

简易英语注释读物



Vol. 125



# *Behind the Headlines*

在标题后面



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SIMPLE ENGLISH READERS

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# *Behind the Headlines*

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## 内 容 简 介

本书原为英国朗曼图书公司出版的简易英语读物丛书之一。作者以简练、流畅的文笔叙述近代历史上发生的一些大事。其中有美国加州旧金山由于大地震引起的全城火灾；1665年由于瘟疫造成的伦敦居民的惨重死亡；1912年英国六万吨巨轮(Titanic)在处女航中触冰山沉没以及其它一些饶有兴味的掌故。

本书文字结构新颖，情节动人，用字不超过1,100个常用词，可供初级或中级英语学习者作为泛读材料使用。

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Zài Biāo Tí Hòu Miàn

在标题后面

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## The San Francisco<sup>1</sup> Fire

EARLY one morning the great Italian singer, Enrico Caruso<sup>2</sup>, was sitting on a box in a city street. He was wearing his night clothes<sup>3</sup> and smoking a cigarette. He himself had carried the box down a lot of steps from his bedroom in the Palace Hotel, and the servants had not paid much attention to him. No one was paying much attention to him now, as he sat rather sadly in the street. The street was a street in San Francisco, California<sup>4</sup>. The date was 18th April, 1906. It was the day of the great earthquake<sup>5</sup>.

Earthquakes were not uncommon in San Francisco, and there had been bad ones in 1868, 1898, and 1900. But the results of the earthquake of 1906 were the worst of all<sup>6</sup>. It first struck the city at twelve minutes past five in the early morning of April 18th, and lasted one minute. This was the event which brought Caruso down into the street with his box. Like many other people at that time, he felt safer outside the building than inside.

A minute seems a short time when one is in a pleas-

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1. San Francisco [ˌsænfɹənˈsiskəʊ]: 旧金山, 三藩市(美国加利福尼亚州太平洋岸的一座大城市, 也是一个重要港口)。

2. Enrico Caruso [enˈrɪkəʊ kəˈruːzəʊ]: 恩利柯·卡鲁索, 人名(1873—1921, 意大利著名男高音歌唱家)。

3. night clothes: 睡衣。clothes 作“衣服”解时, 用复数形式。

4. California [ˌkælɪˈfɔːnjə]: 加利福尼亚州(在美国西岸的一个州)。

5. earthquake [ˈəːθkweɪk]: 地震。

6. to be the worst of all: 是最坏的一次。形容词最高级 worst 前面要加定冠词 the。

ant place, and sometimes it passes much too quickly. But in an earthquake it is terribly long. At one moment you are living your usual life. At the next<sup>1</sup> your chairs and tables are dancing on the floor, your house is moving about, and your world is suddenly changed. You cannot be sure what will happen next. You cannot be sure if you will be alive to see what happens next.

So it was<sup>2</sup> at San Francisco that morning. People who had been asleep opened their eyes and found their beds moving about<sup>3</sup>. Bookcases travelled slowly across floors. A strange noise could be heard on all sides. Then stones began to fall down into the rooms and into the streets outside. Walls and buildings started to come down. The cries of those who were hurt could be heard from near and far<sup>4</sup>, and in some places the roads themselves opened like wide mouths. Street cars fell on their sides. Electric wires came down and started fires.

What does a man do in these conditions? He wants to get outside, and as far away from high buildings as possible<sup>5</sup>. People who live in the country and near open fields have a great advantage<sup>6</sup> in an earthquake. They are free from the fear of falling walls and buildings. But those who live in towns and cities have no safe place waiting for them.

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1. at the next: = at the next moment. 2. So it was...:(情况) 就是这样。so 指上面所说的情况, 为了强调放在句首。 3. found their beds moving about: 发现他们的床在移动。to move about 各处移动, 是宾语 beds 的补足语。 4. from near and far: 远近, 到处, 四面八方。 5. ... as far away from high buildings as possible: 离开高楼越远越好。 6. to have a great advantage: 有一个非常有利的条件。

At the end of one minute the earthquake stopped, and the noise slowly grew less. Many of the people who had run into the streets in their night clothes went back home to dress properly. They were not yet really afraid because earthquakes in San Francisco were fairly common. Most of them believed that this would be no worse than usual<sup>1</sup>, and would soon stop; but the fires which had started were growing bigger.

Fires were not unknown in the city either; indeed its people seem to have suffered more than most others from this cause. Parts of the city had been burnt down six times before this. There was a bad fire in 1849, three bad ones in 1850, and two more in 1851; but the 1906 fire was the greatest and most terrible of all.

Fires were started in different ways. Broken electric wires caused a large number, but burning wood or coal in a fireplace of a house could easily be thrown out when the earthquake moved the building. Then it was quite possible that<sup>2</sup> other wood, or paper or cloth, could be set on fire. Thus the fire increased in size<sup>3</sup> and reached out to other buildings. In San Francisco the bells of fire-engines were soon ringing in the streets as the machines tried to reach burning houses. They ran into people who were trying to leave the fires, and this delayed them a great deal.

Although the city's firemen were good fellows and knew their work well, they did not put out many fires on

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1. no worse than usual: 不比往常的更坏(厉害)。 2. Then it was quite possible that...: "it" 是形式主语, 它代表后面的 that clause.  
3. the fire increased in size: 火场(面积)扩大了。

that day. There was no water in the pipes. Most of San Francisco's water had been brought to the city from the country through three great pipes; but all three had been broken by moving rocks and earth. Therefore, when the firemen tried to turn the water on, there was none.

It is not difficult to understand why the fires grew in size; but why did so many fires start? There were hardly any in the city of Oakland<sup>1</sup>, just across the sea from San Francisco, although it also suffered from the earthquake.

The different conditions in the two cities resulted chiefly from one fact<sup>2</sup>. In Oakland, as soon as the earthquake started, someone remembered to turn off the city's electricity supply<sup>3</sup>. In San Francisco, the chief engineer<sup>4</sup> was hurt almost immediately, and no one else thought of the electricity for a quarter of an hour. Thus, whenever an electric wire was broken in the first fifteen minutes, it was quite possible that a fire would start. About thirty fires were soon burning in different parts of the city.

The breaking of electric wires did not start all the fires. One was the result of a woman's kind heart.<sup>5</sup> When people returned home after the first earthquake, she decided to cook some eggs for the family. They needed some

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1. Oakland ['ɔːklənd]: 奥克兰(在旧金山的对岸, 也是加利福尼亚州西部一港口)。

2. to result chiefly from one fact: 主要由一个事实所造成的。

3. to turn off the city's electricity supply: 切断城市的电源(停止供电)。

4. the chief engineer: 总工程师。

5. One was the result of a woman's kind heart: 有一场火是由于一个妇女的好心肠所造成的。



breakfast, and so she lit a fire<sup>1</sup>. But the fireplace had been broken in the earthquake, and the fire reached some of the wood of which the house was built. When this began to burn, it could not be put out, and soon the next building was on fire also.

This was one of the fires that were especially noticed by James Hopper, a newspaper-man who was in San Francisco at the time. He saw it first in Third Street; but the wind helped it to grow, and it was soon rushing along the smaller side streets. It destroyed the south part of San Francisco because the firemen, without water, were powerless to stop it.

At first numbers of people watched the fires almost as we watch a game of football. They were interesting, and did not yet cause much fear. But they were growing bigger, and black smoke hung above the burning houses like a sign of death. The feelings of the people began to change slowly.

One party of people<sup>2</sup> whose eyes were on a burning building suddenly found other fires behind and beside them. They moved quickly, trying to find a way out<sup>3</sup>. But suddenly a lot of cows, maddened by the heat and smoke, rushed forwards together. In a few moments the whole party was killed by the charging animals<sup>4</sup>.

There was no water to drink and little to eat in the burning city. No hotels were providing meals. The result

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1. to light a fire: 生火。      2. one party of people: 一群人。  
3. to find a way out: 找一条逃生的路。      4. the charging animals: (因受惊而)向前冲的牛。作者不愿重复 cows, 用 animals 来代替。

was that many of the food shops were broken open. The food was stolen and carried off. The disorders increased because there were not enough policemen to deal with all the thieves in the different parts of the city. Something had to be done to stop these unlawful acts,<sup>1</sup> and soldiers were sent into the city to help the police. Food was also given out at certain places in the city, because the people had to eat something. But even in these places fights began when men could not get enough bread.

The soldiers had also to deal with shopkeepers who charged too much. There are always men who want to make money in bad times as in good.<sup>2</sup> One or two shopkeepers had to be driven out of their shops. A soldier heard an old woman talking about one of the bread shops. She said that the shopkeeper charged her 75 cents for bread. This was the kind of thing that could lead to higher and higher prices.

The soldiers went to the shop, entered it, pushed the shopkeeper to one side, and gave the bread to the waiting people free<sup>3</sup>. The shopkeeper was very surprised, but laughed gently. But when the soldiers continued to give away all the food in his shop<sup>4</sup>, he grew very angry and

---

1. Something had to be done to stop these unlawful acts: 必须采取一些措施,来制止这些非法行为。 2. There are always men who want to make money in bad times as in good: 总是有些人在困难的日子里像在好日子里一样设法赚钱。good 后面省略了 times。 3. ... gave the bread to the waiting people free: 把面包免费送给等候的人们。free = free of charge. 4. to give away all the food in his shop: 分发他店里所有的食物。

started to shout. He was taken outside and shot.<sup>1</sup>

Thieves who broke into shops were also shot; but it was better to stop the stealing of food than to shoot thieves. It was therefore necessary to tell the people not to steal if they wished to remain alive. For this purpose, printed notices had to be made.

A printer was found, and he put the proper letters together<sup>2</sup>; but there was no electricity to drive the printing machines<sup>3</sup>. Now, when it was too late to stop the fires, the electricity had been turned off. How could the printing machines be driven? Some other kind of power was needed.

A few soldiers stood outside the door of the building, and watched the people who were passing along the street. Whenever they saw a man with powerful arms, they took him inside and ordered him to turn the printing machine. Several strong men were soon at work<sup>4</sup>, and in this way 5,000 copies of the notice were printed.

While these efforts were being made to keep order<sup>5</sup> in the city, the fires continued to grow. Many of the people at last understood the seriousness of the position, and began to leave the burning city. Men and women took with them the things that they needed, or loved best. Many women carried babies in their arms. But some, who had no babies to save, took their animals or small birds. Men carried shoes or clothes. Some people

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1. He was taken outside and shot: 他被带出去枪毙了。shot = was shot. 2. ... he put the proper letters together: 他把铅字排好了。  
3. to drive the printing machines: 转动印刷机。 4. to be soon at work: 很快就工作起来啦。 5. to keep order: 维持秩序。

pushed or pulled small carts on which they had put valuable articles from the homes that they had left behind.

The people went either to the forest or to the sea. The son of one rich man found his father's small motor-boat and carried people across the sea and away from the fires. This was not the result of kindness. He charged one hundred dollars for one person for one journey. No one seemed to want a return ticket<sup>1</sup>.

Water for San Francisco was brought across the sea in ships. This was only for drinking purposes; there was not enough to put the fires out. Great efforts were being made to stop these, but they continued to burn. In many places the army destroyed all the buildings round a fire, so that it could not burn them and thus reach others. A lot of hard work was done on the great pipes which used to bring water into the city. At last one of them was repaired, but it was too late to stop the fires because they were so big. The wind blew first one way and then another, turning the fires first to one building and then to another.<sup>2</sup> Not much could be done to save them, but at last, at the end of this terrible week, the rain came and the fires began to die down.

About eight out of every ten<sup>3</sup> houses had been destroyed by this time, but the number of people who lost their lives was only about one in every thousand<sup>4</sup>. This

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1. a return ticket: 一张来回票。 2. The wind blew first one way and then another, turning the fires first to one building and then to another: 风起先往一个方向吹, 但后来又吹向另一个方向, 使火头先烧这个楼接着又烧那个楼。 3. eight out of every ten: 每十个中有八个。 4. one in every thousand: 每一千个中有一个。

proves that a lot of good work was done in difficult conditions, but 200,000 people were homeless because so many houses were burnt down.

Man's work is hardly ever perfect,<sup>1</sup> and some mistakes were made by those who were trying to keep order. Some of them were watching for thieves, and they saw a car moving fast along a road. They thought that the driver was hurrying to do some wrong or other<sup>2</sup>, and they shot him without asking any questions. But he was, in fact, a kind man who was hurrying to help some people who had been hurt.

The conditions in the city after this terrible fire are difficult to imagine now. There were a lot of marriages at the end of the fire because young people decided not to wait any longer. They did not know what was going to happen on the next day, or indeed in the next hour. So they got married while they could.

Business-men started to build up their businesses again, but it was slow and heavy work. For some time the banks could not do very much to help.<sup>3</sup> A lot of important papers had disappeared in the fire. Bank accounts and police records were far from complete. Photographs of thieves had been burnt with everything else. If you wanted to know where a man was born, when and where he was married, and whether he was still alive,

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1. Man's work is hardly ever perfect: 人做事情很难尽善尽美。hardly ever=very seldom 几乎从来不。 2. to do some wrong or other: 去做某种坏事。some... or other (表示不肯定或不精确之意)某一...。some 后面跟单数名词。 3. For some time the banks could not do very much to help: 银行有一阵子帮不了什么大忙。

you could not easily find the answers to the questions. Papers and books had been burnt. The remains of schools and offices filled the streets, which had now to be cleared.

Many people walked about looking for lost friends. Men ~~who~~ wanted to find their wives failed to do so. Women could not find their husbands or children. Notices were put up, asking for information or giving it:<sup>1</sup> “Are you alive, Peter Smith? If you are, go to your old home. Your wife is waiting for you there.” “If Tom Robinson reads this notice, he will be glad to learn that his daughter is safe in Oakland.”

After the fire had ended numbers of people visited San Francisco to see its results. News of the fire had reached newspapers all over the country, and had been copied in foreign newspapers. So Americans from Oakland across the water, and foreigners from places far away, came to see the remains of the great city.

These visitors came for pleasure,<sup>2</sup> but they often found something that they did not expect. The streets were still filled with broken stones and broken glass, and the soldiers were working hard every day to clear them. A tired soldier, who was busy with heavy work, was not pleased to see a rich and well-dressed man walking about and doing nothing. So he made the well-dressed man take his beautiful coat off and do some work. The visitor had to start lifting stones; he had to carry them far away.

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1. Notices were put up, asking for information or giving it: 贴出了寻人或通知行踪的布告, it 即 information, 指有关亲人生死和去向的消息。asking 和 giving 都是现在分词短语, 说明主语 notices. 2. These visitors came for pleasure: 参观者是来看热闹的。

Of course, he did not like this, but no one cared very much whether he liked it or not. Therefore, after the fire, teachers, presidents of banks, clerks and important railway men worked hard under the watchful eye of a soldier or policeman. They worked hard because both - the soldier and the policeman had guns.

Most people in the city did not need to be ordered to work. They were ready to do their best<sup>1</sup> to repair their city, and it slowly took on the shape of its old self<sup>2</sup>. But it could never be quite the same again, because about 28,000 buildings had been destroyed and about five hundred million dollars lost<sup>3</sup>.

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1. to do their best: 尽力。 2. ...it slowly took on the shape of its old self: 慢慢地恢复原来的样子。 3. about five hundred million dollars lost: 损失五亿元左右。 lost=had been lost.

## Signals across the Atlantic<sup>1</sup>

ONLY about a hundred years have passed since James Clerk-Maxwell<sup>2</sup> said for the first time that there must be electric waves<sup>3</sup> in space<sup>4</sup>. He said so in 1854 when he was studying light-waves<sup>5</sup>, which are one form of electric waves. He felt sure that there must be others of the same kind, although at that time no one had ever sent a wireless signal<sup>6</sup> anywhere.

This was an excellent proof of the high qualities of the mind of man. Clerk-Maxwell had no experience of these waves, and no one else in those days had any either. He proved the whole thing on paper, using only his head. Twenty-three years had to pass before anyone was able to make waves of this sort.

The first scientist to make them was Heinrich Hertz<sup>7</sup>, a German who was working at Karlsruhe<sup>8</sup>. In 1887 he was making sparks<sup>9</sup> in one part of his room, and he noticed a surprising thing. At the other side of the room a spark appeared in the space between the two ends of a wire which were close together<sup>10</sup>. There seemed to be noth-

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1. the Atlantic [ət'læntɪk]: = the Atlantic Ocean 大西洋。 2. James Clerk-Maxwell ['dʒeɪmz 'klɜ:k 'mækswəl]: 詹姆斯·克拉克·马克斯韦耳, 人名(1831—1879, 苏格兰物理学家)。 3. electric waves: 电波。 4. in space: 在空间。 5. light-waves: 光波。 6. wireless signal: 无线电信号。 7. Heinrich Hertz['hainrik hɜ:ts]: 海恩利克·赫兹, 人名(1857—1894德国物理学家)。 8. Karlsruhe ['kɑ:lsruə]: 卡尔斯鲁厄, 联邦德国西南部莱茵河畔城市。 9. to make sparks: 打火花。 10. ... a spark appeared in the space between the two ends of a wire which were close together: 在两个挨得很近的电线头之间的空隙出现了火花。



ing (except air) between the two places which could carry an electric effect from one to the other; but when Hertz stopped the first spark, the other spark also stopped. When he started it again, the other started again. Electric waves in space were, in fact, causing the effect in the second wire, but Hertz did not immediately understand this. It was the first time that a thing like this had ever happened, and it was the beginning of wireless. But a lot of work had to be done before it could be made useful to the world.

Seven years later (1894) Sir Oliver Lodge<sup>1</sup> showed how these sparks could be used to send useful signals across empty space.

At about the same time (1894) a young Italian, Guglielmo Marconi,<sup>2</sup> also began to study the use of electric waves in space. His father was Italian and his mother Irish. Marconi started his work in Italy, but in 1896 he went to England.

When he reached England he decided to go to see W. H. Preece. This man (a lot older than Marconi) was the chief engineer of the British post office, and was very interested in signals which could be sent across space without wires. In those days, as soon as a ship left port, it could not send or receive signals or news. It was alone on the sea. If it sank, it was possible that no one would ever know what had happened to it. Ships did sometimes disappear<sup>3</sup> and no explanation could be given for this.

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1. Oliver Lodge ['olivə 'lɒdʒ]: 奥利弗·洛奇, 人名 (1851—1940, 英国物理学家和作家)。 2. Guglielmo Marconi [gu:'ljelmo mɑ:'kəʊni]: 古列尔摩·马可尼, 人名 (1874—1937, 意大利电学家, 无线电报发明者)。 3. ships did sometimes disappear: 船确实有时失踪了。“did”为加强语气词。