THOMAS ALVA EDISON: THE MAN WHO LIGHTED THE WORLD
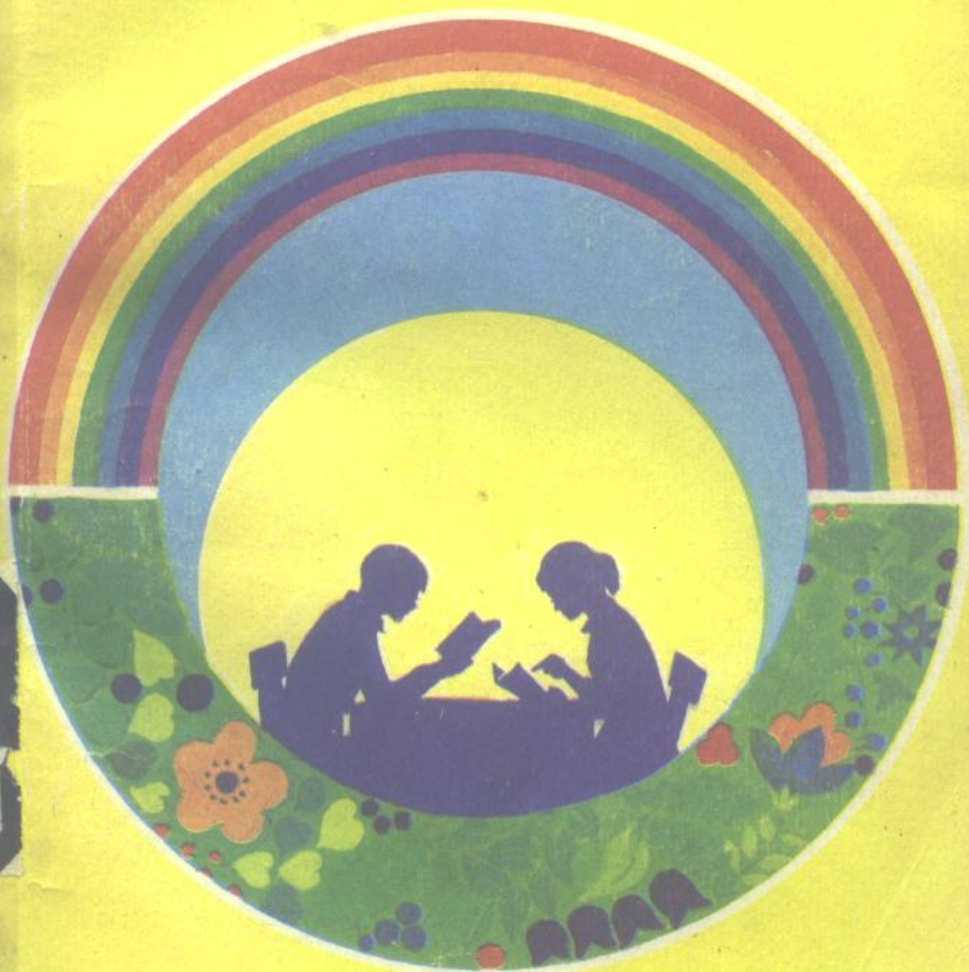
托马斯·阿尔瓦·爱迪生——照亮世界的人

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The Man Who Lighted the World

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刘锦荣 注释

《托马斯·阿尔瓦·爱迪生——照亮世界的人》是一本人物传记，它叙述了美国著名发明家爱迪生的生平及其从事伟大发明的艰苦历程。

爱迪生在学校读书不多，全由他母亲在家亲自教授。他自小善于观察和思考，好奇心也常促使他做出一些有趣的事，如他曾用自己的身体模仿母鸡孵蛋。

爱迪生以他顽强的毅力从事对留声机、电影机、发电机和电灯等的研究，先后完成了3000多种创造发明，为人类做出巨大的贡献。人们称他为"世界发明大王"。

本书故事情节生动有趣，文字浅显易懂，又能帮助读者学到一些科普知识和词汇，生词和语言难点都作了汉语注释。适合高中学生、大学低年级学生和同等英语程度的自学者阅读。

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CONTENTS

YOUNGEST CHILD

Thomas Alva Edison[2] was born in the early morning hours of the 11th of February, in 1847, in the busy little town of Milan, Ohio[3], in the Middle West of the United States. His father's small red house stood on[4] a little hill near the Huron River[5]. Lake Erie[6] was not far away. The ground was covered deeply by snow. The darkness of winter was weakly lighted by candles, and oil lamps, but the child who was born on that day was going to be the one to light the lamp that shines everywhere in the world.

Samuel[7] Edison walked nervously[8] outside the

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1. chapter ['tʃæptə] *n.* (文章的)章, 部分。 2. Thomas Alva Edison ['tɔməs 'ælvə 'edisn] *n.* 托马斯·阿尔瓦·爱迪生, 1847—1931, 美国发明家。 3. Milan [mi'læn] *n.* 米兰。Ohio [əu'haiəu] *n.* 俄亥俄(美国州名)。 4. stand on 座落在; 位于。 5. Huron ['hjuərən] *n.* 休伦。the Huron River 休伦河。 6. Erie ['iəri] *n.* 伊利。Lake Erie 伊利湖。 7. Samuel ['sæmjuəl] *n.* 塞缪尔(男名, 也称 Sam [sæm] 萨姆)。 8. nervously ['nə:vəsli] *n.* 紧张不安地。

closed door of his wife's room. His wife, Nancy[1], had asked God to allow[2] her to have this child. The three youngest of her six children had died in the long, hard winters there. Her oldest daughter, Marion[3], was to be married soon. Pitt[4] Edison was almost 15 years old, and Harriet Ann[5], whom they called Tannie, was 13. A baby would make them all very happy.

Nancy Elliott Edison[6] loved children—all children. She was a strong little woman. Her family had come to America from Scotland[7]. She had been a teacher before she married Samuel Edison of Ontario[8], Canada. She was 18 when she married him.

Nancy's life was not easy. Her tall young husband could jump, run, and fight better than anyone in his town. He was always doing those three things. It was difficult for him to remain interested in any one business, and therefore[9] he changed from one trade to another many times. Also, he was a person who became angry very quickly and very often.

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1. Nancy ['nænsi] *n.* 南希(女名)。 2. allow [ə'lau] *vt.* 允许；准许 (做某事)。 3. Marion ['mɛəriən] *n.* 玛丽恩(女名)。 4. Pitt[pit] *n.* 彼得(男名)。 5. Harriet ['hæriət] Ann *n.* 哈丽特·安(女名)。 6. Nancy Elliot ['eljət] Edison 南希·埃利奥特·爱迪生。 7. Scotland ['skɔtlənd] *n.* 苏格兰。 8. Ontario [ɔn'tɛəriəu] *n.* 安大略(加拿大省名)。 9. therefore ['ðɛəfɔ:] *adv.* 因此,所以。

Sam Edison came to the United States of America to escape[1] the government of Canada. He had joined a group trying to change that government by force[2] in 1837. When it won the fight against[3] Sam Edison's group, the Canadian government said he had tried to destroy his country's government, and sent soldiers to catch him.

This made Edison decide to leave Canada. He ran as fast as he could towards the United States. Soldiers and their hunting[4] dogs followed quickly behind him. He ran for two days without stopping to sleep, crossed the ice of the St. Clair River[5], and arrived in Port Huron[6], Michigan[7], U. S. A.

When Sam Edison stopped running and saw where he was, he decided to go further south. He reached Milan, Ohio, and decided it would be a good town in which to sell materials for building houses. Milan was a new town where many people were then settling. He stayed there and started a business selling wood. He built a pretty red house with a white fence and brought his wife and children there to live in it.

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1. escape [is'keip] *vt.* 逃脱。　　2. force [fɔ:s] *n.* 武力。
3. fight against 与……打仗。　　4. hunt [hʌnt] *vt.* 猎取，追猎。　　5. St. Clair River 圣·克莱尔河。　　6. Port [pɔ:t] Huron 休伦港口。 7. Michigan ['miʃigən] *n.* 密歇根(州名)。

Years later, Sam Edison was walking nervously outside his wife's room. Finally, the woman neighbor who was helping his wife opened the door and came out.

"You have a fine boy," she said. "He has light hair and blue eyes—very much like his mother."

"I am glad he has a face like his mother's," Sam Edison said. "If he also has a character[1] like hers when he is older, that will be better yet!"

The neighbor smiled. Nancy Edison was known as a good person. "I don't know if he will," the neighbor said, "but I think he is an unusual[2] child. He has a very big head."

The first time Sam Edison saw his seventh and last child, he thought the child's head was too large. He was afraid the baby was ill.

"Do you think the child's body will grow big enough for such a large head?" Sam asked his wife.

"He is perfect!" Nancy said. She loved the boy from the moment she first saw him. All her life, she believed in everything he did and told doubting[3] people that he was right.

They named the boy Thomas Alva Edison. He was

1. character ['kærəktə] n. 性格。 2. unusual[ʌn'juːʒuəl] adj. 不寻常的。 3. doubt [daut] vt. 怀疑。

usually called **Alva** when he was young, and his mother always called him Al.

Little Al began very soon to prove that he was unusual. First, he almost never cried. He laughed all the time. He seemed to try to make other people laugh, too.

As a baby, too, he often became very interested in some object. He would then appear to be trying to think of how he could get it into his hands. He moved his mouth and eyes as people do when they are thinking. He never stopped trying to do a thing that he had decided to do. As soon as he learned to walk, he would walk, without any help, towards whatever[1] he wanted.

Little Al's appearance[2] was very pleasant. His head was large but well-formed[3]. But his thick, light-colored hair[4] was a problem. It pointed up from his head, and would not remain in place.[5] Nancy Edison had to cut his hair short, although she did not like to do that. At the age of three years, Alva was mov-

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1. whatever [wɔt'evə] *pron.* 无论什么；不管什么。   2. appearance [ə'piərəns] *n.* 出现；外表。   3. well-formed *adj.* 合适的。   4. his thick, light-coloured hair 厚厚的、淡颜色的头发。   5. It pointed up from his head, and would not remain in place. 头发都从他头上竖了起来，乱蓬蓬的理不顺。

ing his fingers through his hair when he was thinking, as a man does.

As early as anyone can remember, Thomas Alva Edison asked many questions about everything. He seemed to want to learn to talk, only to ask questions. As soon as he learned, he began to ask them, and he asked them during his whole life. Some of his questions had no easy answers; some of them were unimportant. But he never stopped asking them. He asked so many that most of his family did not want to answer any more. But his mother always tried to help.

"Why does the wind blow?" he asked his father.

"I don't know, Al," Sam Edison said.

"Why don't you know?" Alva asked.

Alva was interested in everything. He seemed to think that all nature was full of unknown things, and that it was his job to discover[1] them. He was helping his mother gather eggs one day, when they found a goose[2], sitting on its eggs.

"Why is the goose not eating with the other birds?" Al wanted to know.

"It is sitting on its eggs," said his mother.

"Why?" asked Al.

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1. discover [dis'kʌvə] *vt.* 发现。   2. goose [ɡuːs] *n.* (*pl.* geese) 鹅。

"To keep them warm," his mother said.

"Why does it want to keep them warm?"

"So they will hatch."

"What does 'hatch' mean?"

"A baby goose hatches when it breaks the egg it is born in, and comes out of it."

"If an egg is kept warm, will a goose come out?"

"If it is the right time, and if the egg is a goose egg."

"Oh."

That afternoon, Al caused[1] no trouble for his family. They did not see him anywhere[2]. At the end of the day, Al's father tried to find the boy. Sam found Al on a neighbor's farm, sitting on some goose eggs. He was sad that no little goose had decided to come out!

Al's brothers and sisters were so much older than he was, that he usually played alone or stayed with his mother. Al tried to do everything his brother Pitt did. When Pitt made pictures, Al made pictures. When Pitt read a book, Al tried to read, too.

Most of the time Al played near the house, where

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his mother could see him. When she looked away[1], he would walk away. And because Al was so interested in so many things, he was often in danger. One time he went inside a building where wheat is stored. He fell into the wheat, <u>coming to rest with his</u> head entirely covered by the wheat.[2] He almost died, because he had no air there. But someone pulled Al out by his feet. Another time, he fell into some water and had to be pulled out, wet and afraid.

He often visited the grain mill[3] of Sam Winchester[4], who liked to experiment with new things. At this time Winchester was trying to make a device[5] that would fly. He did this by filling a large bag with something like air, but of less weight.[6] This made Al interested in flying. He put several chemicals[7] together and believed that anyone who ate the chemicals would weigh less than air. Al asked Michael Oates[8], a man who

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1. look away 看别的地方；把脸转过去。　　2．He fell into the wheat ... entirely covered by the wheat. 他掉进麦垛里,头埋进里面,完全被麦子盖住了。　　3. mill [mil] *n.* 磨坊；面粉厂。　　4. Sam Winchester ['wintʃistə] *n.* 萨姆·温沏斯特(人名)。　　5. device[di'vais] *n.* 方法；设计。
6. He did this ... but of less weight. 他用一些像空气一样,但又比空气轻得多的东西注入一个大袋子里。weight [weit] *n.* 重,重量。　　7. chemicals['kemikəlz] *n.* (通常用复数)药品；化学品。　　8. Michael Oates ['maikəl əuts] *n.* 迈克·奥茨(人名)。

worked for Al's father, to eat it and fly. After Oates ate what Al had made, he became so ill that he needed a doctor's help. Al seemed to think it was a failure[1] of Michael Oates—not of Al's own—that Oates did not fly.

For doing these things, Al was whipped. His father thought that only whipping Al would stop him from making trouble.[2] His mother believed that if you don't whip a boy when he does something wrong, he won't become a good man. And she decided not to allow this to happen to Al. He was whipped, but he did not stop being interested in everything.

When he was six years old, Al was whipped harder than ever before. He had been playing in one of his father's farm buildings. Then, he decided to make a small fire. "I wanted to see what it would do," he said. The fire spread quickly. Al escaped, but the building was completely burned. The fire spread almost far enough to burn the whole town. What Al had done was too bad and too dangerous for nothing to be done about it.[3] But you cannot do to a six-year-old

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1. failure ['feiljə] n. 失败。   2. His father ... making trouble. 他父亲认为只有抽打阿尔，才能使他不捣乱。   whip [wip] vt. 抽打。   3. What Al had done ... about it. 阿尔所做的一切是太糟糕，太危险了，因为这件事无法再挽救了。

boy what you would do to a man who did bad things.[1]

Samuel Edison said that he would whip his son in the middle of the town to teach him not to do dangerous things. He asked the townspeople[2] to come and watch. Children were often whipped at that time, but never in public. The townspeople came and brought their children, to teach them not to do such things. Sam Edison whipped his young son while they all watched. Alva did not become angry with his father. But, after that, he never seemed to think of pain[3] as an important thing—his own pain, or other people's.

Al was soon in trouble again. One day he went to play with another boy in a little river. After some time, Al discovered that he was alone. He waited for the boy to come back. But when it became late and the boy did not come back, Al went home. He said nothing about what had happened but, in the middle of the night, he was awakened and asked about his friend.[4]

"I waited and waited," Al said. "He never came."

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1. But you cannot do ... to a man who did bad things.
可是对待一个六岁的孩子你不能象对待一个做了坏事的成人那样对待。 2. townspeople ['taunz'pi:pl] n. 城镇居民。
3. pain [pein] n. 疼痛。 4. He said nothing about what had happened but, ... his friend. 关于所发生的一切他什么都没有说，一直到午夜，他醒来才问起他的朋友。