一滴咖啡或一口面包就会把我噎住似的。海伦凝视着我，也许很惊奇，这时我虽已竭尽全力，却仍无法抑制内心的激动，仍然一个劲儿号啕着，她在我身旁的地上坐下，胳膊抱着双膝，把头靠在膝头上，她就那么坐着，不言不语，像一个印度人。倒是我第一个开了腔：

“海伦，你怎么会跟一个人都相信她会撒谎的人呆在一起呢？”

“是人人吗，简？瞧，只有八十个人听见叫你撒谎者，而世界上有千千万万的人呢。”

“可是我跟那千千万万的人有什么关系呢？我认识的八十个人瞧不起我。”

“简，你错啦，也许学校里没有一个人会瞧不起你，或者讨厌你，我敢肯定，很多人都那么同情你。”

“布罗克赫斯特先生说了话以后，她们怎么可能同情我呢。”

“布罗克赫斯特先生不是神，也不是一个值得钦佩的伟人。这里人不喜欢他。他也不想让人喜欢他。要是他把你看成他的宠儿，你倒会处处树敌，公开的，或者暗地里的都会有。而

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现在这样，大多数胆子大一点的人是会同情你的。而要是你继续努力，好好表现，这些感情正因为暂时的压抑，不久就会更加明显地表露出来。此外，简”她刹住了话头。

“怎样。海伦？”我说着把自己手塞到了她手里，她轻轻地揉着我的手指，使它们暖和过来，随后又说下去：

“即使整个世界恨你，并且相信你很坏，只要你自己问心无愧，知道你是清白的，你就不会没有朋友。”

“不，我明白我觉得自己不错，但这还不够，要是别人不爱我，那么与其活着还不如死去——我受不了孤独和别人的厌恶，海伦。瞧，为了从你那儿，或者坦普尔小姐，或是任何一个我确实所爱的人那儿，得到真正的爱，我会心甘情愿忍受胳膊骨被折断，或者愿让一头公牛把我悬空抛起，或者站在一匹蹶腿的马后面，任马蹄踢向我胸膛——”

“嘘，简！你太看重人的爱了，你的感情太冲动你的情绪太激烈了。一只至高无上的手创造了你的躯体，又往里面注入了生命，这只手除了造就了你脆弱的自身，或者同你一样脆弱的造物之外，还给你提供了别的财富。在地球和人类之外，还有一个看不见的世界，一个精灵王国。这个世界包围着我们，无所不在。那些精灵们注视着我们，奉命守护我们。要是我们在痛苦和耻辱中死去；要是来自四面八方的鄙视刺伤了我们；要是仇恨压垮了我们，天使们会看到我们遭受折磨，会承认我们清白无辜（如果我们确实清白无辜，我知道你受到了布罗克赫斯特先生指控，但这种指控软弱无力，夸大其词，不过是从里德太太那儿转手得来的，因为我从你热情的眼睛里，从你明净的前额上，看到了诚实的本性），上帝只不过等待灵魂与肉体分离，以赐予我们充分酬报。当生命很快结束，死亡必定成为幸福与荣耀的入口时，我们为什么还要因为忧伤而沉沦呢？”

我默不作声。海伦已经使我平静下来了，但在她所传递的宁静里，混杂着一种难以言传的悲哀。她说话时我感受到了这种悲哀，但不知道它从何而来。话一讲完，她开始有点气急，短短地咳了几声，我立刻忘掉了自己的苦恼，隐隐约约地为她担起心来。

我把头靠在海伦的肩上，双手抱住了她的腰，她紧紧搂住我，两人默默地偎依着。我们没坐多久，另外一个人进来了。这时，一阵刚起的风，吹开了沉重的云块，露出了月亮，月光泻进近旁的窗户，清晰地照亮了我们两人和那个走近的身影，我们立刻认出来，那是坦普尔小姐。

“我是特地来找你的，简·爱，”她说，“我要你到我房间里去，既然海伦·彭斯也在，那她也一起来吧。”

我们去了。在这位校长的带领下，我们穿过了一条条复杂的过道，登上一座楼梯，才到她的寓所。房间里炉火正旺，显得很惬意。坦普尔小姐叫海伦·彭斯坐在火炉一边的低靠手椅里，她自己在另一条靠手椅上坐下，把我叫到她身边。

“全都过去了吗？”她俯身瞧着我的脸问。“把伤心都哭光了？”

“恐怕我永远做不到。”

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“为什么？”

“因为我被冤枉了，小姐，你，还有所有其他人，都会认为我很坏。”

“孩子，我们会根据你的表现来看待你的。继续做个好姑娘，你会使我满意的。”

“我会吗，坦普尔小姐？”

“你会的，”她说着用胳膊搂住我。“现在你告诉我，被布罗克赫斯特称为你的恩人的那位太太是谁？”

“里德太太，我舅舅的妻子。我舅舅去世了，他把我交给她照顾。”

“那他不是自己主动要抚养你了？”

“不是，小姐。她感到很遗憾，不得不抚养我。但我常听仆人们说，我舅舅临终前要她答应，永远抚养我。”

“好吧，简，你知道，或者至少我要让你知道，罪犯在被起诉时，往往允许为自己辩护。你被指责为说谎，那你就在我面前尽力为自己辩护吧，凡是记得的事实你都讲，可别加油添醋，夸大其词。”

我暗下决心，要把话说得恰如其分，准确无误。我思考了几分钟，把该说的话理出了个头绪，便一五一十地向她诉说了我悲苦的童年。我已激动得精疲力尽，所以谈到这个伤心的话题时，说话比平时要克制。我还记住了海伦的告诫，不一味沉溺于怨词，叙述时所掺杂的刻薄与恼恨比往日少得多，而且态度收敛，内容简明，听来更加可信。我觉得，我往下说时，坦普尔小姐完全相信我的话。

我在叙述自己的经历时，还提到了劳埃德先生，说他在昏厥后来看过我。我永远忘不了可怕的红房子事件，有详细诉说时，我的情绪有点失态，因为当里德太太断然拒绝我发疯似的求饶，把我第二次关进黑洞洞闹鬼的房子时，那种阵阵揪心的痛苦，在记忆中是什么也抚慰不了的。

我讲完了。坦普尔小姐默默地看了我几分钟，随后说：

“劳埃德先生我有些认识，我会写信给他的。要是他的答复同你说的相符，我们会公开澄清对你的诋毁。对我来说，简，现在你说的相符，我们会公开澄清对你的诋毁。对我来说，简，现在你已经清白了。”

她吻了吻我，仍旧让我呆在她身边（我很乐意站在那里，因为我端详着她的面容、她的装束、她的一、二件饰品、她那白皙的额头、她那一团团闪光的卷发和乌黑发亮的眼睛时，得到了一种孩子般的喜悦）。她开始同海伦·彭斯说话了。

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“今晚你感觉怎么样，海伦？你今天咳得厉害吗？”

“我想不太厉害，小姐。”

“胸部的疼痛呢？”

“好一点了。”

坦普尔小姐站起来，拉过她的手，按了按脉搏，随后回到了自己的座位上。坐定以后，我听见她轻声叹了口气。她沉思了一会，随后回过神来，高兴地说：

“不过今晚你们俩是我的客人，我必须按客人相待，”她按了下铃。

“巴巴拉，”她对应召而来的佣人说，“我还没有用茶呢，你把盘子端来，给两位小姐也放上杯子。”

盘子很快就端来了，在我的目光中，这些放在火炉旁小园桌上的瓷杯和亮晃晃的茶壶多么漂亮！那饮料的热气和烤面包的味儿多香！但使我失望的是（因为我已开始觉得饿了），我发现那份儿很小，坦普尔小姐也同样注意到了，

“巴巴拉，”她说，“不能再拿点面包和黄油来吗？这不够三个人吃呀。”

巴巴拉走了出去，但很快又回来了。

“小姐，哈登太太说已经按平时的份量送来了。”

得说明一下，哈登太太是个管家，这个女人很合布罗克赫斯特先生的心意，两人的心一样都是铁铸的。

“啊，好吧，”坦普尔小姐回答，“我想我们只好将就了，巴巴拉。”等这位姑娘一走，她便笑着补充说：“幸好我自己还能够弥补这次的欠缺。”

她邀海伦与我凑近桌子，在我们俩面前各放了一杯茶和一小片可口却很薄的烤面包，随后打开抽屉，从里面抽出一个纸包，我们眼前立刻出现了一个大果子饼。

“我本想让你们各自带一点儿回去，”她说，“但是因为烤面包这么少，你们现在就得吃掉了。”她很大方地把饼切成了厚片。

那天夜晚，我们吃了香甜的饮料和食品，享受了一次盛宴。当她慷慨提供的美食，满足了我们的辘辘饥肠时，我们的女主人面带满意的微笑，望着我们，那笑容也一样令人愉快。吃完茶点，端走了托盘后，她又招呼我们到火炉边去。我们两人一边一个坐在她身旁。这时，她与海伦开始了谈话，而我能被允许旁听，实在也是有幸。

坦普尔小姐向来神态安详，风度庄重，谈吐文雅得体，这使她不至于陷入狂热、激奋和浮躁，

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同样也使看着她和倾听她的人，出于一种敬畏心情，不会露出过份的喜悦，这就是我此刻的情感。但海伦的情况却使我十分吃惊。

因为茶点振奋了精神，炉火在熊熊燃烧，因为亲爱的导师在场并待她很好，也许不止这一切，而是她独一无二的头脑中的某种东西，激发了她内在的种种力量。这些力量被唤醒了，被点燃了，起初闪烁在一向苍白而没有血色现在却容光焕发的脸上，随后显露在她水灵灵炯炯有神的眼眸里，这双眼睛突然之间获得了一种比坦普尔小姐的眼睛更为独特的美，它没有好看的色彩，没有长长的睫毛，没有用眉笔描过的眉毛，却那么意味深长，那么流动不息，那么光芒四射。随后她似乎心口交融，说话流畅。这些话从什么源头流出来，我无从判断。一个十四岁的女孩有这样活跃、这样宽大的胸怀，装得下这纯洁、充盈、炽热的雄辩之泉么？这就是那个使我难以忘怀的夜晚海伦谈话的特色。她的心灵仿佛急于要在短暂的片刻中，过得与众多长期苟活的人一样充实。

她们谈论着我从未听说过的事情，谈到了逝去的民族和时代，谈到了遥远的国度；谈到了被发现或臆测到的自然界的奥秘，还谈到了书籍。她们看过的书真多啊！她们掌握的知识真丰富！随后她们似乎对法国人名和法国作者了如指掌。但最使我惊讶的是，这时坦普尔小姐问海伦是不是抽空在复习她爸爸教她的拉丁文，还从书架上取了一本书，吩咐她朗读和解释维吉尔^①的一页著作，海伦照着做了。我每听一行朗朗的诗句，对她也就愈加肃然起敬。她几乎还没有读完，上床铃就响了，已不允许任何拖延。坦普尔小姐拥抱了我们俩，她把我们搂到怀里时说：

“上帝保佑你们，我的孩子们！”

她拥抱海伦比拥抱我要长些，更不愿放她走。她一直目送海伦到门边，为了海伦，她再次伤心地叹了口气；为了海伦，她从脸上抹去了一滴眼泪，

到了寝室，我们听见了斯卡查德小姐的嗓音，她正在检查抽屉，而且刚好已把海伦的抽屉拉出来。我们一走进房间，海伦便当头挨了一顿痛骂。她告诉海伦，明天要把五六件叠得乱七八糟的东西别在她的肩上。

“我的东西乱糟糟的真丢脸，”海伦喃喃地同我说，“我是想把它们放整齐的，可总是忘了。”

第二早上，斯卡查德小姐在一块纸牌上写下了十分醒目的两个字“邋遢”，像经文护符匣一样，把它系在海伦那宽大、温顺、聪颖、一付善相的额头上。她那么耐心而毫无怨言地佩戴着它，视之为应得的惩罚，一直戴到晚上。下午放学以后，斯卡查德小姐一走，我便跑到海伦那儿，一把撕下这块牌子，把它扔进火里。她所不会有的火气，整天在我心中燃烧着，大滴大滴热泪，一直烧灼着我的脸颊，她那付悲哀的、听天由命的样子，使我心里痛苦得难以忍受。

上述事件发生后大约一周，坦普尔小姐写给劳埃德先生的信有了回音。他在信中所说的，进一步证实了我的自述。坦普尔小姐把全校师生召集起来，当众宣布，对简·爱所受的指责已经作了调查，而且很高兴地声明对简·爱的诋毁已彻底澄清。教师们随后同我握了手，吻了我，一阵欢悦的低语，回荡在我同伴的队伍之中。

学英语，练听力，上听力课堂！

这样我便卸下了一个沉重的包袱。我打算从头努力，决心排除万难披荆斩棘地前进。我拼命苦干，付出几分努力，便获得几分成功。我的记忆力虽然不是生来很强，但经过实干有了改进，而反复练习使我的头脑更为机敏。几周之后，我被升到了高班，不到两个月我被允许学习法文和绘画。我学了动词 Etre 的最基本的两个时态；同一天我作了第一幅茅屋素描（顺便说一句，屋子墙壁的倾斜度可与比萨斜塔相媲美）。那天夜里上床时，我忘了在遐想中准备有热的烤土豆或白面包与新鲜牛奶的巴米赛德晚餐了，往常我是以此来解馋的。而现在，我在黑暗中所见到的理想画面成了我的盛宴。所有的画作都是出自我手笔，潇洒自如的房屋、树木铅笔画，别致的岩石和废墟，克伊普式的牛群，以及各种可爱的画：有蝴蝶在含苞的玫瑰上翩翩起舞；有鸟儿啄着成熟的樱桃；有藏着珍珠般鸟蛋的鹁鹑巢穴，四周还绕着一圈嫩绿的长春藤。我还在脑子里掂量了一下，有没有可能把那天皮埃罗太太给我看的薄薄的法文故事书，流利地翻译出来。这个问题还没有满意解决，我便甜甜地睡着了。

所罗门说得好：“吃素菜，彼此相爱，强如吃肥牛，彼此相恨。”

现在，我决不会拿贫困的罗沃德去换取终日奢华的盖茨黑德。