

刘 竞译注

世界名家
幽默作品精选

英汉对照

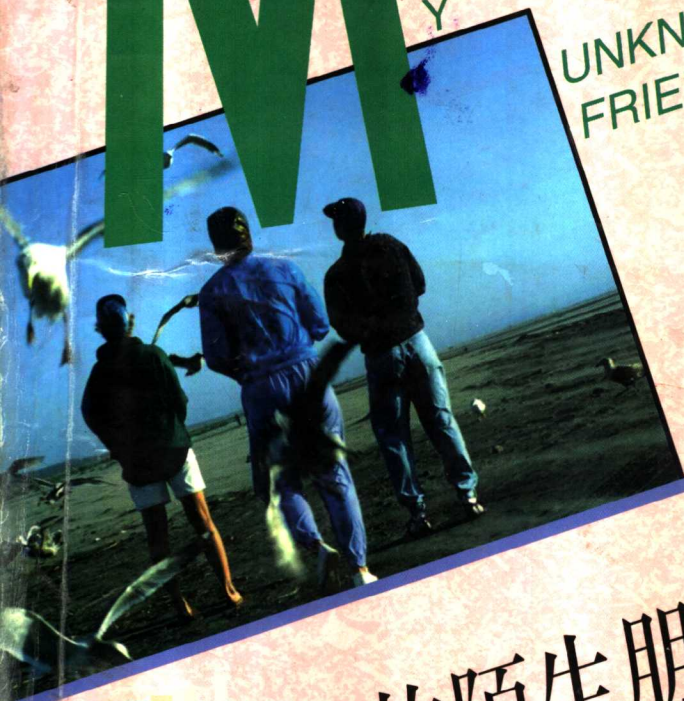
ENTERTAINMENT



休闲英语

MY

UNKNOWN
FRIEND



我的陌生朋友

Stephen Leacock

[加] 斯蒂芬·李科克 著



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前 言

斯蒂芬·巴特勒·李科克(Stephen Butler Leacock)是著名的加拿大幽默作家,也是加拿大第一位享有世界声誉的作家;在美国,他被认为是继马克·吐温之后最受人欢迎的幽默作家。他于1869年12月30日在英格兰汉普郡的斯旺穆尔出生;1876年他6岁时随父母迁居加拿大并在那里受教育。1891年他在多伦多大学毕业后当了8年中学教员;1899年进美国芝加哥大学攻读经济学与政治学;1903年获得政治经济学的哲学博士学位,开始在加拿大麦吉尔大学任教,先后担任政治学讲师、政治与历史副教授、政治经济学教授及政治与经济系系主任等职;1936年从教学岗位上退下来,担任该校的名誉教授;1944年3月28日在多伦多去世。

尽管李科克的正式职业是大学的政治经济学教授,而且他也出版过好几本专业著作;但他在这一方面的名声远不如他作为一位幽默作家的名声。

李科克二十几岁就开始写作幽默小品,他的第一部幽默小品集子(其中收集了他于1891年至1899年期间所写的作品)出版于1910年(即马克·吐温和欧·亨利相继去世的那一年),其时作者已经40岁,此后他便笔耕不辍,在从这时到他1944年去世为止的三十几年期间他虽也写过一些其他形式的文学作品如诗歌、剧本、传记以及文学理论等,但他本人最喜爱的也是写得最多的则是幽默小品,共有将近30个集子。

李科克的幽默是一种淡淡的、含蓄的幽默，他不是靠奇特、滑稽的故事情节来把读者逗得哈哈大笑，而是善于从平淡无奇的日常生活中提炼出一些为大家司空见惯却又往往熟视无睹的可笑的和不合理的东西加以放大后呈现在读者面前，让他们产生共鸣而发出会心的微笑或无奈的苦笑；并且他的作品也不是让人看过笑过就完，而是十分耐咀嚼、有回味，发人深省。

李科克无论写景写事还是写人，笔法都十分细腻；尤其是在刻画人物方面他更具有独特的本领。他在《母亲节》和《五十六号》中分别塑造的一位一年到头终日为全家默默操劳而别无他求的母亲和一位善于观察想象、感情丰富、心地善良的中国洗衣店主人阿仁这两个成功的文学形象令人久久难忘。此外，在这 12 篇精选的幽默小品里你将要结识的人物还有：初次与银行打交道惊惶失措的小职员；自以为阅历丰富、能应付任何局面而终于上当受骗的“老于世故者”；给人照相一味追求“形象美”而全然不顾照片与真人是否相像的摄影师；为了推销存货而不惜蒙骗读者的书商；不管别人是否愿意、硬要给人“帮忙”甚至越俎代庖的“热心人”；不谙人情世故、不会说假话、终于导致悲惨下场的老实人；事事追本穷源、一辈子都在走回头路的倒退者；不懂装懂、做了冤大头还自鸣得意、津津乐道的暴发户；富极无聊、愚昧轻信的阔太太；以及观看演出时自作聪明、大煞风景、最后自食其果的“聪敏人”。这一个个在有限的篇幅里出现的身份不同、面目各异的栩栩如生，使人有似

曾相识之感的可敬、可爱、可怜、可笑、可鄙、可悲的十分鲜明的人物形象，生动地展现了作者刻划人物的非凡才能，相信会给读者带来巨大的艺术享受和满足。

译注者

1997年7月

Contents

目 录

How We Kept Mother's Day	2
母亲节	
My Financial Career	16
涉足金融界	
My Unknown Friend	28
我的陌生朋友	
With the Photographer	46
照相	
The Reading Public	58
读书族	
The Hallucination of Mr. Butt	84
热心人	
The Awful Fate of Melpomenus Jones	102
老实人的下场	
The Retroactive Existence of Mr. Juggins ...	114
倒退的一生	
Number Fifty-Six	128
五十六号	
Mrs. Newrich Buys Antiques	150
暴发户置古董	
Mrs. Easy Has Her Fortune Told	170
算命	
The Conjuror's Revenge	196
报复	

HOW WE KEPT MOTHER'S DAY

OF all the different ideas that have been started lately, I think that the very best is the notion of celebrating once a year "Mother's Day." I don't wonder that May the eleventh is becoming such a popular date all over America and I am sure the idea will spread to England too.

It is especially in a big family like ours that such an idea takes hold. So we decided to have a special celebration of Mother's Day. We thought it a fine idea. It made us all realize how much Mother had done for us for years, and all the efforts and sacrifice that she had made for our sake.

So we decided that we'd make it a great day, a holiday for all the family, and do everything we could to make Mother happy. Father decided to take a holiday from his office, so as to help in celebrating the day, and my sister Anne and I stayed home from college classes, and Mary and my brother Will stayed home from High School.

It was our plan to make it a day just like Xmas^① or any big holiday, and so we decided to decorate the house with flowers and with mottoes over the mantelpieces, and all that kind of thing. We got

① =Christmas

母亲节

在所有那些新近被人提出来的各种各样的主张当中，我认为最高明不过的要算是每年过一次“母亲节”这个主意了。对于5月11日这个日子在整个美洲正日益成为一个如此盛行的节日我并不感到奇怪，而且我确信这种想法一定也会流传到英国去。

特别是在像我们家这样一个大家庭里，这样一种想法就更是深得人心。因此，我们就决定要对母亲节特别庆祝一番。我们认为这主意很不错。它使我们大家意识到母亲多年来为我们做了多少事情，以及她为了我们而作出的那种种努力和牺牲。

于是我们决心要使这一天成为一个不寻常的日子，一个全家人的节日，尽力使母亲快活。父亲决定休一天假不去上班，以便帮忙张罗这天的庆祝活动，我姐姐安妮和我呆在家里没去大学上课，而玛丽和我兄弟威尔则呆在家里没去中学上课。

我们的计划是把这一天搞成就像圣诞节或者任何一个重大节日那样，于是我们决定用鲜花把家里装饰起来，在壁炉架上用一些座右铭装点起来，以及

Mother to make mottoes and arrange the decorations, because she always does it at Xmas.

The two girls thought it would be a nice thing to dress in our very best for such a big occasion, and so they both got new hats. Mother trimmed both the hats, and they looked fine, and Father had bought four-in-hand^② silk ties for himself and us boys as a souvenir of the day to remember Mother by. We were going to get Mother a new hat too, but it turned out that she seemed to really like her old grey bonnet better than a new one, and both the girls said that it was awfully becoming to her.

Well, after breakfast we had it arranged as a surprise for Mother that we would hire a motor car and take her for a beautiful drive away into the country. Mother is hardly ever able to have a treat like that, because we can only afford to keep one maid, and so Mother is busy in the house nearly all the time. And of course the country is so lovely now that it would be just grand for her to have a lovely morning, driving for miles and miles.

But on the very morning of the day we changed the plan a little bit, because it occurred to Father that a thing it would be better to do even than to take Mother for a motor drive would be to take her

② 打活结的

诸如此类的事。我们让母亲去制做一些座右铭和布置那些装饰，因为圣诞节时她总是这样做的。

两个女孩儿认为，在这样一个重大的场合要穿上我们最好的衣服才好，因此她俩都买了新帽子。母亲把那两顶帽子都修饰了一番，弄得很好看，而父亲给他自己和我们两个男孩子都买了丝质的活结领带作为这个日子的纪念品，好对母亲永记不忘。我们本想也给母亲买顶新帽子，可是结果却发现其实她对她那顶灰色的旧软帽似乎比新帽子更喜欢，而两个女孩儿都说那旧软帽对她特别合适。

哎，早饭后我们给母亲安排了一个惊喜：我们要租一辆汽车带她去作一次远到乡间的愉快的乘车兜风。母亲简直从来都没能有那样的享受，因为我们只雇得起一名女仆，于是母亲几乎所有的时间都在家里忙碌着。而当然啦，现在乡村景色这么美，她要是坐车兜上许多英里的风、快快活活地过一个早晨，那简直是太好了。

可就在那天早上我们把计划稍微作了一点改动，因为父亲忽然感到有一种比带母亲去坐车兜风

fishing. Father said that as the car was hired and paid for, we might just as well^③ use it for a drive up into hills where the streams are. As Father said, if you just go out driving without any object, you have a sense of aimlessness, but if you are going to fish, there is a definite purpose in front of you to heighten the enjoyment.

So we all felt that it would be nicer for Mother to have a definite purpose; and anyway, it turned out that Father had just got a new rod the day before, which made the idea of fishing all the more appropriate, and he said that Mother could use it if she wanted to; in fact, he said it was practically for her, only Mother said she would much rather watch him fish and not try to fish herself.

So we got everything arranged for the trip, and we got Mother to cut up some sandwiches and make up a sort of lunch in case we got hungry, though of course we were to come back home again to a big dinner in the middle of the day, just like Xmas or New Year's Day. Mother packed it all up in a basket for us ready to go in the motor.

Well, when the car came to the door, it turned out that there hardly seemed as much room in it as we had supposed, because we hadn't reckoned on

③ 还不如

更好的做法，那就是带她去钓鱼。父亲说，既然汽车是租来的并且已经付了钱，我们还不如用它来开到有溪流的山里去。就像父亲说的那样，如果你只是没有任何目标地出去兜兜风的话，那你就会有一种无目的感，可是如果你是去钓鱼的话，那你的面前就有了一个明确的目的，可以提高兴趣。

于是我们就都感到母亲还是有个明确的目的好些，何况反正父亲又在前一天刚刚买来一根新的钓竿，这就使钓鱼的主张更加合乎时宜了，而且他说如果母亲愿意的话，她可以使用那根新钓杆；事实上，他说那根钓竿简直就是给她买的，不过母亲说她倒宁愿在一旁看着他钓鱼而不想自己尝试着去钓。

于是我们就为此行作好了一切安排，我们让母亲切好一些夹心面包片以便我们肚子饿时可以充作午餐。尽管我们在中午当然还是要再回家来吃上一顿丰盛的大餐的，就像圣诞节或元旦那样。母亲替我们把它全部装好在一只篮子里，准备放进车里带走。

哎，等汽车来到门口的时候才知道，原来那车里面的空间似乎并没有我们原先以为的那么大，因为

Father's fishing basket and the rods and the lunch, and it was plain enough that we couldn't all get in.

Father said not to mind him, he said that he could just as well^④ stay home, and that he was sure that he could put in the time working in the garden; he said that there was a lot of rough dirty work that he could do, like digging a trench for the garbage, that would save hiring a man, and so he said that he'd stay home; he said that we were not to let the fact of his not having had a real holiday for three years stand in our way; he wanted us to go right ahead and be happy and have a big day, and not to mind him. He said that he could plug away^⑤ all day, and in fact he said he'd been a fool to think there'd be any holiday for him.

But of course we all felt that it would never do to let Father stay home, especially as we knew he would make trouble if he did. The two girls, Anne and Mary, would gladly have stayed and helped the maid get dinner, only it seemed such a pity to, on a lovely day like this, having their new hats. But they both said that Mother had only to say the word, and they'd gladly stay home and work. Will

④ 完全可以

⑤ 拼命干

我们没把父亲的鱼篮和那些钓竿以及那些午餐食品考虑进去，看来十分明显的是我们无法全都上去。

父亲说不要管他，他说他可以留在家里，这也没什么关系，并且说他确信他可以用这个时间来干园子里的活，他说有许多粗活脏活他干起来还能行，比如说像挖一条处理垃圾的沟，那样就可以省得雇一个人了，因此他说他要呆在家里；他说虽然也已经有三年没能享受到一次真正的休假了，可是我们也不必对此有顾忌；他要我们只管放手去找乐子，尽情玩上一天，别去管他。他说他可以整天孜孜不倦地干，并且事实上他还说了他原先竟然以为他会有什么休假真是个傻瓜。

可是当然我们全都感到要让父亲呆在家里那是绝对不行的，特别是因为我们知道如果他呆在家里的话他是会制造麻烦的。两个女孩儿安妮和玛丽本来也乐意留下来帮助女仆做饭，只不过像这样一个美好的日子她们戴着新帽子呆在家里就未免太可惜了。不过她俩都说，只要母亲发一句话，她们会很高

and I would have dropped out, but unfortunately we wouldn't have been any use in getting the dinner.

So in the end it was decided that Mother would stay home and just have a lovely restful day round the house, and get the dinner. It turned out anyway that Mother doesn't care for fishing, and also it was just a little bit cold and fresh out of doors, though it was lovely and sunny, and Father was rather afraid that Mother might take cold if she came.

He said he would never forgive himself if he dragged Mother round the country and let her take a severe cold at a time when she might be having a beautiful rest. He said it was our duty to try and⑥ let Mother get all the rest and quiet that she could, after all that she had done for all of us, and he said that that was principally why he had fallen in with⑦ this idea of a fishing trip, so as to give Mother a little quiet. He said that young people seldom realize how much quiet means to people who are getting old. As to himself, he could still stand the racket, but he was glad to shelter Mother from it.

⑥ 尽力

⑦ 赞成

兴呆在家里干活的。威尔和我本来也会退出的，可不幸的是我们在做饭方面却是毫无用处。

因此，最后决定还是让母亲留在家里，她在家可以舒舒服服地过上一天清静悠闲的日子，并且做饭。反正后来发现母亲对钓鱼并没有兴趣，而且户外尽管阳光明媚，也还是稍微有点凉爽，我父亲有点担心她如果也来的话就有可能着凉。

他说，如果正当母亲可以舒舒服服地休息一下的时候，他如果硬把她拖到乡下去而让她得了重感冒的话，他是永远也不会原谅他自己的。他说，在母亲为我们大家做了所有那一切以后，我们有责任尽力让她得到她所能得到的休息和安静；他还说他之所以会赞成这个作一次钓鱼之行的主张，主要就是出于这个原因，为了让母亲得到一点安静。他说年轻人很少懂得安静对上了岁数的人有多重要。至于他自己，他对那些喧嚣吵嚷倒还能忍受，可是他很乐意庇护母亲不受它们困扰。