

中英双语
全新完美呈现

荡涤心灵的精神SPA 第一品牌美文

每天读点

Enjoy a Bit of English Everyday

英文散文

刘正 \ 编译



大连理工大学出版社
Dalian University of Technology Press

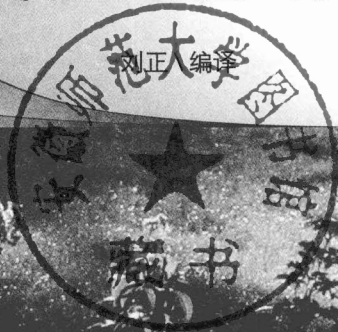
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写在前面的话

Previous Remark



法国作家司汤达说：“就像汽船需要煤炭一样，我们的头脑每天至少需要9~10立方厘米的新思想。”对呀，思想之舟如要不断前行，每天都得补充新的精神给养。新时代追求创新的中国人更需要索那些先进文化中的底蕴。每天阅读点名家散文不失为一个务实而又利于精神健康的方法。

英语散文，浩如烟海；名家群星璀璨，佳作异彩纷呈；或饱含哲思、深沉隽永；或清新质朴、恍若天籁；或激情如炽、诗意纵横；或嬉笑怒骂、酣畅淋漓……20世纪已降，中国广泛吸纳异域文化，许多英语散文名家日渐为国人熟识和喜爱，英语散文的写作深刻影响了中国现代散文乃至现代文学的生成与发展。难怪郁达夫在编选《中国新文学大系·散文二集》时会写到：英国散文的影响，在我们的智识阶级中间，是再过十年二十年也绝不会消灭的一种根深蒂固的潜势力。

《每天读点英文散文》这本书分六卷，精选了英语名家的散文作品，力争典型性和个性并重，多维度、多质地地展现头脑风暴中的奇思妙想。汉语译文追求准确自然，作者简介和注释都富含知识性，便于学习。朋友，读美的散文是种享受，千万别吝啬你对生活的爱。

本书的编译很是艰辛，感谢各位制作人员真诚的帮助和建议。恳请读者朋友多提意见。

刘正

2011.10

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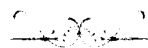
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第一卷



山水故园情

Love for Native Land and Natural Scenery



英伦之美

The Beauty of Britain



【英国】约翰·博恩顿·普里斯特利

作者简介 

约翰·博恩顿·普里斯特利(1894-1984),英国剧作家,小说家,批评家。他的作品具有温文尔雅的讽刺性特征,表达自由政治观点。《危险的角落》(1932年)奠定了他在戏剧界的地位。小说有:《天使人行道》(1930年)、《河对面的农神》(1961年)、《逝去的帝国》(1965年)等。散文《英伦之美》以细腻的笔触感性地描写了英伦风景之包罗万象,尽显作者为祖国而自豪的情怀。

The beauty of our country—or at least all of its south of the Highlands—is as hard to define as it is easy to enjoy. Remembering other and larger countries, we see at once that one of its charms is that it is immensely varied within a small compass. We have here no vast mountain ranges, no illimitable plains, no leagues of forests, and are deprived of the grandeur that may accompany these things. But we have superb variety. A great deal of everything is packed into little space. I suspect that we are always faintly conscious of the fact that this is a smallish island, with the sea always round the corner. We know that everything has to be neatly packed into a small space. Nature, we feel, has carefully adjusted things—mountains, plains, rivers, lakes—to the scale of the island itself. A mountain 12,000 feet high would be a horrible monster here, as wrong as a plain 400 miles long, a river as broad as the Mississippi. In America the whole scale is too big, except for aviators. There is always too much of everything. There you find yourself in a region that is all mountains, then in another region that is merely part of one colossal plain. You can spend a long, hard day in the Rockies simply traveling up or down one valley. You can wander across prairie country that has the desolating immensity of the ocean. Everything is too big; there is too much of it.

Though the geographical features of this island are comparatively small, and there is astonishing variety almost everywhere, that does not mean that our mountains are not mountains, our plains not plains. Consider that piece of luck of ours, the Lake District. You can climb with ease—as I have done many a time—several of its mountains in one day. Nevertheless, you feel that they are mountains and not mere hills—as a correspondent pointed out in *The Times* recently. This same correspondent told a story that proves my point. A party of climbers imported a Swiss guide into the Lake District, and on the first morning, surveying the misty, jagged peaks before him, he pointed to a ledge about two thirds of the way up one of them and suggested that the party should spend the night there. He did not know that that ledge was only an hour or two's journey away and that before the light



went they would probably have conquered two or three of these peaks. He had not realized the scale of the country. He did not know that he was looking at mountains in miniature. What he did know was that he was certainly looking at mountains, and he was right, for these peaks, some of them less than 3,000 feet high, have all the air of great mountains, like those in the Snowdon country, with their grim slaty faces.

My own favorite country, perhaps because I knew it as a boy, is that of the Yorkshire Dales. For variety of landscape, these Dales cannot be matched on this island or anywhere else. A day's walk among them will give you almost everything fit to be seen on this earth. Within a few hours, you have enjoyed the green valleys, with their rivers, find old bridges, pleasant villages, hanging woods, smooth fields; and then the moorland slopes, with their rushing streams, stone walls, salty winds and crying curlews^[1], white farmhouses; and then the lonely heights, which seem to be miles above the ordinary world, with their dark tarns, heather and ling and harebells, and moorland tracks as remote, it seems, as traits in Mongolia. Yet less than an hour in a fast motor will bring you to the middle of some manufacturing town, which can be left and forgotten just as easily as it can be reached from these heights.

With variety goes surprise. Ours is the country of happy surprises. You have never to travel long without being pleasantly astonished. It would not be difficult to compile a list of such surprise that would fill the next fifty pages, but will content myself with suggesting the first few that occur to me. If you go down into the West Country, among rounded hills and soft pastures, you suddenly arrive at the bleak tablelands of Dartmoor and Exmoor, genuine high moors, as if the North had left a piece of itself down there. But before you have reached them you have already been surprised by the queer bit of Fen country you have found in the neighborhood of Glastonbury, as if a former inhabitant had been sent to Cambridge and had brought his favorite fenland walk back from college with him into the West. The long, green walls of the North and South Downs are equally happy

surprises. The Weald is another of them. East Anglia has a kind of rough heath country of its own that I for one never expect to find there and am always delighted to see. No doubt it is only natural that East Lincolnshire and that Southeastern spur of Yorkshire should show us an England that looks more than half Dutch, but the transition always comes as a surprise to me. Then, after the easy rolling Midlands, the dramatic Peak District, with its genuine steep fells, never fails to astonish me, for I feel that it has no business to be there. A car will take you all round the Peak District in a morning. It is nothing but a crumpled green pocket handkerchief. Nevertheless, we hear of search parties going out there to find lost travelers. Again, there has always been something surprising to me about those conical hills that suddenly pop up in Shropshire and along the Welsh border. I have never explored this region properly, and so it remains to me a country of mystery, with a delightful fairy tale quality about its sugar-loaf hills. I could go on with this list of surprises, but perhaps you had better make your own.

Another characteristic of our landscape is its exquisite moderation. It looks like the result of one of those happy compromises that make our social and political plans so irrational and yet so successful. It has been born of a compromise between wildness and tameness, between Nature and Man. In many countries you pass straight from regions where men have left their mark on every inch of ground to other regions that are desolate wildernesses. Abroad, we have all noticed how abruptly most of the cities seem to begin: here, no city; there, the city. With us the cities pretend they are not really there until we are well inside them. They almost insinuate themselves into the countryside. This comes from another compromise of ours, the suburb. There is a great deal to be said for the suburb. To people of moderate means, compelled to live fairly near their work in a city, the suburb offers the most civilized way of life. Nearly all Englishmen are at heart country gentlemen. The suburban villa enables the salesman or the clerk, out of hours, to be almost a country gentleman. (Let us admit that it offers his wife and children more solid advantages.) A man in a newish suburb feels



that he has one foot in the city and one in the country. There are, however, things to be said against the suburb. To begin with, now that everybody has a passion—and, in my opinion, a ridiculous passion—for living in detached or semidetached villas, the new suburbs eat into the countryside in the greediest fashion and immensely enlarge the bounds of their cities. Nor is there anything very pleasing in the sight of these villas and bungalows, thickly sown for miles, higgledy-piggledy⁽²⁾ and messy. Then again, there are disadvantages about being neither completely urban nor completely rural: it might be better if people who work in the cities were more mentally urban, more ready to identify themselves with the life of the city proper. Thus there is something more than cheap snobbery behind that accusing cry of “Suburban!” which we hear so often. It may mean that the accused, with his compromises, has contrived to lose the urban virtues without acquiring the rural ones, and is mentally making the worst of both worlds.

We must return, however, to the landscape, which I suggest is the result of a compromise between wildness and cultivation, Nature and Man. One reason for this is that it contains that exquisite balance between Nature and Man. We see a cornfield and a cottage, both solid evidences of Man’s presence. But notice how these things, in the middle of the scene, are surrounded by witnesses to that ancient England that was nearly all forest and heath. The fence and the gate are man-made, but are not severely regular and trim as they would be in some other countries. The trees and hedges, the grass and wild flowers in the foreground, all suggest that Nature has not been dragooned⁽³⁾ into obedience. Even the cottage, which has an irregularity and coloring that make it fit snugly into the landscape (as all good cottages should do), looks nearly as much a piece of natural history as the trees: you feel it might have grown there. In some countries, that cottage would have been an uncompromising cube of brick which would have declared, “No nonsense one. Man, the drainer, the tiller, the builder, has settled here.” In this English scene there is no such direct opposition. Men and trees and flowers, we feel, have all settled down comfortably together.

The motto is, "Live and let live." This exquisite harmony between Nature and Man explains in part the enchantment of the older Britain, in which whole towns fitted snugly into the landscape, as if they were no more than bits of woodland; and roads went winding the easiest way as naturally as rivers; and it was impossible to say where cultivation ended and wild life began. It was a country rich in trees, birds, and wild flowers, as we can see to this day.



英国之美，至少在高地以南的所有地方的美，难以形容却又易于领略。想想别的更大的国家，我们立刻就能明白我国的一个诱人之处就在于其景致方圆维度虽小，却变幻多端、多姿多彩。我们这儿没有巍峨崔巍的高山，没有一望无际的草原，也没有重翠叠嶂的森林，更加没有高山、草原、森林所带来的那种宏伟壮观。但是，我们的景致却多姿多彩，地方虽小，却包罗万象。我想我们总是很少意识到这是一个四面环海的岛国，万物都被非常精巧地安排在这小小的土地上；自然巧夺天工般地对山脉、草原、河流、湖泊进行了规划，使它们和这个岛国相得益彰。在这里，一座12000英尺高的山峰就会出奇地不相称，一个400英里长的草原也是相当地不适合，更不要说一条像密西西比河那样宽阔的河流了。在美国，除了飞行员以外，人人都会认为整个地方太大，事物也太多。在那里，你来到一个地方，你会发现放眼望去全是山峰；如果你到了另一个地方，你会发现你所在之处只是一个巨大草原的一隅而已。你可以花上一整天，艰苦地在落基山上爬上又爬下；你也可以在如一望无际的、荒凉孤落的大海般的草原上徘徊良久。一切景致都太大也太多。

尽管从地理特征上说，这座岛国相对较小，但所到之处皆多姿多彩、令人惊叹，可这不意味着我们的山不是山，我们的草原不是草原。想想我国那方聚祥纳福的“湖区”宝地吧。你可以悠然自得地在一天中翻越几座小山，我就曾多次地这样做过。不过，你会觉得它们无一例外都是山，而不是沙丘——一个《泰晤士报》的记者最近就这样评价过。这个记者讲述了一件轶事，和我的看法不谋而合。一



群登山爱好者请了一个瑞士的导游来到湖区。第一天早上,在查看了眼前云深雾绕、嶙峋兀列的山峰之后,这位瑞士导游指着离山顶三分之一距离的一块山石说就在那里过夜。他茫然不知到那块山石只有一两个小时的路程,并且,在天黑之前,他们可能已经翻越了两三座这样的山峰。他完全没有意识到这个国家的大小,也不知道他所看到的只是微型的山。他只知道他看到的是山,事实也确实如此,因为这些山虽然都不足3000英尺高,却摆足了大山的气派,这就和斯诺顿地区那些崖岸陡峻的山一样。

我最喜欢的地方是约克郡峡谷,这或许是由于我从小就生活在那里的缘故吧。由于拥有多姿多彩的景致,我们英伦岛内或者世界上其他任何地方都不能与此山谷相比。你花一天时间畅游山谷,它们将会让你看到世界上值得去看的一切景致。在几个小时之内,你就可以有幸领略到苍翠欲滴的谷地里,涓涓小河流淌其中;你同样可以发现精致的古桥、舒适的村落、茂密的森林、平坦的田野;随后就有带着沼地的小山坡,坡儿上有湍泻的小溪、青石古墙、微咸的海风、啼鸣的麻鹑、白色的农舍;再往前就是荒寂的高地,它们比平地高出几英里,上面布满黑色的深潭,遍地都是美丽的石南和蓝铃;最后还有那沼地小径,它们和蒙古一样幽远。可若骑上高速摩托车,不到一个小时,你就能来到某个制造业的小镇,但此等小镇又非常容易被遗忘,因为从高地来到小镇是如此地容易。

与景致的变幻多姿交相辉映的就是风景使人惊喜无限。我们的国家充满着令人无比惬意的惊喜。你从来不用走多远,惊喜就已经接踵而至映入你的眼帘。如果要罗列一下这些惊喜,写满接下来的50页纸,丝毫不费力。现在,我只想把我自己最先知悉的几个惊喜信手拈来、以飧自身。如果你来到西部,游历完锦绣峰峦和茵茵绿野之后,你突然发现自己身处凛冽肃杀、凄切孤寂的达特木尔和埃克木尔台地,它们是真正的沼泽地,好似寒冷的北方在此留下的一块土地。但是在你来到这些台地之前,你就会为在格拉斯顿伯里附近找到的一块奇怪的沼泽而感到大吃一惊,这恰似一个人去了剑桥,临走之时依恋万分,把他最喜欢的散步场所从剑桥带回了西部。而南北丘陵那些绵延、苍翠的壁崖同样也能让人大吃一惊。威尔德就是它们中的一个。东安格利亚崎岖满地、石南遍野,这样一种别具一格的特点别处无从找到,所以,一旦看到,我就无比赏心悦目。毫无疑问,林肯郡东部和约克郡东南部向我们自然地展示了一个和荷兰非常相似的英国景致,然而它们之间的变化和过渡就已经让我无比惊喜了。紧接着微微起伏的米德兰,就是引人入胜的皮克地区,那里悬崖陡峻,非常让我吃惊,因为我认为皮克地区出现

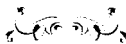
在那里本来就不可思议。驾着车，一早上的时间就可以游历完整个皮克地区，因为它小得像一块褶皱的绿色手帕。然而，我们还听说有搜救队去找寻迷路的游客，真是令人吃惊。同时，那些兀然挺拔于什罗普郡和威尔士边陲的锥形小山就足以让我觉得吃惊。我从来没有好好地游历过这个地区，它以其童话般美丽的圆锥形小山让我觉得神秘莫测。这里的惊喜太多，我可以继续写下去，但您最好亲自来领略。

英国景致的另外一个特征就是大小适度、精致绝伦。这些景致似乎是完美和谐的产物，这样的和谐使得我们的社会和政治规划如此缺乏理性、却又如此成功。这是一种野生与文明的和谐，也是人化与自然的和谐。在很多国家，你可以从一个每寸土地都留下人类烙印的地方一下子来到一个荒无人烟的地方。在别的国家，我们已经发现大多数城市出现得非常突兀：一处，没有城市；下一处，冷不丁地就冒出一座城市。而我们国家的情况是：很多的城市你若没有身处其中，根本就不会发现它们是城市，因为城市与农村已经水乳交融。二者的合二为一源于我们的另外一个妥协和过渡，那就是城市与农村之间的郊区。关于郊区，值得一提的东西太多了。那些中等收入的人们被迫住在城市和他们工作地点相去不远的地方，郊区为他们提供了最文明的生活方式。几乎所有的英国人从根本上说都是乡村绅士。郊区的别墅使得推销员或者公司职员在工作之余得以享受乡村绅士一般的生活情趣（我们还得承认，乡村绅士的生活方式给他们的妻子和孩子带来了更加实惠的好处）。一个新兴郊区的人觉得自己身处城市与农村之间。然而，郊区也有一些不足。首先，既然人们都热衷于住在独立或半独立的别墅里——按照我的观点，这种热衷是荒谬的，所以，新兴的郊区正在用一种最为贪婪的方式吞噬着乡村的土地，并且无限地扩充着城市的边界。同时，如果满目皆是这些杂乱无章、密集排列着的、并且绵延数里的别墅和平房，那就没有什么可以让人赏心悦目了。再者，纯粹的农村或纯粹的城市也有其不足，如果在城市工作的人更加心系城市、更加心甘情愿地过纯粹的城市生活，情况可能会有所好转。但是我们经常听到的一句鄙夷性的话就是“郊区人”，这句话的背后只有那种低俗不堪的势利。这句话可能意味着那些被鄙视的对象通过自身的妥协，不但失去了城市人的美德，又没有养成农村人的优点，结果弄得自己不伦不类。

我们现在再回来谈我们的景致，我认为这样的景致是野性与文明、自然与人化和谐统一的产物。原因之一在于它蕴含了自然与人化之间那种巧妙的平衡。我们可以看到一片玉米地和一间农舍，这些都是人类足迹的铁证。但是请注意，



在整个景致中，这二者周围都是古英格兰风貌的那种森林满地、石南遍野的气派。农舍的栅栏和大门都是人造的，但却没有其他国家那样规则和整齐。农舍前那些林木、树篱、绿草、野花全都证明了自然没有屈从于人类。而那间农舍，即便是它那不规整的形状和颜色都让它和谐地融入到景致中（所有好的农舍都应该这样），它看起来如颗颗树木一样，好像是真正的自然之物，让你觉得它好像原本就生长在那里。在一些国家，这样一间农舍准会像一块与周围极不和谐的方砖，仿佛在叫嚣：“人，排水工，农夫，建筑工，都已经在此定居了下来，没有给我留下任何余地了！”在我们英国的景致中，这样直接的对立与不和谐绝不存在。我们觉得，人和树木、花草应舒服自在地融在一起。我们的箴言是：“生活与共生。”自然与人化的完美和谐从某种程度上展示了古英国的诱人魅力。在英国，一座座小镇和周围的景致巧妙地交融起来，似乎它们只是森林的一隅而已，道路如河流般蜿蜒通畅，让人无法辨别哪里是人化的终结，哪里是野生的开端。我们的国家就是这样充满了树木、鸟儿、野花，任何时候都可以去欣赏、去领略。



- [1] curlew n. 鹞, 白腰杓鹞
 [2] higgledy-piggledy adj. 乱七八糟的, 混乱的
 [3] dragoon v. 迫害, 镇压