



Lyric Prose

抒情散文



愉悦心灵的美文



编译 肖建壮 刘风山



英语美文
欣赏系列

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Lyrical Prose

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当代中国散文

主编：曹文轩、沈从文



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前 言

随着中国加入 WTO、申奥、申博的成功,英语学习日益受到人们的高度重视。然而,当今时代,人们的生活节奏大大加快,有心学习英语,又不可能投入太多的时间和精力;有心学习英语,又倦于传统的学习方式,希望愉快阅读,轻松掌握。故此,我们编译了这套《英语美文欣赏系列》,旨在为具有中学英语水平的广大学生和在职人员,提供一条

1

学习英语的便捷可行的崭新途径。

英语学习,阅读能力的培养至为重要。因为,阅读是获取信息的主要手段,是听、说、写水平提高的基础。一般而言,阅读能力的培养大约有两种图式:一是自下而上的知识性阅读;二是自上而下的交际性阅读。然而,长期以来,我们的英语教学采取的是前者,即,按照“词—句—篇”的顺序,侧重于识别和辨认词句和语法等表层结构,但对于语篇的理解却显得支离破碎,影响了言语交际能力的获得。这里,我们一反以往的做法,充分发挥从语篇的整体出发的交际性阅读的优势,便于读者在茶余饭后、旅行途中、课余时间,或随意翻翻、或细细品



味,以达到解乏去闷、轻松记忆、在愉快的阅读中提高英语应用和交际的能力。

《英语美文欣赏系列》共分6本:《浪漫短诗》、《抒情散文》、《励志小品》、《人间喜剧》、《童话世界》、《哲理故事》。编选的材料散见于各大英语报章书刊,内容丰富,生动有趣,新颖别致,题材多样。各书编排均采用英汉对照的形式,以便读者对照学习和欣赏。该书既便于帮助读者咀嚼原汁原味的英语原文,又为只想通过汉语欣赏英语散文的读者提供了方便。

尽管本书参考了一些专家的相关成果,编选不当甚至失误之处在所难免,渴望得到读者、专家的指正。



目 录

- 前言 (1)
1. Sunday in the Country *Joseph Addison* (1)
乡村礼拜日 约瑟夫·艾迪生
2. An October Sunrise *Richard D. Blackmore* (10)
十月的日出 理查德·D·布雷克默
3. Beauty *Ralph Waldo Emerson* (14)
论美 拉尔夫·瓦尔多·爱默生
4. A Handful of Clay *Henry Van Dyke* (33)
一把黏土 亨利·范·戴克
5. Glories of the Storm *Nancy M. Peterson* ... (42)
壮丽的暴风雨 南希·M·皮得森
6. October Lake *Herbert Ernest Bates* (49)
十月之湖 赫伯特·欧内斯特·贝慈
7. My Wood *E. M. Forster* (56)
我的林子 E·M·弗斯特
8. The Night Storm *Charles Dickens* (68)
夜晚的风暴 查尔斯·狄更斯
9. Spell of the Rising Moon *Peter Steinhart* ... (74)
月亮升起来 皮特·斯坦哈特
10. On Going a Journey *William Hazlitt* (83)



说出游 威廉·赫兹利特

11. What Is Poverty *Jo Goodman Parker* (117)

什么是贫穷 乔·古德曼·帕克

12. Sanity of True Genius *Charles Lamb* (134)

天才未必真癫狂 查尔斯·兰姆

13. Tulips *Joseph Addison* (145)

郁金香 约瑟夫·艾迪生

14. The Windmill *Edward Verrall Lucas* (156)

风车 爱德华·韦拉尔·鲁卡斯

15. Golden Fruit *A. A. Milne* (161)

金色果实 A·A·米尔尼

16. Autumn in the Country *Erma Bombeck* ... (165)

乡村的秋日 艾玛·波姆贝克

2

17. Of Bashfulness *Samuel Johnson* (170)

论羞怯 塞缪尔·约翰逊

18. A Pair of New Shoes *Elsie Phillips* (181)

一双新鞋 埃尔斯·菲利普斯

19. Rural Life in England *Washington Irving* ... (195)

英国的乡村生活 华盛顿·欧文

20. Timeless Tides in New York City *William J. Dean*

..... (217)

纽约城中永恒的潮 威廉·J·迪恩

21. The Rose *Logan Pearsall Smith* (222)

蔷薇 洛根·皮尔瑟尔·史密斯

22. The Man of Destiny *George Bernard Shaw* (231)

主宰命运的人 乔治·伯纳德·萧伯纳



23. A Day's Ramble in London *Richard Steele* (236)
 伦敦一日游 理查德·斯蒂尔
24. Dancers *John Galsworthy* (253)
 舞者 约翰·高尔斯华绥
25. Of Friendship *Francis Bacon* (259)
 论友谊 弗朗西斯·培根
26. Night *Nathaniel Hawthorne* (280)
 夜 纳撒尼尔·霍桑
27. First Snow *John Boynton Priestley* (284)
 初雪 约翰·波尹顿·普瑞斯特利
28. Conclusion Of *Walden* *Henry David Thoreau* (292)
 《沃尔登》结束语 亨利·大卫·梭罗



1 Sunday in the Country

Joseph Addison

I am always well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest subjects, to converse with one another upon different subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the



village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the change, the whole parish-politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular, and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing-master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order and will suffer nobody to sleep in it beside himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them



himself or sends his servants to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces 'Amen' three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about and not disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all the circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see anything ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.



As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side, and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother, or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me that, upon a catechizing day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a Bible to be given to him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place, and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that arise between the parson and the squire, who live in a perpetual state of



war. The parson is always preaching at the squire; and the squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church. The squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters have come to such an extremity, that the squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people, who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important so ever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

1 乡村礼拜日

约瑟夫·艾迪生

约瑟夫·艾迪生(1672年—1719年),英国



著名的散文作家,1672年生于英国一个乡村牧师家庭,后受教于牛津大学,并于1693年获得硕士学位。从1708年开始,艾迪生先后担任过议会议员、国务大臣助理、英国驻爱尔兰总督秘书等职。后曾为理查德·斯蒂尔主编的《闲话报》撰写文章。1711年,他与斯蒂尔合作创办报纸《旁观者》并担任主编。《旁观者》主要刊登关于英国当时社会风尚的文章和一些文学评论,收集并传播当时的各种新思想,以期改变社会。同时,艾迪生还从事诗歌和戏剧创作,著名的作品有诗歌《远征》(1704年)和剧本《加图》(1713年)等。奠定艾迪生在文学领域地位的主要是他的散文创作。他的散文文风优美,文笔流畅,亲切通俗,主题明晰,对以后的散文作家有很大的影响。

我对乡村的礼拜日一直怀有一种独特的感情。我始终认为,如果把每周的第七天作为一个神圣的日子来祭奠仅仅是人类的一种习俗,那么这种习俗应该是人类追求完美与文明的最佳途径。若没有这样一个节日,乡村的人们肯定不久就会退化到未开化的野蛮状态。有了这么一个节日,全村的人便有机会面带着最甜美的笑容,身着最洁净的衣服,同乡亲聚在一起谈天说地,聆听主的教诲,表达对主的敬仰。礼拜日还能够清除人们一周来积攒下的污秽,一方面,为他们的信仰增添营养,另一方面,让前来的男男女女都表现得文雅得体,



发扬他们的美德，以求在邻居心中树立一个良好的形象。城里人在交易所里叱咤风云，乡下人在教堂里同样也能大有作为。祷告前或祷告后，教堂就成了乡下人讨论教区大事的最好去处。

我的朋友罗杰爵士就是一位虔诚的教民，他亲自选摘经文，用以装点教堂的内壁。他还为布道坛捐献了一块精美的台布，并出资为祭坛安装了围栏。他时常对我讲，他初到此地接管地产时，发现本地教民不守常规，为让他们愿意跪下祈祷，他为每一位村民提供了一个跪垫，一卷祷告经文。同时，他还花钱雇了一位巡回音乐教师，走街串巷，向当地的村民传授赞美诗的曲调。今天的村民对他们自己颇为满意，的确他们也好于我所听说过的其他乡村教堂的教民。

当地的所有教民都租种罗杰爵士的田地，因此罗杰爵士对他们要求也比较严格，决不允许任何人做礼拜的时候瞌睡。如果在听牧师讲道的过程中自己不留心小睡了一会儿，那么醒来之后，他就会站起身来，环顾四周，看其他人是否也在睡觉。如果发现什么人在打盹儿，他会自己过去把他唤醒，或者让下人去把他弄醒。在这种场合下，这位老爵士还会暴露其他一些“怪癖”。有时，在吟诵赞美诗的时候，他会把某个句子拖得特别长，别人都已经结束了，他还没有唱完。有时，他会虔诚到对同一位教民连呼三四次



“阿门”。有时，别人都跪着，他却站着，把来做祷告的人数一遍，看看哪个佃户缺席未到。

还有让人感到更吃惊的事。昨天做礼拜的时候，我突然听到我的老朋友高声喊着约翰·马修斯这个名字，目的是想让那人检点一点儿，不要打扰其他的教民。那位叫约翰·马修斯的是个有名的懒汉，当时他正耷拉着双腿解闷儿。这位老爵士向来是以这种古怪的形式显示自己的权威的，但这对于整个教区的教风却大有益处。再说，由于当地的村民也并非那么有教养，因此也并不觉得他的举止有何可笑之处。而且，由于罗杰爵士良好的判断力及其高尚的品德，他的这些怪癖在他的朋友看来非但无损他的声誉，反而更加突出了他的美德。

每次布道完毕，在罗杰爵士没有离开教堂之前，是没有人动的。这时候，爵士从圣坛处的座位上走下来，离开教堂，站在两旁的佃户都弯腰向他行礼。途中，他还不时地询问那些不曾来教堂的父母妻儿最近身体怎样，而这些询问实际上是对缺席者一种委婉的责备。

牧师曾经对我说过，每逢教义问答日，只要哪个孩子的回答令他感到满意，第二天罗杰爵士就会派人送去一部《圣经》，以示鼓励，有时候还附带一块咸肉送给那孩子的母亲。罗杰爵士每年还给牧师五英镑的奖金，