

英漢對照·世界名著

\* 65 \*

# 富蘭克林自傳

*The Autobiography of  
Benjamin Franklin*

by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

富蘭克林著  
陳君懿譯

英漢對照·世界名著

# 富蘭克林自傳

*The Autobiography of  
Benjamin Franklin*

富蘭克林著

中華民國六十二年四月一日出版

# 富蘭克林自傳

精裝本特價 五元整

版權所有  
翻印必究

原著者：富蘭克林

譯述者：陳君 懿

發行人：黃開 禮

發行所：正 文 書 局

印刷者：正 文 書 局

台北市和平東路二段二三三號之十四  
台北郵政劃撥儲金帳戶第五九六一號  
電話：七八一四〇六

經銷者：全省各大書局

本書局經內政部核准登記證為內版台業字第一七〇七號

## 前 言

富蘭克林是初期美國文學的代表作家，又是出版家、發明家、科學家及政治家。他的作品很多，有討論政治的，闡明電學的，以及文學的敘述文、書牘文等。其中以「自傳」為最偉大，是世界僅見而最饒興趣的自傳之一，與美國文學中古典作品之一。他以暢明有力的筆調，把瑣屑的難狀事物毫不費力地記述出來。他沒有詩的氣氛與蕭散的風致。只是質樸地記錄生活的細節；他的長處是自然平易，坦白而有幽默感。除了文學的欣賞以外，他的「自傳」還有多種價值。他有着驚人的實幹精神，由學徒而躋于開國元勳；他的自修苦修，沒讀完小學而獲得多方面的成就。他是美國由殖民地地位跨進獨立戰爭階段中的一位最重要人物。「自傳」就是他的人品及他那時代的忠實寫照，可以作我們行為的鏡子，也可作美國開國史讀。

富蘭克林在一七九〇年四月逝世，他死後五十年散落各方的「自傳」原稿才發現，片斷地在英、法、德等國刊出，到一八一八年才有美國版，全書到一九六七年才出版。「自傳」的第一部份是一七七一年他做美洲殖民地代表住在英國時寫的，他從一七〇六年時寫至一七三〇年結婚

時爲止，寫作時間大概不過十三日。他以書信的方式寫給他的兒子，並沒有公諸於世的企圖。後面由於朋友的敦勸，才有出版的打算，便繼續寫下去。第二部份比較簡單，那時他正做駐法大使，是在法國的潘西（Passy）寫的，費時不過一週。第三部份開始于一七八八年的八月，那時他回到費城的故居，就在那把「自傳」寫到一七五七年，大概寫了三個月。後來在一七八九年他去世的前一年，又寫了一些，寫了一兩天便擱筆，可以稱它爲第四部份。他所敘述的內容係截至在費城活動的時候——他踏上政治舞台就中斷了，因此，這裏只講了一個商人的發跡，而沒有記錄他從事政治和外交的成就。這或著因爲富蘭克林故意避免敘述他在國內外所表現的偉大勢力與成就。他或認爲怎樣奮鬥而爬升到高位的經過只是個人的事，沒有昭示的必要。或者就因爲這個限制，使這本「自傳」成爲任何地方人士所愛好閱讀的，而富蘭克林這個光輝的名字永爲世人所敬仰，正如他在「窮苦的李察曆書」裏所說的：「一個良好的榜樣，才是最佳的格言。」

## Chapter I

To William Franklin Esq.  
Governor of  
New Jersey

*Twyford, at the Bishop of St. Asaph's,\* 1771.*

*Dear Son,*—I have ever had pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors. You may remember the inquiries I made among the remains of my relations when you were with me in England, and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to learn the circumstances of *my* life, many of which you are unacquainted with, and expecting the enjoyment of a few weeks' uninterrupted leisure, I sit down to write them. Besides, there are some other inducements that excite me to this undertaking. From the poverty and obscurity in which I was born, and in which I passed my earliest years, I have raised myself to a state of affluence and some degree of celebrity in the world. As constant good fortune has accompanied me even to an advanced period of life, my posterity will perhaps be desirous of learning the means which I employed, and which, thanks to Providence, so well succeeded with me. They may also deem them fit to be imitated, should any of them find themselves in similar circumstances.

\* Twyford was the country residence of Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph's. Dr. Franklin was in the habit of calling Dr. Shipley "The Good Bishop." He became introduced to him while in Europe, as agent for several of the colonies, and in this year, 1771, paid two visits to Twyford. Dr. Shipley was one of the few in the House of Lords who opposed from the first the course pursued by the British government in relation to North America. He published some poems and sermons, and some writings in reference to the colonial dispute. He died in 1788; and Dr. Franklin, in a letter of condolence to his daughter, writes: "His departure is a loss, not to his family and friends only, but to his nation and to the world; for he was intent on doing good, had wisdom to devise the means, and talents to promote them. His sermon before the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and *'his Speech intended to be Spoken,'* are proofs of his ability as well as his humanity. Had his counsels in those pieces been attended to by the ministers, how much bloodshed might have been prevented, and how much expense and disgrace to the nation avoided!"

# 第一章

謹以此書致給

新澤西州總督

威廉·富蘭克林先生

一七七一年寫於邵福德·聖阿沙天主教之邸

親愛的兒子：我一向就喜歡搜集我祖先的閒行軼事。你也許還記得，當你和我在英國時，我曾經去探訪親戚中的遺老，並爲此目的而從事旅行。我想，你或許和我一樣，很想知道我的生活情狀，其中有許多事你到現在還不知道呢。而且，我目前隱居在鄉間休息，預計有一個星期的無人打擾的空閒，所以我就坐下來，把這些寫給你了，除了這些原因外，我還有別的動機，我出身於微寒黑暗之中，在這世界上居然能夠掙扎到有點富裕和小有名氣，一生的生活又相當的幸福，我的子孫或許歡喜知道，我是運用什麼處世之道，再加上上帝的恩惠，才能使我成功，因爲他們或許會發現，有的東西對他們的處境很適合，可以效法。

This good fortune, when I reflect on it, which is frequently the case, has induced me sometimes to say, that if it were left to my choice, I should have no objection to go over the same life from its beginning to the end: requesting only the advantage authors have, of correcting in a second edition the faults of the first. So would I also wish to change some incidents of it for others more favorable. Notwithstanding, if this condition was denied, I should still accept the offer of recommencing the same life. But as this repetition is not to be expected, that which resembles most living one's life over again, seems to be to recall all the circumstances of it; and, to render this remembrance more durable, to record them in writing.

In thus employing myself, I shall yield to the inclination so natural to old men, of talking of themselves and their own actions; and I shall indulge it without being tiresome to those who, from respect to my age, might conceive themselves obliged to listen to me, since they will be always free to read me or not. And, lastly (I may as well confess it, as the denial of it would be believed by nobody), I shall perhaps not a little gratify my own *vanity*. Indeed, I never heard or saw the introductory words "*Without vanity* I may say," &c., but some vain thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter, wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of good to the possessor, and to others who are within his sphere of action: and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd if a man were to thank God for his *vanity* among the other comforts of life.

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility to acknowledge that I attribute the mentioned happiness of my past life to his divine providence, which led me to the means I used and gave the success. My belief of this induces me to *hope*, though I must not *presume*, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal reverse, which I may experience as others have done; the complexion of my future fortune being known to him only in whose power it is to bless us, even in our afflictions.

Some notes which one of my uncles (who had the same curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relative to our

那種幸福的生活，當我回憶時，常常誘使我說，如果幸運給我機會，讓我自己選擇，我不會反對把同樣的生活從頭再過一遍的，不過，只想能夠像一個作家一樣，在再版時改正初版的錯誤而能有進步而已。所以我必得除開改正錯誤外，變換一些不快的偶然錯誤，和突生的事件，使別人更覺舒服。但是，即使這是被否定了，我仍舊樂意接受這個機會，不過，這種重新再過一遍的生活是不可期望的，那末退而求其次，最像重度一生的該是回憶平生，把它記下來，使此回憶儘可能的經久長存。

那末，在這裏，我也是倚老賣老，來談論自己和過去的行止。但我的倚老賣老可不得讓人家生厭，此書閣下願不願讀，悉聽尊便。他們爲了敬重長者，想起來應該一讀此書。而且（我最好還是自己承認出來的好，否則沒有會相信我了。）好像我將深深感謝我自己的虛榮心，確實的，我很少聽人家在導言中說：「我可以沒有虛榮心地說」這等話，他們那樣說了以後，而下面立刻接着舉出來的事情，都是充滿了虛榮意味的。大部份的人儘管自己是多麼虛榮自負，却不喜歡別人有虛榮心；不過，我遇到了這樣的情形，總是坦然自處，不以爲意，人有虛榮心也是好的，而且在他所及的行動範圍以內，對別人也有好處的，所以，有許多理由，若是有人感激上帝在他種種生活的享受之外，還給了他虛榮心，那也無可厚非。

現在，我一說感激上帝，就想謙恭地承認，我過去的幸福生活，全歸上帝的慈蔭，上帝導我以處世之道，並使這些方面無往不利。我的信仰誘我希望同樣的好處仍舊臨於我身，繼續着那種幸福，或使能負擔一種逆運，這也許我會和別人一樣地經驗著；我以後的命運如何，只有天曉得，就是苦難，也只有上帝才有力量賜給我們。

我有一位伯父（他和我一樣，有搜集家庭軼事的興緻），有一次，他把札記交給我，供給我幾許關於我們祖先

ancestors. From these notes I learned that they lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, on a freehold of about thirty acres, for at least three hundred years, and how much longer could not be ascertained.\*

This small estate would not have sufficed for their maintenance without the business of a smith, which had continued in the family down to my uncle's time, the eldest son being always brought up to that employment; a custom which he and my father followed with regard to their eldest sons. When I searched the registers at *Ecton*, I found an account of their marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, as the registers kept did not commence previous thereto. I, however, learned from it that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he was too old to continue his business, when he retired to Banbury, in Oxfordshire, to the house of his son John, with whom my father served an apprenticeship. There my uncle died and lies buried. We saw his gravestone in 1758. His eldest son Thomas lived in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now lord of the manor there. My grandfather had four sons, who grew up: viz., Thomas, John, Benjamin, and Josiah. Being at a distance from my papers, I will give you what account I can of them from memory: and if my papers are not lost in my absence, you will find among them many more particulars.†

Thomas, my eldest uncle, was bred a smith under his

\* Sir John Fortescue, chief justice of the King's Bench in the time of Henry VI., in his famous work, "De Laudibus Legum Angliæ," written in 1412, speaks of wealthy freeholders as commonly called Franklins. Chaucer and Spencer both speak of the country gentleman as a Franklin; and the name was probably assumed as a surname when the fashion of surnames came up. The name Francuelin or Franqueln is found in France, and may be traced back as far as 1521, and even to the century before.

† Among Dr. Franklin's papers was found a letter from his father, dated Boston, May 25th, 1739: "As to the original of our name there is various opinions; some say that it came from a sort of title of which a book, that you bought when here, gives a lively account. Some think we are of a French extract, which was formerly called Franks; some of a free line, a line free from that vassalage which was common to subjects in days of old; some from a bird of long red legs."

的掌故。從這些掌故中我方知道這個家族在英國諾坦澄登夏的愛克登村，一塊大約有三十畝的世襲不動產上，一直住了至少三百年，至於有多久，無法考查。

這小家產若不是靠打鐵業是不足維持的，直到我伯父的時候，一家中的長子都要學這個行業，爲了習慣，所以我的伯父和我的父親使他們的長子也遵行之。當我查愛克登的戶籍冊事，我找到他們的生期、婚葬的記錄，不過只從一五五五年起，再以前，那裏鄉鎮所藏的戶籍冊沒有了。據那本戶籍冊我知道我是五世的幼房幼子。我的祖父湯麥司生於一五九八年，他住在愛克頓，直到他作工嫌太老了，那時他去和他的兒子約翰一起住在牛津的彭白雷邨，而我的父親跟着他做學徒，我的祖先死在那裏，葬在那裏。我們曾見他的一七五八年的碑誌。他的長子湯麥司住在愛克頓的屋子裏，後來傳給他的獨生女，和她的丈夫衛令勃勒人，飛惜兒。她把田屋賣給伊士戴先生，現在是那裏的地主了。我的祖父有四個長大成人的兒子：湯麥司、約翰、拜雅明和耶賽埃。我的文件不很全，但我將把我所記得的事情盡量的告訴你：要不是文件在我離家出外時遺失了的話，你還可以從這裏面找到許許多多的詳細資料來的。

大叔父湯麥司繼承父業而學鐵匠：但是倚其聰明（我

father; but, being ingenious, and encouraged in learning (as all my brothers were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal inhabitant of that parish, he qualified himself for the bar, and became a considerable man in the county; was chief mover of all public-spirited enterprises for the county or town of Northampton, as well as of his own village, of which many instances were related of him; and he was much taken notice of and patronized by Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, on the 6th of January, four years to a day before I was born. The recital which some elderly persons made to us of his character, I remember, struck you as something extraordinary, from its similarity with what you knew of me. "Had he died," said you, "four years later, on the same day, one might have supposed a transmigration."

John, my next uncle, was bred a dyer, I believe of wool. Benjamin was bred a silk dyer, serving an apprenticeship in London. He was an ingenious man. I remember, when I was a boy, he came to my father's in Boston, and resided in the house with us for several years. There was always a particular affection between my father and him, and I was his godson. He lived to a great age. He left behind him two quarto volumes of manuscript, of his own poetry, consisting of fugitive pieces addressed to his friends.\* He had invented a short-hand of his own, which he taught me, but, not having practiced it, I have now forgotten it. He was very pious, and an assiduous attendant at the sermons of the best preachers, which he reduced to writing according to his

\* These volumes are now in the possession of Mrs. Samuel Emmons, of Boston, great-granddaughter of their author. The thoughts of the writer run chiefly on moral and religious subjects; and the pieces embrace many acrostics, as the names of his friends and connections, and other pieces addressed to them on various occasions. The following lines were sent to his *namesake*, and were probably elicited by some juvenile performance of the future philosopher. They were prophetic.

" 'Tis time for me to throw aside my pen

When hanging sleeves read, write, and rhyme like men.

This forward Spring fortells a plenteous crop;

For, if the bud bear grain, what will the top!

If plenty in the verdant blade appear,

What may we not soon hope for in the ear!

When flowers are beautiful before they're blown,

What rarities will afterward be shown!

If trees good fruit un'noculated bear,

You may be sure 'twill afterward be rare.

的弟兄行都如是)，帕美兒老爺鼓勵他求學，引他做書記，於是這位鄉鎮上的真君子成爲一鄉所敬的人。他是諾坦澄登鄉鎮和自己村上的公益事業的主動人，關於這種事有許多事情講得到，而當時哈利法克司爵士尤其注意他和優禮他。他死於一七〇二年正月六日，而四年以後的前一天正是我的生日。這個他的生平與性格的記載是受之於愛克頓的幾位長者，我記得，好像有些不同尋常的事刺激你，就是他的生平很像你所知道的我的行止。「如果他死於同日，你說，有人會疑心是他轉世呢。」

二叔父約翰是學染工，我相信是毛織品的染工。拜雅明是學染絲的，在倫敦當學徒。他是個聰敏人。我很記得他，因爲當我是孩子時，他從遠道到波士頓我父親那裏，並且和我們同住在這屋子裏好幾年。他享年很高。他的孫子塞墨兒富蘭克林現在住在波士頓，他遺給我兩本四開本的手稿，是他自己的詩，包含着偶然的幾篇贈與他的親友的，這幾篇給我的如下所引可爲例子。他曾自己創造一種速寫法，他曾教我，但是，久不練習，現在我已忘掉了。我的名字是跟這位伯父起的，他和我的父親間有特別的感情。信教很虔誠，良好牧師講道時，他是位傾聽者，他用他的速寫記下來，所以他有許多記講道的冊子。他又大可

method, and had thus collected several volumes of them. He was also a good deal of a politician; too much so, perhaps, for his station. There fell lately into my hands, in London, a collection he made of all the principal political pamphlets relating to public affairs, from the year 1641 to 1717; many of the volumes are wanting, as appears by their numbering, but there still remain eight volumes in folio, and twenty in quarto and in octavo. A dealer in old books had met with them, and knowing me by name, having bought books of him he brought them to me. It would appear that my uncle must have left them here when he went to America, which was about fifty years ago. I found several of his notes in the margins. His grandson, Samuel Franklin, is still living in Boston.

Our humble family early embraced the Reformed religion. Our forefathers continued Protestants through the reign of Mary, when they were sometimes in danger of persecution on account of their zeal against popery. They had an English Bible, and to conceal it, and place it in safety, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the cover of a joint-stool. When my great-grandfather wished to read it to his family, he placed the joint-stool on his knees, and then turned over the leaves under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the

---

If fruits are sweet before they've time to yellow,  
 How luscious will they be when they are mellow!  
 If first years' shoots such noble clusters send,  
 What laden boughs, Engedi-like, may we expect in the end!"

Benjamin Franklin, the philosopher's uncle, died in Boston in 1728, leaving one son, Samuel, the only survivor of ten children. This son had an only child, a son, referred to in the text, as living in 1771. He died in 1775, leaving four daughters. It may be here remarked, that there is not now a male descendant of Dr. Franklin's grandfather living who bears the name of Franklin. Dr. Franklin's eldest son, to whom this autobiography was addressed, left one son, William Temple Franklin, who died without issue. His second son, Francis Folger, died in childhood. His daughter, Sarah, married Richard Bache in 1767, and their descendants are numerous, six out of seven marrying: viz., Benjamin Franklin Bache, who married Margaret Marcoe; William, who married Catharine Wistar; Deborah, William J. Duane; Richard, a daughter of Alexander J. Dallas; Sarah, Thomas Sergeant.

謂之爲政治家，照他的位置 也許太過分。新近我在倫敦，有一批他所彙集的關於公益的重要小冊，自一六四一年至一七一七年的，落在我的手中，如卷數所顯示者有許多本子是缺掉的，但仍剩有八冊對開本又和二十四冊四開本與八開本，一個舊書買碰到了這些書，因爲我有時跟他買書，所以知道我，他帶來給我。這似乎在我的伯父到美洲去時遺下的，溯之已有五十年以上了，書邊上還有許多註釋。

我們這個無名的家族很早就改革宗教，而經過瑪利皇后統治時繼續是新教徒，當時他們熱烈地反對舊教，有時有窘辱的危險。他們曾有一本英文聖經，要隱匿和保全之，用繩把它反縛在一隻摺棧的下面和套子裏面。當我的老祖宗向他的家庭誦讀時，他把這摺棧轉在他的膝上，在繩下翻開書頁。孩子中的一個立在門口，注意也許看見這

Bible remained concealed under it as before. This anecdote I had from Uncle Benjamin. The family continued all of the Church of England till about the end of Charles the Second's reign, when some of the ministers that had been outed for their non-conformity holding conventicles in Northamptonshire, my Uncle Benjamin and Father Josiah adhered to them, and so continued all their lives: the rest of the family remained with the Episcopal Church.

My father married young, and carried his wife with three children to New England, about 1685. The conventicles being at that time forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed in their meetings, some considerable men of his acquaintance determined to go to that country, and he was prevailed with to accompany them thither, where they expected to enjoy the exercise of their religion with freedom. By the same wife my father had four children more born there, and by a second wife ten others, in all seventeen; of whom I remember to have seen thirteen sitting together at his table, who all grew up to years of maturity, and were married; I was the youngest son, and the youngest of all the children except two daughters. I was born in Boston, in New England.\* My mother, the second wife of my father, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather, in his ecclesiastical history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*, as "a godly and learned Englishman," if I remember the words rightly. I was informed he wrote several small occasional works, but only one of them was printed, which I remember to have seen several years since. It was written in 1675. It was in familiar verse, according to the taste of the times and people, and addressed to the government there. It asserts the liberty of conscience in behalf of the Anabaptists, the Quakers, and other sectaries that had been persecuted. He attributes to this persecution the Indian wars, and other calamities that had befallen the country, regarding them as

\* The public Register of Births in Boston, still preserved, dates Dr. Franklin's with January 6th, 1706. This is Old Style, and, according to our present calendar, is the same as January 17th. It appears by the record of the Old South Church, opposite which building his father then lived, that he was baptized the same day. The early years of Franklin were spent in a house corner of Hanover and Union streets, to which his father removed shortly after his birth.

位宗教送達吏走來，他是宗教裁判庭的職員呢。在那種情形下，這櫬首先翻下它的足部，其時這聖經仍舊如前般匿在櫬下。這件遺事我從我的伯父拜雅明處聽來的。我們全家繼續信英國教直到却爾斯二世在位之末，當時有些因爲不依國教而被斥逐的教堂理事者在諾坦澄登開非國教派的宗教會議，拜雅明和耶惜埃加入他們，遂這樣的繼續他們的一生，其餘的家族自屬於聖公會。

我的父親，早年結婚，大約在一六八二年他帶著他的妻子和三個孩子到新英格蘭。這個非國教派的宗教會是法律所禁的，常常要被搗亂，以此他所認識的有許多人都移向那個地方去，而他也被勸和他們結伴到那邊，在那裏他們希望樂享信教自由的式子。這一位妻子又爲他生下四個孩子，而其繼室生下十個之多，共有十七；關於這個我記得十三個同時坐在一桌。孩子們都長成爲丈夫與婦人，婚娶了，我是最小的男孩子，而比我更小的祇有兩個。我生於新英格蘭波士頓。我的母親，這位繼室，名阿拜亞福格爾，彼得福格爾的女兒，他是新英格蘭第一批移民中的一個。可頓馬坦兒在他的本地的宗教史上曾光榮地提及他，稱他爲敬神而飽學的英國人，如果我把此語記得很對的話。我曾聽得他曾寫過各種的隨筆，但是其中祇有一種是付印的，這我在好幾年前才看到。這件東西寫於一六七五年，是一首合時的民間的普通體制的詩，而論及在那裏的政府。本之良心的自由的意思，代表浸禮會，兄弟會和別的那種曾被迫害的分派，以紅人之亂和別的災害降臨於此土