

英文精選

上冊

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# SELECTIONS

FROM

# THE BEST AUTHORS

BOOK I

## 英文精選

上冊

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# SELECTIONS FROM THE BEST AUTHORS

## LETTER TO SAMUEL MATHER

Benjamin Franklin

Passy, May 12, 1784.

I received your kind letter, with your excellent advice to the people of the United States, which I read with great pleasure, and hope it will be duly regarded. Such writings, though they may be lightly passed over\* by many readers, yet, if they make a deep impression on one active mind in a hundred, the effects may be considerable. Permit me to mention one little instance, which, though it relates to myself, will not be quite uninteresting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled, "Essays to Do Good," which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn\* of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life, for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good* than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book.

You mention your being in your seventy-eighth year. I am in my seventy-ninth year; we are growing old together. It is now more than sixty years since I left Boston, but I remember well both your father and grandfather, having heard them both in the pulpit and seen them in their eyes. The first time I saw your father was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania\*. He

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received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he said hastily, "Stoop, stoop!" I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me, "*You are young, and have the world before you*"; *STOOP as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*" This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me; and I often think of it when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high.

## NOTES

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN** (1706-1790)—He was the most preëminent among the illustrious Americans, born in Boston, Massachusetts, and died at Philadelphia where he had passed the greater part of his life. He achieved an undying reputation as a man of business, as a scientist, as a writer, as a statesman, and as a diplomatist. His *Autobiography* is most familiar to us.

lightly passed over: read through as something of no importance

turn: change

Pennsylvania: name of a state of U. S. A.

have the world before you: you have to face human affairs in society (你將來必須應付世事)

MOTHER

MOTHER

Kathleen Norris

No, Mother never worried, or if she did, nobody ever knew it. Care, fatigue, responsibility, hard, long years of busy days and broken nights\* had left their mark on her face; but there was a contagious\* serenity in her smile, a clear steadiness in her calm eyes, and her forehead, beneath an unfashionably plain sweep of hair, was untroubled and smooth.

Mother was a simple woman; so absorbed in the hourly problems attendant upon the housing and feeding of her husband and family that her own personal ambitions, if she had any, were quite lost sight of,\* and the actual outlines of her character were forgotten by everyone, herself included. In her busy day marched successfully to nightfall; if darkness found her husband reading in his big chair, the younger children sprawled safe and asleep in the nursery, the older ones contented with books or games, the clothes spritzed, the bread set, the kitchen dark and clean, she asked no more of life.

She would sit, her overflowing work-basket beside her, looking from one absorbed face to another, thinking perhaps of Julie's new school dress, of Ted's impending siege\* with the dentist, or of the old bureau in the attic that might be mended for Bruce's room. "Thank God, we all have warm beds," she would say, when they all went upstairs yawning and chilly.

She had married, at twenty, the man she had loved and had found him better than her dreams in many ways, and perhaps disappointing in some few others, but "the best man in the



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world" for all the m. That for more than twenty years he had been satisfied to stand for nine hours daily behind his dingy desk, and to carry home to her his unopened salary envelope twice a month, she found only admirable. Daddy was "steady", he was "so gentle with the children," he was "the easiest man in the world to cool for\*." "Bless his heart, no woman ever had less to worry over in her husband!" she would say, looking from her kitchen window to the garden where he trained\* the pea-vines, with the children's yellow heads bobbing about him. She never analyzed his character, much less criticized him. Good and bad, he was taken for granted\*; she was much more lenient to him than to any of the children.

She welcomed the babies as gifts from God, marvelled over their tiny perfectness, dreamed over the soft little forms with a heart almost too full for prayer. She secretly regarded her children as marvelous, even while she laughed down\* their youthful conceit and punished their naughtiness.

## NOTES

Kathleen Norris—She is a contemporary American novelist, quite a voluminous writer. In the twenty-seven years from 1911 to 1937, she had twenty-five books published. *Mother* was published in 1911.

broken nights: nights when one is often awakened from sleep

contagious: catching (動人的)

lost sight of: invisible

impending siege: operation that threatens to come soon

(武器) 刀等手續

in many way: in many respects

for all that: in spite of

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to cool for: to make calm  
train: cause to grow up a wall  
taken for granted: not submitted to inspection (不容  
查或考慮)

laugh down: silence with laughter (一笑置之)

## GIVE ME LIBERTY OR GIVE ME DEATH

Patrick Henry

Mr. President:—No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the House\*. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining as I do, opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the House is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part\*, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery; and in proportion to the magnitude of the subject, ought to be the freedom of the debate\*. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfil the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offence, I should consider myself as guilty of treason towards my country, and of an act of disloyalty towards the Majesty of Heaven\*, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren, till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part\* of wise men,

engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those, who, having eyes, see not, and having ears, hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal\* salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst, and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British Ministry for the last ten years, to justify\* those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the House. Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not\*, sir; it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with\* those warlike preparations which cover our waters\* and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation; the last arguments to which kings resort\*.

I ask, gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us; they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British Ministry have been so long forging. And



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what have we to oppose to them? Shall we <sup>any</sup> argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to\* entreaty and humble supplication? What terms\* shall we find, which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer. Sir, we have done everything that could be done, to avert the storm\* which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored—its interposition to arrest\* the tyrannical hands of the Ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned, with contempt, from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge in the fond\* hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room\* for hope. If we wish to be free—if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending—if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon, until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained, we must fight!—I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts\* is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak, unable to cope with\* so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual

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resistance by <sup>lying</sup> supinely on our backs and hugging the delusive phantom of hope, until our enemies shall have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature has placed in our power. <sup>Three</sup> millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat, but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable—and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, peace, peace—but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death!

### NOTES

**Patrick Henry (1736-1799)**—He is remembered as the greatest orator of the American Revolution. He was a native of Virginia, had been elected a member of the House of Burgesses.

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and introduced the so-called "Virginia Resolves"—only the Virginia Burgesses and Governor had the right to tax the colony. As a member of the Virginia Provincial Convention, he gave the speech selected here to put the colony to war.

House: assembly, convention (議會)

for my own part: in my opinion

the freedom of the debate: this noun phrase is the subject of "ought to be", with "in proportion etc." as the complement

hold to: promise to, vow to

Majesty of Heaven: God

part: duty

temporal: of this life, opposite to spiritual

justify: demonstrate (證明)

Trust it not: Do not trust it

comport with: suit; be in agreement with (一致)

waters: sea

the last arguments to which kings resort: the last step

which kings take to settle quarrels between nations

resort to: seek help from; make use of

terms: language; mode of expression (措辭 語氣)

storm: war

arrest: stop

fond: foolish

spoon: opportunity

hosts: armies

cope with: fight equally against

preside over: exercise control over

Boston: a great city in U.S.A. along the Atlantic

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LOCHINVAR

Walter Scott

Oh! young Lochinvar is come out of the West,  
Through all the wide Border his steed was the best;  
And, save his good broad sword, he weapons had none,<sup>o</sup>  
He rode all unarmed, and he rode all alone.  
So faithful in love, and so dauntless in war,  
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake, and he stopped not for stone,  
He swam the Eske River where ford there was none;  
But, ere he alighted at Netherby\* gate,  
The bride had consented;\* the gallant came late;  
For a laggard in love, and a dastard in war,  
Was to wed the fair Ellen\* of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,  
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all;  
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword  
(For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word),  
"Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,  
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar!"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;—  
Love swells like the Solway\*, but ebbs like its tide,  
and now am I come, with this lost love\* of mine,\*  
Tread by one measure, drink one cup of wine.  
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,  
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar,"

The bide kissed the goblet: the knight took it up,  
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.  
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,  
With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye:  
He took her left hand, ere her mother could bar,—  
“Now tread we a measure,” said young Lochinvar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face;  
That never a hall such a galliard\* did grace;  
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,  
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and plume;  
And the bridemaids whispered, “‘Twere better, by far,  
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar”.

One touch to her hand, and one word in her ear,  
When they reached the hall door; and the charger stood  
near;  
So light to the croup the fair lady he swung,  
So light to the saddle before her he sprung:  
“She is won! we are gone! over bank, bush, and scar;  
They’ll have fleet steeds that follow,”\* quoth young  
Lochinvar.

There was mounting ’mong\* Graemes\* of the Netherby  
clan:  
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves\*, they rode and they  
ran.

There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lea\*,  
But the lost bride of Netherby ne’er did they see.  
So daring in love, and so dauntless in war,  
Have you e’er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

## NOTES

Walter Scott (1771-1832)—He was an English romantic poet and novelist. As he was of Scottish birth, the background of most of his writings was in Scotland. He wrote the celebrated Waverley Novels, such as *Ivanhoe*, *The Taisman*, *Rob Roy*, *Kennilworth*, *Quentin Durward*, etc. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* is the most famous of his poems. *Lochinvar* is a popular simple ballad on an old love story.

he weapons had none: he had no weapons

Netherby: name of the lady's family

the bride had consented: i. e. she had consented to marry another man

Ellen: the lady's name

Solway: Solway Firth, an estuarine inlet of the Irish Sea, between England and Scotland (海口名)

this lost love of mine: i. e. the bride

galliard: a kind of dance

they'll have fleet steeds that follow: people who want to pursue us must ride fast, in other words, we are not to be overtaken

'mong: among

Gracmes: name of place

Forsters, Fenwicks, Musgraves: titles of noble families

Cannobie Lea: tract of grass land in Scotland (草原地名)

## GOD SEES THE TRUTH BUT WAITS

Leo Tolstoy

In the town of Vladimir lived a young merchant named Ivan Dmitritch Aksyonof. He had two shops and a house of his own.



Aksyonof was a handsome, fair-haired, curly-headed fellow, full of fun, and very fond of singing. When quite a young man he had been given to\* drink, and was riotous when he had had too much; but after he married he gave up drinking, except now and then.

One summer Aksyonof was going to the Nizhny Fair, and as he bade good-by to his family his wife said to him, "Ivan Dmitritch, do not start today; I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksyonof laughed, and said, "You are afraid that when I get to the fair I shall go on a spree."

His wife replied: "I do not know what I am afraid of; all I know is that I had a bad dream. I dreamt you returned from the town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your hair was quite gray."

Aksyonof laughed. "That's a lucky sign," said he. "See if I don't sell out all my goods, and bring you some presents from the fair."

So he said good-by to his family, and drove away.

When he had traveled halfway, he met a merchant whom he knew, and they put up\* at the same inn for the night. They had some tea together, and then went to bed in adjoining rooms.

It was not Aksyonof's habit to sleep late, and wishing to travel while it was still cool, he aroused the driver before dawn, and told him to put in\* the horses.

Then he made his way across to the landlord of the inn (who lived in a cottage at the back), paid his bill, and continued his journey.

When he had gone about twenty-five miles he stopped for the horses to be fed. Aksyonof rested a while in the passage of the inn, then he stepped out into the porch and

ordering a *sambovar*\* to be heated, got out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a *troyka* (three-horse conveyance\*) drove up with tinkling bells, and an official alighted, followed by two soldiers. He came to Aksyonof and began to question him, asking him who he was and whence he came. Aksyonof answered him fully, and said, "Won't you have some tea with me?" But the official went on cross-questioning him and asking him: "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone, or with a fellow merchant? Did you see the other merchant this morning? Why did you leave the inn before dawn?"

Aksyonof wondered why he was asked all these questions, but he described all that had happened, and then added, "Why do you cross-question me as if I were a thief or a robber? I am traveling on business of my own, and there is no need to question me."

Then the official, calling the soldiers, said, "I am the police officer of this district, and I question you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been found with his throat cut. We must search your things."

They entered the house. The soldiers and the police officer unstrapped\* Aksyonof's luggage and searched it. Suddenly the officer drew a knife out of a bag, crying, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksyonof looked, and seeing a bloodstained knife taken from his bag, he was frightened.

"How is it there is blood on this knife?"

Aksyonof tried to answer, but could hardly utter a word, and only stammered: "I—I don't know—not mine."

Then the police officer said, "This morning the merchant was found in bed with his throat cut. You are the only

person who could have done it. The house was locked from the inside, and no one else was there. Here is this blood-stained knife in your bag, and your face and manner betray you! Tell me how you killed him, and how much money you stole.

Aksyonof swore he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after they had had tea together, that he had no money except eight thousand rubles of his own, and that the knife was not his. But his voice was broken, his face pale, and he trembled with fear as though he were guilty.

The police officer ordered the soldiers to bind Aksyonof and to put him in the cart. As they tied his feet together and flung him into the cart, Aksyonof crossed himself\* and wept. His money and goods were taken from him, and he was sent to the nearest town and imprisoned there. Inquiries as to his character were made in Vladimir. The merchants and other inhabitants of that town said that in former days he used to drink and waste his time, but that he was a good man. Then the trial came on: he was charged\* with murdering a merchant from Byazan, and robbing him of twenty thousand rubles.

His wife was in despair, and did not know what to believe. Her children were all quite small; one was a baby at her breast. Taking them all with her, she went to the town where her husband was in jail. At first she was not allowed to see him; but, after much begging, she obtained permission from the officials, and was taken\* to him. When she saw her husband in prison dress and in chains, shut up with thieves and criminals, she fell down, and did not come to her senses for a long time. Then she drew her children to her, and sat down near him. She told him of things as