

刘 竞译注

世界名家  
幽默作品精选

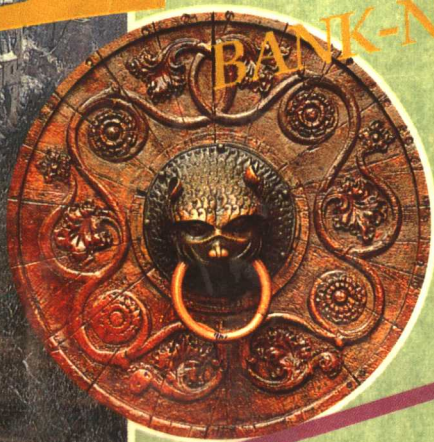
英汉对照  
ENTERTAINMENT



休闲英语

ENGLISH

THE £1,000,000  
BANK-NOTE



# 百万英镑

Mark Twain

[美]马克·吐温 著



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## 前 言

马克·吐温是著名的幽默大师，是美国最优秀的作家之一，本名塞缪尔·兰霍恩·克莱门斯 (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)，于 1835 年 11 月 30 日出生在美国密苏里州佛罗里达，没受过多少正规教育。1839 年他 4 岁时，他家迁居到位于密西西比河西岸的港口城市汉尼巴尔；他父亲在当地开了一家食品杂货店，并从事律师职业。1847 年他父亲去世，于是年仅 12 岁的还在上学的塞缪尔就不得不分担起维持家庭生活的责任，在课余时间和假期里干送货员、店员和铁匠伙计等杂活。13 岁被迫辍学，进一家印刷工场当学徒，后来先后在纽约、费城、圣路易斯、辛辛那提等地的报馆当排字工人和印刷工人，以后又在往来于密西西比河的轮船上干过几年舵手，后来又在内华达州和加州当过报馆记者，随后又成了受人欢迎的幽默演说家。

在塞缪尔度过他大部分童年时期的小城市汉尼巴尔，讲述夸张故事是当地人的主要的消遣之一；在这种环境的熏陶下，他很小就以善于讲故事而闻名，而他后来的幽默作品有许多正是以夸张的故事为基

础的。1852年他17岁时在波士顿的《旅行包》杂志上发表了一篇幽默小品习作。在其后的十年里(1853—1862)他经常为美国西部和中西部的一些报纸写幽默小品;这一时期所使用的笔名有“斯诺德格拉斯”、“布拉布”、“法瑟姆军曹”、“乔希”、“漫游者”等。1863年2月3日,他在给弗吉尼亚市的《地方企业报》投稿时首次使用了“马克·吐温”(Mark Twain)这一笔名。那是行船人测量河水深度时使用的术语,意思是“水深两英寻”(等于12英尺,刚够船只安全通过的深度)。

马克·吐温的作品数量很大,有长篇小说、中篇小说、短篇小说、轶事与小品、游记、诗歌、剧本和自传等,其中以长篇小说《汤姆·索亚历险记》及其续篇《哈克贝利·费恩历险记》最为著名;但短篇小说与小品一直是他比较喜爱的一种文学形式,这种形式的作品他写了一辈子。可以说,他的文学生涯以短篇开始,以短篇结束。

马克·吐温的幽默作品从艺术风格上来说可以分为三类:

第一类属于温和的幽默,目的仅在于博读者一笑,并没有什么深刻的含义(主要是作者早期的一些作品;本书所收的《我怎样规规矩矩地挣了三块钱》

虽不是早期的作品,但也属于这一类)。

第二类是对社会上一些不良现象进行善意的嘲讽(例如收入本书的《百万英镑》和《卡庇托林维纳斯传奇》嘲笑了社会上的拜金主义;《两个小故事》嘲笑了“熟人好办事”的关系网;《大宗牛肉合同纠纷的真相》嘲笑了政府的机构臃肿和官僚主义)。

第三类是抱着愤世嫉俗的态度对一些丑恶的东西进行无情的揭露和辛辣的讥刺(主要是作者晚年的一些作品,如本书中的《战争祈祷》就是属于这一类)。

许多作品的构思十分巧妙(例如《百万英镑》和《中世纪的离奇故事》)显示了作者讲故事的高超本领。

马克·吐温由于他在文学创作方面所取得的巨大成就,于 1888 年至 1907 年先后获得美国耶鲁大学(两次)和密苏里大学以及英国牛津大学授予的名誉学位。

马克·吐温于 1910 年 4 月 21 日在他在美国康涅狄格州雷丁的家中逝世。

译注者

1995 年 10 月

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## HOW I HONESTLY EARNED THREE DOLLARS

In some ways I was always honest; even from my earliest years I could never bring myself to use money which I had acquired in questionable ways; many a time I tried, but principle was always stronger than desire. Six or eight months ago, Lieut. -Gen<sup>l</sup>. Nelson A. Miles<sup>2</sup> was given a great dinner party in New York, and when he and I were chatting together in the drawing-room before going out to dinner he said, "I've known you as much as thirty years, isn't it?"

I said, "Yes, that's about it, I think."

He mused a moment or two and then said, "I wonder we didn't meet in Washington in 1867; you were there at that time, weren't you?"

I said, "Yes, but there was a difference; I was not known then; I had not begun to bud—I was an obscurity; but you had been adding to your fine Civil War record; you had just come back from your brilliant Indian campaign in the Far West, and had been rewarded with a brigadier-generalship in the regular army, and everybody was talking about you and praising you. If you had met me, you wouldn't be able to remember it now—unless some unusual circumstance of the meeting had burnt it into your memory. It is forty years ago, and people don't remember nobodies over a stretch of time like that."



## 我怎样规规矩矩地挣了三块钱

在某些方面来说，我这个人始终是规规矩矩的：即使是从我初入社会的那几年算起，我也从来没能勉强自己去使用我通过一些不明不白的手段得来的钱；我曾经尝试过许多回，可是原则始终是比较比欲望更有力量。六个月或八个月以前，人们在纽约为纳尔逊·A·迈尔斯中将举行了一次盛大的宴会，而当他和我两个人在去餐厅赴宴以前在客厅里一起聊天的时候，他说，“我认识你已经有30年之久了，是不是？”

“对，我想差不多是有了。”

他沉思了一小会儿，然后说，“奇怪，1867年我们在华盛顿怎么没有见过面，你那时候也在那儿，是不是？”

我说，“是的，可是这里面有个区别；我当时并不出名；我还没有露头角——我是个默默无闻的人，而你除了在内战时期战功赫赫以外又在增加新的业绩；那时你刚结束你在西部边远地区的那场战果辉煌的印第安战役后归来，获得在正规军中担任准将职位的酬劳，人人都在谈论你，赞扬你。即使你曾经和我见过面，你现在也不会想得起来——除非那次见面有什么不寻常的情况使它在你的记忆里打上了烙印。这已经是40年前的事了，人们是不会经过这么长一段时间仍能记得起一些无名小卒的。”

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1. =Lieutenant General 陆军中将 2. 纳尔逊·阿普尔顿·迈尔斯(1839—1925) 美国陆军将领，在南北战争中立有战功，其后曾在美国西部边远地区同印第安人作战；1895年起担任美国陆军司令；1903年退休前晋升为陆军中将。

I didn't wish to continue the conversation along that line, so I changed the subject. I could have proven to him without any trouble that we did meet in Washington in 1867, but I thought it might embarrass one or the other of us, so I didn't do it. I remember the incident very well. This was the way of it:

I had just come back from the Quaker City<sup>3</sup> Excursion, and had made a contract with Elisha Bliss of Hartford to write a book about it<sup>4</sup>. I was out of money, and I went down to Washington to see if I could earn enough there to keep me in bread and butter<sup>5</sup> while I should write the book. I came across William Swinton and together we invented a scheme for our mutual sustenance; we became the fathers and originators of what is a common feature in the newspaper world now, the syndicate. We became the old original first Newspaper Syndicate<sup>6</sup> on the planet; it was on a small scale but that is usual with untried new enterprises. We had twelve journals on our list; they were all weeklies, all obscure and poor and all scattered far away among the back settlement. It was a proud thing for those little newspapers to have a Washington correspondent, and a fortunate thing for us that they felt in that way about it. Each of the twelve took two letters a week from us, at a dollar per

我不想让我俩的交谈顺着那条路继续下去，就改变了话题。我本可以毫无困难地向他证明我们1867年在华盛顿确实见过面，可是我想这也许会使我们两个人中的一个或另一个感到难堪，所以就没有这么干。那件事我记忆得非常清楚。事情是这样的：

那时我在参加乘“贵格城”号游轮旅游后刚刚回来，并且已经和哈特福德的伊莱沙·布利斯订了合同要写一本关于这次旅游的书。我钱用完了，于是我就到华盛顿去看看是否能在哪儿挣到足够的钱，以便在写那本书的期间不至于饿肚子。我遇上了威廉·斯温顿，我们俩共同制订了一项维持彼此生计的计划；我们缔造和创始了一个现在在报界已经司空见惯的东西——辛迪加。我们成了过去首创的世界上第一家报业辛迪加；它规模很小，可是一些未经考验的新企业通常都是那样的。在我们的会员名单上我们有12家期刊；它们全是周刊，全都名不见经传并且很穷，而且全都远远地散布在穷乡僻壤里。对于这些报纸来说，能拥有一名华盛顿通讯员是一件值得骄傲的事，而它们对这事抱有这样的看法对我们来说则是幸事。这12家报纸每家每周采用我们两篇

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3. “贵格城”号，是当时一艘旅游船的名字。 4. 即 The Innocents Abroad（《傻子在国外》）一书。书中详尽地记述了作者和一群游客于1867年6月间乘“贵格城”号游轮去欧洲和圣地耶路撒冷旅游的经过。 5. 让我有饭吃，不致挨饿。 6. 报业辛迪加：向各家报纸杂志出售一些内容相同的稿件供同时发表的企业。

letter; each of us wrote one letter per week, and sent off six duplicates of it to these benefactors, thus acquiring twenty-four dollars a week<sup>7</sup> to live on, which was all we needed in our cheap and humble quarters.

Swinton was one of the dearest and loveliest human beings I have ever known, and we led a charmed existence together, in a contentment which knew no bounds. He was a Scotchman, and a Presbyterian<sup>8</sup>; a Presbyterian of the old and genuine school, being honest and sincere in his religion and loving it and finding serenity and peace in it. He hadn't a vice, unless a large and grateful sympathy with Scotch whisky may be called by that name. I didn't regard it as a vice, because he was a Scotchman, and Scotch whisky to a Scotchman is as innocent as milk is to the rest of the human race. In Swinton's case it was a virtue and not an economical one. Twenty-four dollars a week would really have been riches to us if we hadn't had to support that jug<sup>9</sup>; because of the jug we were always sailing pretty close to the wind<sup>10</sup>, and any tardiness in the arrival of any part of our income was sure to cause some inconvenience.

I remember a time when a shortage occurred; we had to have three dollars, and we had to have it before the close of the day. I don't know now how

通讯,每篇的稿酬是一块钱,我们俩每人每周写一篇通讯,并且向这些赞助人寄出 6 份这些通讯的复写件,这样我们俩每周可以得到 24 块钱来维持生活,我们当时住在廉价的简陋住房里,这 24 块钱足以应付我们的全部需要了。

斯温顿是我所知道的最亲切和最可爱的人之一,我们一起生活得很愉快,感到无限满足。他是苏格兰人,又是基督教长老会的教友,一个老派的正宗的长老会教友,在信仰方面朴实虔诚,热爱他的信仰并且从中得到平静和安宁。他没有任何恶习,除非对苏格兰威士忌酒的心满意足的巨大喜好也可以叫做一种恶习。我并不认为那是一种恶习,因为他是个苏格兰人,而苏格兰威士忌酒对一个苏格兰人就和牛奶对其余的人一样无害。就斯温顿的情况来说这是一种美德,并且不是省钱的事。假如我们不是非得负担那威士忌酒的开支的话,每周 24 块钱对我们真可以算得上是一笔财富了;由于有威士忌酒的支出,我们的日子总是过得紧巴巴的,而我们的收入中只要有任何一部分来得稍微迟一点,就一定会引起一些不方便。

我记得有一回发生了缺钱用的情况;我们亟需弄到三块钱,而且必须在当天天黑以前弄到。我们当时怎么会碰巧一下子需要那么多钱,我现在已经记

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7. 这句话从文字上来分析,“it”代表“one letter per week”,而“thus acquiring twenty-four dollars a week”的行为主体是“each of us”;似乎是说,他们俩每人每周把他自己写的一篇通讯复写 6 份寄出、并由此各得稿酬 24 块钱。但那样一来每篇通讯的稿酬成了 4 块钱,而两人的每周所得一共有 48 块,同上下文格格不入;这显然不是作者的本意而是由文字不够严谨所造成的词不达意的现象。译文中对此作了补救。 8. 基督教长老会教友。 9. 原义是酒壶,这里是俚语,指威士忌酒。 10. 日子过得相当节俭。

we happened to want all that money at one time; I only know we had to have it. Swinton told me to go out and find it, and he said he would also go out and see what he could do. He didn't seem to have any doubt that we would succeed, but I knew that that was his religion working in him; I hadn't the same confidence; I hadn't any idea where to turn to raise all that bullion<sup>11</sup> and I said so. I think he was ashamed of me, privately, because of my weak faith. He told me to give myself no uneasiness, no concern; and said in a simple, confident and unquestioning way, "The Lord will provide." I saw that he fully believed the Lord would provide, but it seemed to me that if he had had my experience— But never mind that; before he was done with me his strong faith had had its influence, and I went forth from the place almost convinced that the Lord really would provide.

I wandered around the streets for an hour, trying to think up some way to get that money, but nothing suggested itself<sup>12</sup>. At last I lounged into the big lobby of the *Ebbitt House*, which was then a new hotel, and sat down. Presently a dog came loafing along. He paused, glanced up at me and said with his eyes, "Are you friendly?" I answered with my eyes that I was. He gave his tail a grateful wag and came forward and rested his jaw on my knee and lifted his brown eyes to my face in a winningly affectionate way. He was a lovely creature, as beautiful as a girl, and he was made

不起来了；我只记得我们当时非得有这笔钱不可。斯温顿教我出去设法弄到它，他说他自己也要出去想想办法。他似乎对于我们会成功毫不怀疑，可是我知道那是他的信仰在他身上起着作用；我可没有他那种信心；我对于上哪儿才能弄到那笔钱毫无概念，于是我就那么说了。我想他一定因为我信心不足而在私下里为我感到羞耻。他教我别着急，也别发愁；他用一种简单、自信、毫不怀疑的口气说：“上帝会恩赐的。”我看出来他完全相信上帝会恩赐的，可是据我看来假如他曾经有过我那样的经历——不过别管那个啦；在他和我谈完话以前，他的强烈的信念发生了影响，于是我在从那儿出发的时候几乎深信不疑地认为上帝真的会恩赐的。

我在街上徘徊了一个小时，试图想出个办法来弄到那笔钱，可是没想出来。最后我逛进了当时新开的一家埃比特旅馆的大厅，坐了下来。过了一会儿，有一条狗游游荡荡地过来。它停下来，抬头望望我，它的目光似乎在说，“你是友好的吗？”我用目光回答说我是的。它感激地摇摇尾巴，走上前来把下巴靠在我膝头上，抬起它那对棕色的眼睛带着一种惹人喜爱的温柔表情看着我的脸。它是个可爱的动物，像个姑娘那样美丽，浑身的毛像丝绸和天鹅绒那样光滑

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11. 本义为金块，这里借用来指大笔的钱。 12. 在脑海中浮现出来

all of silk and velvet. I stroked his smooth brown head and fondled his dropping ears, and we were a pair of lovers right away. Pretty soon Brig.-Gen<sup>13</sup>. Miles, the hero of the land, came strolling by in his blue and gold splendors with everybody's admiring gaze upon him. He saw the dog and stopped, and there was a light in his eye which showed that he had a warm place in his heart for dogs like this gracious creature; then he came forward and patted the dog and said,

"He is very fine—he is a wonder; would you sell him?"

I was greatly moved; it seemed a marvelous thing to me, the way Swinton's prediction had come true.

I said, "Yes."

The General said, "What do you ask for him?"

"Three dollars."

The General was manifestly surprised. He said: "Three dollars? Only three dollars? Why, that dog is a most uncommon dog; he can't possibly be worth less than fifty. If he were mine, I wouldn't take a hundred for him. I'm afraid you are not aware of his value. Reconsider your price if you like, I don't wish to wrong you."



柔软。我轻轻地抚摩它那光滑的棕色脑袋，抚摸它的两只下垂的耳朵，于是我们俩立刻就成了一对恋人。不一会儿，全国闻名的英雄迈尔斯准将穿着他那套熠熠生辉的蓝、金两色的服装在众人羡慕目光的注视下漫步走过。他看到了那条狗就停下脚步，眼睛里发出光芒，流露出他内心里对像这样高雅的狗十分喜爱；然后他走上前来拍拍那条狗，说道：

“它非常优雅——它真希罕；你愿意卖掉它吗？”

我大受感动；这在我看来真是件不可思议的事情：斯温顿的预言竟然应验了。

我说，“愿意。”

那将军说，“这条狗你要多少钱？”

“三块钱。”

那将军显然十分诧异。他说：“三块钱？只要三块钱？喂，那条狗是一条极不平常的狗呀，它的价值不可能低于 50 块。假如它是我的，我连 100 块都不肯卖。恐怕你并不知道它的价值。如果你愿意，你不妨重新考虑一下你的要价，我不想让你吃亏。”