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QUO VADIS

by Henryk Sienkiewicz
(A Nobel Prize Winner)

Translated from the Polish
by Jeremiah Curtin

你往何处去

[波]亨利克·显克威支 著
(诺贝尔文学奖得主)
杰利米·克汀 译



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总 序

经典名著的语言无疑是最凝练、最优美、最有审美价值的。雪莱的那句“如冬已来临，春天还会远吗？”让多少陷于绝望的人重新燃起希望之火，鼓起勇气，迎接严冬过后的春天。徐志摩一句“悄悄的我走了，正如我悄悄的来；我挥一挥衣袖，不带走一片云彩”又让多少人陶醉。尼采的那句“上帝死了”，又给多少人以振聋发聩的启迪作用。

读经典名著，尤其阅读原汁原味作品，可以怡情养性，增长知识，加添才干，丰富情感，开阔视野。所谓“经典”，其实就是作者所属的那个民族的文化积淀，是那个民族的灵魂缩影。英国戏剧泰斗莎士比亚的《哈姆雷特》和《麦克白》等、“意大利语言之父”的但丁的《神曲》之《地狱篇》《炼狱篇》及《天堂篇》、爱尔兰世界一流作家詹姆斯·乔伊斯的《尤利西斯》及《一个艺术家的肖像》等、美国风趣而笔法超一流的著名小说家马克·吐温的《哈克历险记》以及《汤姆索亚历险记》等，德国著名哲学家尼采的《查拉图斯特拉如是说》及《快乐的科学》等等，都为塑造自己民族的文化积淀，做出了永恒的贡献，也同时向世界展示了他们所属的民族的优美剪影。

很多著名领袖如林肯、毛泽东等伟大人物，也都曾从经典名著中汲取力量，甚至获得治国理念。耶鲁大学教授查尔斯·希尔曾在题为《经典与治国理念》的文章，阐述了读书与治国之间的绝妙关系。他这样写道：“在几乎所有经典名著中，都可以找到让人叹为观止、深藏其中的治国艺术原则。”

经典名著，不仅仅有治国理念，更具提升读者审美情趣的功能。世界上不同时代、不同地域的优秀经典作品，都存在一个共同属性：歌颂赞美人间的真善美，揭露抨击世间的假恶丑。

读欧美自但丁以来的经典名著，你会看到，西方无论是在漫长的黑暗时期，抑或进入现代进程时期，总有经典作品问世，对世间的负面，进行冷峻的批判。与此同时，也有更多的大家作品问世，热情讴歌人间的真诚与善良，使读者不由自主地沉浸于经典作品的审美情感之中。

英语经典名著，显然是除了汉语经典名著以外，人类整个进程中至关重要的文化遗产的一部分。从历史上看，英语是全世界经典阅读作品中，使用得最广泛的国际性语言。这一事实，没有产生根本性变化。本世纪相当长一段时间，这一事实也似乎不会发生任何变化。而要更深入地了解并切身感受英语经典名著的风采，阅读原汁原味的英语经典作品的过程，显然是必不可少的。

辽宁人民出版社及时并隆重推出“最经典英语文库”系列丛书，是具有远见与卓识的出版行为。我相信，这套既可供阅读，同时也具收藏价值的英语原版经

典作品系列丛书，在帮助人们了解什么才是经典作品的同时，也一定会成为广大英语爱好者、大中学生以及学生家长们的挚爱的“最经典英语文库”。

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北外公共外交研究中心
欧美文学研究中心主任
全国英国文学学会名誉会长

张中载 教授
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CHAPTER 1

PETRONIUS woke only about midday, and as usual greatly wearied. The evening before he had been at one of Nero's feasts, which was prolonged till late at night. For some time his health had been failing. He said himself that he woke up benumbed, as it were, and without power of collecting his thoughts. But the morning bath and careful kneading of the body by trained slaves hastened gradually the course of his slothful blood, roused him, quickened him, restored his strength, so that he issued from the *elaeothesium*, that is, the last division of the bath, as if he had risen from the dead, with eyes gleaming from wit and gladness, rejuvenated, filled with life, exquisite, so unapproachable that Otho himself could not compare with him, and was really that which he had been called,—*arbiter elegantiarum*.

He visited the public baths rarely, only when some rhetor happened there who roused admiration and who was spoken of in the city, or when in the *ephebias* there were combats of exceptional interest. Moreover, he had in his own "*insula*" private baths which Celer, the famous contemporary of Severus, had extended for him, reconstructed and arranged with such uncommon taste that Nero himself acknowledged their excellence over those of the Emperor, though the imperial baths were more extensive and finished with incomparably greater luxury.

After that feast, at which he was bored by the jesting

of Vatinius with Nero, Lucan, and Seneca, he took part in a diatribe as to whether woman has a soul. Rising late, he used, as was his custom, the baths. Two enormous balneatores laid him on a cypress table covered with snow-white Egyptian byssus, and with hands dipped in perfumed olive oil began to rub his shapely body; and he waited with closed eyes till the heat of the laconicum and the heat of their hands passed through him and expelled weariness.

But after a certain time he spoke, and opened his eyes; he inquired about the weather, and then about gems which the jeweller Idomeneus had promised to send him for examination that day. It appeared that the weather was beautiful, with a light breeze from the Alban hills, and that the gems had not been brought. Petronius closed his eyes again, and had given command to bear him to the tepidarium, when from behind the curtain the nomenclator looked in, announcing that young Marcus Vinicius, recently returned from Asia Minor, had come to visit him.

Petronius ordered to admit the guest to the tepidarium, to which he was borne himself. Vinicius was the son of his oldest sister, who years before had married Marcus Vinicius, a man of consular dignity from the time of Tiberius. The young man was serving then under Corbulo against the Parthians, and at the close of the war had returned to the city. Petronius had for him a certain weakness bordering on attachment, for Marcus was beautiful and athletic, a young man who knew how to preserve a certain aesthetic measure in his profligacy; this, Petronius prized above everything.

"A greeting to Petronius," said the young man, entering the tepidarium with a springy step. "May all the gods grant thee success, but especially Asklepios and Kypris, for under their double protection nothing evil can meet one."

"I greet thee in Rome, and may thy rest be sweet

after war," replied Petronius, extending his hand from between the folds of soft karbas stuff in which he was wrapped. "What's to be heard in Armenia; or since thou wert in Asia, didst thou not stumble into Bithynia?"

Petronius on a time had been proconsul in Bithynia, and, what is more, he had governed with energy and justice. This was a marvellous contrast in the character of a man noted for effeminacy and love of luxury; hence he was fond of mentioning those times, as they were a proof of what he had been, and of what he might have become had it pleased him.

"I happened to visit Heraklea," answered Vinicius. "Corbulo sent me there with an order to assemble reinforcements."

"Ah, Heraklea! I knew at Heraklea a certain maiden from Colchis, for whom I would have given all the divorced women of this city, not excluding Poppaea. But these are old stories. Tell me now, rather, what is to be heard from the Parthian boundary. It is true that they weary me every Vologeses of them, and Tiridates and Tigranes,—those barbarians who, as young Arulenus insists, walk on all fours at home, and pretend to be human only when in our presence. But now people in Rome speak much of them, if only for the reason that it is dangerous to speak of aught else."

"The war is going badly, and but for Corbulo might be turned to defeat."

"Corbulo! by Bacchus! a real god of war, a genuine Mars, a great leader, at the same time quick-tempered, honest, and dull. I love him, even for this,—that Nero is afraid of him."

"Corbulo is not a dull man."

"Perhaps thou art right, but for that matter it is all one. Dulness, as Pyrrho says, is in no way worse than wisdom, and differs from it in nothing."

Vinicius began to talk of the war; but when Petronius closed his eyes again, the young man, seeing his

uncle's tired and somewhat emaciated face, changed the conversation, and inquired with a certain interest about his health.

Petronius opened his eyes again.

Health!—No. He did not feel well. He had not gone so far yet, it is true, as young Sissena, who had lost sensation to such a degree that when he was brought to the bath in the morning he inquired, "Am I sitting?" But he was not well. Vinicius had just committed him to the care of Asklepios and Kypris. But he, Petronius, did not believe in Asklepios. It was not known even whose son that Asklepios was, the son of Arsinoe or Koronis; and if the mother was doubtful, what was to be said of the father? Who, in that time, could be sure who his own father was?

Hereupon Petronius began to laugh; then he continued,—"Two years ago, it is true, I sent to Epidaurus three dozen live blackbirds and a goblet of gold; but dost thou know why? I said to myself, 'Whether this helps or not, it will do me no harm.' Though people make offerings to the gods yet, I believe that all think as I do,—all, with the exception, perhaps, of mule-drivers hired at the Porta Capena by travellers. Besides Asklepios, I have had dealings with sons of Asklepios. When I was troubled a little last year in the bladder, they performed an incubation for me. I saw that they were tricksters, but I said to myself: 'What harm! The world stands on deceit, and life is an illusion. The soul is an illusion too. But one must have reason enough to distinguish pleasant from painful illusions.' I shall give command to burn in my hypocaustum, cedar-wood sprinkled with ambergris, for during life I prefer perfumes to stench. As to Kypris, to whom thou hast also confided me, I have known her guardianship to the extent that I have twinges in my right foot. But as to the rest she is a good goddess! I suppose that thou wilt bear sooner or later white doves to her altar."

"True," answered Vinicius. "The arrows of the Parthians have not reached my body, but a dart of Amor has struck me—unexpectedly, a few stadia from a gate of this city."

"By the white knees of the Graces! thou wilt tell me of this at a leisure hour."

"I have come purposely to get thy advice," answered Marcus.

But at that moment the epilatores came, and occupied themselves with Petronius. Marcus, throwing aside his tunic, entered a bath of tepid water, for Petronius invited him to a plunge bath.

"Ah, I have not even asked whether thy feeling is reciprocated," said Petronius, looking at the youthful body of Marcus, which was as if cut out of marble. "Had Lysippos seen thee, thou wouldst be ornamenting now the gate leading to the Palatine, as a statue of Hercules in youth."

The young man smiled with satisfaction, and began to sink in the bath, splashing warm water abundantly on the mosaic which represented Hera at the moment when she was imploring Sleep to lull Zeus to rest. Petronius looked at him with the satisfied eye of an artist.

When Vinicius had finished and yielded himself in turn to the epilatores, a lector came in with a bronze tube at his breast and rolls of paper in the tube.

"Dost wish to listen?" asked Petronius.

"If it is thy creation, gladly!" answered the young tribune; "if not, I prefer conversation. Poets seize people at present on every street corner."

"Of course they do. Thou wilt not pass any basilica, bath, library, or book-shop without seeing a poet gesticulating like a monkey. Agrippa, on coming here from the East, mistook them for madmen. And it is just such a time now. Caesar writes verses; hence all follow in his steps. Only it is not permitted to write better verses than Caesar, and for that reason I fear

a little for Lucan. But I write prose, with which, however, I do not honor myself or others. What the lector has to read are codicilli of that poor Fabricius Veiento."

"Why 'poor'?"

"Because it has been communicated to him that he must dwell in Odyssa and not return to his domestic hearth till he receives a new command. That Odyssey will be easier for him than for Ulysses, since his wife is no Penelope. I need not tell thee, for that matter, that he acted stupidly. But here no one takes things otherwise than superficially. His is rather a wretched and dull little book, which people have begun to read passionately only when the author is banished. Now one hears on every side, 'Scandala! scandala!' and it may be that Veiento invented some things; but I, who know the city, know our patres and our women, assure thee that it is all paler than reality. Meanwhile every man is searching in the book,—for himself with alarm, for his acquaintances with delight. At the book-shop of Avirnus a hundred copyists are writing at dictation, and its success is assured."

"Are not thy affairs in it?"

"They are; but the author is mistaken, for I am at once worse and less flat than he represents me. Seest thou we have lost long since the feeling of what is worthy or unworthy,—and to me even it seems that in real truth there is no difference between them, though Seneca, Musonius, and Trasca pretend that they see it. To me it is all one! By Hercules, I say what I think! I have preserved loftiness, however, because I know what is deformed and what is beautiful; but our poet, Bronzebeard, for example, the charioteer, the singer, the actor, does not understand this."

"I am sorry, however, for Fabricius! He is a good companion."

"Vanity ruined the man. Every one suspected him, no one knew certainly; but he could not contain

himself, and told the secret on all sides in confidence. Hast heard the history of Rufinus?"

"No."

"Then come to the frigidarium to cool; there I will tell thee."

They passed to the frigidarium, in the middle of which played a fountain of bright rose-color, emitting the odor of violets. There they sat in niches which were covered with velvet, and began to cool themselves. Silence reigned for a time. Vinicius looked awhile thoughtfully at a bronze faun which, bending over the arm of a nymph, was seeking her lips eagerly with his lips.

"He is right," said the young man. "That is what is best in life."

"More or less! But besides this thou lovest war, for which I have no liking, since under tents one's finger-nails break and cease to be rosy. For that matter, every man has his preferences. Bronzebeard loves song, especially his own; and old Scaurus his Corinthian vase, which stands near his bed at night, and which he kisses when he cannot sleep. He has kissed the edge off already. Tell me, dost thou not write verses?"

"No; I have never composed a single hexameter."

"And dost thou not play on the lute and sing?"

"No."

"And dost thou drive a chariot?"

"I tried once in Antioch, but unsuccessfully."

"Then I am at rest concerning thee. And to what party in the hippodrome dost thou belong?"

"To the Greens."

"Now I am perfectly at rest, especially since thou hast a large property indeed, though thou art not so rich as Pallas or Seneca. For seest thou, with us at present it is well to write verses, to sing to a lute, to declaim, and to compete in the Circus; but better, and especially safer, not to write verses, not to play, not to sing, and not to compete in the Circus. Best of all, is

it to know how to admire when Bronzebeard admires. Thou art a comely young man; hence Poppaea may fall in love with thee. This is thy only peril. But no, she is too experienced; she cares for something else. She has had enough of love with her two husbands; with the third she has other views. Dost thou know that that stupid Otho loves her yet to distraction? He walks on the cliffs of Spain, and sighs; he has so lost his former habits, and so ceased to care for his person, that three hours each day suffice him to dress his hair. Who could have expected this of Otho?"

"I understand him," answered Vinicius; "but in his place I should have done something else."

"What, namely?"

"I should have enrolled faithful legions of mountaineers of that country. They are good soldiers,—those Iberians."

"Vinicius! Vinicius! I almost wish to tell thee that thou wouldst not have been capable of that. And knowest why? Such things are done, but they are not mentioned even conditionally. As to me, in his place, I should have laughed at Poppaea, laughed at Bronzebeard, and formed for myself legions, not of Iberian men, however, but Iberian women. And what is more, I should have written epigrams which I should not have read to any one,—not like that poor Rufinus."

"Thou wert to tell me his history."

"I will tell it in the unctorium."

But in the unctorium the attention of Vinicius was turned to other objects; namely, to wonderful slave women who were waiting for the bathers. Two of them, Africans, resembling noble statues of ebony, began to anoint their bodies with delicate perfumes from Arabia; others, Phrygians, skilled in hairdressing, held in their hands, which were bending and flexible as serpents, combs and mirrors of polished steel; two Grecian maidens from Kos, who were simply like deities, waited as vestiplicae, till the moment should

come to put statuesque folds in the togas of the lords.

"By the cloud-scattering Zeus!" said Marcus Vinicius, "what a choice thou hast!"

"I prefer choice to numbers," answered Petronius. "My whole 'familia' [household servants] in Rome does not exceed four hundred, and I judge that for personal attendance only upstarts need a greater number of people."

"More beautiful bodies even Bronzebeard does not possess," said Vinicius, distending his nostrils.

"Thou art my relative," answered Petronius, with a certain friendly indifference, "and I am neither so misanthropic as Barsus nor such a pedant as Aulus Plautius."

When Vinicius heard this last name, he forgot the maidens from Kos for a moment, and, raising his head vivaciously, inquired,—*"Whence did Aulus Plautius come to thy mind? Dost thou know that after I had disjointed my arm outside the city, I passed a number of days in his house? It happened that Plautius came up at the moment when the accident happened, and, seeing that I was suffering greatly, he took me to his house; there a slave of his, the physician Merion, restored me to health. I wished to speak with thee touching this very matter."*

"Why? Is it because thou hast fallen in love with Pomponia perchance? In that case I pity thee; she is not young, and she is virtuous! I cannot imagine a worse combination. Brr!"

"Not with Pomponia—eheu!" answered Vinicius.

"With whom, then?"

"If I knew myself with whom? But I do not know to a certainty her name even,—Lygia or Callina? They call her Lygia in the house, for she comes of the Lygian nation; but she has her own barbarian name, Callina. It is a wonderful house,—that of those Plautiuses. There are many people in it; but it is quiet there as in the groves of Subiacum. For a number of