

FOCUS ON

SAT阅读真经21篇

时代焦点教育留美黄皮书系列

主编◎许 轶

- 源于真题

全书内容均来自SAT阅读真题

- 形式统一

培养与SAT考试完全相同的阅读习惯

- 词汇详解

在阅读中提高词汇量和语言能力

- 背景知识

了解写作意图，摸索命题规律



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本书所甄选文章均源于SAT阅读真题,篇幅长度达到真题的十至二十倍,并配备了SAT名师讲解,凝结了名师的教学感悟与智慧。更应值得SAT考生关注的是,本书所有文章均有“追根溯源”一栏,旨在告知考生该篇文章的重要性及哪年以什么样的考试形式出现,对考生SAT考试有着重要的引导阅读意义。

本书可以帮助SAT考生夯实SAT阅读考试基础和技能,帮助考生掌握SAT阅读考试重要考点,非常适合SAT考生阅读。

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前言 *Preface*

SAT是美国高考，也是全球中学生申请美国大学需要参加的一项考试，阅读是其中最难的部分。SAT阅读使得众多包括美国学生在内的考生头痛不已，根本原因就在于考查范围广，考查内容涉及人文社会科学（文学、历史学、人类学、社会学）和自然科学（天文学、地质学、生物学）等领域，需要考生花费大量精力进行阅读。但是，人的精力是有限的，在较短时间内读几十本高难度的专业书籍，显然对大多数考生来说是不现实的。

美国的学生可以获得高分，是因为他们在平时的阅读中涉猎广泛，不仅仅是泛读，而且还有精读。但对中国高中生来说，在百忙之中“读书破万卷”又谈何容易呢？好消息是，我们通过统计分析和科学归类，把最常考的背景知识和文章体裁分类，节选了21篇。这样读者只需三周，便能轻松随着时代焦点教育名师，穿越古今中外、跨越时空，去外太空览胜，去海底探索鲸鱼，去远古追寻人类文明起源，去现代探寻艺术创作的真谛，去和斯坦福的教授探讨真相和记忆被扭曲的真实原因。我们和马克·吐温在火炉边畅谈密西西比河上的生活，和霍桑探寻《红字》背后的人性真谛，和海明威品味异乡孤独的漂泊。更重要的是，我们可以和美国的高手站在同一个起跑线上。

本书取材巧妙、设计科学，但绝非是让读者投机取巧。在精读本书、配合我们名师的视频讲解之后，我们更希望读者通过我们授人以渔，继续根据自己的兴趣和弱项，有选择地进行某些题材和背景知识的补充。时代焦点的SAT培训，要求所有老师都参加SAT考试并获得高分，我们强调的是真才实学，而不是吹牛和投机取巧，这也是我们的师资在国内独一无二的原因。

本书特点如下：

特点一：内容皆源于SAT阅读真题，且高于原文：富含人文社会科学和自然科学等内容，在过去的四年考试中，上述题材反复出现；本书的内容长度是真题的十到二十倍，考生可以充分利用本书练习阅读。高强度的训练，不仅能使大家充分熟悉各种考试题材，有效提高阅读水平，而且能使大家的阅读能力远远超过SAT考试要求达到的水平。

特点二：形式与SAT真题高度统一：字体、字号、行数及行号都与SAT阅读真题完全一致。翻开本书，大家即会看到SAT阅读真题的排版样式：页面采用双栏形式，行号清晰，页脚右下方箭头标记：GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE。看这本超级真经，大家会熟悉SAT阅读真题的文本样式，找到做真题的感觉，真正做到知己知彼，

百战不殆！

特点三：各篇文章都配有极难英文词汇详解，减轻单词查找负担。要彻底拿下阅读这一块，词汇是考生首先必须攻克的一关，这就要求考生不断积累。词汇是语言的基础，大量英语词汇的积累可以使学习者终身受益。通过本书的阅读，考生可以在原有英语学习基础上进一步扩大词汇量，为自身英语语言能力的提高打下坚实的词汇基础。

特点四：各篇文章配有背景知识、作者介绍及追根溯源部分，以便大家更好地理解文章内容，抓住主题思想，了解作者写作意图及命题规律。例如：本书开篇节选《瓦尔登湖》的经济篇，在篇章结束后配有作者亨利·戴维·梭罗的简介、《瓦尔登湖》的简介，以及选取文章的介绍。这样，考生不仅能了解考题内容，而且能了解整本书的情况及作者的写作目的和意图。追根溯源部分介绍选取文章的出题年份，使考生掌握历年出题情况及规律。

特点五：本书配有名师视频讲解，权威、系统地讲解SAT阅读重点考点。聘请中国排名前列的SAT明星教师，为大家深入浅出地讲解书中篇章精华、有效阅读技巧及SAT阅读重点难点。他们有着长达十余年的SAT考试培训经验，对SAT阅读考试的内容和特点了如指掌；他们有着深厚的英文功底，深谙SAT命题之道，对SAT阅读的研究尤为深入。

想要取得SAT阅读高分，必须经过系统的训练和全面的练习，方能在通往SAT阅读高分的路上过关斩将、到达彼岸。

《SAT阅读真经》源于真题，高于真题；一本真经涵盖所有SAT阅读重点考点！心动不如行动！Take me home!

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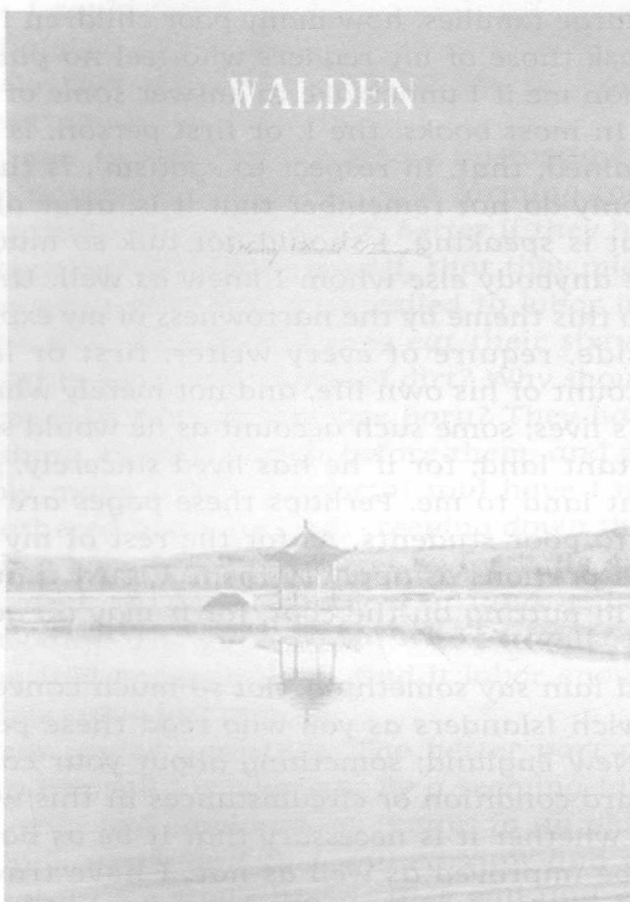
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1

Walden 《瓦尔登湖》（英美名著）

By Henry David Thoreau (亨利·戴维·梭罗)

WALDEN



Economy

When I Wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord,

5 Massachusetts¹, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only. I lived there two years and two months. At present I am a sojourner in civilized life again.

I should not obtrude² my affairs so much on the notice of my readers if very particular inquiries had not been made by my
 10 townsmen concerning my mode of life, which some would call impertinent³, though they do not appear to me at all impertinent, but, considering the circumstances, very natural and pertinent. Some have asked what I got to eat; if I did not feel lonesome; if I was not afraid; and the like. Others have been curious to learn what
 15 portion of my income I devoted to charitable purposes; and some, who have large families, how many poor children I maintained. I will therefore ask those of my readers who feel no particular interest in me to pardon me if I undertake to answer some of these questions in this book. In most books, the I, or first person, is omitted; in this it
 20 will be retained; that, in respect to egotism⁴, is the main difference. We commonly do not remember that it is, after all, always the first person that is speaking. I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experience. Moreover,
 25 I, on my side, require of every writer, first or last, a simple and sincere account of his own life, and not merely what he has heard of other men's lives; some such account as he would send to his kindred from a distant land; for if he has lived sincerely, it must have been in a distant land to me. Perhaps these pages are more particularly
 30 addressed to poor students. As for the rest of my readers, they will accept such portions as apply to them. I trust that none will stretch the seams in putting on the coat, for it may do good service to him whom it fits.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese
 35 and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to live in New England; something about your condition, especially your outward condition or circumstances in this world, in this town, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. I have travelled a good deal
 40 in Concord; and everywhere, in shops, and offices, and fields, the inhabitants have appeared to me to be doing penance in a thousand remarkable ways. What I have heard of Bramins sitting exposed to

1 Massachusetts 马萨诸塞州, 是美国的一个州, 正式名称为“马萨诸塞联邦”(Commonwealth of Massachusetts), 位于美国东北部, 是新英格兰地区的一部分。

2 obtrude /əb'tru:d/ vt. 强行向前, 强行, 强迫。英译: push to thrust outward。同义: push out, thrust out。

3 impertinent /im'pə:tinənt/ adj. 无礼的, 不切题的。英译: improperly forward or bold。反义: pertinent。

4 egotism /i:'gətiz(ə)m/ n. 自我为中心, 自尊自大。英译: self-importance。派生词: egotist, gotistic。

four fires and looking in the face of the sun; or hanging suspended, with their heads downward, over flames; or looking at the heavens over their shoulders "until it becomes impossible for them to resume their natural position, while from the twist of the neck nothing but liquids can pass into the stomach"; or dwelling, chained for life, at the foot of a tree; or measuring with their bodies, like caterpillars, the breadth of vast empires; or standing on one leg on the tops of pillars—even these forms of conscious penance are hardly more incredible and astonishing than the scenes which I daily witness. The twelve labors of Hercules¹ were trifling in comparison with those which my neighbors have undertaken; for they were only twelve, and had an end; but I could never see that these men slew or captured any monster or finished any labor. They have no friend Iolaus to burn with a hot iron the root of the hydra²'s head, but as soon as one head is crushed, two spring up.

I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. Better if they had been born in the open pasture and suckled by a wolf, that they might have seen with clearer eyes what field they were called to labor in. Who made them serfs of the soil? Why should they eat their sixty acres, when man is condemned to eat only his peck of dirt? Why should they begin digging their graves as soon as they are born? They have got to live a man's life, pushing all these things before them, and get on as well as they can. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well-nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty, its Augean stables never cleansed, and one hundred acres of land, tillage, mowing, pasture, and woodlot! The portionless, who struggle with no such unnecessary inherited encumbrances, find it labor enough to subdue and cultivate a few cubic feet of flesh.

But men labor under a mistake. The better part of the man is soon plowed into the soil for compost. By a seeming fate, commonly called necessity, they are employed, as it says in an old book, laying up treasures which moth and rust will corrupt and thieves break through and steal. It is a fool's life, as they will find when they get to the end of it, if not before. It is said that Deucalion and Pyrrha³ created men by throwing stones over their heads behind them:

1 Hercules /hə:kjuli:z/ *n.* 大力英雄, 力士。英译: (classical mythology) a hero noted for his strength.

2 hydra /haidrə/ *n.* 水螅; 九头蛇。

3 Deucalion and Pyrrha 丢卡利翁与皮拉, 古希腊神化中人物。丢卡利翁 (Deucalion) 是普罗米修斯和克吕墨涅之子, 皮拉的丈夫; 宙斯发洪水毁灭人类时只留下他们俩。

Inde genus durum sumus, experiensque laborum, Et documenta
damus qua simus origine nati.

Or, as Raleigh rhymes it in his sonorous way,

"From thence our kind hard-hearted is, enduring pain and care,

85 approving that our bodies of a stony nature are."

So much for a blind obedience to a blundering oracle, throwing
the stones over their heads behind them, and not seeing where they
fell.

Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere
90 ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious¹ cares
and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be
plucked by them. Their fingers, from excessive toil, are too clumsy
and tremble too much for that. Actually, the laboring man has not
leisure for a true integrity day by day; he cannot afford to sustain

95 the manliest relations to men; his labor would be depreciated in the
market. He has no time to be anything but a machine. How can he

remember well his ignorance—which
his growth requires—who has so
often to use his knowledge? We should

100 feed and clothe him gratuitously²
sometimes, and recruit him with our
cordials, before we judge of him. The

finest qualities of our nature, like
the bloom on fruits, can be preserved

105 only by the most delicate handling.

Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one
another thus tenderly.

Some of you, we all know, are poor, find it hard to live, are
sometimes, as it were, gasping for breath. I have no doubt that some

110 of you who read this book are unable to pay for all the dinners which
you have actually eaten, or for the coats and shoes which are fast
wearing or are already worn out, and have come to this page to

spend borrowed or stolen time, robbing your creditors of an hour. It
is very evident what mean and sneaking lives many of you live, for

115 my sight has been whetted by experience; always on the limits, trying
to get into business and trying to get out of debt, a very ancient
slough³, called by the Latins *aes alienum*⁴, another's brass, for some
of their coins were made of brass; still living, and dying, and buried



1 factitious /fæk'tiʃəs/ adj. 不自然的。虚假的 英译: not produced by natural forces.

2 gratuitously /gre'tju(:)iti/ adj. 无理由的, 不必要的, 无缘无故的。

3 slough /slau/ n. 泥坑, 泥沼, 绝境, 本文指沼泽。vt. 使陷入泥沼; 抛弃。

4 Latins *aes alienum* 拉丁语。

by this other's brass; always promising to pay, promising to pay, tomorrow, and dying today, insolvent; seeking to curry favor, to get custom, by how many modes, only not state-prison offences; lying, flattering, voting, contracting yourselves into a nutshell of civility or dilating into an atmosphere of thin and vaporous generosity, that you may persuade your neighbor to let you make his shoes, or his hat, or his coat, or his carriage, or import his groceries for him; making yourselves sick, that you may lay up something against a sick day, something to be tucked away in an old chest, or in a stocking behind the plastering, or, more safely, in the brick bank; no matter where, no matter how much or how little.

I sometimes wonder that we can be so frivolous, I may almost say, as to attend to the gross but somewhat foreign form of servitude called Negro Slavery¹, there are so many keen and subtle masters that enslave both North and South. It is hard to have a Southern overseer; it is worse to have a Northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself. Talk of a divinity in man! Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests? Does not he drive for squire make a stir? How godlike, how immortal, is he? See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds. Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion. What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate. Self-emancipation even in the West Indian provinces of the fancy and imagination—what Wilberforce is there to bring that about? Think, also, of the ladies of the land weaving toilet cushions against the last day, not to betray too green an interest in their fates! As if you could kill time without injuring eternity.

The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats². A



1 Negro Slavery 黑人奴隶制 Negro *n.* 黑种人, 黑人 *adj.* 黑人的。

2 minks and muskrats *n.* 水貂和麝鼠。

stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called the games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work. But it is a characteristic of wisdom not to do desperate things.

When we consider what, to use the words of the catechism¹, is the chief end of man, and what are the true necessities and means of life, it appears as if men had deliberately chosen the common mode of living because they preferred it to any other. Yet they honestly think there is no choice left. But alert and healthy natures remember that the sun rose clear. It is never too late to give up our prejudices. No way of thinking or doing, however ancient, can be trusted without proof. What everybody echoes or in silence passes by as true today may turn out to be falsehood tomorrow, mere smoke of opinion, which some had trusted for a cloud that would sprinkle fertilizing rain on their fields. What old people say you cannot do, you try and find that you can. Old deeds for old people, and new deeds for new. Old people did not know enough once, perchance, to fetch fresh fuel to keep the fire a-going; new people put a little dry wood under a pot, and are whirled round the globe with the speed of birds, in a way to kill old people, as the phrase is. Age is no better, hardly so well, qualified for an instructor as youth, for it has not profited so much as it has lost. One may almost doubt if the wisest man has learned anything of absolute value by living. Practically, the old have no very important advice to give the young, their own experience has been so partial, and their lives have been such miserable failures, for private reasons, as they must believe; and it may be that they have some faith left which belies that experience, and they are only less young than they were. I have lived some thirty years on this planet, and I have yet to hear the first syllable of valuable or even earnest advice from my seniors. They have told me nothing, and probably cannot tell me anything to the purpose. Here is life, an experiment to a great extent untried by me; but it does not avail me that they have tried it. If I have any experience which I think valuable, I am sure to reflect that this my mentors said nothing about.

One farmer says to me, "You cannot live on vegetable food solely, for it furnishes nothing to make bones with"; and so he religiously devotes a part of his day to supplying his system with the raw material of bones; walking all the while he talks behind his oxen, which, with vegetable-made bones, jerk him and his lumbering plow along in spite of every obstacle. Some things are really necessities of

1 catechism /kætɪkɪzəm/ n. 教义问答(手册), 一系列提问。

life in some circles, the most helpless and diseased, which in others are luxuries merely, and in others still are entirely unknown.

The whole ground of human life seems to some to have been gone over by their predecessors, both the heights and the valleys, and all things to have been cared for. According to Evelyn, "the wise Solomon prescribed ordinances for the very distances of trees; and the Roman praetors have decided how often you may go into your neighbor's land to gather the acorns which fall on it without trespass, and what share belongs to that neighbor." Hippocrates¹ has even left directions how we should cut our nails; that is, even with the ends of the fingers, neither shorter nor longer. Undoubtedly the very tedium and ennui² which presume to have exhausted the variety and the joys of life are as old as Adam³. But man's capacities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried. Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, "be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?"

We might try our lives by a thousand simple tests; as, for instance, that the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours. If I had remembered this it would have prevented some mistakes. This was not the light in which I hoed them. The stars are the apexes⁴ of what wonderful triangles! What distant and different beings in the various mansions of the universe are contemplating the same one at the same moment! Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions. Who shall say what prospect life offers to another? Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other's eyes for an instant? We should live in all the ages of the world in an hour; ay, in all the worlds of the ages. History! Poetry! Mythology! I know of no reading of another's experience so startling and informing as this would be.



The greater part of what my neighbors call good I believe in my soul to be bad, and if I repent of anything, it is very likely to be my good behavior. What demon possessed me that I behaved so well?

1 Hippocrates /hiə'pɒkrətiːz/ *n.* (希腊的名医) 希波克拉底 (约公元前460—约公元前370, 古希腊医师, 称医药之父)。

2 ennui /ɒnuː/ *n.* 厌倦, 无聊。英译: the feeling of being tired, bored and dissatisfied.

3 Adam *n.* 亚当 (《圣经》故事人物, 相传为人类始祖)。

4 apex /eɪpeks/ *n.* 顶, [喻] 顶峰。英译: the highest point of something, 复数: apexes。

You may say the wisest thing you can, old man—you who have lived seventy years, not without honor of a kind—I hear an irresistible voice which invites me away from all that. One generation abandons the enterprises of another like stranded vessels.

240 I think that we may safely trust a good deal more than we do. We may waive just so much care of ourselves as we honestly bestow elsewhere. Nature is as well adapted to our weakness as to our strength. The incessant anxiety and strain of some is a well-nigh incurable form of disease. We are made to exaggerate the importance 245 of what work we do; and yet how much is not done by us! or, what if we had been taken sick? How vigilant we are! determined not to live by faith if we can avoid it; all the day long on the alert, at night we unwillingly say our prayers and commit ourselves to uncertainties. So thoroughly and sincerely are we compelled to live, reverencing 250 our life, and denying the possibility of change. This is the only way, we say; but there are as many ways as there can be drawn radii from one centre. All change is a miracle to contemplate; but it is a miracle which is taking place every instant. Confucius¹ said, "To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we do not 255 know, that is true knowledge." When one man has reduced a fact of the imagination to be a fact to his understanding, I foresee that all men at length establish their lives on that basis.

Let us consider for a moment what most of the trouble and anxiety which I have referred to is about, and how much it is 260 necessary that we be troubled, or at least careful. It would be some advantage to live a primitive and frontier life, though in the midst of an outward civilization, if only to learn what are the gross necessities of life and what methods have been taken to obtain them; or even to look over the old day-books of the merchants, to see what 265 it was that men most commonly bought at the stores, what they stored, that is, what are the grossest groceries. For the improvements of ages have had but little influence on the essential laws of man's existence: as our skeletons, probably, are not to be distinguished from those of our ancestors.

270 By the words, necessary of life, I mean whatever, of all that man obtains by his own exertions, has been from the first, or from long use has become, so important to human life that few, if any, whether from savageness, or poverty, or philosophy, ever attempt to do without it. To many creatures there is in this sense but one necessary

1 Confucius /kən'fju:ʃiəs/ n. 孔子, 孔丘, 孔夫子。孔子(前551年9月28日, 亦即农历8月27~前479年4月11日, 亦即农历2月11日), 子姓, 孔氏, 名丘, 字仲尼, 汉族, 东周时期鲁国陬邑(今中国山东曲阜市南辛镇)人, 祖上为宋国(今河南商丘)贵族。春秋末期的思想家和教育家, 儒家思想的创始人。

275 of life, food. To the bison of the prairie it is a few inches of palatable¹
grass, with water to drink; unless he seeks the Shelter of the forest
or the mountain's shadow. None of the brute creation requires more
than Food and Shelter. The necessities of life for man in this climate
may, accurately enough, be distributed under the several heads of
280 food, shelter, clothing, and fuel; for not till we have secured these
are we prepared to entertain the true problems of life with freedom
and a prospect of success. Man has invented, not only houses, but
clothes and cooked food; and possibly from the accidental discovery
of the warmth of fire, and the consequent use of it, at first a luxury,
285 arose the present necessity to sit by it. We observe cats and dogs
acquiring the same second nature. By proper shelter and clothing
we legitimately retain our own internal heat; but with an excess of
these, or of Fuel, that is, with an external heat greater than our own
internal, may not cookery properly be said to begin? Darwin, the
290 naturalist, says of the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego², that while
his own party, who were well clothed and sitting close to a fire, were
far from too warm, these naked savages, who were farther off, were
observed, to his great surprise, "to be streaming with perspiration
at undergoing such a roasting." So, we are told, the New Hollander
295 goes naked with impunity, while the European shivers in his clothes.
Is it impossible to combine the hardiness of these savages with the
intellectualness of the civilized man? According to Liebig³, man's body
is a stove, and food the fuel which keeps up the internal combustion⁴
in the lungs. In cold weather we eat more, in warm less. The animal
300 heat is the result of a slow combustion, and disease and death take
place when this is too rapid; or for want of fuel, or from some defect
in the draught, the fire goes out. Of course the vital heat is not
to be confounded with fire; but so much for analogy. It appears,
therefore, from the above list, that the expression, animal life, is
305 nearly synonymous with the expression, animal heat; for while food
may be regarded as the fuel which keeps up the fire within us—and
fuel serves only to prepare that food or to increase the warmth of our
bodies by addition from without—shelter and clothing also serve only
to retain the heat thus generated and absorbed.

1 palatable /pə'leɪtəbəl/ *adj.* 可口的, 美味的, 愉快的, 鲜美可口的。

2 Tierra del Fuego 南美洲南端群岛。名字由来: 1520年10月, 航海家麦哲伦发现被他命名的麦哲伦海峡时, 首先看到的是当地土著居民在岛上燃起的堆堆篝火, 遂将此岛命名为“火地岛”。

3 Liebig 最小因子定律。德国化学家Baron Justus von Liebig于1840年在其所著的《无机化学及其在农业和生理学中的应用》一书中, 分析了土壤与植物生长的关系, 认为每一种植物都需要一定种类和一定数量的营养元素, 并阐述在植物生长所必须的元素中, 供给量最少(与需要量相比相差较大)的元素决定着植物的产量, 这一概念被称为“最小因子定律”。

4 combustion /kəm'bʌstʃən/ *n.* 燃烧, 烧毁, 氧化, 骚动。例句: The energy is released by combustion on the application of a match 火柴点燃后在燃烧过程中释放能量。

The grand necessity, then, for our bodies, is to keep warm, to keep
310 the vital heat in us. What pains we accordingly take, not only with
our food, and clothing, and Shelter, but with our beds, which are our
night-clothes, robbing the nests and breasts of birds to prepare this
shelter within a shelter, as the mole has its bed of grass and leaves
at the end of its burrow! The poor man is wont to complain that this
315 is a cold world; and to cold, no less physical than social, we refer
directly a great part of our ails. The summer, in some climates, makes
possible to man a sort of Elysian life. Fuel, except to cook his food,
is then unnecessary; the sun is his fire, and many of the fruits are
sufficiently cooked by its rays; while food generally is more various,
320 and more easily obtained, and clothing and shelter are wholly or
half unnecessary. At the present day, and in this country, as I find
by my own experience, a few implements, a knife, an axe, a spade, a
wheelbarrow, etc., and for the studious, lamplight, stationery, and
access to a few books, rank next to
325 necessities, and can all be obtained
at a trifling cost. Yet some, not wise,
go to the other side of the globe, to
barbarous and unhealthy regions,
and devote themselves to trade
330 for ten or twenty years, in order
that they may live—that is, keep
comfortably warm—and die in New
England at last. The luxuriously
rich are not simply kept comfortably
335 warm, but unnaturally hot; as I
implied before, they are cooked, of
course a la mode.



Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts of
life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the
340 elevation of mankind. With respect to luxuries and comforts, the
wisest have ever lived a more simple and meagre life than the poor.
The ancient philosophers, Chinese, Hindoo, Persian, and Greek, were
a class than which none has been poorer in outward riches, none so
rich in inward. We know not much about them. It is remarkable that
345 we know so much of them as we do. The same is true of the more
modern reformers and benefactors of their race. None can be an
impartial or wise observer of human life but from the vantage ground
of what we should call voluntary poverty. Of a life of luxury the fruit
is luxury, whether in agriculture, or commerce, or literature, or art.