

ENGLISH PARTY

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逃跑的色拉

Ceres' Runaway and Other Essays

(英) Alice Meynell 著

阳 程 王 莹 主编

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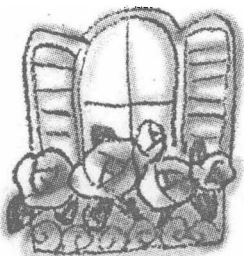
前 言

当今时代,英语已成为国际社会的标准语言,成为走向世界的通行证。英语阅读则是人们开阔眼界、及时获取信息、把握机会,甚至增添生活乐趣的手段。而对英语原版名著的阅读无疑是感受浓郁的异域文化,了解多姿多彩的风土人情,并掌握地道英语的最佳途径。

为此,我们精选了这一套英文原版名著,纯正地道的英语,将会带您进入一个绚丽多彩的世界。

读者在阅读英语原著时应该注意:

可以使用词典,但不要逢词必查。没有词典的帮助阅读会非常困难,但是,只有把心思用在意义的解读上时,读者才能摆脱词汇量的束缚,才会知道哪些词该查,哪些词不该查,哪些地方该详细地看,哪些地方该跳过去;也只



有在抛开了积累词汇学习英语等基本想法之后,才能够做到词汇的高度积累,语法体系的高度完善,英语水平的高度发展。

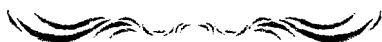
本丛书选文精心,可读性强,相信读者在阅读后英语水平一定会有大幅度的提高。

编 者



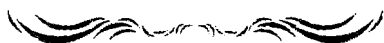
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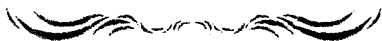
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CERES' RUNAWAY

One can hardly be dull possessing the pleasant imaginary picture of a Municipality hot in chase of a wild crop—at least while the charming quarry escapes, as it does in Rome. The Municipality does not exist that would be nimble enough to overtake the Roman growth of green in the high places of the city. It is true that there have been the famous captures—those in the Colosseum, and in the Baths of Caracalla; moreover a less conspicuous running to earth takes place on the Appian Way, in some miles of the solitude of the Campagna, where men are employed in weeding the roadside. They slowly uproot the grass and lay it on the ancient stones—rows of little corpses—for sweeping up, as at Upper Tooting; one wonders why. The governors of the city will not succeed in making the Via Appia look busy, or its stripped stones suggestive of a thriving commerce. Again, at the cemetery within the now torn and shattered Aurelian wall by the Porta San Paolo.

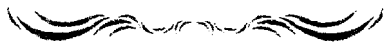




they are often mowing of buttercups. "A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread," says Shelley, whose child lies between Keats and the pyramid. But a couple of active scythes are kept at work there summer and spring—not that the grass is long, for it is much overtopped by the bee-orchis, but because flowers are not to laugh within reach of the civic vigilance.

2

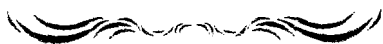
Yet, except that it is overtaken and put to death in these accessible places, the wild summer growth of Rome has a prevailing success and victory. It breaks all bounds, flies to the summits, lodges in the sun, swings in the wind, takes wing to find the remotest ledges, and blooms aloft. It makes light of the sixteenth century, of the seventeenth, and of the eighteenth. As the historic ages grow cold it banters them alike. The flagrant flourishing statue, the haughty facade, the broken pediment (and Rome is chiefly the city of the broken pediment) are the opportunities of this vagrant garden in the air. One certain church, that is full of attitude, can hardly be aware that a crimson snapdragon of great stature and many stalks and blossoms is standing on its furthest summit tiptoe against its sky. The cornice of another church in the fair middle of Rome lifts out of the shadows of the streets a row of accidental marigolds. Impartial to the antique, the mediaeval, the Renaissance early and late, the newer modern, this wild summer finds its account in travertine and tufa, reticulated work,





brick, stucco and stone. "A bird of the air carries the matter," or the last sea- wind, sombre and soft, or the latest tramontana, gold and blue, has lodged in a little fertile dust the wild grass, wild wheat, wild oats!

If Venus had her runaway, after whom the Elizabethans raised hue and cry, this is Ceres. The municipal authorities, hot-foot, cannot catch it. And, worse than all, if they pause, dismayed, to mark the flight of the agile fugitive safe on the arc of a flying buttress, or taking the place of the fallen mosaics and coloured tiles of a twelfth-century tower, and in any case inaccessible, the grass grows under their discomfited feet. It actually casts a flush of green over their city piazza—the wide light-grey pavements so vast that to keep them weeded would need an army of workers. That army has not been employed; and grass grows in a small way, but still beautifully, in the wide space around which the tramway circles. Perhaps a hatred of its delightful presence is what chiefly prompts the civic government in Rome to the effort to turn the piazza into a square. The shrub is to take the place not so much of the pavement as of the importunate grass. For it is hard to be beaten—and the weed does so prevail, is so small, and so dominant! The sun takes its part, and one might almost imagine a sensitive Municipality in tears, to see grass running, overhead and underfoot, through the "third" (which is in truth the

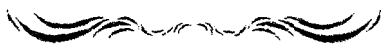




fourth) Rome.

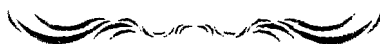
When I say grass I use the word widely. Italian grass is not turf; it is full of things, and they are chiefly aromatic. No richer scents throng each other, close and warm, than these from a little hand-space of the grass one rests on, within the walls or on the plain, or in the Sabine or the Alban hills. Moreover, under the name I will take leave to include lettuce as it grows with a most welcome surprise on certain ledges of the Vatican. That great and beautiful palace is piled, at various angles, as it were house upon house, here magnificent, here careless, but with nothing pretentious and nothing furtive. And outside one lateral window on a ledge to the sun, prospers this little garden of random salad. Buckingham Palace has nothing whatever of the Vatican dignity, but one cannot well think of little cheerful cabbages sunning themselves on any parapet it may have round a corner.

Moreover, in Italy the vegetables—the table ones—have a wildness, a suggestion of the grass, from lands at liberty for all the tilling. Wildish peas, wilder asparagus—the field asparagus which seems to have disappeared from England, but of which Herrick boasts in his manifestations of frugality—and strawberries much less than half-way from the small and darkling ones of the woods to the pale and corpulent of the gardens, and with nothing of the wild fragrance lost—these are all Italian things of savage





savour and simplicity. The most cultivated of all countries, the Italy of tillage, is yet not a garden, but something better, as her city is yet not a town but something better, and her wilderness something better than a desert. In all the three there is a trace of the little flying heels of the runaway.



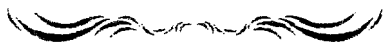


A VANQUISHED MAN

6

Haydon died by his own act in 1846, and it was not, in the event, until 1853 that his journal was edited, not by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, as he wished, but by Tom Taylor. Turning over these familiar and famous volumes, often read, I wonder once more how any editor was bold to “take upon himself the mystery of things” in the case of Haydon, and to assign to that venial moral fault or this the ill-fortune and defeat that beset him, with hardly a pause for the renewal of the resistance of his admirable courage.

That he made a mere intellectual mistake, gave thanks with a lowly and lofty heart for a genius denied him, that he prepared himself to answer to Heaven and earth for the gift he had not, to suffer its reproach, to bear its burden, and that he looked for its reward, is all his history. There was no fault of the intellect in his apprehension of the thing he thought to stand possessed of. He



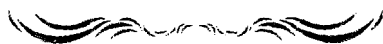


conceived it aright, and he was just in his rebuke of a world so dull and trivial before the art for which he died. He esteemed it aright, except when he deemed it his.

His editor, thinking himself to be summoned to justify the chastisement, the destruction, the whole retribution of such a career, looks here and there for the sins of Haydon; the search is rewarded with the discovery of faults such as every man and woman entrusts to the common generosity, the general consciousness. It is a pity to see any man conning such offences by heart, and setting them clear in an editorial judgement because he thinks himself to hold a trust, by virtue of his biographical office, to explain the sufferings and the failure of a conquered man.

What, in the end, are the sins which are to lead the reader, sad but satisfied, to conclude with "See the result of—", or "So it ever must be with him who yields to—," or whatever else may be the manner of ratifying the sentence on the condemned and dead? Haydon, we hear, omitted to ask advice, or, if he asked it, did not shape his course thereby unless it pleased him. Haydon was self-willed; he had a wild vanity, and he hoped he could persuade all the powers that include the powers of man to prosper the work of which he himself was sure. He did not wait upon the judgement of the world, but thought to compel it.

Should he, then, have waited upon the judgement of such a

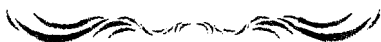




world? He was foremost in the task of instructing, nay, of compelling it when there was a question of the value of the Elgin Marbles, and when the possession—which was the preservation—of these was at stake. There he was not wrong; his judgement, that dealt him, in his own cause, the first, the fatal, the final injury—the initial subtle blow that sent him on his career so wronged, so cleft through and through, that the mere course and action of life must ruin him—this judgement, in art, directed him in the decision of the most momentous of all public questions. Haydon admired, wrote, protested, declaimed, and fought; and in great part, it seems, we owe our perpetual instruction by those judges of the Arts which are the fragments of the Elgin sculptures, to the fact that Haydon trusted himself with the trust that worked his own destruction. Into the presence especially of those seated figures, commonly called the Fates, we habitually bring our arts for sentence. He lent an effectual hand to the setting-up of that Tribunal of headless stones.

8

The thing we should lament is rather that the world which refused, neglected, forgot him—and by chance-medley was right, was right! — had no possible authority for anything that it did against him, and that he might have sent it to school, for all his defect of genius; moreover, that he was mortally wounded in the last of his forty years of battle by this ironic wound; among the

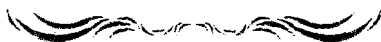




bad painters chosen to adorn the Houses of Parliament with fresco, he was not one. This affront he took at the hands of men who had no real distinctions in their gift. He might well have had, by mere chance, some great companion with whom to share that rejection. The unfortunate man had no such fortuitous fellowship at hand. How strange, the solitude of the bad painter outcast by the worst, and capable of making common cause indomitably with the good, had there been any such to take heart from his high courage!

There was none. There were ranged the unjust judges with their blunders all in good order, and their ignorance new dressed, and there was no artist to destroy except only this one, somewhat better than their favoured, their appointed painters in fresco; one uncompanioned, and a man besides through whose heart the public reproach was able to cut keenly.

Is this sensibility to be made a reproach to Haydon? It has always seemed to me that he was not without greatness—yet he was always without dignity—in those most cruel passages of his life, such as that of his defeat, towards the close of his war, by the show of a dwarf, to which all London thronged, led by Royal example, while the exhibition of his picture was deserted. He was not betrayed by anger at this end of hopes and labours in which all that a man lives for had been pledged. Nay, he succeeded in bear-





ing what a more inward man would have taken more hardly. He was able to say in his loud voice, in reproach to the world, what another would have barred within: one of his great pictures was in a cellar, another in an attic, another at the pawnbroker's, another in a grocer's shop, another unfinished in his studio; the bills for frames and colours and the rent were unpaid. Some solace he even found in stating a few of these facts, in French, to a French official or diplomatic visitor to London, interested in the condition of the arts. Well, who shall live without support? A man finds it where he can.

After these offences of self-will and vanity Tom Taylor finds us some other little thing—I think it is inaccuracy. Poor Haydon says in one phrase that he paid all his friends on such a day, and in another soon following that the money given or lent to him had been insufficient to pay them completely; and assuredly there are many revisions, after-thoughts, or other accidents to account for such a slip. His editor says the discrepancy is “characteristic,” but I protest I cannot find another like it among those melancholy pages. If something graver could but be sifted out from all these journals and letters of frank confession, by the explainer! Here, then, is the last and least: Haydon was servile in his address to “men of rank.” But his servility seems to be very much in the fashion of his day—nothing grosser; and the men who set the

