

金牌励志
双语典藏
全新升级版

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin

富兰克林自传

与伟大心灵深度对话，开启完美的道德之旅

一个令人难以置信的通才
美国精神最完美的代表

[美]本杰明·富兰克林 著
房利娟 邹妍洵 译



演绎诸种善与美的道德真谛

改变了无数人命运的
美国精神读本

富兰克林告诉我们的绝顶智慧经验

蕴含了奋斗与成功的真知灼见

一部影响了几代美国人、历经两百多年经久不衰的励志奇书



中国宇航出版社

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1706年1月17日，本杰明·富兰克林出生在北美波士顿一个小商贩家庭，家里有17个孩子，他排行15。他8岁入学读书，后来由于家庭经济困难，便辍学回家帮父亲照顾店面；12岁，到哥哥经营的印刷所当学徒；17岁，离开波士顿，分别到费城和英国伦敦印刷所当工人；20岁，返回费城，开始独立经营印刷所，印刷和发行《宾夕法尼亚报》，并出版了《穷理查德历书》，当时被译成多种文字，行销欧美各国，不到28岁便成了依靠勤劳致富的成功商人。富兰克林一生只在学校读了一年书，但是他的学习从未间断过。他利用一切空余时间刻苦自学，完全靠自学精通英语，苦练写作，大量阅读欧洲各国历史、哲学、文学等方面的著作。他16岁开始在报上发表他的第一篇文章，不到30岁便以百科式的学识和过人的才华在北美享有盛誉。正是由于他的刻苦勤奋，以后他才取得了诸多成就。

他是美国历史上第一位享有国际声誉的科学家和发明家。为了探索电的秘密，他做了闻名后世的“风筝引电”实验，并因此发明了避雷针，最早提出了电流的理论。新式火炉、电轮、三轮钟、双焦距眼镜、自动烤肉机、玻璃口琴、高架取书器、新式路灯等一系列高度实用的发明创造也都归功于他。在其他科学领域——光学、热学、声学、数学、海洋学、植物学等方面，他也颇有建树。

他也是一位杰出的社会活动家，为北美殖民地的文化和社会福利做了大量的工作。他组织建立“共读社”，创办费城图书馆，组建费城消防队，改革费城警务，创建“美洲哲学学会”，组建费城国民自卫军，筹建高等学院（即后来的宾夕法尼亚大学），帮助创办费城医院，提案铺设费城街道，赴英请愿反对业主在殖民地的免税特权。他还改革了北美殖民地的邮政制度，建立起北美殖民地统一的邮政系统。

他更是一位伟大的政治家和外交家。从1736年开始富兰克林投身政治，先后担任宾夕法尼亚立法机关秘书、会议议员。1754年他作为宾夕法尼亚代表出席在奥尔巴尼召开的殖民地代表大会，提出著名的“奥尔巴尼联盟计划”。1775年，他作为宾夕法尼亚州代表参加第二次大陆会议，成为美国《独立宣言》起草人之一。他奉大陆会议派遣出使法国，以其坚忍不拔的耐心和灵活巧妙的外交手腕，促成缔结《美法同盟条约》，争取了法国的支持和援助，确保了美国独立战争的胜利。美国独立后，他当选为宾夕法尼亚州州长，并成为宪法起草委员会委员，力促美国宪法通过。

富兰克林被美国和欧洲授予“第一个伟大美国人”的称号。

《富兰克林自传》的写作始于1771年，当时富兰克林在英格兰都维夫圣·阿萨福主教的乡村住所度假。正如他在文中最开始所言，写《自传》的最初目的仅仅是想将自己丰富的人生阅历和生活经验记载下来，以便他的儿子威廉·富兰克林及其子孙后代能从中学到可资借鉴的经验，在人生道路上少走弯路。《自传》第一部分对自己生平事迹的叙述止于1730年。由于各种原因，这部分《自传》手稿辗转到了他的朋友艾贝尔·詹姆斯手中。詹姆斯和另外一位看过手稿的朋友均强烈建议富兰克林续写《自传》，并建议他将预期的读者由家人改为公众，因为他们一致认为该自传能够引导青年人奋发向上，为青年人提高自我修养提供一个极好的范例。于是，自1784年富兰克林开始续写《自传》，直到1790年他去世。此时《自传》只写到1757年，他的后半生没有来得及在《自传》中提及。当然，囿于富兰克林所处的时代，他的个别观点（如对于印第安人的看法）也不免存有偏见。

《富兰克林自传》是一部影响了几代美国人、历经两百余年经久不衰的励志奇书，它包含了人生奋斗与成功的真知灼见，以及诸种善与美的道德真谛，被公认为是改变了无数人命运的美国精神读本。

金牌励志系列丛书第一版从上市至今受到广大读者的热烈欢迎，如今将金牌励志系列四本经典作品《假如给我三天光明》《林肯传》《富兰克林自传》《世界上最神奇的24堂课》全新升级改版，希望能继续得到读者朋友们的支持。

译者

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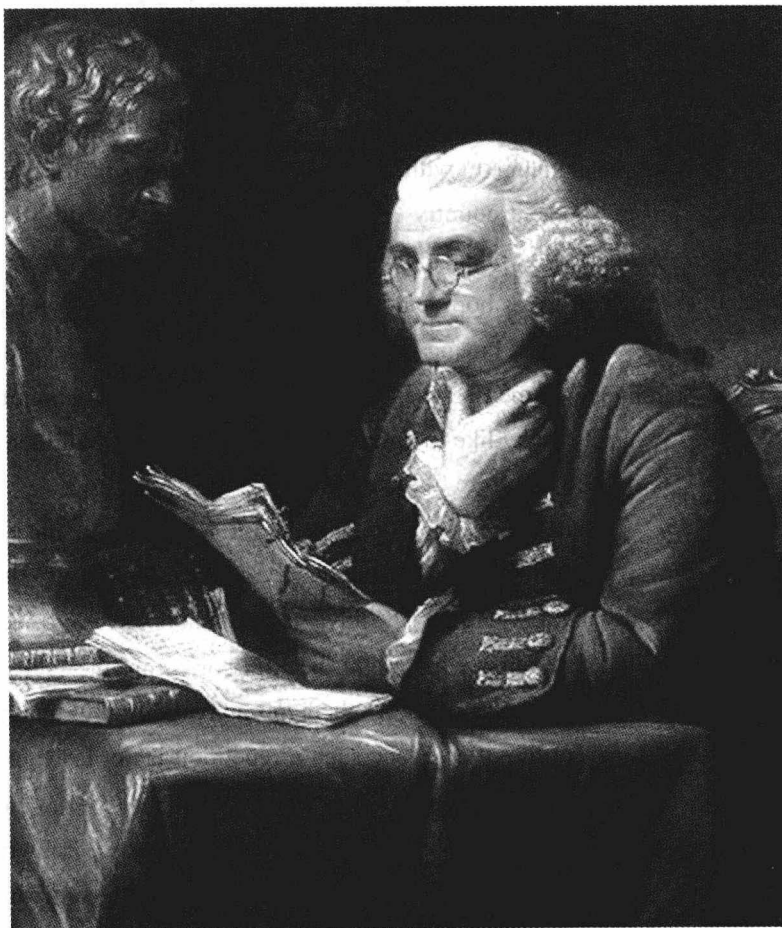
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本杰明·富兰克林

本杰明·富兰克林

Benjamin Franklin

(1706 — 1790)



Chapter One



WYFORD, at the Bishop of St. Asaph's, 1771.

Dear son,

I have ever had a pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes^① of my ancestors^②. You may remember the inquiries I made among the remains of my relations when you were with me in England, and the journey I undertook for that purpose. Imagining it may be equally agreeable to you to know the circumstances of my life, many of which you are yet unacquainted^③ with, and expecting the enjoyment of a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement^④, I sit down to write them for you, to which I have besides some other inducements^⑤. Having emerged^⑥ from the poverty and obscurity^⑦ in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence^⑧ and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity^⑨, the conducting^⑩ means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity^⑪ may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated.

That felicity, when I reflected on it, has induced^⑫ me sometimes to say, that were it offered to my choice, I should have no objection to a repetition of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition to correct some faults of the first. So I might, besides correcting the faults, change some sinister^⑬ accidents and events of it for others more favorable. But though this were denied, I should still accept the offer. Since such a repetition is not to be expected, the next thing most like living one's life over again seems to be a recollection^⑭ of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down^⑮ in writing.

Hereby^⑯, too, I shall indulge^⑰ the inclination^⑱ so natural in old men, to be talking of themselves and their own past actions; and I shall indulge it without being tiresome^⑲ to others, who, through respect to age, might conceive themselves obliged to give me a hearing, since this may be read or not as any one pleases. And, lastly (I may as well

第一章 写传缘由



1771年写于都维夫圣·阿萨福教堂的主教家中。

吾儿：

我一贯喜欢搜集自己祖上哪怕是点点滴滴的珍闻逸事。你可能还记得，为此我曾特意去过英格兰，跟那些依旧健在的族中老人们打听这些事，当时你也随我一同前往。想到你可能也同样乐于了解我一生的境遇，而且，有许多的经历是你不曾知晓的，加之在现住的乡间别墅里，我恰好有大概整整一个星期不受任何人打扰的悠闲时光，于是坐下来，想把这些事情记述出来给你看。除此之外，之所以写这些东西，我还有一些别的目的。我出身低微，幼年在贫寒的家庭中长大，后来竟能够生活优裕，并在世界上赢得了些许的声名，迄今为止我的一生总是好运相伴。我的为人处世之道，承蒙上帝恩惠，让我有了今天这些成就。我的后代子孙们可能想了解这些处世之道是什么，也许他们会发现其中的某些情况跟他们的情形有相似之处，因此可以用于借鉴和模仿。

每次回想起自己一生中碰到的好运气，我总是忍不住感慨，如果再给我一次重新选择人生的机会，我也不会反对将自己的人生从头到尾再重演一次，只希望能像作家们在作品再版时会校正初版的错误一样，可以对人生做一些小小的修正。除了能改正其中的一些错误以外，我可能还会把人生中的某些不好的事情和事件做一些变动以利于他人。但是，即便没有这种修正的机会，我仍然愿意将自己的人生重新过一遍。当然，人生是不可能重复去过的，那么最接近于重演人生的方式莫过于回忆自己的一生，将这些回忆尽可能地付诸笔端了。

借此，我可以像大多数老年人那样絮絮叨叨地说一说自己的过去。而且用写作的方式叙述往事，不至于让年轻人因为出于对我年龄的尊敬而假装洗耳恭听，也不至于让人生厌，因为读与不读这些东西，就在他们自己了。最后一点（我还是自己承认的好，因为

注释

- ① anecdote 轶事，短而有趣的故事
- ② ancestor 祖先，祖宗
- ③ unacquainted 不熟的，不知道的
- ④ retirement 幽静地方，偏僻地方，隐居处
- ⑤ inducement 动机，诱因
- ⑥ emerge 脱颖而出
- ⑦ obscurity 无名的人或地方，低微的处境
- ⑧ affluence 富裕，丰富
- ⑨ felicity 幸福，幸运

- ⑩ conducting 有助的，有益的
- ⑪ posterity 后裔，子孙
- ⑫ induce 引诱，劝导，诱发
- ⑬ sinister 不祥的，有害的
- ⑭ recollection 回忆，往事
- ⑮ put down 记下来
- ⑯ hereby 由此，借此
- ⑰ indulge 沉迷，纵情享受
- ⑱ inclination 倾向，爱好
- ⑲ tiresome 令人厌倦的，累人的

confess^① it, since my denial of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify^② my own vanity^③. Indeed, I scarce^④ ever heard or saw the introductory words, “Without vanity I may say,” etc., but some vain^⑤ thing immediately followed. Most people dislike vanity in others, whatever share they have of it themselves; but I give it fair quarter wherever I meet with it, being persuaded that it is often productive of^⑥ good to the possessor, and to others that are within his sphere of action; and therefore, in many cases, it would not be altogether absurd^⑦ if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.

And now I speak of thanking God, I desire with all humility^⑧ to acknowledge that I owe^⑨ the mentioned happiness of my past life to His kind providence^⑩, which lead me to the means I used and gave them success. My belief of this induces me to hope, though I must not presume, that the same goodness will still be exercised toward me, in continuing that happiness, or enabling me to bear a fatal^⑪ reverse^⑫, which I may experience as others have done, the complexion^⑬ of my future fortune being known to Him only in whose power it is to bless to us even our afflictions^⑭.

即便我不承认，别人也不会相信），写自传在很大程度上也满足了我的虚荣心。说老实话，我经常听到或者看到“可以毫不自夸地说”之类的开场白，然而接下来说的却往往都是些自卖自夸的话。虽说每个人或多或少都会自夸，但大多数人都不喜欢别人自夸。但我碰到自夸之人时，往往报以宽容之心，因为我觉得这对于他自己和他周围的人而言往往也不会有什么坏影响。因此，在许多情况下，如果一个人把自己的虚荣心当做生活中的一种慰藉并因此而感谢上帝的话，也算不上是什么荒谬的事情。

说到感谢上帝，我必须谦恭地承认，我过去人生中的一切幸福与快乐都是拜仁慈的上帝所赐，是上帝给我指出了为人处世之道，并引导我利用这些为人处世之道走向成功。尽管我不该去臆断，但是这样的信念仍让我希望，上帝在未来会依旧赐予我同样的恩惠，无论是让我的幸福与快乐延续下去，还是让我像别人曾经经历的那样，去忍受命中注定的逆厄——毕竟，未来的命运如何，只有万能的上帝知晓，在我们遭受痛苦与不幸时依旧在保佑我们。

注释

① confess 承认，坦白

② gratify 满足

③ vanity 虚荣心，自负

④ scarce 几乎不

⑤ vain 自夸的，爱虚荣的

⑥ be productive of 可能产生……的结果

⑦ absurd 荒谬的，荒唐可笑的

⑧ humility 谦恭，谦逊，谦卑

⑨ owe (to) 把……归功于

⑩ providence 天意，上帝的保佑

⑪ fatal 致命的

⑫ reverse 倒退，挫折，失败

⑬ complexion 情况，局面

⑭ affliction 痛苦，折磨，忧伤

Chapter Two



The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished^① me with several particulars^② relating to our ancestors. From these notes I learned that the family had lived in the same village, Ecton, in Northamptonshire, for three hundred years, and how much longer he knew not (perhaps from the time when the name of Franklin, that before was the name of an order^③ of people, was assumed by them as a surname when others took surnames all over the kingdom), on a freehold^④ of about thirty acres, aided by the smith's business, which had continued in the family till his time, the eldest son being always bred to that business; a custom which he and my father followed as to their eldest sons. When I searched the registers at Ecton, I found an account of their births, marriages and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no registers kept in that parish^⑤ at any time preceding^⑥. By that register I perceived that I was the youngest son of the youngest son for five generations back. My grandfather Thomas, who was born in 1598, lived at Ecton till he grew too old to follow business longer, when he went to live with his son John, a dyer at Banbury, in Oxfordshire, with whom my father served an apprenticeship^⑦. There my grandfather died and lies buried. We saw his gravestone in 1758. His eldest son Thomas lived in the house at Ecton, and left it with the land to his only child, a daughter, who, with her husband, one Fisher, of Wellingborough, sold it to Mr. Isted, now lord of the manor^⑧ there. My grandfather had four sons that grew up, viz.^⑨: Thomas, John, Benjamin and Josiah. I will give you what account I can of them, at this distance from my papers, and if these are not lost in my absence, you will among them find many more particulars.

Thomas was bred a smith under his father, but being ingenious^⑩, and encouraged in learning (as all his brothers were) by an Esquire^⑪ Palmer, then the principal gentleman in that parish, he qualified himself for the business of scrivener^⑫, became a considerable^⑬ man in the county, was a chief mover of all public-spirited^⑭ undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his own village, of which many instances were related^⑮

第二章
家世和童年

我的一个伯父跟我一样，喜欢搜集家族中的珍闻逸事。他的一些笔记后来传到我手里，让我详细了解了许多关于我们祖上的事情。从他的这些笔记中，我了解到，我们的家族在诺桑普顿郡的埃克顿区的一个小村子里已经住了300年，究竟之前已经住了多少年，他也无从知晓了。（“富兰克林”一词原来是对某一个阶层民众的称呼，当英国的民众都开始使用姓氏的时候，我们的祖先便把“富兰克林”当做自己的姓氏，可能从那时候起他们便在此居住了。）他们有30英亩的土地，世代以打铁为副业。家族中的长子都会被培养成打铁匠来继承这门手艺，这个传统祖辈传了下来，一直传到这个伯父那代，他和我的父亲也遵循了这个老传统，让自己的长子学打铁。我曾查阅过埃克顿教区的登记簿，发现只有1555年之后的出生、嫁娶和丧葬记录，在此之前没有任何记录可循。通过这个登记簿我了解到，不仅仅我是家中最小的儿子，从我往前的5代祖先都是家中最小的儿子。我的祖父托马斯生于1598年，一直生活在埃克顿，直到年迈不能继续从事劳动时才跟着儿子约翰住。约翰是牛津郡班伯雷区的一个染匠，我的父亲就跟着他做过学徒工。我的祖父在此逝世后便葬于此地。我们在1758年见到了他的墓碑。他最年长的儿子托马斯就住在埃克顿的老宅里，后来把这所房子连同土地一并传给了他的独生女儿。他女儿和丈夫——威灵堡区一个叫费舍的人，将房产卖给了伊斯德先生，也就是现在那座房产所在庄园的主人。我祖父有4个儿子活下来，即托马斯、约翰、本杰明和约瑟。我所做的记录都没有带在身边，但我会尽可能详细地一一介绍他们。如果我离家后这些记录没有丢失的话，从中你会找到更多关于他们的细节。

托马斯在父亲的培养下成为一名打铁匠。但是，由于天资聪颖，加上当时这个教区的乡绅帕尔默老爷鼓励他在学业上努力（他的兄弟们也一样被鼓励去求学），他最终获得了书记官的资格，在这个镇享有很高的声望。他还是这个镇及整个诺桑普顿郡以及他本村中所有公益事业的主要倡导者，很多事件中都曾提及他。当时的哈里法克斯勋爵非

— 注释 —

① furnish 供给，提供

② particular 详情，细节，事项

③ order 阶层，团体

④ freehold (不动产的) 所有权

⑤ parish 教区

⑥ preceding (时间或地点上) 在前的，在前的

⑦ apprenticeship 学徒训练

⑧ manor 庄园，领地

⑨ viz. 即，就是

⑩ ingenious 有独创性的，灵巧的

⑪ Esquire 旧指骑士，先生，绅士。

⑫ scrivener 公证人，文书

⑬ considerable 重要的

⑭ public-spirited 有公德心的，有爱国心的

⑮ related 有关联的

of him, and much taken notice of and patronized^① by the then Lord Halifax. He died in 1702, January 6, old style, just four years to a day^② before I was born. The account we received of his life and character from some old people at Ecton, I remember, struck you as something extraordinary, from its similarity to what you knew of mine. “Had he died on the same day,” you said, “one might have supposed a transmigration^③.”

John was bred a dyer, I believe of woolens. Benjamin was bred a silk dyer, serving an apprenticeship at London. He was an ingenious man. I remember him well, for when I was a boy he came over to my father in Boston, and lived in the house with us some years. He lived to a great age. His grandson, Samuel Franklin, now lives in Boston. He left behind him two quarto^④ volumes, MS.^⑤, of his own poetry, consisting of little occasional pieces addressed^⑥ to his friends and relations, of which the following, sent to me, is a specimen. He had formed a short-hand of his own, which he taught me, but, never practicing it, I have now forgot it. I was named after this uncle, there being a particular affection between him and my father. He was very pious^⑦, a great attender of sermons^⑧ of the best preachers, which he took down in his short-hand, and had with him many volumes of them. He was also much of a politician; too much, perhaps, for his station. There fell lately into my hands, in London, a collection he had made of all the principal pamphlets^⑨, relating to public affairs, from 1641 to 1717; many of the volumes are wanting as appears by the numbering, but there still remain eight volumes in folio^⑩, and twenty-four in quarto and in octavo^⑪. A dealer in old books met with them, and knowing me by my sometimes buying of him, he brought them to me. It seems my uncle must have left them here, when he went to America, which was about fifty years since. There are many of his notes in the margins.

This obscure^⑫ family of ours was early in the Reformation^⑬, and continued Protestants^⑭ through the reign of Queen Mary^⑮, when they were sometimes in danger of trouble on account of their zeal^⑯ against popery^⑰. They had got an English Bible, and to conceal and secure it, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the cover of a joint-stool^⑱. When my great-great-grandfather read it to his family, he turned up the joint-stool upon his knees, turning over the leaves then under the tapes. One of the

常赏识他，对他大力支持。他死于旧历的1702年1月6日，而我恰好在4年后的同一天出生。我还记得，听了埃克顿一些老人们对他的生平和性格的描述后，你大为惊讶，觉得这些跟你所了解的我太相似了，并曾经跟我说过：“要是你在他去世那天出生的话，说不定大家都以为你是他的转世呢。”

约翰被培养成染匠，我觉得他应该是染毛制品的。本杰明被培养成丝绸染匠，在伦敦做的学徒工。他很有天分。对他我记忆深刻，因为我小的时候他曾经到波士顿找我父亲，在我们家住了好几年。他后来活到很大年纪。他的孙子塞缪尔·富兰克林现在就住在波士顿。他身后留有两卷四开本的手抄本诗集，收录了他写给自己朋友和亲戚的一些即兴短诗，这里有一首短诗就是他寄给我的。他自己还编了一套速记方法，并传授给我，然而我从未练习过，现在也早已忘得一干二净。我的名字就是取自这位伯父的名字，因为我父亲和他有深厚的感情。他是个虔诚的教徒，只要有名的牧师布道他必定会参加，并用自创的速记方法记录下来，这样的笔记积累了不少本。他还比较热衷于政治，应该说，就他的职位而言，他热衷得有些过头。最近在伦敦的时候，有一本他编成的合集传到我手里，是一本从1641年到1717年间与公共事务有关的所有重要政论的合集，从编号上来看，有许多本已经遗失，但仍然有对开本8本，四开本和八开本24本。后来这些书到了一位旧书商手里，因为我经常从他那里买书，他认识我，便把这些书送了过来。看样子是我的伯父在去美洲时把书留在那里的，距现在大概也有50年了。书页空白处多处都有他做的笔记。

我们这个默默无闻的家族在宗教改革运动早期便参与其中，在“血腥玛丽”执政时期，他们因为强烈反对天主教而时时冒着遭受迫害的危险，却依然笃信新教。当时，他们有一本英文版的《圣经》，为了藏住这本书，家里人把它打开用带子绑在一个折叠凳子的凳面下。在给全家人读《圣经》时，我的高祖便把折叠凳倒过来，放在膝盖上，翻动带

— 注释 —

- ① patronize 保护，支持
- ② to a day 一天也不差
- ③ transmigration (宗)轮回，转世
- ④ quarto 四开，四开本
- ⑤ MS. 即manuscript，手抄的。
- ⑥ address 写给……
- ⑦ pious 虔诚的
- ⑧ sermon 布道，说教
- ⑨ pamphlet 小册子
- ⑩ folio 对开本
- ⑪ octavo 八开纸，八开本
- ⑫ obscure 微暗的，不著名的
- ⑬ Reformation 宗教改革运动，是16世纪欧洲新兴资产阶级以宗教改革为旗号发动的一次大规模反对天主教会、反对封建制度的社会政治运动，主要反对教皇通过教会在全国进行控制以及天主教会内部

的骄奢腐化。

- ⑭ Protestant 新教徒。新教，也经常被直接称为基督教，与天主教、东正教并列，为广义上的基督教的三大派别之一。新教是在16世纪宗教改革运动中脱离天主教而形成的新宗派或其中不断分化出的派系的统称。
- ⑮ Queen Mary 玛丽一世，是英国伊丽莎白一世女王的姐姐，亨利八世的长女，于1553年至1558年在位。她登上王位后立即宣布恢复天主教，并对新教徒采取了高压政策，大肆屠杀其中的激进分子，众多新教徒被迫流亡国外，因而被英国人民称为“血腥玛丽”。
- ⑯ zeal 虔诚，热情
- ⑰ popery 罗马天主教
- ⑱ joint-stool 折叠椅子

children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor^① coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the Bible remained concealed under it as before. This anecdote I had from my uncle Benjamin. The family continued all of the Church of England^② till about the end of Charles the Second^③'s reign, when some of the ministers that had been outed^④ for nonconformity^⑤ holding conventicles^⑥ in Northamptonshire, Benjamin and Josiah adhered to^⑦ them, and so continued all their lives: the rest of the family remained with the Episcopal Church.

Josiah, my father, married young, and carried his wife with three children into New England^⑧, about 1682. The conventicles having been forbidden by law, and frequently disturbed, induced some considerable men of his acquaintance to remove to that country, and he was prevailed with^⑨ to accompany them thither^⑩, where they expected to enjoy their mode of religion with freedom. By the same wife he had four children more born there, and by a second wife ten more, in all seventeen; of which I remember thirteen sitting at one time at his table, who all grew up to be men and women, and married; I was the youngest son, and the youngest child but two, and was born in Boston, New England. My mother, the second wife, was Abiah Folger, daughter of Peter Folger, one of the first settlers^⑪ of New England, of whom honorable mention is made by Cotton Mather in his church history of that country, entitled *Magnalia Christi Americana*, as -a godly^⑫, learned Englishman,- if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry^⑬ small occasional pieces, but only one of them was printed, which I saw now many years since. It was written in 1675, in the home-spun^⑭ verse^⑮ of that time and people, and addressed to those then concerned in the government there. It was in favor of liberty of conscience^⑯, and in behalf of the Baptists^⑰, Quakers^⑱, and other sectaries^⑲ that had been under persecution^⑳, ascribing^㉑ the Indian wars, and other distresses^㉒ that had befallen^㉓ the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous^㉔ an offense, and exhorting^㉕ a repeal^㉖ of those uncharitable^㉗ laws. The whole appeared to me as written with a good deal of decent^㉘ plainness^㉙ and manly freedom. The six concluding lines I remember, though I have forgotten the two first of