

READINGS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

詳 注 現 代 英 文 叢 刊

乙 輯 第 一 種

Clarence Day

LIFE WITH FATHER

跟父親一塊兒過日子

KAIMING BOOK CO., LTD

READINGS IN PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH

*Clarence Day*

LIFE WITH FATHER

With Notes

*by*

LÜ HSIANG

THE KAIMING BOOK CO., LTD

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〔注釋本〕

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## 詳注現代英文叢刊例言

1. 本叢刊暫分甲乙兩輯，甲輯適合已學英文兩三年的程度，乙輯適合已學三四年的程度。
2. 本叢刊的取材，在內容方面（1）求其題材為青年所能理解而又具有文學價值者；（2）求其作品新穎，為一般選本所未見者。
3. 在文字方面，我們取材的標準是（1）行文平易，用字淺顯，初學易於了解和欣賞；（2）接近口語，活潑生動，既饒趣味，亦有實用。
4. 本叢刊的注釋竭力求其詳盡。若有似乎該注而我們沒有注的，大概是一翻字典就得，決無岐解可能的。反之許多常用的字，它的意義往往因地而異，我們的注解是寧濫毋闕。又有許多俚語俗字，在英美是家喻戶曉的，我們卻不惜一再注明，也是因為中國在這方面實有需要。
5. 一般注本多限於一字一語的釋義。我們除在這方面照常詮釋外，尤其注意詞語的用法和文句的結構，隨時加以提示。
6. 本叢刊每種都有兩個本子，一種只有注釋，一種兼附譯文。多數教師不願學生閱讀英漢對照的本子，因為有譯文可以倚賴，往往會把原文囫圇讀過，不去仔細研求。不附譯文的注釋本恰可供給教師採用作課本，或指定作補充讀物。
7. 但是自修的學習者，雖有注釋，難免還有不明白的地方，既無質疑問難之所，能有一份譯文，也可以多一個參考。我們的譯注本恰可供給這種需要。

## 本書介紹

本書作者 Clarence Day (1874-1935)，耶魯大學出身。本來也沒有什麼大名聲，晚年纔拿他幼年時的家庭生活作題材，先後寫成 *God and My Father* (1932)，*Life with Father* (1935)，*Life with Mother* (1938) 三本書，這三本書卻可以讓他不朽了。這三本書裏頭的中心人物是‘父親’，一個證券商人，作者把他寫的極其生動，我們讀這些文章，簡直覺得‘父親’要從書上跳下來跟我們說話，不，吵架。分析起來，‘父親’其實只是個極平凡的人，愛吃，愛喝，怕生病，自以為是，要別人順從他的意思，可說大多數人都是如此，只是他的個性特別強，加上作者這枝生花妙筆，於是極平凡的就一變而為極不平凡。這三本書不朽，‘父親’也不朽了。除‘父親’以外，作者敘寫其餘的人物和大大小小的事情，也處處地方無不顯出他的諳知人性，洞達世情，這幾本書的風行一時，確非偶然。後來有兩位劇作家把‘父親’改編成為劇本，賣座歷久不衰，而且有許多人來問，原作者怎麼會知道他們家裏的事情如此清楚，法國人問他是不是到過法國，波蘭人問他是不是到過波蘭——對於一本書，還有比這個更高的讚美嗎？

這些文章從 1920 年起就陸續發表在刊物上，最初一部分‘父親’本人還讀到，還常常跟兒子辯駁。三本書中最重要的一本，‘跟父親一塊兒過日子’出版於 1935 年的六月，同年十二月作者就去世，‘跟母親一塊兒過日子’（其實那裏面父親還是主角）是他的太太搜輯遺稿編成的。

本書一共三十篇，我們限於篇幅，只選了六篇，讀者若是覺得好——不會不覺得的——務必找一本原書來從頭至尾讀一遍。

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## Father Tries to Make Mother Like Figures

**F**ATHER was always trying to make Mother keep track of the household expenses. He was systematic by nature and he had had a sound business training. He had a full set of account books at home in addition to those in his office—a personal cashbook, journal, and ledger—in which he carefully made double entries. His home ledger showed at a glance exactly how much a month or a year his clothes or his clubs or his cigar bills amounted to. Every item was listed. He knew just how every one of his expenses compared with those of former years, and when he allowed the figures to mount up in one place, he could bring them down in another.

Before he got married, these books had apparently given him great satisfaction, but he said they were never the same after that. They had suddenly stopped telling him anything. He still knew what his personal expenses were, but they were microscopic compared to his household expenses, and of those he knew nothing, no details, only the horrible total. His money was flowing away in all directions and he had no record of it.

Every once in so often he tried to explain his system to Mother. But his stout, leather-bound ledgers, and his

methodical ruling of lines in red ink, and the whole business of putting down every little expense every day, were too much for her. She didn't feel that women should have anything to do with accounts, any more than men should have to see that the parlor was dusted. She had been only a *débutante* when she married, not long out of school, and though she had been head of her class, and wrote well and spelled well, and spoke beautiful French, she had never laid eyes on a ledger. Every time Father showed her his, she was unsympathetic.

Figures were so absorbing to Father that for a long time he couldn't believe Mother really disliked them. He hoped for years that her lack of interest was due only to her youth and that she would outgrow it. He said confidently that she would soon learn to keep books. It was simple. Meanwhile, if she would just make a memorandum for him of whatever she spent, he would enter it himself in the accounts until he could trust her to do it.

That day never arrived.

Father knew where some of the money went, for part of the expenses were charged. But this was a poor consolation. Although the household bills gave him plenty of data which he could sit and stare at, in horror, he said that many of the details were not clear to him, and most of the rest were incredible.



He tried to go over the bills regularly with Mother, as well as he could, demanding information about items which he did not understand. But every now and then there were items which she didn't understand, either. She said she wasn't sure they were mistakes, but she couldn't remember about them. Her mind was a blank. She behaved as though the bill were a total stranger to her.

This was one of the features that annoyed Father most.

Mother didn't like these sessions a bit. She told us she hated bills, anyhow. When they were larger than she expected, she felt guilty and hardly dared to let Father see them. When some of them seemed small to her, she felt happy, but not for long, because they never seemed small to Father. And when she spotted an error—when she found, for instance, that Tyson, the butcher, had charged too much for a broiler—she had to fly around to the shop to have it corrected, and argue it out, and go through a disagreeable experience, and then when she told Father how hard she had worked he took it as a matter of course, and she indignantly found that she never got any credit for it.

Sometimes I had to do this kind of thing, too. There was a man named Flannagan over on Sixth Avenue who supplied us with newspapers, and I used to be sent to rebuke him when he overcharged. Father said Flannagan

had no head for figures. After checking up the addition and recomputing the individual items, he would generally discover that the bill was anywhere from three to fourteen cents out. He then sent for me, handed me the correct amount of change and the bill, and told me to go over to see Flannagan the next day, after school, and warn him that we wouldn't stand it.

I got used to this after a while, but the first time I went I was frightened. Flannagan was a large man who looked like a barkeeper and whose face was tough and belligerent. When I marched into his dark little shop and shakily attempted to warn him that we wouldn't stand it, he leaned over the counter, stared down at me, and said loudly, "Har?"

"Excuse me, Mr. Flannagan," I repeated, "here is your bill but it's wrong."

"Har?"

"It seems to be just a little wrong, sir. Eight cents too much for the *Sun*."

Flannagan snatched the bill from me and the money, and went to his desk. After working over it with a thick pencil, and smudging the bill all up, front and back, he snarled to himself, and receipted it the way Father wished. Then he chucked it disdainfully on the counter. I picked it up and got out.

"Confound it all," Father said when he got it, "don't muss my bills up so."

"It was Mr. Flannagan, Father."

"Well, tell him he must learn to be tidy."

"Yes, sir," I said, hopelessly.

I liked figures myself, just as Father did, and I thought it was queer Mother didn't. She was as quick at them as anybody, yet she didn't get any fun out of writing them down and adding them up. I liked the problems in my school arithmetic, and I deeply admired Father's account books. I didn't dare tell him this, somehow. He never offered to let me examine those big, handsome books. He kept them locked up in a desk he had, down in the front basement.

If I showed Father one of my arithmetic lessons, he was interested—he got up from his chair and put down his newspaper and sat at the dining-room table with a pencil and paper, to see how well I had done. But Mother didn't want to go into such matters.

Every month when the bills came in, there was trouble. Mother seemed to have no great extravagances. But she loved pretty things. She had a passion for china, for instance. She saw hundreds of beautiful cups and saucers that it was hard to walk away from and leave. She knew she couldn't buy them, and mustn't, but every so often

she did. No one purchase seemed large by itself, but they kept mounting up, and Father declared that she bought more china than the Windsor Hotel.

Father couldn't see why charge accounts should be a temptation to Mother. They were no temptation to him. He knew that the bill would arrive on the first of the month and that in a few days he would pay it. He said he had supposed that Mother would have the same feelings that he had about this.

But Mother was one of those persons for whom charge accounts were invented. When she bought something and charged it, the first of the next month seemed far away, and she hoped that perhaps Father wouldn't mind—he might be nice about it for once. Her desire for the thing was strong at that moment, the penalty was remote, and she fell.

She was a different woman entirely when she had to pay cash. It was hard to get cash out of Father, she never got much at one time, and as she looked in her pocketbook she could see her precious little hoard dwindling. She fingered a purchase and thought twice about it before she could bear to part with the money. But shopping on a charge account was fun. She tried not to let herself be tempted, but of course she was, all the time, and after she had conscientiously resisted nine lovely temptations, it

didn't seem really wicked to yield to the tenth.

Father did his level best to take all the fun out of it for her. Once every month regularly he held court and sat as a judge, and required her to explain her crimes and misdemeanors. When she cried, or showed that she was hurt, it appeared that Father, too, felt hurt and worried. He said again and again at the top of his voice that he wished to be reasonable but that he couldn't afford to spend money that way, and that they would have to do better.

Once in a while when Father got low in his mind and said that he was discouraged, Mother felt so sorry that she tried hard to keep count of the cash for him. She put down all sorts of little expenses, on backs of envelopes or on half-sheets of letter paper of different sizes, and she gave these to Father with many interlineations and much scratching out of other memoranda, and with mystifying omissions. He would pore over them, calling out to her to tell him what this was, or that, in a vain attempt to bring order out of this feminine chaos.

Mother could sometimes, though not very often, be managed by praise, but criticism made her rebellious, and after a dose of it she wouldn't put down any figures at all for a while. She had to do the mending and marketing and take care of the children, and she told Father she had

no time to learn to be a bookkeeper too. What was the use of keeping track of anything that was over and done with? She said that wasn't her way of doing things.

"Well," Father said patiently, "let's get at the bottom of this, now, and work out some solution. What is your way of doing things? Tell me."

Mother said firmly that her way was to do the very best she could to keep down expenses, and that all her friends thought she did wonderfully, and the Wards spent twice as much.

Father said, "Damn the Wards! They don't have to work for it. I don't wish to be told what they spend, or how they throw money around."

Mother said, "Oh, Clare, how can you! They don't. They just like to have things go nicely, and live in a comfortable way, and I thought you were so fond of Cousin Mary. You know very well she is lovely, and she gave the baby a cup."

Father declared that he might be fond of Cousin Mary without wanting to hear so damned much about her. He said she cropped up every minute.

"You talk of your own family enough," Mother answered.

Father felt this was very unjust. When he talked of his own family he criticized them, and as severely as he

knew how. He held tightly onto himself in an effort to keep to the subject. He said that the point he was trying to make was that Cousin Mary's ways were not his ways, and that consequently there was no use whatever discussing them with him.

Mother said, "Goodness knows *I* don't want to discuss things, it's always you who are doing it, and if I can't even *speak* of Cousin Mary—"

"You can, you can speak of her all you want to," Father hotly protested. "But I won't have Cousin Mary or anyone else dictating to me how to run things."

"I didn't say a word about her dictating, Clare. She isn't that kind."

"I don't know what you said, now," Father replied. "You never stick to the point. But you implied in some way that Cousin Mary—"

"Oh, Clare, please! I didn't! And I can't bear to have you talk so harshly of her when she admires you so"

Something like this happened to every financial conversation they had. Father did his best to confine the discussion to the question at issue, but somehow, no matter how calmly he started, he soon got exasperated and went galloping fiercely off in any direction Mother's mind happened to take; and in the middle of it one of the babies would cry and Mother would have to go off to see what

was wrong, or she would have to run down to leave word for Mrs. Tobin, the washerwoman, to do Father's shirts differently, and when Father complained Mother reminded him reproachfully that she had to keep house.

Father was baffled by these tactics. But every time he went back down to the basement and ruled neat lines in his ledgers, he made up his mind all over again that he wouldn't give up.



## Father Teaches Me to Be Prompt

**F**ATHER made a great point of our getting down to breakfast on time. I meant to be prompt, but it never occurred to me that I had better try to be early. My idea was to slide into the room at the last moment. Consequently, I often was late.

My brothers were often late, too, with the exception of George. He was the only thoroughly reliable son Father had. George got down so early, Father pointed out to me, that he even had time to practice a few minutes on the piano

The reason George was so prompt was that he was in a hurry to see the sporting page before Father got hold of the newspaper, and the reason he then played the piano was to signal to the rest of us, as we dressed, which team had won yesterday's ball game. He had made up a code for this purpose, and we leaned over the banisters, pulling on our stockings and shoes, to hear him announce the results. I don't remember now what the titles were of the airs he selected, but the general idea was that if he played a gay, lively air it meant that the Giants had won, and when the strains of a dirge or lament floated up to us, it meant that Pop Anson had beaten them.