

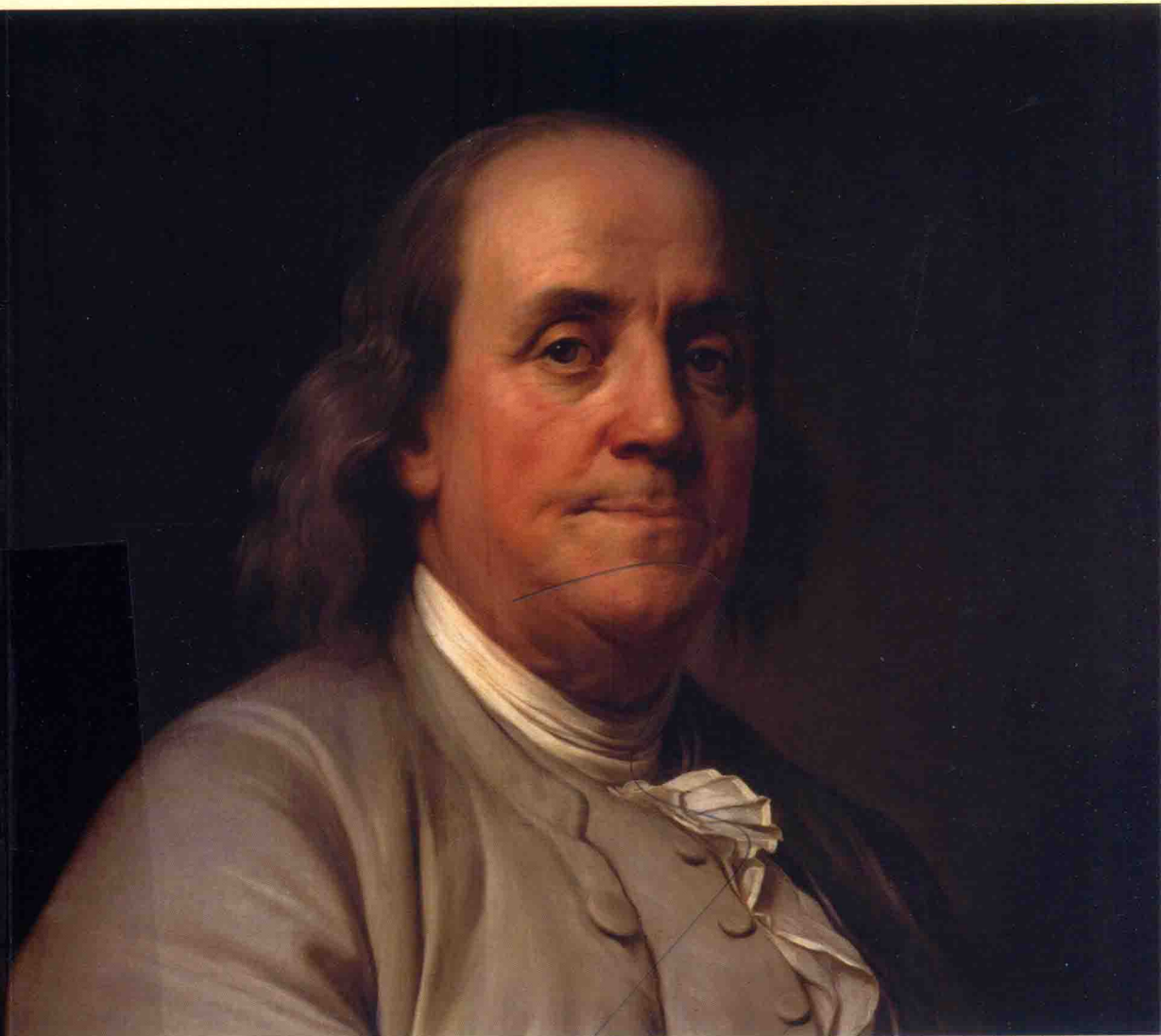
名家经典珍藏版

# 富兰克林自传

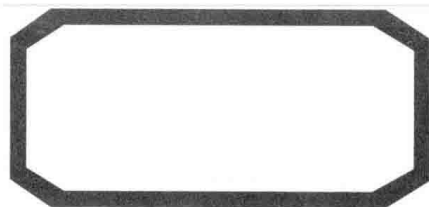
(英汉双语)

[美] 本杰明·富兰克林◎著 袁敏琴◎译

❖❖❖ THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ❖❖❖



北京工业大学出版社



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## 出版说明

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我们衷心期待这套书成为大家学习道路上不可或缺的好伙伴！如果您在阅读中发现有疑问或错误之处，请不吝指正，以便我们更加完善这套书。



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## Chapter 1

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

Dear son:

I have ever had pleasure in obtaining any little anecdotes of my ancestors. 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 with, and expecting the enjoyment of a week's uninterrupted leisure in my present country retirement, I sit down to write them for you.

To which I have besides some other inducements. Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well

## 第一章

(1771年，写于都怀福德村圣·阿萨夫教堂主教家中)

亲爱的儿子：

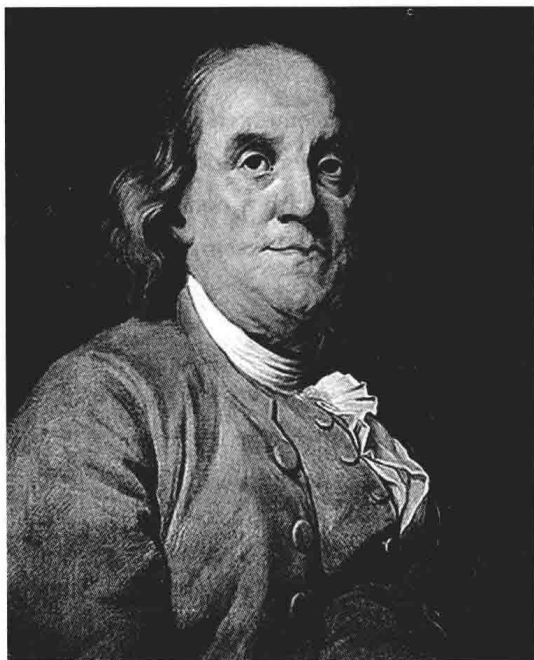
我向来喜欢搜集有关我的祖辈的一切奇闻逸事。也许你还记得，当你和我一同住在英国的时候，我曾经为了这一缘故而跋涉，调查了我亲友中尚存于世的人。我现在正在乡间度假，预计会有整整一个星期的闲暇时间，我想你也许想知道我这一辈子的事情，其中有许多还是你没有听说过的，因此我就坐了下来，替你写出来。

除此以外，我还有一些其他的动机。由于我出身贫寒，幼年生长于穷苦卑微的家庭，而后来竟然生活优越，在世界上享有些许声誉，并且至今一帆风顺，我的处世之道——承蒙上帝的福佑——获得了巨大的成就，我的子孙或许

succeeded, my posterity 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 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 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 of that life, and to make that recollection as durable as possible by putting it down in writing.

Hereby, too, I shall indulge the inclination so natural in old men, to be talking of



■ 富兰克林

themselves and their own past actions; and I shall indulge it without being tiresome 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 confess it,

愿意知道，就像他们所发现的一样，这些处世之道的一部分或许与他们的自己的情况相符，因此适合仿效。

当我回顾一生中的幸运时，有时我不禁会这样说，如果有人提议给我选择的话，我不会拒绝把我这一生从头再演一遍，而仅仅要求像作家那样，在再版之际有机会改正初版

中的某些缺陷。除了改正错误，我也可以把某些不幸的遭遇和事件变得更加顺利些。但是，即使这些都无法回避的话，我还是愿意接受提议，以重演我的一生。由于这种重演是不可能的，那么，与重演某人一生最接近的，似乎就是回忆了。为了使这种回忆尽可能保持长久，就是把它记载下来。

因此，我将按着老年人常有的倾向来谈论自己和自己过去的经历。我将尽量不让听的人感到厌倦——他们或者是因为尊敬老人而觉得非听我的话不可，这些一经写下来，那么听不听就全凭个人喜好了。



since my denial of it will be believed by nobody), perhaps I shall a good deal gratify my own vanity. Indeed, I scarce ever heard or saw the introductory words, "Without vanity I may say," &c., but some vain 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 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 if a man were to thank God for his vanity among the other comforts of life.

The notes one of my uncles (who had the same kind of curiosity in collecting family anecdotes) once put into my hands, furnished me with several particulars 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 of people, was assumed by them as a surname when others took surnames all over the kingdom), on a freehold 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

最后（我还是自己承认的好，因为即使我否认，谁也不会相信），写自传或许还能极大地满足我的自负心。事实上，我很少听见或看到“我可以毫不自夸地说……”这种开场白以后，不说一些自我吹嘘之话的。

大多数人不喜欢别人的吹嘘，不管他们自己是多么自负。但是，无论我在哪里遇到这种情况，我总是能宽恕的，因为我相信这种心理对自己和他周围的人都有益处。所以，在许多情况下，如果一个人把自负心当作生命的一种安慰而感恩的话，这也不是荒诞之举。

我的一位伯父（他也同样喜欢搜集家族中的遗闻逸事），曾交给我一些笔记，给我提供了一些有关我们祖先的事迹。从这些笔记中，我知道了我们家族在诺桑普顿郡的爱克顿教区至少已住了300年，而在这以前还有多少年他就知道了（也许从他们采用“富兰克林”这个姓起。在这以前，“富兰克林”是一个人民阶层的名称，当时英国各地的人都采用了姓氏）。他们有30英亩土地，以打铁为副业，直到我伯父的时代为止，打铁这一行业一直保持着，家中长子一直学打铁，我伯父和我父亲都遵循着这个传统，叫他们的长子学打铁。

我研究了爱克顿教区的户籍册，只找到了1555年以后人们出生、嫁娶和丧

and burials from the year 1555 only, there being no registers kept in that parish at any time preceding. 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. 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 there.

My grandfather had four sons that grew up, viz.: 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, and encouraged in learning (as all my brothers were) by an Esquire Palmer, then the principal gentleman in that parish, he qualified himself for the business of scrivener; became a considerable man in the county; was a chief mover of all public-spirited undertakings for the county or town of Northampton, and his own village, of which many instances were related of him; and much taken notice of and patronized by the then Lord Halifax.

葬的记录，那个教区在那以前的户籍册已经没有保留了。从这个户籍册中，我发现我是五代以来小儿子的小儿子。

我的祖父托马斯出生于1598年，住在爱克顿，直到老得不能干活了，他就住到了他儿子约翰那里，约翰是牛津郡班布雷村的一个染匠，我父亲就跟着他学徒。我的祖父死在那里，并安葬于斯。我们在1758年看到了他的墓碑。他的长子托马斯住在爱克顿的家中，后来把房子和土地传给了他唯一的女儿。他女儿和她的丈夫费雪（威灵堡人）又把这些卖给了伊斯德先生，他现在是那里的庄园主。

我祖父养大了4个儿子，名叫托马斯、约翰、本杰明和约西亚。我将把我记得的给你写出来，由于我手里头没有材料，如果这些东西在我离家以后还不曾遗失的话，你可以从记录中找到更详细的材料。

托马斯被他父亲培养成了一个铁匠，但是他天生聪颖，当时该教区的大绅士帕尔默鼓励他求学上进（他的弟弟们也得到了同样的鼓励），他就获得了担任书记官的资格，成为地方上有影响的人，也成为他本村和诺桑普顿城镇以及他所在的州的一切公益事业的主要推动者，许多事情都和他有关，并受到了当

He died in 1702, January 6, old style, just four years to a day 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."

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 volumes, MS., of his own poetry, consisting of little occasional pieces addressed 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 practising 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, a great attender of sermons 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

时的哈利法克斯勋爵的赏识和奖励。

他死于旧历1702年1月6日，正好是我出生之前的整整4年。当我们从爱克顿教区的一些老人口中听到有关他的生平和性格的时候，我还记得，你非常惊讶，因为这一切很像你所知道的我。

“如果他在您出世的那一天去世，”你说，“有人也许会认为灵魂转世呢！”

约翰学了染匠，我认为是染呢绒的。本杰明当了丝绸染匠，是在伦敦学的手艺。他生性聪明。我清楚地记得，当我还是一个孩子的时候，他渡海来波士顿找我父亲，和我们一起住了好几年。他活了很大一把年纪。他的孙子萨缪尔·富兰克林现在还住在波士顿。他死后，留下来两本四开本的诗稿，里面是一些写给他的朋友和亲戚的诗。下面寄给我的这首诗，就是一个实例。

他自己研究出了一套速写术，并教给了我，但是我从来没有练过，所以现在全忘了。我的名字就来自他，因为我父亲跟他感情特别好。

他非常虔诚，经常去听著名传教士讲道，并用他的速记法把他们的讲道记下来，他身边就有许多这样的笔记本。他还是一位了不起的政治家，或许还超出了他的地位本身。

principal pamphlets, 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, and twenty-four in quarto and in octavo. 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 family of ours was early in the Reformation, and continued Protestants through the reign of Queen Mary, when they were sometimes in danger of trouble on account of their zeal against popery. 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. 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 children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor 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 till about the end of Charles the Second's reign, when some of the ministers that had been outed for nonconformity holding conventicles in Northamptonshire, Benjamin and Josiah

最近，我在伦敦得到了他搜集的从1641年到1717年间重要的政治事件手册，从标明的序号来看，有许多册已经散失了，但是还留下了8本对开本，24本四开本和八开本。一个旧书商人得到了这些书，因为我有时来他这里买书，他认识我，所以他就把它们送给了我。看来是我伯父去美洲时留在这里的，至今已经50多年了。在书的空白边上有许多他的注解。

我们这个卑微的家族很早就投身于宗教改革运动，而且在玛丽女王整个统治时期一直坚持信仰新教，当时他们狂热地反对教皇，所以有时会遭受迫害之险。他们有一本英文版《圣经》，为了隐藏和保管它，他们将它打开，用细带子绑在一个折叠凳的底部。当我的高祖父对全家人读经文时，就把折叠凳翻过来放在他的膝盖上，然后翻动带子下面的书页。

他的一个孩子站在门口放哨，如果看见教会法庭的官员走过来，就提前通知。这时，凳子又重新翻过来，四脚落地，《圣经》又像以前一样藏好了。这些我是从本杰明伯父那里听来的。直到大约查理二世统治的时候，这个家族还是一致信奉国教。但是，那时有一些牧师因为不信奉国教教义而被开除了教籍，他们在诺桑普顿举行会议。本杰明和约西亚改信了他们的教派，而且一生

adhered to 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, 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 to accompany them thither, 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 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, learned Englishman,' if I remember the words rightly. I have heard that he wrote sundry 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 verse of that time and people, and addressed to those then concerned in the government there. It was in favor of liberty of

不变，家里的其他人仍然信奉国教。

我父亲约西亚很早就结婚了，大约在1682年，带着他的妻子和3个孩子迁到了新英格兰。由于非国教的宗教集会受到法律禁止，而且时常受到干扰，致使我父亲的朋友中，一些有声望的人打算移居到新大陆，我父亲答应陪他们一起去那里。他们希望在那里能自由地信仰他们的宗教。

在新英格兰，这位太太又生了4个孩子；他的第二个妻子又生了10个，共17个孩子。我还记得，有一阵子，他的餐桌旁围坐着13个孩子，这13个孩子都已经长大了，而且都结了婚。我是幼子，比我小的只有两个妹妹。我出生在新英格兰的波士顿。

我母亲是我父亲的第二个妻子，叫阿拜亚·福尔戈，是彼得·福尔戈的女儿。我的外祖父，则是新英格兰的最早移民之一。他曾被克顿·马休在他的《美洲教会史》中表扬过，称他为“一个虔诚而有学问的英国人”，如果我没记错的话。我听说他曾经写过各种即兴短诗，但只有一首被印刷出来，我在许多年以前曾读过。

这首诗写于1675年，用当时民间流行的体裁写成，是写给当时当地的执政

conscience, and in behalf of the Baptists, Quakers, and other sectaries that had been under persecution, ascribing the Indian wars, and other distresses that had befallen the country, to that persecution, as so many judgments of God to punish so heinous an offense, and exhorting a repeal of those uncharitable laws.

The whole appeared to me as written with a good deal of decent plainness and manly freedom. The six concluding lines I remember, though I have forgotten the two first of the stanza; but the purport of them was, that his censures proceeded from good-will, and, therefore, he would be known to be the author.

*"Because to be a libeller (says he)  
I hate it with my heart;  
From Sherburne town, where now I dwell  
My name I do put here;  
Without offense your real friend,  
It is Peter Folger."*

My elder brothers were all put apprentices to different trades. I was put to the grammar-school at eight years of age, my father intending to devote me, as the tithe of his sons, to

当局的。它拥护信仰自由，支持受迫害的浸礼会、教友会和其他教派，指出殖民地的印第安人战争和其他灾祸是迫害教徒的后果，是上帝对这种重大罪行的判决和惩罚，并规劝当局废除那些残酷的法律。

在我看来，整首诗简洁紧凑，平易近人。这首诗的最后6行我还记得，但是最初两行我已记不清了，不过这两行的大意是说他的批评出于善意，因此他情愿让别人知道他是这首诗的作者。

由于从心坎里，  
我憎恶做一个匿名诽谤者，  
我现在就住在谢尔本，  
我的姓名就在这里，  
你真诚的朋友，毫无恶意，  
他就是彼得·福尔戈。

我的兄长们都从事不同的行业。我8岁就被送到语法学校读书，因为我父亲

the service of the Church. My early readiness in learning to read (which must have been very early, as I do not remember when I could not read), and the opinion of all his friends, that I should certainly make a good scholar, encouraged him in this purpose of his.

My uncle Benjamin, too, approved of it, and proposed to give me all his short-hand volumes of sermons, I suppose as a stock to set up with, if I would learn his character. I continued, however, at the grammar-school not quite one year, though in that time I had risen gradually from the middle of the class of that year to be the head of it, and farther was removed into the next class above it, in order to go with that into the third at the end of the year. But my father, in the meantime, from a view of the expense of a college education, which having so large a family he could not well afford, and the mean living many so educated were afterwards able to obtain—reasons that he gave to his friends in my hearing—altered his first intention, took me from the grammar-school, and sent me to a school for writing and arithmetic, kept by a then famous man, Mr. George Brownell, very successful in his profession generally, and that by mild, encouraging methods. Under him I acquired fair writing pretty soon, but I failed in the arithmetic, and made no progress in it.

At ten years old I was taken home to assist my father in his business, which was that of a tallow-chandler and sope-boiler; a business he was not bred to, but had assumed on his arrival in New England, and on finding his dying trade would not maintain his family,

打算把我当作他的儿子中的什一税来捐献给教会。在识字方面我起步很早（我一定很早就识字了，因为我不记得我曾有不识字的时期），他的朋友们又都说我将来读书一定会有出息，这都鼓舞了我父亲送我去学校读书。

我的伯父本杰明也赞成此举，并提议把他全部说教的速记本送给我，我想这是作为他开张的资本吧，如果我愿意学习他的速记法的话。但是，我在语法学校念了不到一年，虽然我在这一年中逐渐从班里面的中等生上升到了优等生，接着就升入了二年级，准备在那年的年终随班一起升入三年级。然而，这时候，我父亲考虑到大学教育的花费，因为有一大家子人要抚养，同时许多受过大学教育的人后来穷困潦倒——这是他在我面前对他的朋友们讲的，所以他改变了原来的主意，让我离开了语法学校，并将我送到了一所书算学校。这所学校由当时著名的乔治·布朗纳先生创办，一般来说他的办学非常成功，并且能够循循善诱，采用鼓励的教学方法。在他的教导下，我很快就学会了一手漂亮的书法，但是我的算术不及格，并且毫无进步。

我10岁的时候，被父亲接回家来，帮助他经营生意。他经营油烛和肥皂制造业，他原来并不是干这一行的，但是到了新英格兰之后，他发现他原来从事



being in little request. Accordingly, I was employed in cutting wick for the candles, filling the dipping mold and the molds for cast candles, attending the shop, going of errands, etc.

I disliked the trade, and had a strong inclination for the sea, but my father declared against it; however, living near the water, I was much in and about it, learnt early to swim well, and to manage boats; and when in a boat or canoe with other boys, I was commonly allowed to govern, especially in any case of difficulty; and upon other occasions I was generally a leader among the boys, and sometimes led them into scrapes, of which I will mention one instance, as it shows an early projecting public spirit, tho' not then justly conducted.

There was a salt-marsh that bounded part of the mill-pond, on the edge of which, at high water, we used to stand to fish for minnows. By much trampling, we had made it a mere quagmire. My proposal was to build a wharff there fit for us to stand upon, and I showed my comrades a large heap of stones, which were intended for a new house near the marsh, and which would very well suit our purpose. Accordingly, in the evening, when the workmen were gone, I assembled a number of my play-fellows, and working with them diligently like so many emmets, sometimes two or three to a stone, we brought them all away and built our little wharff. The next morning the workmen were surprised at missing the stones, which were found in our wharff. Inquiry was made after the

的染色生意冷清，不能维持全家人的生活，所以就改了行。因此，我被指定做剪烛芯、灌烛模、管店铺、出差等事情。

我不喜欢这个行业，同时我强烈地想去航海，可是我父亲反对。因为住在海边，我经常到海边去玩水，早就很会游泳了，还学会了划船。当我和其他小孩在大船或小船里面的时候，我总是发号施令的人，特别是在处境困难的时候。在其他场合下，我一般也是孩子王，有时候会让他们陷入窘境。我想举其中的一个例子，因为这件事显示了我很早就已经突显出来的热心公益的精神，虽然这件事在当时做得不对。

在水车贮水池的边上有一个盐泽，在涨潮时分，我们时常站在盐泽边上钓鲱鱼。由于经常践踏，我们把盐泽的边沿踩成了一个泥潭。我提议在那里修一个码头，这样我们就可以站在那里。我将一大堆石头指给我的伙伴们看，这些石头是准备在盐泽边上建一所新房子用的，正好很符合我们的需要。因此，当工人们晚上离开的时候，我召集了几个玩伴，就像一群蚂蚁一样，勤快地工作着，有时两三个人搬一块石头。我们终于把石头全搬来了，建好了我们的小



removers; we were discovered and complained of; several of us were corrected by our fathers; and though I pleaded the usefulness of the work, mine convinced me that nothing was useful which was not honest.

I think you may like to know something of his person and character. He had an excellent constitution of body, was of middle stature, but well set, and very strong; he was ingenious, could draw prettily, was skilled a little in music, and had a clear pleasing voice, so that when he played psalm tunes on his violin and sung withal, as he sometimes did in an evening after the business of the day was over, it was extremely agreeable to hear.

He had a mechanical genius too, and, on occasion, was very handy in the use of other tradesmen's tools; but his great excellence lay in a sound understanding and solid judgment in prudential matters, both in private and publick affairs. In the latter, indeed, he was never employed, the numerous family he had to educate and the straitness of his circumstances keeping him close to his trade; but I remember well his being frequently visited by leading people, who consulted him for his opinion in affairs of the town or of the church he belonged to, and showed a good deal of respect for his judgment and advice: he was also much consulted by private persons about their affairs when any difficulty occurred, and frequently chosen an arbitrator between contending parties.

码头。第二天早上，工人们很奇怪石头不见了，后来在我们的码头上找到了它们。他们追查是谁干的，我们被查了出来，被狠狠地批评了一顿，我们中有几个因此而受到了父亲的责备。虽然我辩解说这件事是有益的，但是我父亲使我深信，不诚实的事情是不会有收益的。

我想你或许想知道一些我父亲的外貌和性格吧。他有着强健的身体，身材中等，但是非常结实，十分强壮。他天资聪颖，画得一手好画，稍微懂点儿音乐。他有一副清脆悦耳的嗓音，所以有时候当他晚上忙完一天的工作时，用提琴拉着赞歌的调子唱歌，还是挺动听的。

他还有机械方面的才华，有时候偶尔拿到其他行业的工具，他也能熟练地使用。但是，他最大的长处，是表现在处理公私重大问题时所展现出来的深刻见解和正确判断上。事实上，他从来没有参与过政事，由于家里那么多孩子必须教育，家境又困难，他只能死死地守着他的生意。但是我清楚地记得，地方上有头有脸的人经常来拜访他，向他请教镇上或他所属教会的问题，而且很重视他的判断和忠告。当人们在个人生活中遇到了困难的时候，也常常来向他请