

泰西三十軼事

鮑爾溫編纂

臺灣商務印書館印行

·王雲五主編·

人人文



泰西三十軼事

THIRTY MORE
FAMOUS STORIES RETOLD

BY

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行雙館者鈔馭商沸壺

編印人人文庫序

余弱冠始授英文，爲謀教學相長，並滿足讀書慾，輒廣購英文出版物。彼時英國有所謂人人叢書 Everyman's Library 者，刊行迄今將及百年，括有子目約及千種，價廉而內容豐富，所收以古典爲主，間亦參入新著。就內容與售價之比，較一般出版物所減過半。其能如是，則以字較小，行較密，且由於古典作品得免對著作人之報酬，所減成本亦多。

余自中年始，從事出版事業，迄今四十餘年，中斷不逾十載。在大陸時爲商務印書館輯印各種叢書，多厲廉售之意，如萬有文庫一二集，叢書集成初編以及國學基本叢書等，其尤著者也。民五十三年重主商務印書館，先後輯印萬有文庫薈要，叢書集成簡編，漢譯世界名著甲編等，一本斯旨。惟以整套發售，固有利於圖書館與藏書家，未必盡適於青年學子也。

幾經考慮，乃略仿英國人人叢書之制，編爲人人文庫，陸續印行，分冊發售，定價特廉，與人人叢書相若；讀者對象，以青年爲主，則與前述叢書略異。本文庫版本爲四十開，以新五號字排印，與人人叢書略同；每冊定價一律，若干萬字以下，或相等篇幅者爲單冊，占一號；超過若干萬字或相等篇幅者爲複冊，占二號，皆依出版先後編次。每號實價新臺幣八元，

一改我國零售圖書向例，概不折扣。惟實行以來，發見間以萬數千字之差，售價即加倍，頗欠公允。研討再四，決改定售價，單號仍爲八元，雙號則減爲十二元，俾相差不過鉅，又爲鼓勵多購多讀，凡一次購滿五冊者加贈一單冊，悉聽購者自選。區區之意，亦欲藉此而一新書業風氣，並使購讀者得較優之實惠而已。

抑今後重印大陸版各書，除別有歸屬，或不盡適於青年閱讀者外，當盡量編入本文庫。同時本文庫亦儘可能搜羅當代海內外新著，期對舊版重印者維持相當比例。果能如願，則本文庫殆合英國人人叢書與家庭大學叢書 Home University Library 而一之也。

數年之間，取材方面，時有極合本文庫性質，徒以篇幅過多，不得不割愛者，因自五十八年七月起新增特號一種，售價定爲二十元，俾本文庫範圍益廣，而仍保持定價一律之原則。惟半年以來，紙價工價均大漲，祇得將特號面數酌予調整。凡初版新書，每冊在二百一十面至三百面者，或景印舊版，每冊在三百一十面至五百面者，均列入特號，事出不獲已，當爲讀書界所共諒也。

中華民國五十九年一月五日王雲五識

TO
"THE LITTLEST TEACHER OF THEM ALL"
AND HIS FRIENDS,
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
WITH THE SINCERE REGARDS OF
THE AUTHOR

(From Bulletin of the New York Public Library)

And last comes the littlest teacher of them all. By standing up very straight he could look across the top of my desk and his eyes met mine unwaveringly, as I accused him of having kept Baldwin's "Fifty Famous Stories" from August till December. He explained, and I considered the matter settled. Five minutes later I looked up to find him still there—"Little boy, what *do* you want?"

"Please, ma'am, that book."

"This was too much—"You've had it three months; why don't you take some other?"

"Because that's the only one she likes. I've tried another; she won't even look at it."

"She? who is *she*?"

"The one I teach."

I thought he was getting mixed. "The book you *learn* from, little boy?"

"No, ma'am, the girl I teach."

"How old is she?"

He eyed me critically. "'Bout as big as you are"

Then he told me all about her. She was the daughter of the Italian shoe mender; her father wasn't very kind to her, she knew no English, and had no friends; he taught her in the evenings. "But she's learnin', and when she learns she'll like this better 'n Italy."

TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS

It is now more than a year since you read my "Fifty Famous Stories." Those stories, as you will remember, are quite short and easy. Before you had finished your second year at school you could read every one of them without stopping to study the meaning of the words. Many thousands of children have read those fifty stories, and then they have asked for more; and this is my excuse for the present volume.

You are older now, and you have learned many things which you did not know when we first became acquainted. You are able to read almost everything. And so, in telling you "Thirty More Famous Stories," I have chosen more difficult subjects and have not been so careful to select the shortest and easiest words. Still, you will not find this book hard to read, neither do I think it will prove to be less interesting than the earlier volume.

Nearly all the stories are true, and there are not more than three or four that might not have happened. In every one there is something worth learning and remembering.

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THIRTY MORE FAMOUS STORIES



COLUMBUS AND THE EGG

Christopher Columbus discovered America on the 12th of October, 1492. He had spent eighteen years in planning for that wonderful first voyage which he made across the Atlantic Ocean. The thoughts and hopes of the best part of his life had been given to it. He had talked and argued with sailors and scholars and princes and kings, saying, "I know that, by sailing west across the great ocean, one may at last

reach lands that have never been visited by Europeans." But he had been laughed at as a foolish dreamer, and few people had any faith in his projects.

At last, however, the king and queen of Spain gave him ships with which to make the trial voyage. He crossed the ocean and discovered strange lands, inhabited by a people unlike any that had been known before. He believed that these lands were a part of India.

When he returned home with the news of his discovery there was great rejoicing, and he was hailed as the hero who had given a new world to Spain. Crowds of people lined the streets through which he passed, and all were anxious to do him honor. The king and queen welcomed him to their palace and listened with pleasure to the story of his voyage. Never had so great respect been shown to any common man.

But there were some who were jealous of the discoverer, and as ready to find fault as others were to praise. "Who is this Columbus?" they asked, "and what has he done? Is he not a pauper pilot from Italy? And could not any other seaman sail across the ocean just as he has done?"

One day Columbus was at a dinner which a Spanish gentleman had given in his honor, and several of these persons were present. They were proud, conceited fellows, and they very soon began to try to make Columbus uncomfortable.

"You have discovered strange lands beyond the sea," they said. "But what of that? We do not see

COLUMBUS AND THE EGG

why there should be so much said about it. Anybody can sail across the ocean; and anybody can coast along the islands on the other side, just as you have done. It is the simplest thing in the world."

Columbus made no answer; but after a while he took an egg from a dish and said to the company, "Who among you, gentlemen, can make this egg stand on end?"

One by one those at the table tried the experiment. When the egg had gone entirely around and none had succeeded, all said that it could not be done.

Then Columbus took the egg and struck its small end gently upon the table so as to break the shell a little. After that there was no trouble in making it stand upright.

"Gentlemen," said he, "what is easier than to do this which you said was impossible? It is the simplest thing in the world. Anybody can do it—*after he has been shown how.*"

“UPON A PEAK IN DARIEN”

FIRST STORY

After Columbus had shown the way to America a great many Spaniards came over. They came to Haiti and Cuba and Porto Rico and the smaller islands near them. Like Columbus they believed that these lands were near the eastern coast of Asia. They believed that they were a part of India, and therefore spoke of them as the Indies. Afterwards, when their mistake became known, these islands were named the West Indies and the true islands of India were called the East Indies.

Far to the southwest of Cuba, Columbus had discovered a long coast which he named Darien. It was the neck of land which we call the Isthmus of Panama, but he supposed that it was a part of the mainland of Asia. A few years later some Spanish sailors visited Darien and carried word back to Haiti that there was gold there. Now at that time a Spaniard would go to the end of the world for gold, and therefore this news caused great excitement among the young men who had come across the ocean for the purpose of adventure.

“To Darien! to Darien!” was the cry; and soon a company was formed and two ships were made ready to sail to that land of promise.

The voyage was a delightful one from the start. The sea was calm, the wind was fair, and the vessels

sped swiftly on their way. Soon the pleasant shores and green mountains of Haiti were lost to view. Only little rocky islets could be seen. The ship was heading straight into the Caribbean Sea.

Then, what was the surprise of the crew of the larger ship to hear strange rattings in the hold! A voice also was heard, like that of some one calling for help. What could it mean? The sailors could not see any one, and yet the sounds could not be mistaken.

"Please help me out!" The voice seemed to come from among some barrels in which provisions were stored.

"A man is in one of the barrels," said the captain.

Soon the barrel was found and opened. Out of it leaped a young man, richly clad in a velvet cloak and a silk doublet embroidered with gold. He was a handsome fellow. His eyes were keen and bright, and his face had a determined look, like that of one who is used to having his own way about things. At his side hung a long sword, and in his belt was a dagger.

Several of the men knew him; and so he did not need to say that his name was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. They knew that he was a dashing adventurer, always doing and daring, and always borrowing and spending money. But why was he in the barrel?

"The truth of the matter is this," he said; "I am in debt to almost everybody in Haiti. The officers were looking for me and would have taken me to prison. So I persuaded one of my friends to put me in a barrel and send me on board with the salt beef.

'And now here I am, bound with the rest of you for the rich coast of Darien.'

The captain was very angry. He threatened to put Balboa ashore on one of the rocky islets. "Shame! shame!" cried the rest of the party. "Let him go with us. He will be a great help." And so the captain grew kinder and agreed to take him.

Balboa's manners were so pleasant, and he proved to be so able and brave, that soon nearly all on the ship looked up to him as their leader. When they reached Darien and began to seek for a good place to settle, Balboa gave them much help. He had been on the coast before, and he guided them to a safe harbor.

The captain proved to be so overbearing that the men at last refused to obey him. They chose Balboa to be their commander, and the captain was glad to go back to Haiti in one of the ships.

Balboa made a treaty with a powerful Indian chief who lived in a grand house and ruled all the country around. He married the chief's daughter; and at the wedding feast the chief gave the Spaniards a great quantity of gold and many slaves.

The Indians did not care much for gold. They did not know that it was worth anything. When they saw the Spaniards molding it into bars and quarreling over it, they were astonished. "If you think so much of that yellow stuff," they said, "why don't you go where there is plenty of it?" And then they told Balboa that far to the south, on the other side of the mountains, there was a great sea, and on the shores of

the sea there lived a people who had so much gold that they used it to make cups and bowls and even pans and kettles.

Balboa made up his mind to go at once in search of that sea. With two hundred men and a pack of



bloodhounds, to chase unfriendly Indians, he set off toward the mountains. The distance was not great, but the country was very rough, the forest was almost

impassable, and the party had to move slowly. After many days they came to the highest ridge of the mountains. Balboa climbed to the top of the loftiest peak and looked around. South and west of him he beheld a great sea. It was so near that it seemed almost at his feet; and it stretched away and away into the distance until it seemed to meet the blue sky.

No white man had ever beheld that sea before; none had even so much as heard of it. The Spaniards afterwards called it the South Sea, because in going to it across the isthmus it seemed to lie south of the land; but we know it as the largest of all the oceans, the mighty Pacific.

From that peak in Darien, Balboa looked down with mingled feelings of awe and exultation.

"With eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific,—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

Balboa had no idea that he had discovered an ocean. He supposed that the great water was merely a gulf or bay washing the coast, perhaps of India, perhaps of China. He hastened to get down to the shore. He stood on the beach, and as the waves broke about his feet he raised his sword in the air and declared that he took possession of the new-found sea in the name of the king of Spain.

Balboa with his men soon returned to the other side of the isthmus. He sent word to Spain of the discovery he had made. But ships and men and a new governor were already on their way to Darien;

for word had reached the king that plenty of gold was to be had there.

The new governor was an old man, as fierce and heartless as a tiger. No sooner had he arrived in Darien than he began to oppress and kill the Indians. Thousands of them perished through his cruelty. Balboa was grieved to the heart; he felt pity for the poor savages. By the first homeward-bound ship he secretly sent complaints to the king about the governor's doings. Then he set to work getting ready to explore the South Sea.

Four small ships were taken apart at Darien, and Balboa caused the pieces to be carried over the mountains. At the shore on the farther side these pieces were again put together, and the ships were launched upon the sea. They were the first European vessels that ever floated on the Pacific.

But they were not yet ready to sail. They still needed a few bolts to strengthen them and some pitch to stop the leaks. While Balboa was waiting for these things the governor sent for him. The old tiger had heard of the complaints that had been sent to the king.

Balboa was ready to obey orders. He recrossed the mountains and was met by the officers who had been sent to arrest him. "You have plotted against me, you have tried to turn the king against me," said the savage governor. "You shall die the death of a traitor."

Before the sun went down, the brave, dashing, handsome Balboa was dead.