

選文英文學大

SELECTED READINGS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

SPECIALLY PREPARED FOR USE IN
CHINESE COLLEGES

SELECTED AND EDITED

By

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INTRODUCTION

There is a dearth of good textbooks for teaching freshman and sophomore English in the Chinese colleges. Among the few that exist, the content is most unsuitable for use. They err mostly in being too difficult or too easy for the students. Now the material chosen for the edification of the college youths should in principle be similar to the fare that is selected for his physical upkeep. In the latter case, a diet replete with rich victuals is not undesirable. But if the happy optimum is passed, as likely as not the person for whom the nourishment is intended will not only fail to benefit by it but will develop disorders in his digestive system or other more serious ailments. On the other hand, too scanty a fare will before long bring about a even greater ill effect. An experienced dietician will therefore strike a happy balance between the two. The similarity between this and the meting out of a course of study to the students is too evident to need further amplification.

In compiling this text, I have taken into account the difficulties just mentioned and have exercised a great care to select materials that will suit a large number of the colleges. Due account has also been taken of the fact that the freshman and sophomore work is mostly preparatory. Sufficient material therefore should be introduced to let the student obtain a glimpse of the vast vista that the future has in store for him. Nor is it forgotten the importance to acquaint the students into the beauty and richness of the English literature. For this purpose, the classical works are freely introduced. But as it is often

complained that too much bookish English will serve no purpose, a liberal portion of current literature has been included. In both cases, because the field of operation is so extensive, only interesting works are selected.

The classifications used in this book are more or less conventional with such additions as the compiler thinks fit, the idea being to acquaint the students with the various kinds of writing that may be useful to them during college career, or when they emerge into the world to make a living.

The content is purposely made more copious than necessary to meet the regular one year requirement of the ordinary colleges, partly to give the instructor a wide realm of selection, and partly to furnish the students with some easily accessible reading material. As far as possible, the chief works of the authors are listed in the footnote so that the students may pursue further the writings of an author that appeal to him. Finally, in making this selection, I purposely steer clear of poetical work as unsuitable for the purpose for which this text is intended.

The editor wishes to express his hearty thanks to the various publishers for the use of the material in this book, and to President J. Usang Ly, Professor Sung-tao D. Lee both of Chiao-Tung University, Mr. Edward Y. Hsu, Professor of English Literature in the Great China University, and my wife, Jane Elizabeth Kwong, for their valuable suggestions and assistance both in the collecting of material and in reading the manuscript while it is in preparation.

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CHAPTER I

HISTORY

Following are two selections of historical writing from eminent English authors. Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is probably the last word in historical work in the English language; while Wells' *The Outline of History* is one of the most popular and best selling books of the recent times. Students who are interested in this line of work should be acquainted with the writings of Macaulay and the *French Revolution* and *Heroes and Hero-Worship* of Carlyle.

The Siege, Assault, and Final Conquest of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453

BY EDWARD GIBBON (1737-1794)

(From *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
Chapter LXVIII)

Gibbon has long been acknowledged as one of the foremost writers in history. The *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) is a masterpiece of his that has withstood the test of time. After a lapse of two centuries, his style is just as lively as ever. The following selection is typical of the author's power of bringing into life some obscure passages in history.

The Greeks and Turks passed an anxious and sleepless winter: the former were kept awake by their fears, the latter by their hopes; both by the preparations of defence and attack; and the two emperors, who had the most to lose or to gain, were the most deeply affected by the national sentiment. In Mahomet, that sentiment was inflamed by the ardor of his youth and temper: he amused his leisure with building at Adrianople the lofty palace of Jehan Numa (the watchtower of the world); but his serious thoughts were irrevocably bent on the conquest of the city of Caesar. At the dead of night, about the second watch, he started from his bed, and commanded the instant attendance of his prime vizier. The message, the hour, the prince, and his own situation, alarmed the guilty conscience of Calil Basha; who had possessed the confidence, and advised the restoration, of Amurath. On the

accession of the son, the vizier was confirmed in his office and the appearances of favor; but the veteran statesman was not insensible that he trod on a thin and slippery ice, which might break under his footsteps, and plunges him in the abyss. His friendship for the Christians, which might be innocent under the late reign, had stigmatized him with the name of Gabour-Or-tachi, or foster-brother of the infidels; and his avarice entertained a venal and treasonable correspondence, which was detected and punished after the conclusion of the war. On receiving the royal mandate, he embraced perhaps for the last time, his wife and children; filled a cup with pieces of gold, hastened to the palace, adored the sultan, and offered, according to the Oriental custom, the slight tribute of his duty and gratitude. "It is not my wish," said Mahomet, "to resume my gifts, but rather to heap and multiply them on thy head. In my turn I ask a present far more valuable and important;—Constantinople." As soon as the vizier had recovered from his surprise, "The same God," said he, "who has already given thee so large a portion of the Roman empire, will not deny the remnant, and the capital. His providence, and thy power, assure thy success; and myself, with the rest of thy faithful slaves, will sacrifice our lives and fortunes."—"Lala," (or preceptor) continued the sultan, "do you see this pillow? All the night, in my agitation, I have pulled it on one side and the other; I have risen from my bed, again have I lain down; yet sleep has not visited these weary eyes. Beware of the gold and silver of the Romans: in arms we are superior; and with the aid of God, and the prayers of the prophet, we shall

speedily become masters of Constantinople." To sound the disposition of his soldiers, he often wandered through the streets alone, and in disguise; and it was fatal to discover the sultan, when he wished to escape from the vulgar eye. His hours were spent in delineating the plan of the hostile city; in debating with his generals and engineers, on what spot he should erect his batteries; on which side he should assault the walls; where he should spring his mines; to what place he should apply his scaling-ladders: and the exercises of the day repeated and proved the lucubrations of the night.

Among the implements of destruction, he studied with peculiar care **the** recent and tremendous discovery of the Latins; and his artillery surpassed whatever had yet appeared in the world. A founder of cannon, a Dane (Dacian) or Hungarian, who had been almost starved in the Greek service, deserted to the Moslems, and was liberally entertained by the Turkish sultan. Mahomet was satisfied with the answer to his first question, which he eagerly pressed on the artist. "Am I able to cast a cannon capable of throwing a ball or stone of sufficient size to batter the walls of Constantinople? I am not ignorant of their strength; but were they more solid than those of Babylon, I could oppose an engine of superior power: the position and management of that engine must be left to your engineers." On this assurance, a foundry was established at Adrianople: the metal was prepared; and at the end of three months, Urban produced a piece of brass ordnance of stupendous, and almost incredible magnitude; a measure of twelve palms is assigned to the

bore; and the stone bullet weighed above six hundred pounds. A vacant place before the new palace was chosen for the first experiment; but to prevent the sudden and mischievous effects of astonishment and fear, a proclamation was issued, that the cannon would be discharged the ensuing day. The explosion was felt or heard in a circuit of a hundred furlongs: the ball, by the force of gunpowder, was driven about a mile; and on the spot where it fell, it buried itself a fathom deep in the ground. For the conveyance of this destructive engine, a frame or carriage of thirty wagons was linked together and drawn along by a team of sixty oxen: two hundred men on both sides were stationed, to poise and support the rolling weight; two hundred and fifty workmen marched before to smooth the way and repair the bridges; and near two months were employed in a laborious journey of one hundred and fifty miles. A lively philosopher derides on this occasion the credulity of the Greeks, and observes, with much reason, that we should always distrust the exaggerations of a vanquished people. He calculates, that a ball, even of two hundred pounds, would require a charge of one hundred and fifty pounds of powder; and that the stroke would be feeble and impotent, since not a fifteenth part of the mass could be inflamed at the same moment. A stranger as I am to the art of destruction, I can discern that the modern improvements of artillery prefer the number of pieces to the weight of metal; the quickness of the fire to the sound, or even the consequence, of a single explosion. Yet I dare not reject the positive and unanimous evidence of contemporary writers; nor can it seem improbable that the first

artists, in their rude and ambitious efforts, should have transgressed the standard of moderation. A Turkish cannon, more enormous than that of Mahomet, still guards the entrance of the Dardanelles; and if the use be inconvenient, it has been found on a late trial that the effect was far from contemptible. A stone bullet of *eleven* hundred pounds' weight was once discharged with three hundred and thirty pounds of powder: at the distance of six hundred yards it shivered into three rocky fragments; traversed the strait; and, leaving the waters in a foam, again rose and bounded against the opposite hill.

While Mahomet threatened the capital of the East, the Greek emperor implored with fervent prayers the assistance of earth and heaven. But the invisible powers were deaf to his supplications; and Christendom beheld with indifference the fall of Constantinople, while she derived at least some promise of supply from the jealous and temporal policy of the sultan of Egypt. Some states were too weak, and others too remote; by some the danger was considered as imaginary, by others as inevitable: the Western princes were involved in their endless and domestic quarrels; and the Roman pontiff was exasperated by the falsehood or obstinacy of the Greeks. Instead of employing in their favour the arms and treasures of Italy, Nicholas the Fifth had foretold their approaching ruin; and his honor was engaged in the accomplishment of his prophecy. Perhaps he was softened by the last extremity of their distress; but his compassion was tardy; his efforts were faint and unavailing; and Constantinople had fallen before the squadrons of Genoa and Venice could sail from their

harbors. Even the princes of the Morea and of the Greek islands affected a cold neutrality: the Genoese colony of Galata negotiated a private treaty; and the sultan indulged them in the delusive hope that by his clemency they might survive the ruin of the empire. A plebeian crowd, and some Byzantine nobles, basely withdrew from the danger of their country; and the avarice of the rich denied the emperor, and reserved for the Turks, the secret treasures which might have raised in their defence whole armies of mercenaries. The indigent and solitary prince prepared, however, to sustain his formidable adversary; but if his courage were equal to the peril, his strength was inadequate to the contest. In the beginning of the spring, the Turkish vanguard swept the towns and villages as far as the gates of Constantinople: submission was spared and protected; whatever presumed to resist was exterminated with fire and sword. The Greek places on the Black Sea, Mesembria, Acheloum, and Bizon, surrendered on the first summons; Selybria alone deserved the honors of a siege or blockade; and the bold inhabitants, while they were invested by land, launched their boats, pillaged the opposite coast of Cyzicus, and sold their captives in the public market. But on the approach of Mahomet himself all was silent and prostrate: he first halted at the distance of five miles; and from thence advancing in battle array, planted before the gate of St. Romanus the Imperial standard; and on the sixth day of April formed the memorable siege of Constantinople.

The troops of Asia and Europe extended on the right and left from the Propontis to the harbor; the Janizaries

in the front were stationed before the sultan's tent; the Ottoman line was covered by a deep intrenchment; and a subordinate army enclosed the suburb of Galata, and watched the doubtful faith of the Genoese. The inquisitive Philelphus, who resided in Greece about thirty years before the siege, is confident that all the Turkish forces of any name or value could not exceed the number of sixty thousand horse and twenty thousand foot; and he upbraids the pusillanimity of the nations, who had tamely yielded to a handful of Barbarians. Such indeed might be the regular establishment of the *Capiculi*, the troops of the Porte who marched with the prince, and were paid from his royal treasure. But the bashaws, in their respective governments, maintained or levied a provincial militia; many lands were held by a military tenure; many volunteers were attracted by the hope of spoil; and the sound of the holy trumpet invited a swarm of hungry and fearless fanatics, who might contribute at least to multiply the terrors, and in a first attack to blunt the swords, of the Christians. The whole mass of the Turkish powers is magnified by Ducas, Chalcondyles, and Leonard of Chios, to the amount of three or four hundred thousand men; but Phranza was a less remote and more accurate judge; and his precise definition of two hundred and fifty-eight thousand does not exceed the measure of experience and probability. The navy of the besiegers was less formidable: the Propontis was overspread with three hundred and twenty sail: but of these no more than eighteen could be rated as galleys of war; and the far greater part must be degraded to the condition of store-ships and transports,