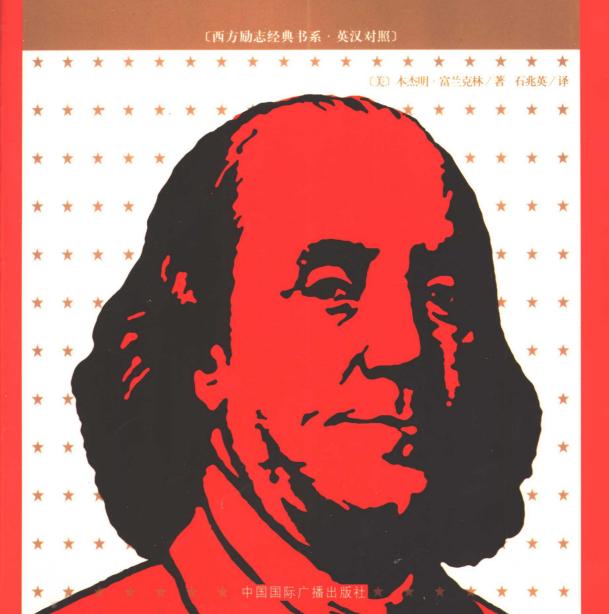
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震撼心灵的伟人自白 垂范千古的自强精神



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本杰明·富兰克林——资本主义精神最完美的代表,18世纪美国最伟大的科学家,著名的政治家和文学家。他一生最真实的写照是他自己所说过的一句话:"诚实和勤勉,应该成为你永久的伴侣。"

酷爱学习的一生

1706年1月17日,本杰明·富兰克林出生在北美洲的波士顿。他的父亲原是英国洗染工,当时以制造蜡烛和肥皂为业,生有17个孩子,富兰克林排行十五。富兰克林八岁入学读书,由于家庭困难他到十岁时就缀学了,回家帮父亲做蜡烛。富兰克林一生只在学校读了这两年书。12岁时,他到哥哥詹姆士经营的小印刷所当学徒,自此他当了近十年的印刷工人,但他的学习从未间断过,他从伙食费中省下钱来买书。同时,利用工作之便,他结识了几家书店的学徒,将书店的书在晚间偷偷地借来,通宵达旦地阅读,第二天清晨便归还。他阅读的范围很广,从自然科学、技术方面的通俗读物到著名科学家的论文以及名作家的作品。

1723年富兰克林离开了波士顿,分别到费城和英国伦敦印刷厂当工人。 1726年秋,富兰克林回到费城,这时他已掌握了精湛的印刷技术,开始独立经营印刷所,印刷和发行《宾夕法尼亚报》,并出版了《穷理查历书》,当时被译成12种文字,行销欧美各国。1727年秋,在费城他和几个青年创办了"讲读俱乐部",组织了小型图书馆,帮助工人、手工业者和小职员进

The Autobiography Of

行自学。每星期五晚上,论讨有关哲学、政治和自然科学等问题。这时富兰克林还不到30岁,通过刻苦自修,已经成为一个学识渊博的学者和启蒙思想家,在北美的声誉日益提高。在富兰克林的领导下,"讲读俱乐部"几乎存在了40年之久,后来发展为美国哲学会,成为美国科学思想的中心。

一个人可以没有学历,可以没有文凭,但不可以没有知识。 富兰克林的一生虽只上了两年学,但他的一生从未放弃对知识的 追求。为了进一步打开知识宝库的大门,他孜孜不倦地学习外国 语,先后掌握了法文、意大利文、西班牙文及拉丁文。他广泛地 吸收了世界科学文化的先进成果,为自己的科学研究奠定了坚实 的基础。

捕捉暴风雨中的雷电

1746年,一位英国学者在波士顿利用玻璃管和莱顿瓶表演了电学实验。富兰克林怀着极大的兴趣观看了他的表演,并被电学这一刚刚兴起的科学强烈地吸引住了,随后便开始了电学研究,在家里做了大量实验。在 18 世纪以前,人们还不能正确地认识雷电到底是什么。当时人们普遍相信雷电是上帝发怒的说法。一些不信上帝的有识之士曾试图解释雷电的起因,但都未获成功,学术界比较流行的是认为雷电是"气体爆炸"的观点。

在一次试验中,富兰克林的妻子里德不小心碰到了莱顿瓶,一团电火闪过,里德被击中倒地,面色惨白,足足在家躺了一个星期才恢复健康。这起意外事件,使思维敏捷的富兰克林想到了空中的雷电。他经过反复思考,断定雷电也是一种放电现象,它和在实验室产生的电在本质上是一样的。于是,他写了一篇名叫《论天空闪电和我们的电气相同》的论文,并送给了英国皇家学会。但这一伟大设想竟遭到了许多人的嘲笑,有人甚至嗤笑他是"想把上







帝和雷电分家的狂人"。

富兰克林决心用事实来证明一切。1752年6月的一天,阴云密布,电闪雷鸣,一场暴风雨就要来临了。富兰克林和他的儿子威廉一道,带着上面装有一个金属杆的风筝来到一个空旷地带。由于风大,风筝很快就被放上高空。刹那,雷电交加,大雨倾盆。富兰克林和他的儿子一道拉着风筝线,焦急地期待着。此时,一道闪电从风筝上掠过,富兰克林用手靠近风筝上的铁丝,立即感觉到一种强烈的麻木感。他抑制不住内心的激动,大声呼喊:"威廉,我被电击了!"随后,他又将风筝线上的电引入莱顿瓶中。回到家里以后,富兰克林用雷电进行了各种电学实验,证明了天上的雷电与人工摩擦产生的电具有完全相同的性质。

风筝实验的成功使富兰克林在全世界科学界的名声大振。然而,在荣誉和胜利面前,富兰克林没有停止对电学的进一步研究。1753年,俄国著名电学家利赫曼为了验证富兰克林的实验,不幸被雷电击死,这是做电实验的第一个牺牲者。血的代价,使许多人对雷电试验产生了戒心和恐惧。但富兰克林在死亡的威胁面前没有退缩,经过多次试验,他制成了一根实用的避雷针。他把几米长的铁杆,用绝缘材料固定在屋顶,杆上紧拴着一根粗导线,一直通到地里。当雷电袭击房子的时候,它就沿着金属杆通过导线直达大地,房屋建筑完好无损。1754年,避雷针开始应用,并相继传到英国、德国、法国,最后普及世界各地。

杰出的社会活动家

富兰克林不仅是一位优秀的科学家,而且还是一位杰出的社会活动家。 他一生用了不少时间去从事社会活动。富兰克林特别重视教育,他兴办图 书馆、组织和创立多个协会,都是为了提高各阶层人的文化素质。

正当他在科学研究上不断取得新成果的时候,由于英国殖民者的残暴统治,北美殖民地的民族解放运动日益高涨。为了民族的独立和解放,他 毅然放下了实验仪器,积极地站在了斗争的最前列。从 1757 到 1775 年他





几次作为北美殖民地代表到英国谈判。独立战争爆发后,他参加了第二届大陆会议和《独立宣言》的起草工作。1776年,已经70高龄的富兰克林又远涉重洋出使法国,赢得了法国和欧洲人民对北美独立战争的支援。1787年,他积极参加了制定美国宪法的工作,并组织了反对奴役黑人的运动。

巨星陨落 光耀千古

1790年4月17日,夜里11点,富兰克林溘然逝世于费城。 4月21日,美国人民为他举行了最隆重的葬礼。

本杰明·富兰克林虽出身贫寒,但热爱知识、追求美德的他,通过自身不懈的努力,成为出色的新闻工作者、外交官、自然科学家、政治家和哲学家,最后成为美利坚合众国的建国元勋,成为世界上最伟大的公民,不仅受到美国人民的爱戴,也受到世界各国人民世世代代的敬仰。

他的自传不仅跨越时代,激励了世世代代的美国人民,而且 跨越国界,震撼了所有立志向上的人的心灵!

作为美国人民的骄傲,作为一代伟人,当他走完了他人生路上的84个春秋,静静地躺在教堂院子里的墓穴后,我们在他的墓碑上能看到的却只是如下一行字:印刷工富兰克林。



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1771年,写作于特怀福德镇,圣阿萨夫教堂主教家





Chapter 1

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 know the circumstances of my life, many of which you are yet unacquainted with, and expecting the enjoyment of a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them for you. To which I have besides some other inducements. Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducing means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated.

That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced me sometimes to say, that were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first. So I might, besides correcting the faults, change some sinister accidents and events of it for others more favorable. But though this were denied, I should still accept the offer. Since such a repetition is not to be expected, the next thing most like living one's life over again seems to be a recollection of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing.

Hereby, too, I shall indulge the inclination so natural in old men, to be talking of themselves and their own past actions; and I

第一章

1. 我的童年,我的亲人

这种幸福,在我审视它时,不时地引诱我说,如果再给我一次机会,我将毫不犹豫地从头开始,一如既往地重新度过我的一生。我仅仅要求像作家那样,在再版时有改正初版某些缺陷的机会。如若可能,除了改正错误以外,我也同样地要把某些不幸的遭遇变得更顺利些。但即使这些不幸避免不了,我也仍然愿意的,那么最接近重演的似乎就是回忆了。为了使回忆尽可能地保持久远,似乎就需要把它记下来。

anecdote ['ænikdəut] n.轶事
ancestor ['ænsistə] n.祖宗
relation [ri'leifən] n.亲戚
equal ['iːkwəl] adj.相等的
circumstance ['səːkəmstəns] n. 境况
uninterrupted ['ʌnintə'rʌptid] adj.
连续的

leisure ['le3ə(r)] n.闲暇
retirement [ri'taiəmənt] n.退休
inducement [in'dju:smənt] n.动机
emerge [i'mə:dʒ] vi.(事实)显现出来
obscurity [əb'skjuəriti] n.身份低像
breed (过去式和过去分词 bred)

[bri:d] v. (使) 繁殖, 抚养affluence ['æfluəns] n.富裕reputation [ˌrepju(:)'teifən] n.名誉felicity [fi'lisiti] n.幸福conduce [kən'dju:s] v.导致, 有利于posterity [pɔs'teriti] n.子孙, 后裔

reflect on v.思考,反省 induce [in'djuts] vt.促使,引起 offer a choice 自己挑选,听凭选择 have no objection to 不反对 repetition [irepi'tifən] n.重复,循环 advantage [əd'va:ntidʒ] n.利益 edition [i'difən] n.版 correct [kə'rekt] vt.改正,纠正 sinister ['sinistə] adj.险恶的 favorable ['feiərəbl] adj.有利的,良好的

deny [di'nai] v.拒绝
recollection [ˌrekə'lekʃən] n.回忆
durable ['djuərəbl] adj.持久的
put down v.记下



shall indulge it without being tiresome to others, who, through respect to age, might **conceive** themselves obliged to give me a hearing, since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And, lastly (I may as well **confess** it, since my **denial** of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal **gratify** my own **vanity**. Indeed, I scarce ever heard or saw the **introductory** words, "Without vanity I may say," 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 that 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 owe the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence, which lead me to the means I used and gave them 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 to us even our afflictions.

The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars relating to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that the family had lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, for three hundred years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the time when the name of Franklin, that before was the name of an order of people, was assumed by them as

既然我提到了上帝,我愿意十分谦恭地承认,上面提到的我过去一生中的幸福当归功于上帝仁慈的旨意,上帝的旨意引导我使用了我的处世之道并赐我以成功。这种信仰使我希望,虽然我不应该臆断,上帝在将来会像以前一样地祝福我,不论是使我继续享受幸福,或是使我忍受命中注定的厄运(像其他人一样),我未来命运的前景仅仅为上帝所知晓,为他的威力所驾驭,甚至在我们遭受危难之际也在保佑我们。

我的一位伯父的手记(这位伯父也有集家族轶事的嗜好)曾落到我手中,他的手记使人了解到我们先人们的一些详情细节并从中得知我们这个家族已在北安普敦郡的埃克顿村至少生活三百年之久了,究竟在这之前还有多少

hereby ['hiə'bai] adv.因此,据此
indulge [in'dAld3] v.纵容
inclination [,inkli'neifən] n.爱好
conceive [kən'sixv] vt.以为
confess [kən'fes] v.承认
denial [di'naiəl] n.否认
gratify ['grætifai] vt.使满足
vanity ['væniti] n.虚荣心
introductory [,intrə'dAktəri] adj.介绍
性的
possessor [pə'zesə] n.所有人
sphere [sfiə] n.球,球体,范围
absurd [əb'səɪd] adj.荒谬的

humility [hju(:)'militi] n.谦卑acknowledge [ək'nɔlidʒ] vt.承认mention ['menʃən] vt.提及,说起providence ['prɔvidəns] n.神的眷願induce [in'dju:s] vt.促使,导致presume [pri'zju:m] vt.认为fatal ['feitl] adj.命运注定的reverse [ri'və:s] vt.颠倒complexion [kəm'plekʃən] n.局面even ['i:vən] vt.使平坦affliction [ə'flikʃən] n.痛苦

curiosity [.kjuəri'əsiti] n.好奇心
anecdote ['ænikdəut] n.轶事
furnish ['fə:niʃ] vt.提供
particular [pə'tikjulə] n.细节
ancestor ['ænsistə] n.祖先
Northamptonshire [nɔː'θæmptənʃiə]
n.北安普敦郡 [英国英格兰郡名]



a surname when others took surnames all over the kingdom), on a freehold of about thirty acres, aided by the smith's business, which had continued in the family till his time, the eldest son being always bred to that business; a custom which he and my father followed as to their eldest sons. When I searched the registers at Ecton, I found an account of their births, marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no registers kept in that parish at any time preceding. By that register I perceived 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 grew too old to follow business longer, when he went to live with his son John, a **dyer** at Banbury, in **Oxfordshire**, with whom my father served an **apprenticeship**. There my grandfather 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 child, a 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 that grew up, viz.: Thomas, John, Benjamin and Josiah. I will give you what account I can of them, at this distance from my papers, and if these are not lost in my absence, you will among them find many more particulars.

Thomas was bred a smith under his father; but, being ingenious, and encouraged in learning (as all my brothers were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal gentleman in that parish, he qualified himself for the business of scrivener; became a considerable man in the county; was a chief mover of all public—spirited undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his own village, of which many instances were related of him; and much taken notice of and patronized by the then Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, January 6, old

托马斯跟他父亲学打铁,但他天性聪颖,

assume [ə'sju:m] vt.假定
surname ['sə:neim] n.姓
freehold ['fri:həʊld] n.自由保有,不
动产
acre ['eikə] n.英亩
aid [eid] vt.救济,帮助
smith [smiθ] n.铁匠
bred [bred] v. (breed 的过去式及过
去分词) (使)繁殖,教养,抚养
burial ['beriəl] n.埋葬
register ['redʒistə] n.登记簿
parish ['pærif] n.教区
preceding [pri (:) 'sixdin] adj.在前的
perceive [pə'si:v] v.认识到
generation[ɪdʒenə'reifən] n.一代人

dyer ['daiə] n.染工
Oxfordshire ['ɔksfədʃiə] n.牛津郡
apprenticeship [ə'prentis,ʃip] n.学徒
的身份
gravestone ['greivstəun] n.墓石
Fisher ['fiʃə] 费希尔 (姓氏)
manor ['mænə] n.庄园
viz. [viz] adv.即

ingenious [in'dʒiːnjəs] adj.机灵的



style, just four years to a day before I was born. The account we received of his life and character from some old people at Ecton, I remember, struck you as something **extraordinary**, from its **similarity** to what you knew of mine. "Had he died on the same day," you said, "one might have supposed a **transmigration**."

John was bred a dyer, I believe of woolens. Benjamin was bred a silk dyer, serving an apprenticeship at London. He was an ingenious man. I remember him well, for when I was a boy he came over to my father in Boston, and lived in the house with us some years. He lived to a great age. His grandson, Samuel Franklin, now lives in Boston. He left behind him two quarto volumes, MS., of his own poetry, consisting of little occasional pieces addressed to his friends and relations, of which the following, sent to me, is a specimen. He had formed shorthand of his own, which he taught me, but, never practicing it, I have now forgot it. I was named after this uncle; they're being a particular affection between him and my father. He was very pious, a great attender of sermons of the best preachers, which he took down in his short-hand, and had with him many volumes of them. He was also much of a politician; too much, perhaps, for his station. There fell lately into my hands, in London, a collection he had made of all the principal pamphlets, relating to public affairs, from 1641 to 1717; many of the volumes are wanting as appears by the numbering, but there still remain eight volumes in folio, and twenty-four in quarto and in octavo. A dealer in old books met with them, and knowing me by my sometimes buying of him, he brought them to me. It seems my uncle must have left them here, when he went to America, which was about fifty years since. There are many of his notes in the margins.

This obscure family of ours was early in the Reformation, and

当地教区的大绅士帕尔梅先生鼓励他学文化(他的胞弟们都受到了这一鼓励),他后来成为一名合格的文书,一名地方上相当有名的人物。他是本村、诺坦普顿镇和该郡的所有公益事业的主要推动者,爱克顿的人们向我讲述了他的许多事迹,他已引起了公众的注意并受到哈得费克斯勋爵的赏识和奖励。托马斯于旧历 1702 年 6 月去世。四年后我恰在同一个日子里出生。我记得爱克顿的老人向我们所讲述的他的生平和性格曾强烈地震动了你,因为你觉得那些和你所了解的我的经历和性格相类似。你说:"他如果死在你出世的那一天,人们或许会以为是灵魂转世呢!"

约翰成了一名洗染工,我想是染羊毛的。 本杰明叔父则学会了丝绸印染手艺,是在伦敦 学的手艺。他是个灵巧人。我记得, 我还是孩 子时,他来到波士顿我父亲的住处,跟我们一 同住了几年。他一直活到耄耋之年, 其孙塞缪 尔·富兰克林如今仍住在波士顿。他死后留下了 两卷四开的手稿,都是他自己的诗作,其中有为 他的朋友而作的一些即兴作品。下面寄给我的 一首诗就是一个实例。他自己还发明了一种速 记法,并且教过我。可是我没有练习,现在已经 忘了。我父亲和他之间始终存在着一种特殊的 手足之情, 而我则成了他的教子。他十分虔诚, 每每有最棒的布道者讲道,他次次必到,并且按 照自己的速记法记录下来,就这样日积月累,记 了好几卷笔记。此外, 他还参加大量的政治话 动:就其身份来说, 也许活动过多了点。我不久 前在伦敦时,有一份他编的文集落到了我手里。

esquire [is'kwaiə] n.旧指骑士、先生 principal ['prinsəp(ə)1, -sip-] adj. 主 parish ['pæri∫] n. 教区 qualify ['kwolifai] vt.使具有资格, 使 合格 scrivener ['skrivnə] n.代笔人 considerable [kənˈsidərəbl] adj. 重要的 mover ['mu:və] n. 鼓吹者 relate [ri'leit] vt. 叙述 patronize ['pætrənaiz] v. 资助 style [stail] n.风格 extraordinary[iks'tro:dnəri] adj.特别的 similarity [simi'læriti] n. 类似 transmigration [trænsmai qreif (a) n, tra:-] n. [宗] 轮回 woolen ['wulin] adj.毛纺的 apprenticeship [əˈprentisɪʃip] n. 学徒 的身份 ingenious [in'dʒiːnjəs] adj.机灵的 quarto ['kwɔ:təu] n.四开,四开大的书本 volume ['vɔliwm; (US)-jəm] n.卷,册 poetry ['pəuitri, 'pəuetri] n.诗 consist of 由...构成,包含有 occasional [əˈkeiʒnəl] adj.即兴的 address [ə'dres] n./vt.向...致辞,演说 specimen ['spesimin, -mən] n. 范例 shorthand ['fo:thænd] n.速记 affection [ə'fekʃən] n.友爱 pious ['paiəs] adj. 虔诚的 attend [ə'tend] vi.专心,留意 sermon ['sə:mən] n.训诫,说教,布道 preacher [pri:tfə] n.讲道者; 传教士 be much of 喜欢 pamphlet ['pæmflit] n. 小册子 folio ['fəuliəu] n. 对开的纸, (原稿



的)一页

octavo [ɔk'teivəu] n.八开本

dealer ['di:lə] n. 经销商