

【 中文导读英文版 】



The Essays of Michel de Montaigne
Book the Third

蒙田随笔全集

第3卷

[法] 蒙田 著
王勋 纪飞 等 编译

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内 容 简 介

《蒙田随笔》是文艺复兴后期法国著名作家、思想家蒙田的代表作，也是迄今为止世界上最有影响的散文作品之一。作者将自己的生活、阅读和旅游见闻等以随笔的形式记录下来，集结为随笔集。在随笔集中，蒙田以单个人为起点直至描写人的共性与本性，从日常生活、传统习俗到人生哲理等等无所不谈。蒙田以智者的眼光，旁征博引，鉴古知今，反思探索人与人生；他主张打破古典权威，张扬人性自由，崇尚科学精神。随笔语调平和、通俗易懂，论述深入浅出，是一部真正的“大众哲学”。该书问世 400 多年来，先后被译成世界上几十种语言，成为文学史上影响深远的经典之作。作者对人生、社会、宗教等的感想及感悟感染了一代又一代读者的心灵。

无论作为语言学习的课本，还是作为通俗的散文读本，本书对当代中国的读者，特别是青少年都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况，进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平，在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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米歇尔·德·蒙田（Michel de Montaigne，1533—1592），文艺复兴后期法国著名的思想家、文学家。

蒙田 1533 年 2 月 18 日生于法国南部佩里戈尔地区蒙田城堡的一个贵族家庭。他的父亲是一位继承了丰厚家产的商人，还多次被任命为波尔多市市长。1549 年，蒙田进入图卢兹大学学习法律，毕业后进入法院工作。1562 年，他在巴黎高等法院宣誓效忠天主教。之后，蒙田曾两次任波尔多市市长。1568 年，在父亲去世之后，蒙田成了蒙田城堡的领主。1571 年，蒙田回到蒙田城堡，开始隐居读书生活。

自 1571 年起一直到他逝世，蒙田在隐居阅读、游历和生活中随时写下了许多心得体会，并称之为随笔。1580 年，《随笔》第一卷和第二卷出版。1592 年 9 月 13 日，蒙田逝世。1595 年，在他去世三年后，《蒙田随笔》全集（共三卷）出版。蒙田以博学著称，在《蒙田随笔》全集中，日常生活、传统习俗、宗教、人生哲理等等无所不谈，特别是旁征博引了许多古希腊、罗马时代作家的论述。书中，作者还对自己作了大量的描写与剖析，使人阅读起来有娓娓而谈的亲切之感，增加了作品的文学趣味。《蒙田随笔》是 16 世纪各种思潮和各种知识经过分析的总汇，有“生活的哲学”之美称。书中语言平易通畅，富于生活情趣，在法国散文史上占有非常重要的地位。

1613 年，《蒙田随笔》被译成英语；1633 年，被译成意大利语……出版 400 多年来，《蒙田随笔》先后被译成世界上几十种语言，在世界各地拥有无数的忠实读者。蒙田是启蒙运动以前法国的知识权威和批评家，是一位人类感情冷峻的观察家，也是对各民族文化，特别是西方文化进行冷静研究的学者。启蒙运动时期一大批文学巨匠，像英国的培根、法国的卢梭等都吸收借鉴了蒙田随笔的风格，他因此被后人尊奉为随笔的鼻祖。从他的思想和感情来看，人们可以把他看成是那个时代出现的一个现代人。



该书曾入选英国作家毛姆开列的“真正杰作文学书”书目和美国学者唐斯开列的“塑造当代文明的 111 本书”书目。

在中国,《蒙田随笔》同样是广大读者喜爱的世界经典散文作品之一,该作品的版本数量也有数十个。基于这个原因,我们决定编译该作品,并采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中,我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓,也尽可能保留原作的叙述主线。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文文本之前,可以先阅读中文导读部分,这样有利于了解故事背景,从而加快阅读速度。我们相信,该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者,特别是青少年读者的科学素养和人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平,书中难免会有不当之处,衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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第一章 论功利与诚实

Chapter 1 Of Profit and Honesty



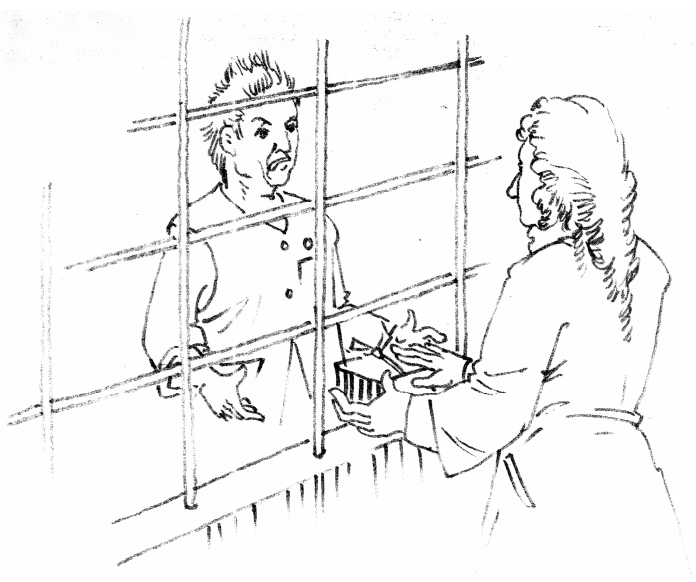
谁都难免说傻话，可悲的是还说得很起劲。这事跟我无关。我的傻话都是漫不经心时傻里傻气说出来的。想说就说，随说随忘，毫不在乎。傻成怎样也就怎样对待，绝不贩卖。我对着白纸说话与对着人说话一样，求的是真。

我们的制度，不论在公共还是私人领域，处处都不完美，但不能说它无用，无用就是它的作用。我们生来则由病态的品性黏合而成，野心、嫉妒、羡慕、报复、迷信、失望，与生俱来，难以改变，从野兽身上可以看到这些影子，包括残忍性在内。

因此，我们看到别人受苦，内心不但不同情，还会产生一种说不出的幸灾乐祸的快感。然而，谁消除了这些品质的种子，便也摧毁了人性的基本条件。

同样，在我们的制度中，有一些必要的职能，不仅是恶劣的，还是罪恶的。这些罪恶不但有它们的位子，并且不断对我们产生影响，正如我们的健康要靠毒药维持。我经常看到一些法官通过舞弊、许愿或宽恕，使用哄吓、诈骗等手段来诱使罪人招供，我感到很气愤。我痛恨这种不讲信义的法律。

同时，由于我很不乐意为了一位君王去背叛一个普通人，我也就不会为了一个普通人去背叛一位君王。我也曾几次参与君王之间的谈判，在分歧与不和中进行斡旋。我竭力避免因我而产生误解，因而把最强烈的意见和盘托出，而不似那些掩饰自己的心意，假装中立迎合别人的人。我是个稚嫩的谈判新手，幸运的是至今一切顺利。我开诚布公，因而与人初次交往就深得人心，取得信任。我直言不讳时，言辞激烈，不计后果，然而我



法官诱骗罪人招供

必须要让那些先生们看到，我并不是在谋一己之利。

No man is free from speaking foolish things; but the worst on't is, when a man labours to play the fool:

“Nae iste magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit.”

[“Truly he, with a great effort will shortly say a mighty trifle.”

—Terence, *Heaut.*, act iii., s. 4.]

This does not concern me; mine slip from me with as little care as they are of little value, and 'tis the better for them. I would presently part with them for what they are worth, and neither buy nor sell them, but as they weigh. I speak on paper, as I do to the first person I meet; and that this is true, observe what follows.

To whom ought not treachery to be hateful, when Tiberius refused it in a thing of so great importance to him? He had word sent him from Germany that if he thought fit, they would rid him of Arminius by poison: this was the most potent enemy the Romans had, who had defeated them so ignominiously under Varus, and who alone prevented their aggrandisement in those parts.

He returned answer, “that the people of Rome were wont to revenge themselves of their enemies by open ways, and with their swords in their hands, and not clandestinely and by fraud”: wherein he quitted the profitable for the honest. You will tell me that he was a braggadocio; I believe so too: and 'tis no great miracle in men of his profession. But the acknowledgment of virtue is not less valid in the mouth of him who hates it, forasmuch as truth forces it from him, and if he will not inwardly receive it, he at least puts it on for a decoration.

Our outward and inward structure is full of imperfection; but there is nothing useless in nature, not even inutility itself; nothing has insinuated itself into this universe that has not therein some fit and proper place. Our being is cemented with sickly qualities: ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, and despair have so natural a possession in us, that its image is discerned in beasts; nay, and cruelty, so unnatural a vice; for even in the midst of compassion we feel within, I know not what tart-sweet titillation of ill-natured pleasure in seeing others suffer; and the children feel it:

“*Suave mari magno, turbantibus aequora ventis,*

E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem.”

[“It is sweet, when the winds disturb the waters of the vast sea, to

witness from land the peril of other persons.”—Lucretius, ii. 1.]

of the seeds of which qualities, whoever should divest man, would destroy the fundamental conditions of human life. Likewise, in all governments there are necessary offices, not only abject, but vicious also. Vices there help to make up the seam in our piecing, as poisons are useful for the conservation of health. If they become excusable because they are of use to us, and that the common necessity covers their true qualities, we are to resign this part to the strongest and boldest citizens, who sacrifice their honour and conscience, as others of old sacrificed their lives, for the good of their country: we, who are weaker, take upon us parts both that are more easy and less hazardous. The public weal requires that men should betray, and lie, and massacre; let us leave this commission to men who are more obedient and more supple.

In earnest, I have often been troubled to see judges, by fraud and false hopes of favour or pardon, allure a criminal to confess his fact, and therein to make use of cozenage and impudence. It would become justice, and Plato himself, who countenances this manner of proceeding, to furnish me with other means more suitable to my own liking: this is a malicious kind of justice, and I look upon it as no less wounded by itself than by others. I said not long since to some company in discourse, that I should hardly be drawn to betray my prince for a particular man, who should be much ashamed to betray any particular man for my prince; and I do not only hate deceiving myself, but that any one should deceive through me; I will neither afford matter nor occasion to any such thing.

In the little I have had to mediate betwixt our princes [Between the King of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV., and the Duc de Guise. See De Thou, *De Vita Sua*, iii. 9.] in the divisions and subdivisions by which we are at this time torn to pieces, I have been very careful that they should neither be deceived in me nor deceive others by me. People of that kind of trading are very reserved, and pretend to be the most moderate imaginable and nearest to the opinions of those with whom they have to do; I expose myself in my stiff opinion, and after a method

the most my own; a tender negotiator, a novice, who had rather fail in the affair than be wanting to myself. And yet it has been hitherto with so good luck (for fortune has doubtless the best share in it), that few things have passed from hand to hand with less suspicion or more favour and privacy. I have a free and open way that easily insinuates itself and obtains belief with those with whom I am to deal at the first meeting. Sincerity and pure truth, in what age soever, pass for current; and besides, the liberty and freedom of a man who treats without any interest of his own is never hateful or suspected, and he may very well make use of the answer of Hyperides to the Athenians, who complained of his blunt way of speaking: “Messieurs, do not consider whether or no I am free, but whether I am so without a bribe, or without any advantage to my own affairs.” My liberty of speaking has also easily cleared me from all suspicion of dissembling by its vehemency, leaving nothing unsaid, how home and bitter soever (so that I could have said no worse behind their backs), and in that it carried along with it a manifest show of simplicity and indifference. I pretend to no other fruit by acting than to act, and add to it no long arguments or propositions; every action plays its own game, win if it can.

As to the rest, I am not swayed by any passion, either of love or hatred, towards the great, nor has my will captivated either by particular injury or obligation. I look upon our kings with an affection simply loyal and respectful, neither prompted nor restrained by any private interest, and I love myself for it. Nor does the general and just cause attract me otherwise than with moderation, and without heat. I am not subject to those penetrating and close compacts and engagements. Anger and hatred are beyond the duty of justice; and are passions only useful to those who do not keep themselves strictly to their duty by simple reason:

“Utatur motu animi, qui uti ratione non potest.”

[“He may employ his passion, who can make no use of his reason.”

—Cicero, *Tusc. Quaes.*, iv. 25.]

All legitimate intentions are temperate and equable of themselves; if otherwise, they degenerate into seditious and unlawful. This is it which makes me walk everywhere with my head erect, my face and my heart open. In truth, and I am not afraid to confess it, I should easily, in case of need, hold up one

candle to St. Michael and another to his dragon, like the old woman; I will follow the right side even to the fire, but exclusively, if I can. Let Montaigne be overwhelmed in the public ruin if need be; but if there be no need, I should think myself obliged to fortune to save me, and I will make use of all the length of line my duty allows for his preservation. Was it not Atticus who, being of the just but losing side, preserved himself by his moderation in that universal shipwreck of the world, amongst so many mutations and diversities? For private man, as he was, it is more easy; and in such kind of work, I think a man may justly not be ambitious to offer and insinuate himself. For a man, indeed, to be wavering and irresolute, to keep his affection unmoved and without inclination in the troubles of his country and public divisions, I neither think it handsome nor honest:

“Ea non media, sed nulla via est, velut eventum
exspectantium, quo fortunae consilia sua applicent.”

[“That is not a middle way, but no way, to await events, by which
they refer their resolutions to fortune.”—Livy, xxxii. 21.]

This may be allowed in our neighbours’ affairs; and thus Gelo, the tyrant of Syracuse, suspended his inclination in the war betwixt the Greeks and barbarians, keeping a resident ambassador with presents at Delphos, to watch and see which way fortune would incline, and then take fit occasion to fall in with the victors. It would be a kind of treason to proceed after this manner in our own domestic affairs, wherein a man must of necessity be of the one side or the other; though for a man who has no office or express command to call him out, to sit still I hold it more excusable (and yet I do not excuse myself upon these terms) than in foreign expeditions, to which, however, according to our laws, no man is pressed against his will. And yet even those who wholly engage themselves in such a war may behave themselves with such temper and moderation, that the storm may fly over their heads without doing them any harm. Had we not reason to hope such an issue in the person of the late Bishop of Orleans, the *Sieur de Morvilliers*?

[An able negotiator, who, though protected by the Guises, and
strongly supporting them, was yet very far from persecuting the
Reformists. He died 1577.]

And I know, amongst those who behave themselves most bravely in the present war, some whose manners are so gentle, obliging, and just, that they will certainly stand firm, whatever event Heaven is preparing for us. I am of opinion that it properly belongs to kings only to quarrel with kings; and I laugh at those spirits who, out of lightness of heart, lend themselves to so disproportioned disputes; for a man has never the more particular quarrel with a prince, by marching openly and boldly against him for his own honour and according to his duty; if he does not love such a person, he does better, he esteems him. And notably the cause of the laws and of the ancient government of a kingdom, has this always annexed to it, that even those who, for their own private interest, invade them, excuse, if they do not honour, the defenders.

But we are not, as we nowadays do, to call peevishness and inward discontent, that spring from private interest and passion, duty, nor a treacherous and malicious conduct, courage; they call their proneness to mischief and violence zeal; 'tis not the cause, but their interest, that inflames them; they kindle and begin a war, not because it is just, but because it is war.

A man may very well behave himself commodiously and loyally too amongst those of the adverse party; carry yourself, if not with the same equal affection (for that is capable of different measure), at least with an affection moderate, well tempered, and such as shall not so engage you to one party, that it may demand all you are able to do for that side, content yourself with a moderate proportion of their, favour and goodwill; and to swim in troubled waters without fishing in them.

The other way, of offering a man's self and the utmost service he is able to do, both to one party and the other, has still less of prudence in it than conscience. Does not he to whom you betray another, to whom you were as welcome as to himself, know that you will at another time do as much for him? He holds you for a villain; and in the meantime hears what you will say, gathers intelligence from you, and works his own ends out of your disloyalty; double-dealing men are useful for bringing in, but we must have a care they carry out as little as is possible.

I say nothing to one party that I may not, upon occasion, say to the other, with a little alteration of accent; and report nothing but things either indifferent

or known, or what is of common consequence. I cannot permit myself, for any consideration, to tell them a lie. What is intrusted to my secrecy, I religiously conceal; but I take as few trusts of that nature upon me as I can. The secrets of princes are a troublesome burthen to such as are not interested in them. I very willingly bargain that they trust me with little, but confidently rely upon what I tell them. I have ever known more than I desired. One open way of speaking introduces another open way of speaking, and draws out discoveries, like wine and love. Philippides, in my opinion, answered King Lysimachus very discreetly, who, asking him what of his estate he should bestow upon him? "What you will," said he, "provided it be none of your secrets." I see every one is displeased if the bottom of the affair be concealed from him wherein he is employed, or that there be any reservation in the thing; for my part, I am content to know no more of the business than what they would have me employ myself in, nor desire that my knowledge should exceed or restrict what I have to say. If I must serve for an instrument of deceit, let it be at least with a safe conscience: I will not be reputed a servant either so affectionate or so loyal as to be fit to betray any one: he who is unfaithful to himself, is excusably so to his master. But they are princes who do not accept men by halves, and despise limited and conditional services: I cannot help it: I frankly tell them how far I can go; for a slave I should not be, but to reason, and I can hardly submit even to that. And they also are to blame to exact from a freeman the same subjection and obligation to their service that they do from him they have made and bought, or whose fortune particularly and expressly depends upon theirs. The laws have delivered me from a great anxiety; they have chosen a side for me, and given me a master; all other superiority and obligation ought to be relative to that, and cut, off from all other. Yet this is not to say, that if my affection should otherwise incline me, my hand should presently obey it; the will and desire are a law to themselves; but actions must receive commission from the public appointment.

All this proceeding of mine is a little dissonant from the ordinary forms; it would produce no great effects, nor be of any long duration; innocence itself could not, in this age of ours, either negotiate without dissimulation, or traffic without lying; and, indeed, public employments are by no means for my palate:

what my profession requires, I perform after the most private manner that I can. Being young, I was engaged up to the ears in business, and it succeeded well; but I disengaged myself in good time. I have often since avoided meddling in it, rarely accepted, and never asked it; keeping my back still turned to ambition; but if not like rowers who so advance backward, yet so, at the same time, that I am less obliged to my resolution than to my good fortune, that I was not wholly embarked in it. For there are ways less displeasing to my taste, and more suitable to my ability, by which, if she had formerly called me to the public service, and my own advancement towards the world's opinion, I know I should, in spite of all my own arguments to the contrary, have pursued them. Such as commonly say, in opposition to what I profess, that what I call freedom, simplicity, and plainness in my manners, is art and subtlety, and rather prudence than goodness, industry than nature, good sense than good luck, do me more honour than disgrace: but, certainly, they make my subtlety too subtle; and whoever has followed me close, and pryed narrowly into me, I will give him the victory, if he does not confess that there is no rule in their school that could match this natural motion, and maintain an appearance of liberty and licence, so equal and inflexible, through so many various and crooked paths, and that all their wit and endeavour could never have led them through. The way of truth is one and simple; that of particular profit, and the commodity of affairs a man is entrusted with, is double, unequal, and casual. I have often seen these counterfeit and artificial liberties practised, but, for the most part, without success; they relish of AEsop's ass who, in emulation of the dog, obligingly clapped his two fore-feet upon his master's shoulders; but as many caresses as the dog had for such an expression of kindness, twice so many blows with a cudgel had the poor ass for his compliment:

"Id maxime quemque decet, quod est cujusque suum maxime."

["That best becomes every man which belongs most to him;"]

—Cicero, *De Offic.*, i. 31.]

I will not deprive deceit of its due; that were but ill to understand the world: I know it has often been of great use, and that it maintains and supplies most men's employment. There are vices that are lawful, as there are many actions, either good or excusable, that are not lawful in themselves.

The justice which in itself is natural and universal is otherwise and more nobly ordered than that other justice which is special, national, and constrained to the ends of government,

“Veri juris germanaeque justitiae solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra et imaginibus utimur;”

[“We retain no solid and express portraiture of true right and germane justice; we have only the shadow and image of it.”

—Cicero, *De Offic.*, iii. 17.]

insomuch that the sage Dandamis, hearing the lives of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Diogenes read, judged them to be great men every way, excepting that they were too much subjected to the reverence of the laws, which, to second and authorise, true virtue must abate very much of its original vigour; many vicious actions are introduced, not only by their permission, but by their advice:

“Ex senatus consultis plebisquescitis scelera exercentur.”

[“Crimes are committed by the decrees of the Senate and the popular assembly.”—Seneca, *Ep.*, 95.]

I follow the common phrase that distinguishes betwixt profitable and honest things, so as to call some natural actions, that are not only profitable but necessary, dishonest and foul.

But let us proceed in our examples of treachery two pretenders to the kingdom of Thrace [Rhescuporis and Cotys. Tacitus, *Annal.*, ii. 65] were fallen into dispute about their title; the emperor hindered them from proceeding to blows: but one of them, under colour of bringing things to a friendly issue by an interview, having invited his competitor to an entertainment in his own house, imprisoned and killed him. Justice required that the Romans should have satisfaction for this offence; but there was a difficulty in obtaining it by ordinary ways; what, therefore, they could not do legitimately, without war and without danger, they resolved to do by treachery; and what they could not honestly do, they did profitably. For which end, one Pomponius Flaccus was found to be a fit instrument. This man, by dissembled words and assurances, having drawn the other into his toils, instead of the honour and favour he had promised him, sent him bound hand and foot to Rome. Here one traitor

betrayed another, contrary to common custom: for they are full of mistrust, and 'tis hard to overreach them in their own art: witness the sad experience we have lately had. [Montaigne here probably refers to the feigned reconciliation between Catherine de Medici and Henri, Duc de Guise, in 1588.]

Let who will be Pomponius Flaccus, and there are enough who would: for my part, both my word and my faith are, like all the rest, parts of this common body: their best effect is the public service; this I take for presupposed. But should one command me to take charge of the courts of law and lawsuits, I should make answer, that I understood it not; or the place of a leader of pioneers, I would say, that I was called to a more honourable employment; so likewise, he that would employ me to lie, betray, and forswear myself, though not to assassinate or to poison, for some notable service, I should say, "If I have robbed or stolen anything from any man, send me rather to the galleys." For it is permissible in a man of honour to say, as the Lacedaemonians did, [Plutarch, *Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend*, c. 21.] having been defeated by Antipater, when just upon concluding an agreement: "You may impose as heavy and ruinous taxes upon us as you please, but to command us to do shameful and dishonest things, you will lose your time, for it is to no purpose." Every one ought to make the same vow to himself that the kings of Egypt made their judges solemnly swear, that they would not do anything contrary to their consciences, though never so much commanded to it by themselves. In such commissions there is evident mark of ignominy and condemnation; and he who gives it at the same time accuses you, and gives it, if you understand it right, for a burden and a punishment. As much as the public affairs are bettered by your exploit, so much are your own the worse, and the better you behave yourself in it, 'tis so much the worse for yourself; and it will be no new thing, nor, peradventure, without some colour of justice, if the same person ruin you who set you on work.

If treachery can be in any case excusable, it must be only so when it is practised to chastise and betray treachery. There are examples enough of treacheries, not only rejected, but chastised and punished by those in favour of whom they were undertaken. Who is ignorant of Fabricius sentence against the physician of Pyrrhus?