

# 荀傳集

Hertz C. K. Kê

英文书信序言选编

# 荀 傳 梨

英文书信序



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# 序

余幼时诵方望溪姚姬传刘大櫟诸先生所为古文辞，窃喜其意在言外，淡而弥永，至于循玩不忍释手。长习英吉利文字，仍嗜读其隽逸有神味者。求诸国内殆鲜其人；有之自嘉定葛君传槩始。葛君夙赋天稟，又能力学不倦。骤聆其言论，似尚诡辩，多偏见；然静焉思之，确有至理存乎其间。譬食谏果，初甚涩口，终则齿颊间津津有余味也。其为文善取不伦不类者以为比，轻描淡写，寓讽深刻。余尝拟为英文之桐城派，英文学者中之东方生。虽人事百忙，读之便觉大快。君邃于英文规范，故为文清新纯正，不落恒蹊；论文往往多独到处。生平著述极富，所作《致友人书》及《英文学生日记》，尤风行海内。兹更汇其生平所作，付梓问世；以余相知较深，驰书索言，因泚笔而乐为之序。

苏兆龙

## PREFACE

Except for the fact that it is issued in three volumes, this book may be properly called an omnibus. It contains special articles, letters, prefaces, little essays, poems interpreted, and essays concerning the study of English. Most of the things included have been first published in *The Chung Hwa English Weekly*, under the headings "Talks on Things", "This and That", "Thoughts and Impressions", "The Open Classroom", "Chats on Writing English", and "Helps to the Study of English". The "Thoughts and Impressions" series and three other essays originally appeared under a pseudonym.

It is a matter of regret that I did not make a duplicate of my first letter to Mr H. W. Fowler, and therefore cannot include it in this book. The one printed herein, as is mentioned in "To the Memory of Mr H. W. Fowler", was written a fortnight after his death.

The essays concerning the study of English must not be regarded as a systematic treatment of the subject. Many of the points touched upon are more fully dealt with in my *How to Master English Without a Teacher*.

The following publishers have kindly permitted the inclusion of the pieces the titles of which follow their names in brackets: *The China Journal* ("On the Europeanization of the Chinese Language" and "Some Fragments of Pai Chü-i's Poetry concerning Women"); *The English Weekly* ("Letter to Mr H. W. Fowler" and "Letter to Mr A. J. Fowler" [dated March 23, 1934]); The Ching Wen Book Company ("Preface to 'The Diary of a Student'", "Preface to 'The Peacock Flies South-East'", and "Preface to 'A Chinese Schoolboy Visits England'").

Hertz C. K. Kê

December, 1936

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## TO THE MEMORY OF<sup>1</sup> MR H. W. FOWLER

Readers of this Weekly<sup>2</sup> must remember reading in No 620 Mr H. W. Fowler's letter to me, dated November 24, 1933. Now I have to announce that I have just got word<sup>3</sup> from his brother, Mr A. J. Fowler<sup>4</sup>, of the death of the famous grammarian and lexicographer<sup>5</sup>, which occurred red on December 26, 1933, about a fortnight before I received the above-mentioned letter and replied to it To quote Mr A. J. Fowler's letter:

*I regret to tell you that my brother, H. W. Fowler, died on December 26th, 1933, after a short illness. His answer to your first letter must have been among the last things that he wrote; and I well remember the admiration with which he spoke of your command of the English language. And his correspondence with foreign students of English was so wide as to qualify him very completely for a judgement on this point.*

*My brother belonged, and frequently contributed, to the Society for Pure English<sup>6</sup> — generally called the S. P. E. — which has issued a great many pamphlets on special subjects.<sup>7</sup>*

*My brother was engaged on a new dictionary<sup>8</sup> when he died; when it is now likely to be published, I cannot say.*

I do not know much about Mr H. W. Fowler's life. But I believe that the little that I know will no doubt be of interest to all serious students of English.

Mr H. W. Fowler was born in 1858. It was in 1903 that his literary collaboration with his twelve-year-younger brother, F. G. Fowler, began with the translation of Lucian<sup>9</sup>, a celebrated<sup>10</sup> Greek author, the result being published in four volumes<sup>11</sup> in 1905. Thenceforward the two brothers produced three joint works<sup>12</sup>: *The King's English*<sup>13</sup> (1906), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* (1911), and *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary* (1924). *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*<sup>14</sup> (1926) is the work of H. W. Fowler, though he designed it with F. G. Fowler, who died in 1918, aged 47, and did not live to see<sup>15</sup> the publication of *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary* and *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*. H. W. Fowler brought out a revised edition of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* in 1929<sup>16</sup> and one of *The King's English* in 1930. He was one of the editors of *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*,<sup>17</sup> published in 1933.

As most readers of this Weekly must know very well. I am a great admirer of Mr H. W. Fowler. I do not think I could have studied English with such results as I have got, if I had not used his books these eight or ten years<sup>18</sup>; and I am happy to think that I had the honour of corresponding with him within a very short time of his regretted death, on which, by the way, I have now composed the following Chinese couplet:



硕学冠群儒，有弟能传千载业  
遗书成绝笔，思翁不禁九回肠

## NOTES

1. To the Memory of: 纪念
2. this Weekly: 指 *The Chung Hwa English Weekly* (《中华英文周报》)
3. word: 消息
4. A. J. Fowler: H. W. Fowler 之弟，生于1868年，卒于1939年
5. famous grammarian and lexicographer: 著名之文法家兼字典家 (即指 H. W. Fowler)
6. Society for Pure English: 按此会在英国，创于1913年
7. which has issued a great many pamphlets on special subject: 按此会自1919年来曾刊行专论数十册，讨论文法，读音，语源等题
8. was engaged on a new dictionary: 正在从事编一新字典 (按此字典原定名为 *Quarto Oxford Dictionary*，今已更名为 *The Oxford Dictionary of Modern English*，由 H. W. Fowler 之弟 A. J. Fowler 及其友 H. G. Le Mesurier 继续编著。)
9. Lucian: 琉善，希腊著作家，约生于公元125年，约卒于公元180年
10. celebrated: 著名的
11. published in four volumes: 按此书及下文所述各书均系英国牛津大学出版社出版
12. joint works: 合著之书

13. *The King's English*: 此书论述写作英文之种种问题
14. *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage*: 此书论述英文中种种难点, 涉及文法、句构、读音、拼法等项
15. *did not live to see*: 不及见……而已死
16. *brought out a revised edition of The Concise Oxford Dictionary in 1929*: 于1929年出版*The Concise Oxford Dictionary*之改订本(按此书于1934年出第三版, 加一附录。)
17. *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*: 此书共两厚册, 由C. T. Onions 主编
18. *these eight or ten years*: 最近过去之八年或十年

## SOME INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE LATE<sup>1</sup> H. W. FOWLER, “A LEXICOGRAPHER OF GENIUS”

Ever since the death of Mr H. W. Fowler, which occurred on December 26, 1933, I have been on the look-out for<sup>2</sup> anything written about him. I found an article in *The Times*<sup>3</sup> (London), which called Fowler “a lexicographer of genius” and said: “His name has long been an oracle, and every year his dictionaries instruct and delight thousands of new readers”; an item in *The Periodical* (published by the Oxford University Press) containing the sentence “Though Mr Fowler’s work consisted largely of compilation, it exhibited not only great learning and sound judgement, but also a rare originality”; and a short poem in memory of<sup>4</sup> him in *Punch*<sup>5</sup> (London), the first eight lines of which read:

*Learned, yet master of a style that lit  
His erudition with unfailing wit,  
He strove, from fame and fortune self-exiled,  
To keep the well of English undefiled  
By jargon and base coinage, yet was loth  
To set pedantic limits to its growth,*

*Holding it wiser (as John Dryden said)  
To traffic with the living and the dead.*<sup>6</sup>

All these things, however, deal with<sup>7</sup> the grammarian and lexicographer rather than with the man; but it was chiefly about the man that I began to feel curious after my correspondence with him. This curiosity was not satisfied till I received a copy of Dr G. G. Coulton's Memoir<sup>8</sup> of H. W. Fowler from his brother A. J. Fowler. This Memoir is published as Tract No XLIII of the Society for Pure English; in the first paragraph the author says: "I must do my best to emphasize the personal side of this impersonal writer<sup>9</sup>". Having read the book carefully through, I fancy that the readers of this Weekly might be glad to read about some interesting facts relating to a man whose very name perhaps suggests to them nothing but words and words and words.<sup>10</sup> Hence the following few paragraphs, which I of course do not intend to form anything like a connected biographical sketch:

Besides being a grammarian, a lexicographer, and classical scholar<sup>11</sup>, H. W. Fowler was a first-rate swimmer, skater, and climber<sup>12</sup>, a marvellous first-line forward<sup>13</sup> at football, a good shot<sup>14</sup>, a humorist, and a devoted lover.

Once, when he was a teacher at Sedburgh<sup>15</sup>, he was bathing with some smaller boys in a shallow pool, when a man came galloping to warn them of a cloud-burst<sup>16</sup> that was bringing a heavy spate<sup>17</sup>; Fowler had only just time to get the

boys up the steep bank before the flood came down like a wall. On another occasion, several years later, when there was a fog, he had been swimming at haphazard<sup>18</sup> far too long in the icy water before the boatman heard him and picked him up in a state of exhaustion.

Fowler married on his fiftieth birthday (1908), only ten days after he had proposed to his wife, who was then forty-six years old. He wrote the following postcard to Dr G. G. Coulton on the day preceding his wedding day:

*I didn't write before lest<sup>19</sup> you should send me a present, and I write now lest you should learn it first from the papers<sup>20</sup>, that tomorrow, on my 50th birthday, I marry Miss Jessie Marian Wills, aged 46.*

(I am glad to find that this sentence reads very much like many sentences in my *Letters to a Friend*<sup>21</sup>.)

Some years after his marriage, the Great War broke out,<sup>22</sup> and Fowler, now fifty-seven, enlisted with his brother F. G. Fowler. They went to France in December 1915, and did not get their discharge<sup>23</sup> till half a year later. When he was in France, he wrote to his wife almost every day. The whole of this correspondence is now deposited among the manuscripts in St John's College Library at Cambridge<sup>24</sup>. Below are two interesting passages:

*Jan. 16. I have to inform you that there was nothing at all*

*to justify your dream. I have never either fainted or felt like<sup>25</sup> fainting since we have been out here; so mind you<sup>26</sup> enter this in your memory as a proof that no importance should be attached to dreams and presentiments<sup>27</sup> ...*

(By the way, “since we have been out here” is not grammatically perfect, though quite idiomatic; I think Fowler would have written “since we came here” if he had had enough time to take care of his grammar.)

*Mar. 6. Have a look now and then at the stars between six and seven in the evening; they and the sun and moon are the only things we have a chance of looking at, at the same time... When I was talking to the sister in charge of Frank<sup>28</sup> [i. e. F. G.<sup>29</sup>], she explained that though he was better he was not yet fit to go back to camp. — “He has not got cheeks like yours<sup>30</sup>”, quoth<sup>31</sup> she. Don’t be jealous, dear; I will try to abide in the paths of virtue.<sup>32</sup>*

(I like this harmless humour; this, again, reminds me of some humorous expressions in my *Letters to a Friend*.)

After his discharge, Fowler returned at once to his literary work. He was always on the best terms with<sup>33</sup> his wife. Their afternoon walks were often in the park; and the lodge-keeper once said to a friend: “There go the lovers!” That he loved her whole-heartedly may be seen from the following lines from a poem he wrote for the *Westminster Gazette*<sup>34</sup>:

*She says the world to her's one man,  
To me it is one woman.*<sup>35</sup>

Also from his *Epilogue*<sup>36</sup> (written after his wife's death in October 1930) to a little volume of verse entitled *Rhymes of Darby to Joan*<sup>37</sup>:

*And Joan is dead! — and buried, near  
The bells she loved and does not hear.*<sup>38</sup>  
*Four years have recordless remained  
Of fears that waxed and hopes that waned*<sup>39</sup> ...  
*She played her brave game to the last:*<sup>40</sup>  
*No parting word between them passed.*<sup>41</sup>  
*He's lonely left at board and bed,*<sup>42</sup>  
*No Darby now — for Joan is dead.*<sup>43</sup>

(I do not think Fowler can be called a true poet, but his verse is perfect.)

Fowler used to do household work himself instead of keeping a servant. In 1926, the secretary of the Clarendon Press<sup>44</sup> wrote to offer him a servant's wages in order to give him greater leisure for his literary work. Fowler replied as follows:

*My half-hour from 7:00 to 7:30 this morning was spent in  
(1) a two-mile run along the road, (2) a swim in my next-door  
neighbour's pond — exactly as some 48 years ago I used to run*

round the Parks and cool myself in (is there such a place now?) Parson's Pleasure<sup>45</sup>. That I am still in condition for such freaks I attribute to having had for nearly 30 years no servants to reduce me to a sedentary and all-literary existence.<sup>46</sup> And now you seem to say: Let us give you a servant, and the means of slow suicide and quick lexicography.<sup>47</sup> Not if I know it; I must go my slow way.<sup>48</sup>

(Again, so far as style is concerned,<sup>49</sup> the last two sentences read as if they were mine.)

Fowler is said never to have left unanswered any letter from any of his readers. In a letter to a friend dated July 22, 1926, he said:

*I am one of those fools who are too much flattered by questions from strangers to treat them summarily,<sup>50</sup> and must always give them more answer than they are expecting, instead of saying "Thanks very much, I will think about it".*

And I am sure that when Fowler wrote the following, he had a smile on his face:

*A convict in a Californian<sup>51</sup> prison wrote asking me for a copy of Modern English Usage to complete him for a literary career when he should have served his time.<sup>52</sup>*

Lest some of my readers should think I am crazy about Fowler and his books, I have to conclude this article by telling



about a crazy man who wrote to Fowler now and then.<sup>53</sup> That man is a Mr Jones<sup>54</sup>; he has collected all the various doings ascribed to “Jones” in the illustrative examples in *The Pocket Oxford Dictionary* and bases upon them a claim to be descended from William the Conqueror.<sup>55</sup> Well, even if my surname were Jones instead of Kê, I could not possibly be so crazy as to make any effort to hunt for expressions containing the word “Jones” in any Fowler book,<sup>56</sup> still less<sup>57</sup> to base on them any claim to be descended from William the Conqueror. No, I am not crazy enough, after all.

## NOTES

1. The Late: 已故的
2. on the look-out for: 注意以求
3. *The Times*: 《泰晤士报》伦敦日报名, 于1785年创刊, 原名 *The Daily Universal Register*, 1788年改为今名
4. in memory of: 纪念
5. *Punch*: 伦敦幽默周刊名, 于1841年创刊
6. Learned, yet master of a style that lit his erudition with unflinching wit, he strove, from fame and fortune self-exiled (= self-exiled from fame and fortune), to keep the well of English undefiled by jargon and base coinage, yet was loth to set pedantic limits to its growth, holding it wiser (as John Dryden said) to traffic with the living and the dead: 其为人也博学, 然其为文, 又恒能以诙谐之笔, 使其学得跃然纸上, 自远于名利而惟保存英文之纯粹是求, 然亦不如腐儒辈