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双语经典

麦加菲读本

McGuffey Readers

[美] 威廉·H. 麦加菲 编
艾梅 译

全球销量超过一亿三千万册，被美国《出版周刊》
评为“人类出版史上第三大畅销书”。



哈尔滨出版社
HARBIN PUBLISHING HOUSE



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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

麦加菲读本 / (美)威廉·H.麦加菲编; 艾梅译. —哈尔滨:
哈尔滨出版社, 2009. 3

(彩色图文经典)

ISBN 978-7-80753-545-4

I. 麦… II. ①威… ②艾… III. 品德教育—青少年读物
IV. D432. 62-49

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2009) 第 008862 号

责任编辑:尹 君 颜 楠

封面设计:晨旭光华

麦加菲读本

[美]威廉·H.麦加菲 编 艾梅 译

哈尔滨出版社出版发行

哈尔滨市香坊区泰山路 82-9 号

邮政编码:150090 营销电话:0451-87900345

E-mail:hrbcbbs@yeah.net

网址:www.hrbcbbs.com

全国新华书店经销

北京佳信达欣艺术印刷有限公司印刷

开本 787×1092 毫米 1/16 印张 14 字数 325 千字

2009 年 3 月第 1 版 2009 年 3 月第 1 次印刷

ISBN 978-7-80753-545-4

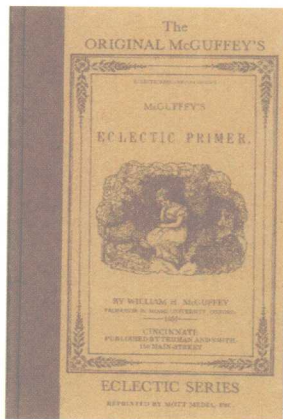
定价:21.80 元

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本社常年法律顾问:黑龙江大公律师事务所徐桂元 徐学滨

经典读本的重新发现和开发

艾柯



多年前,看到一则信息,美国《出版周刊》评选“有史以来全球最畅销图书”,前六名分别为《圣经》《毛主席语录》《麦加菲读本》《英语语法原理》《吉尼斯纪录大全》《致加西亚的信》。这份榜单因我策划的《致加西亚的信》一书的热销而为人们所关注,其他作品也纷纷被重新发掘出版,《麦加菲读本》就是其中之一。

一直想选编一本真正适合中国孩子阅读的《麦加菲读本》,这一想法藏于内心多年,但苦于各种粗制滥造版本充斥于坊间,难以推广。直到今天,浮躁之风渐减,应该是重新推出新版本较好的时机了。

一个 100 年前选编的读本,为什么还有出版和阅读的价值呢?这一问题在《致加西亚的信》畅销时,就有许多记者曾经问及过。我当时的回答是:时代在变迁,但是人类的情感和智慧是永恒不变的。另一方面,我们正面临一个处在转型期的社会,价值观正在发生巨大的转变。中国今天所面对的,与 100 年前的美国有某些共通性。这一观点也可用来解释《麦加菲读本》的出版原因。

根据有关资料,我了解到关于《麦加菲读本》出版的相关背景:19 世纪初的美国,来自欧洲和世界各地的移民涌进美国,社会急剧动荡。作为一位有良知的教育家,麦加菲意识到教育普及的重要性,他历时 20 年,编写了这套以他名字命名的系列教材。

中国也正处于大规模的社会流动性阶段,大量人口从乡村进入城市,儿童的教育问题也引起了社会的广泛关注,如何为孩子提供一个良好的学习和阅读环境,将是一个巨大的挑战。

最近,我参与由著名教育家朱永新先生组织发起的新教育研究和推广活动,大家讨论最多的问题就是儿童阅读。我曾经发出这样的感慨:中国孩子太可怜,一是功课压力太大,无暇阅读;二是图书市场混乱无序,无书可读。前者是社会和教育行政管理者的责任,后者则是我们出版人应该深刻检讨的——我们究竟为孩子们提供了多少可读之书,提供了什么样的读物?

无书可读,或者说“无有价值的书可读”,所以才有我们对西方 100 年前的经典进行重新翻译。在经济领域,我们已经开始超越西方,但是在阅读和教育领域,我们落后也许不仅仅是 100 年。这并非危言耸听,中国教育和儿童阅读问题之严重,让许多有识之士忧心忡忡。

《麦加菲读本》在体例上属于选本,选编了当时的许多名家名篇,它将道德教育和文学修养的培养融为一体,经过了历史的检验,无疑是有其价值的。类似的读本还有美国前教育部长威廉·贝内特选编的《美德书》系列,出版后立即成为风靡全球的超级畅销书。由此可见,阅读的推广价值是多么强大。但是,作为出版人,不能仅仅停留在引进和翻译国外畅销书上,而应该开发更多适合中国孩子阅读的读本。

为此,我们正在努力。希望不久大家就能看到以中国教育家的名字命名的学生读本。





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年少时光



在拉格比学校

托马斯·休斯



托马斯·休斯 (Thomas Hughes, 1822-1896), 英国律师和作家。他最著名的作品是小说《汤姆·布朗学校的时光》和半自传体小说《在拉格比学校》, 休斯在拉格比学校度过了他的学生生涯。

小男生们安静地回到自己的床上去睡觉了, 他们一边脱衣服一边悄悄地说话。汤姆比其他男孩子的年龄稍大一些。他们脱掉了夹克和马甲, 坐在床上聊天。

可怜的小亚瑟被汤姆新奇的见解搞得晕头转向。以前, 他从来没有像现在这样确定自己是与一群想法怪异的男孩子住在一起, 这让他感到苦恼和不习惯。他几乎不想把夹克脱下来。然而, 过了一会儿, 他还是费力地脱了下来。于是他停住了, 盯着坐在他床尾的一直有说有笑的汤姆。

“汤姆,” 他低声说, “我可以洗洗手和脸吗?”

“当然, 只要你喜欢,” 汤姆目不转睛地看着他说, “你的洗手台在窗户下面, 如果你把水都用了, 明天早上你就要去取更多的水。”

汤姆继续说着, 亚瑟已经从床铺悄悄地移到了自己的洗手台, 开始洗手和脸, 并对这个房间观察了一会儿。

男孩子们继续说笑着, 亚瑟已经洗完并脱掉了衣服, 换上了睡衣。他比以前更紧张地环视了一下周围。两三个小男孩已经上床了, 用膝盖支着下巴坐着。灯光很亮, 孩子们仍然说着笑着。

对于一个贫穷、孤独的小男孩来说, 这真是一个难熬的时刻。然而, 在这段时间里, 他没有向汤姆请教他可以做什么或不可以做什么。他只是跪在床边, 这是他孩童时期每天要做的功课, 向能够听到这个软弱小男孩的哭喊, 并能够分担他的痛苦的上帝敞开心扉, 这个坚强的男子汉此时陷入极大的痛苦之中。

汤姆已经解开鞋带, 坐在了床尾, 因此他背对着亚瑟, 也就看不见发生的事情了。在大家突然沉默的时候, 他仰头向上看。然后, 两三个男孩开始讥笑那个跪在地上的小男孩。其中那个站在寝室中央的残忍的大块头, 还捡起一只拖鞋摔向那个小男孩, 还骂他是一个爱哭的家伙。



汤姆目睹了事情的全部过程,就在他看到那个家伙正要伸手去抓那个软弱的小男孩的胳膊时,他迅速抓起一只靴子朝那个欺凌弱小者的脑袋扔了过去。

“汤姆,你这个混蛋!你要干什么!”大块头忍着疼痛吼道。

“别管我是什么意思,”汤姆一边说一边跳到了地板上,他身上的每一滴血似乎都要沸腾起来,“如果有谁想要另一只鞋,他知道怎么做!”

事情的结果变得不确定起来,因为在这个时候,六年级的男孩子推门进来了,寝室里的孩子们不敢吭声。汤姆和其他男孩子都冲到床上,脱掉了衣服。不一会儿,老管理员走进房间熄灭了蜡烛,接着蹒跚地向另一间寝室走去。关门的时候,他一如既往地说了:“晚安,先生们。”

在入睡以前,寝室里的许多男孩子又想起了刚才的那段小插曲。然而,汤姆似乎已经睡意全无。有一段时间,兴奋一股又一股地涌进大脑,回忆一个又一个地浮现在脑海中,让他无法思考。他的大脑思考着,心脏跳动着,他几乎忍不住要从床上跳下来,在寝室里飞奔。

接着他想起了自己的母亲。几年以前,在睡觉之前,他从不忘记跪在床边向上帝祈祷——几乎从未间断过。他轻轻地躺下,心碎般地哭泣起来。那时,他只有14岁。

.....

在那个时候,即使在拉格比学校里,小家伙也没有勇气公开祈祷。几年后,当校长阿诺德那具有男子气概的虔诚对学校产生潜移默化的影响时,情况有了变化。在他的有生之年,至少在校舍里他是这样做的。在学校其他地方,我认为是以另一种方式进行的。

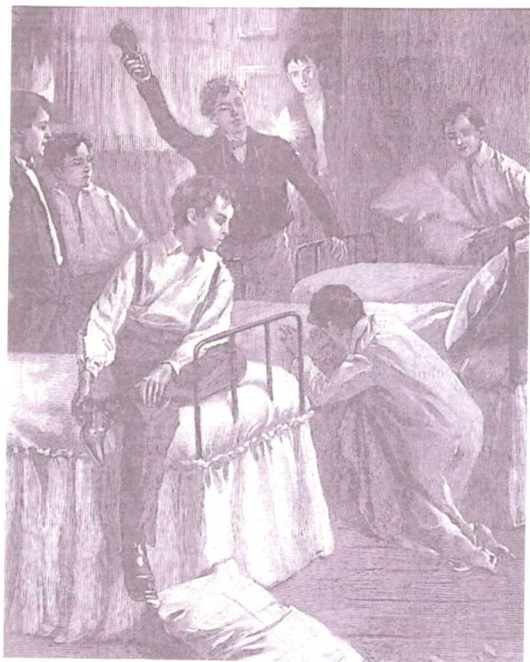
不过,可怜的汤姆错过了那个时期。在刚刚来到学校的几个晚上,因为孩子们的吵闹声,他没有跪下祈祷,只是在床边一直坐到熄灯,然后偷偷地跑出去祈祷,唯恐有人发现。其他许多穷孩子或许也是这样做的。

之后,汤姆认为可以在床上祈祷,因此无论跪着、坐着或躺着他都可以祈祷。汤姆也变成了不在其他人面前进行忏悔的人。在刚刚过去的一年里,他已经有很长时间没有做过一次真诚的祈祷了。

可怜的汤姆!令他心碎的最初和最痛苦的感觉,就是感到自己的懦弱。其他人身上那些他所憎恶的恶习涌进并煎熬着他的灵魂。他曾对他的母亲、对自己的良心、对上帝撒过谎。他怎么能忍受呢?然而,他却对那个可怜弱小男孩的软弱产生了怜悯,甚至是轻蔑,可就是这个男孩做出了他吹嘘却不敢去做的事情。



拉格比学校的孩子们



汤姆拿起一只鞭子，向那个欺凌弱小者的脑袋扔了过去。

孩子更勇敢呢？我现在有权利开始这样做吗？我是不是应该认真地祈祷，同时让其他男孩子知道我这样做，并带领他们跟着我一起做呢，我至少应该继续我已经开始的事情。”

然而，那天晚上，他的善良天使太强大了，他转过身便睡了。他决定将这种强烈的冲动付诸行动，不在乎后果如何，而且在这种冲动中他找到了平静。

第二天早晨，他起床后就洗漱穿衣，在铃敲响之前的十分钟时间里只差夹克和马甲没穿上了。然后，他在全寝室男孩子面前跪下来祈祷。说了还不到五个字，铃声就打断了他的祈祷。他听着屋里每个人的窃窃私语——他们是怎样看待他的呢？他羞于继续跪着，也羞于站起来。

最后，一个似乎从心底发出的平静而微弱的声音，说出了这样的宣言：“上帝对我这个罪人是仁慈的！”他重复了一遍又一遍，然后安慰而谦逊地站了起来，准备面对所有的事情。

事实上，他多虑了：他看到，除了亚瑟，另外还有两个男孩已经效仿他进行祈祷了。他在向学校走去时，明白了一个道理：征服了自己的软弱就能够征服整个世界。然而，我们可以想象我们独自在善良的一边，人类的国王和上帝将会与他的人民同在。

他还发现，他太高估自己的行为所产生的影响了！几个晚上以来，当他跪在那里祈祷时，都会听到一两句冷嘲热讽，但这种情况很快就过去了。除了三四个男孩子以外，其他所有的男孩子都一个接一个地跟随他的引导去做了。

因为那天晚上小亚瑟高尚的举动，所以他暗暗发誓无论在任何情况下都要支持他、鼓舞他、帮助他以及替他分担重担，这使他第一次感到了安慰。他决定明天给家里写信，把所有事情都告诉母亲，告诉她，她的儿子曾经是多么怯懦。当他最后决定在第二天早上履行自己的誓言时，心里感到了平静。

早晨开始比晚上要困难，但是他不能再让机会溜走了。他结结巴巴地说了几次，因为恶魔指引着他，起初他所有的老朋友称他为“伪君子”和“固执”，当然还有十多个更难听的叫法。还有人悄悄地对他说他的动机会被别人误解，他和那个新来的小男孩会一起被人孤立。然而，承担各种后果是他的职责，而且他会尽自己最大的努力。

然后，他想到一个比较适中的方法，“我能不能不通过这种方式表现得比其他



At Rugby School

Thomas Hughes

THE little schoolboys went quietly to their own beds, and began undressing and talking to one another in whispers: while the elder, amongst whom was Tom, sat chatting about on one another's beds, with their jackets and waistcoats off.

Poor little Arthur was overwhelmed with the novelty of his position. The idea of sleeping in the room with strange boys had clearly never crossed his mind before, and was as painful as it was strange to him. He could hardly bear to take his jacket off; however, presently, with an effort, off it came, and then he paused and looked at Tom, who was sitting at the bottom of his bed, talking and laughing.

"Please, Tom," he whispered, "may I wash my face and hands?"

"Of course, if you like," said Tom, staring, "that's your wash-hand stand under the window, second from your bed. You'll have to go down for more water in the morning if you use it all."

And on he went with his talk, while Arthur stole timidly from between the beds out to his wash-hand stand, and began his ablutions, thereby drawing for a moment on himself the attention of the room.

On went the talk and laughter. Arthur finished his washing and undressing, and put on his nightgown. He then looked round more nervously than ever. Two or three of the little boys were already in bed, sitting up with their chins on their knees. The light burned clear, the noise went on.

It was a trying moment for the poor, little, lonely boy; however, this time he did not ask Tom what he might or might not do, but dropped on his knees by his bedside, as he had done every day from his childhood, to open his heart to Him who heareth the cry and beareth the sorrows of the tender child, and the strong man in agony.

Tom was sitting at the bottom of his bed unlacing his boots, so that his back was toward Arthur, and he did not see what had happened, and looked up in wonder at the sudden silence.



Then two or three boys laughed and sneered, and a big, brutal fellow, who was standing in the middle of the room, picked up a slipper and shied it at the kneeling boy, calling him a sniveling young shaver.

Then Tom saw the whole, and the next moment the boot he had just pulled off flew straight at the head of the bully, who had just time to throw up his arm and catch it on his elbow.

"Tom, you rascal! What do you mean by that?" roared he, stamping with pain.

"Never mind what I mean," said Tom, stepping on to the floor, every drop of blood in his body tingling, "if any fellow wants the other boot, he knows how to get it."

What would have been the result is doubtful, for at this moment the sixth-form boy came in, and not another word could be said. Tom and the rest rushed into bed and finished their unrobing there, and the old janitor had put out the candle in another minute, and toddled on to the next room, shutting the door with his usual, "Good night, gentleman."

There were many boys in the room by whom that little scene was taken to heart before they slept. But sleep seemed to have deserted the pillow of poor Tom. For some time his excitement and the flood of memories which chased one another through his brain, kept him from thinking or resolving. His head throbbed, his heart leapt, and he could hardly keep himself from springing out of bed and rushing about the room.

Then the thought of his own mother came across him, and the promise he had made at her knee, years ago, never to forget to kneel by his bedside and give himself up to his Father before he laid his head on the pillow, from which it might never rise; and he lay down gently, and cried as if his heart would break. He was only fourteen years old.

...

It was no light act of courage in those days for a little fellow to say his prayers publicly, even at Rugby. A few years later, when schoolmaster Arnold's manly piety had begun to leaven the school, the tables turned; before he died, in the schoolhouse at least, and I believed in the other houses, the rule was the other way.

But poor Tom had come to school in other times. The first few nights after he came he did not kneel down because of the noise, but sat up in bed till the candle was out, and then stole out and said his prayers, in fear lest some one should find him out. So did many another poor little fellow.

Then he began to think that he might just as well say his prayers in bed, and then that did not matter whether he was kneeling, or sitting, or lying down. And so it had come to pass with Tom, as with all who will not confess their Lord before men; and for the last year he had probably not said his prayers in earnest a dozen times.

Poor Tom! The first and bitterest feeling, which was like to break his heart, was the sense of his own cowardice. The vice of all others which he loathed was brought in and burned



in on his own soul. He had lied to his mother, to his conscience, to his God. How could he bear it? And then the poor, little, weak boy, whom he had pitied and almost scorned for his weakness, had done that which he, braggart as he was, dared not do.

The first dawn of comfort came to him in vowing to himself that he would stand by that boy through thick and thin, and cheer him, and help him, and bear his burdens, for the good deed done that night. Then he resolved to write home next day and tell his mother all, and what a coward her son had been. And then peace came to him as he resolved, lastly, to bear his testimony next morning.

The morning would be harder than the night to begin with, but he felt that he could not afford to let one chance slip. Several times he faltered, for the Devil showed him, first, all his old friends calling him “Saint,” and “Squaretoes,” and a dozen hard names, and whispered to him that his motives would be misunderstood, and he would be left alone with the new boy; whereas, it was his duty to keep all means of influence, that he might do good to the largest number.

And then came the more subtle temptation, “shall I not be showing myself braver than others by doing this? Have I any right to begin it now? Ought I not rather to pray in my own study, letting other boys know that I do so, and trying to lead them to it, while in public, at least, I should go on as I have done?”

However, his good angel was too strong that night, and he turned on his side and slept, tired of trying to reason, but resolved to follow the impulse which had been so strong, and in which he had found peace.

Next morning he was up and washed and dressed, all but his jacket and waistcoat, just as the ten minutes’ bell began to ring, and then in the face of the whole room he knelt down to pray. Not five words could he say,—the bell mocked him; he was listening for every whisper in the room,—what were they all thinking of him? He was ashamed to go on kneeling, ashamed to rise from his knees.

At last, as it were from his inmost heart, a still, small voice seemed to breathe forth the words of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” He repeated them over and over, and rose from his knees comforted and humbled, and ready to face the whole world.

It was not needed: two other boys besides Arthur had already followed his example, and he went down to the great school with a glimmering of another lesson in his heart,—the lesson that he who has conquered his own coward spirit has conquered the whole outward world; and also that however we may fancy ourselves alone on the side of good, the King and Lord of men is nowhere without his witnesses.

He found, too, how greatly he had exaggerated the effect to be produced by his act. For a few nights there was a sneer or a laugh when he knelt down, but this passed off soon, and one by one all the other boys but three or four followed the lead.



少年富兰克林

纳萨尼尔·霍桑



纳萨尼尔·霍桑 (Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1804-1864), 19 世纪美国颇具影响力的浪漫主义小说家和心理小说家, 代表作为长篇小说《红字》。他的小说主要以新英格兰为背景, 小说中的许多人物性格来源于清教徒。

当本杰明·富兰克林还是个孩子的时候, 他就非常喜欢钓鱼。他的闲暇时光都是在磨坊的池塘边度过的。在那里, 他捕捉随着水流游到这里的比目鱼、河鲈以及鳗鲡。

波士顿市郊的一片沼泽地是本杰明与同伴经常钓鱼的地方。水边有一个深深的泥塘, 因此当他们捉鱼的时候, 就不得不站在泥塘里。

一天, 当他们站在泥塘里的时候, 本杰明·富兰克林对他的同伴说: “这样太不舒服了。”

“是啊,” 另一个男孩子说, “没有一个更好的地方站立, 真是太遗憾了!”

在沼泽地不远处的干地上, 有许多买来盖新房子用的大石块。本杰明站在这些石头的最高处。

“朋友们,” 他说道, “我有一个主意。你们知道, 站在泥塘里捉鱼实在是太难受了。看,



淤泥已经没到我的膝盖了,你们的情况也差不多。

“现在我提议建一个码头。你们看到那些石头了吗?工人们打算用这些石头在这里建一座房子。我的计划就是把这些石头搬到水边,建一个码头。朋友们,你们说怎么样啊?我们要不要建一个码头呢?”

“要,要,”男孩子们喊道,“我们马上行动吧!”

孩子们达成了一致,决定晚上来这里,在月光下开始他们伟大的公共事业。

按照约定的时间,孩子们聚到了一起,迫不及待地开始移动石块。他们工作起来就像一群蚂蚁,有时候两个人或三个人搬一块石头。最后,他们把石块都搬完了,建起了自己的码头。

工作完成之后,本杰明喊道:“朋友们,现在,让我们大喊三声,之后就回家睡觉。明天我们就可以悠闲地捉鱼了。”

“好哇!好哇!好哇!”他的同伴们喊道,然后都跑回家睡觉去了,憧憬着明天。

早晨,泥瓦匠来到这里开始工作。但是令他们奇怪的是,所有的石头都不见了!泥瓦匠的领头人仔细地看了看四周,发现了许多小脚印,有穿着鞋的、有光脚的。随着这些脚印一直走到水边,他立刻发现了那些丢失的、用来建房子的石头。

“啊!我知道了,多淘气的孩子们啊,”他说,“昨天,这些小淘气鬼偷走这些石头用来建码头了。而且我不得不说,这些小家伙做得不错。”

他非常生气,立刻跑到地方法官那里报告。法官下令:“将本杰明和其他偷石头的坏家伙带到这里。”

要不是石头的失主比那个泥瓦匠领头人仁慈的话,本杰明和他的伙伴们就有麻烦了。然而,幸运的是,那位绅士非常敬重本杰明的父亲,而且那些孩子在整个事件中的合作精神令他感到高兴。因此,他轻易地放走了这些孩子。

但是这些可怜的孩子还要经历另外一场审判——受到他们父亲的惩罚和教训。在那个悲惨的晚上,许多棍棒都被打断了。然而对于本杰明来说,鞭打没有什么可害怕的,可怕的是父亲的谴责。而且,他的父亲确实非常愤怒。

“本杰明,过来。”富兰克林先生用一贯严厉、沉重的语调说道。孩子走到父亲的椅子前站住。“本杰明,”他的父亲说道,“什么诱使你拿走本不属于你的东西?”

“为什么,父亲,”本杰明抬起先前低垂的头,盯着富兰克林先生的脸问,“那是否只是满足了我的利益呢,我从来没有这样想过。但是我知道,码头可以方便大家。如果石头的主人只是用它们来建造一座房子,那么除了他自己,没有人可以享受到它们的益处。现在,我用这些石头建了一个码头,给许多人带来了益处。”

“我的儿子,”富兰克林先生严肃地说,“你所做的事情给公众带来的损害要比对石头主人的损害更大。我确信,本杰明,无论是公众还是个人,其痛苦都是因为忽略了一个重要的事实——罪恶只能制造罪恶,好的目标只能通过正当的行为达到。”

终其一生,本杰明·富兰克林从未忘记他与父亲的谈话。而且我们有理由认为,在他所有的公共以及个人事业中,他都遵循着他睿智的父亲教导他的原则。