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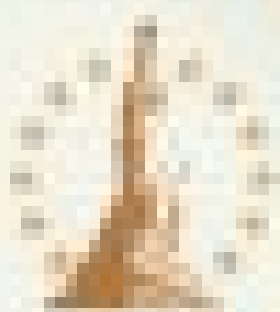
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WILLIAM H. MCGUFFEY



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呈现于读者面前的这套《美国语文读本》，亦名《麦加菲读本》，其编者威廉·H·麦加菲曾先后任美国迈阿密大学语言学教授和俄亥俄大学校长。考虑到“麦加菲”的英文名称在美国已是注册商标，加之它是一套影响深远而广泛的语文课本，我们在中国首次原文出版这套著名教材时，便将书名定为《美国语文读本》。这套书既有教材功能，亦可当作提高英语水平的有效读物。

《美国语文读本》从19世纪中期至20世纪中叶，一直被广泛用作美国学校的语文教材，据称有10000多所美国学校用它当作教材。美国著名汽车制造商亨利·福特称赞这套书是他儿童时代最有兴趣的读物，后来他自费大量印刷这套书，分发给很多学校。到了21世纪，西方一些私立学校和家庭学校仍用它作为教材，足见这套书的价值与影响力。据估计，这套书从问世至1960年，至少发行了1.22亿册；1961年后，在西方每年销量仍达30000册以上。应该说，没有哪一套个人主编的教材能超过此发行量了！

这套读本的英文原版共分七级，包括启蒙读本和第1-6级。考虑到启蒙读本与第一级篇幅都较少，难易程度也很接近，于是我们将之合并为第1册，其余2-6级与英文原版相同。这样国内出版的这套读本共包括6册。第1册从字母表开始，主要侧重于字母的发音与书写、基本单词与常用句型，同时强调英文书写，课文后面附

有不少书法练习，让孩子们不仅将英语说得像外国人，而且写得也跟外国人一样，这也许是国内英语教学所缺少的一个环节。从第2册开始，均是比较正式的课文，每一课包括词汇和课文，对一些难词有英文解释，让学生学会通过简单英文理解生词，养成用英语理解和思维的习惯。第4册还附有课后思考练习，这些练习可以帮助学生更好理解文章，引发孩子们的思考。第5册和第6册的课文前增加了作者简介与相关背景知识，内容丰富而有一定深度。

从所选课文的英文难易程度来看，大致而言，这套读本的第1-3册跟国内小学毕业程度相近，那么第4级以上则适用于中学生阅读使用。从文体方面，除了常用文体外，这套读本对诗歌、戏剧、论说文等文体也很重视，书中选取了不少名家的名作名篇。这对国内孩子们真正感受英语这一西方语言的魄力是大有帮助的。

人类文化的瑰宝不仅源远流长，而且具有很大共通性，在全社会不断呼吁教育改革的今天，我们将这套优秀的美国读本引进到国内，应该具有一定借鉴意义。它有益于中国孩子在学习英语的同时，了解西方的文学与文化历史，通过英语这门语言工具，开阔自己的视野，打开通往世界的心灵之窗。同时，这套书的字里行间灌输了很多做人的道理和准则，让孩子们在学习英语的同时学会做人，这正是我们出版此套书的内心所愿！

作为此书的出版者，我们最后恳请读者原谅并给予帮助的是，由于此套书出版过程中扫描和编排校对的工作量较大，或许会出现一些错误与不当之处，恳请读者谅解并指正，并帮助我们更加完善此套读本。我们的联系方式为 meiguoyuwen@126.com，期待与您交流！

出版者



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LESSON 1

ANECDOTE OF THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE

A laughable story was circulated during the administration of the old Duke of Newcastle, and retailed to the public in various forms. This nobleman, with many good points, was remarkable for being profuse of his promises on all occasions, and valued himself particularly on being able to anticipate the words or the wants of the various persons who attended his levees, before they uttered a word. This sometimes led him into ridiculous embarrassment; and it was this proneness to lavish promises, which gave occasion for the following anecdote:

At the election of a certain borough in Cornwall, where the opposite interests were almost equally poised, a single vote was of the highest importance. This object the Duke, by well applied argument and personal application, at length attained; and the gentleman he recommended, gained the election. In the warmth of gratitude, his grace poured forth acknowledgments and promises without ceasing, on the fortunate possessor of the casting vote; called him his best and dearest friend; protested, that he should consider himself as forever indebted to him; and that he would serve him by night or by day.

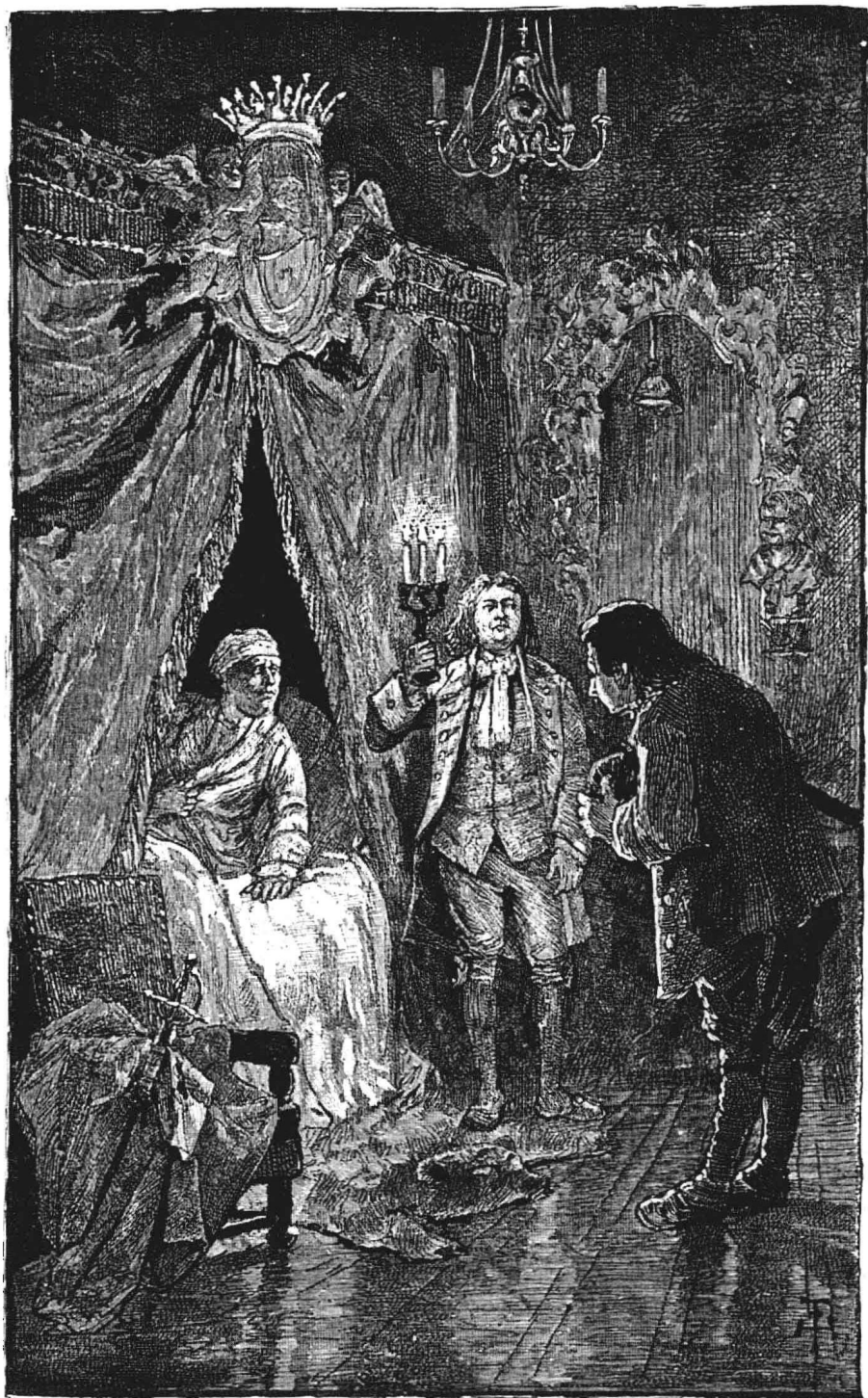
The Cornish voter, who was an honest fellow, and would not have thought himself entitled to any reward, but for such a torrent of acknowledgments, thanked the Duke for his kindness, and told him the supervisor of excise was old and infirm, and, if he would have the goodness to recommend his son-in-law to the commissioners, in case of the old man's death, he should think himself and his family bound to render his grace every assistance in their power, on any future occasion.

"My dear friend, why do you ask for such a trifling employment?" exclaimed his grace; "your relative shall have it the moment the place is vacant, if you will but call my attention to it."

"But how shall I get admitted to you, my lord? For in London, I understand, it is a very difficult business to get a sight of you great folks, though you are so kind and complaisant to us in the country."

"The instant the man dies," replied the Duke, "set out posthaste for London; drive directly to my house, and, be it by night or by day, thunder at the door; I will leave word with my porter to show you upstairs directly; and the employment shall be disposed of according to your wishes."

The parties separated; the Duke drove to a friend's house in the neighborhood, without a wish or desire to see his new acquaintance till that day seven years; but the memory of the Cornish elector, not being burdened with such a variety of objects, was more retentive. The supervisor died a few months after, and the Duke's humble friend, relying on the word of a peer, was conveyed to London posthaste, and ascended with alacrity the steps of that nobleman's palace.



The reader should be informed, that just at this time, no less a person than the King of Spain was expected hourly to depart this life, an event in which the minister of Great Britain was particularly concerned; and the Duke of Newcastle, on the very night that the proprietor of the decisive vote arrived at his door, had sat up anxiously expecting dispatches from Madrid. Wearied by official business and agitated spirits, he retired to rest, having previously given particular instructions to his porter not to go to bed, as he expected every minute a messenger with advices of the greatest importance, and desired that he might be shown upstairs, the moment of his arrival.

His grace was sound asleep; and the porter, settled for the night in his armchair, had already commenced a sonorous nap, when the vigorous arm of the Cornish voter roused him from his slumbers. To his first question, "Is the Duke at home?" the porter replied, "Yes, and in bed; but has left particular orders that, come when you will, you are to go up to him directly."

"Bless him, for a worthy and honest gentleman," cried our applicant for the vacant post, smiling and nodding with approbation at the prime minister's kindness, "how punctual his grace is; I knew he would not deceive me; let me hear no more of lords and dukes not keeping their words; I verily believe they are as honest, and mean as well as any other folks." Having ascended the stairs as he was speaking, he was ushered into the Duke's bedchamber.

"Is he dead?" exclaimed his grace, rubbing his eyes, and scarcely awakened from dreaming of the King of Spain, "Is he dead?"

"Yes, my lord," replied the eager expectant, delighted to find the election promise, with all its circumstances, so fresh in the nobleman's memory.

"When did he die?"

"The day before yesterday, exactly at half past one o'clock, after being confined three weeks to his bed, and taking a *power of doctor's stuff*; and I hope your grace will be as good as your word, and let my son-in-law succeed him."

The Duke, by this time perfectly awake, was staggered at the impossibility of receiving intelligence from Madrid in so short a space of time; and perplexed at the absurdity of a king's messenger applying for his son-in-law to succeed the King of Spain: "Is the man drunk, or mad? Where are your dispatches?" exclaimed his grace, hastily drawing back his curtain; where, instead of a royal courier, he recognized at the bedside, the fat, good-humored countenance of his friend from Cornwall, making low bows, with hat in hand, and "hoping my lord would not forget the gracious promise he was so good as to make, in favor of his son-in-law, at the last election."

Vexed at so untimely a disturbance, and disappointed of news from Spain, the Duke frowned for a moment; but chagrin soon gave way to mirth, at so singular and ridiculous a combination of circumstances, and, yielding to the impulse, he sunk upon the bed in a violent fit of laughter, which was communicated in a moment to the attendants.

The relater of this little narrative, concludes, with observing, "Although the Duke of Newcastle could not place the relative of his old acquaintance on the throne of His Catholic Majesty, he advanced him to a post not less honorable—he made him an exciseman."

—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

LESSON 2

THE NEEDLE

The gay belles of fashion may boast of excelling
In waltz or cotillon, at whist or quadrille;
And seek admiration by vauntingly telling
Of drawing, and painting, and musical skill:
But give me the fair one, in country or city,
Whose home and its duties are dear to her heart,
Who cheerfully warbles some rustical ditty,
While plying the needle with exquisite art:
The bright little needle, the swift-flying needle,
The needle directed by beauty and art.

If Love have a potent, a magical token,
A talisman, ever resistless and true,
A charm that is never evaded or broken,
A witchery certain the heart to subdue,
'T is this; and his armory never has furnished
So keen and unerring, or polished a dart;
Let beauty direct it, so polished and burnished,
And oh! it is certain of touching the heart:
The bright little needle, the swift-flying needle,
The needle directed by beauty and art.

Be wise, then, ye maidens, nor seek admiration,
By dressing for conquest, and flirting with all;
You never, whate'er be your fortune or station,
Appear half so lovely at rout or at ball,
As gayly convened at the work-covered table,
Each cheerfully active, playing her part,
Beguiling the task with a song or a fable,
And plying the needle with exquisite art:
The bright little needle, the swift-flying needle,
The needle directed by beauty and art.

—*Samuel Woodworth.*

LESSON 3

DAWN

Edward Everett, 1794-1865. He was born at Dorchester, Mass., now a part of Boston, and graduated from Harvard College with the highest honors of his class, at the age of seventeen. While yet in college, he had quite a reputation as a brilliant writer. Before he was twenty years of age, he was settled as pastor over the Brattle Street Church, in Boston, and at once became famous as an eloquent preacher. In 1814, he was elected Professor of Greek Literature in his Alma Mater; and, in order to prepare himself for the duties of his office, he entered on an extended course of travel in Europe. He edited the "North American Review," in addition to the labors of his professorship, after he returned to America.

In 1825, Mr. Everett was elected to Congress, and held his seat in the House for ten years. He was Governor of his native state from 1835 to 1839. In 1841, he was appointed Minister to England. On his return, in 1846, he was chosen President of Harvard University, and held the office for three years. In 1852, he was appointed Secretary of State. February 22, 1856, he delivered, in Boston, his celebrated lecture on Washington. This lecture was afterwards delivered in most of the principal cities and towns in the United States. The proceeds were devoted to the purchase of Mt. Vernon. In 1860, he was a candidate for the Vice Presidency of the United States. He is celebrated as an elegant and forcible writer, and a chaste orator.

This extract, a wonderful piece of word painting, is a portion of an address on the "Uses of Astronomy," delivered at the inauguration of the Dudley Observatory, at Albany, N, Y. Note the careful use of words, and the strong figures in the third and fourth paragraphs.

I had occasion, a few weeks since, to take the early train from Providence to Boston; and for this purpose rose at two o'clock in the morning. Everything around was wrapped in darkness and hushed in silence, broken only by what seemed at that hour the unearthly clank and rush of the train. It was a mild, serene, midsummer's night,—the sky was without a cloud, the winds were whist. The moon, then in the last quarter, had just risen, and the stars shone with a spectral luster but little affected by her presence.

Jupiter, two hours high, was the herald of the day; the Pleiades, just above the horizon, shed their sweet influence in the east; Lyra sparkled near the zenith; Andromeda veiled her newly-discovered glories from the naked eye in the south; the steady Pointers, far beneath the pole, looked meekly up from the depths of the north to their sovereign.

Such was the glorious spectacle as I entered the train. As we proceeded, the timid approach of twilight became more perceptible; the intense blue of the sky began to soften; the smaller stars, like little children, went first to rest; the sister beams of the Pleiades soon melted together; but the bright constellations of the west and north remained unchanged. Steadily the wondrous transfiguration went on. Hands of angels, hidden from mortal eyes, shifted the scenery of the heavens; the glories of night dissolved into the

glories of the dawn.

The blue sky now turned more softly gray; the great watch stars shut up their holy eyes; the east began to kindle. Faint streaks of purple soon blushed along the sky; the whole celestial concave was filled with the inflowing tides of the morning light, which came pouring down from above in one great ocean of radiance; till at length, as we reached the Blue Hills, a flash of purple fire blazed out from above the horizon, and turned the dewy teardrops of flower and leaf into rubies and diamonds. In a few seconds, the everlasting gates of the morning were thrown wide open, and the lord of day, arrayed in glories too severe for the gaze of man, began his state.

I do not wonder at the superstition of the ancient Magians, who, in the morning of the world, went up to the hilltops of Central Asia, and, ignorant of the true God, adored the most glorious work of his hand. But I am filled with amazement, when I am told, that, in this enlightened age and in the heart of the Christian world, there are persons who can witness this daily manifestation of the power and wisdom of the Creator, and yet say in their hearts, "There is no God."

LESSON 4

DESCRIPTION OF A STORM

Benjamin Disraeli. 1805-1881, was of Jewish descent. His ancestors were driven out of Spain by the Inquisition, and went to Venice. In 1748, his grandfather came to England. His father was Isaac Disraeli, well known as a literary man. Benjamin was born in London, and received his early education under his father. He afterwards studied for a lawyer, but soon gave up his profession for literature. His first novel, "Vivian Grey," appeared when the author was twenty-one years of age; it received much attention. After several defeats he succeeded in an election to Parliament, and took his seat in that body, in the first year of Victoria's reign. On his first attempt to speak in Parliament, the House refused to hear him. It is said that, as he sat down, he remarked that the time would come when they would hear him. In 1849, he became the leader of the Conservative party in the House. During the administration of W. E. Gladstone, Mr. Disraeli was leader of the opposition. In 1868, he became prime minister, holding the office for a short time. In 1874, he was again appointed to the same office, where he remained until 1880. His wife was made Viscountess of Beaconsfield in 1868. After her death, the title of Earl of Beaconsfield was conferred on Disraeli. He ranked among the most eminent, statesmen of the age, but always devoted a portion of his time to literature. "Lothair," a novel, was published in 1870.

* * * They looked round on every side, and hope gave way before the scene of desolation. Immense branches were shivered from the largest trees; small ones were entirely stripped of their leaves; the long grass was bowed to the earth; the waters were whirled in eddies out of the little rivulets; birds, leaving their nests to seek shelter in the crevices of the rocks, unable to stem the driving air, flapped their wings and fell upon the earth; the frightened animals of the plain, almost suffocated by the impetuosity of the wind, sought safety and found destruction; some of the largest trees were torn up by the roots; the sluices of the mountains were filled, and innumerable torrents rushed down the before empty gullies. The heavens now open, and the lightning and thunder contend with the horrors of the wind.

In a moment, all was again hushed. Dead silence succeeded the bellow of the thunder, the roar of the wind, the rush of the waters, the moaning of the beasts, the screaming of the birds. Nothing was heard save the splash of the agitated lake, as it beat up against the black rocks which girt it in.

Again, greater darkness enveloped the trembling earth. Anon, the heavens were rent with lightning, which nothing could have quenched but the descending deluge. Cataracts poured down from the lowering firmament. For an instant, the horses dashed madly forward; beast and rider blinded and stifled by the gushing rain, and gasping for breath. Shelter was nowhere. The quivering beasts reared, and snorted, and sank upon their