

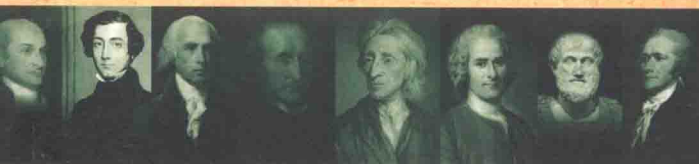


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# 杰斐逊选集


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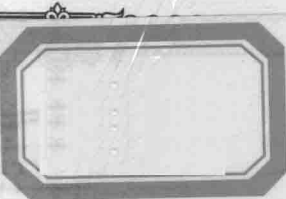


The Life and Selected Writings  
of Thomas Jefferson

[美] 托马斯·杰斐逊  
(Thomas Jefferson) ◎ 著  
强梅梅 ◎ 导读



 中国人民大学出版社



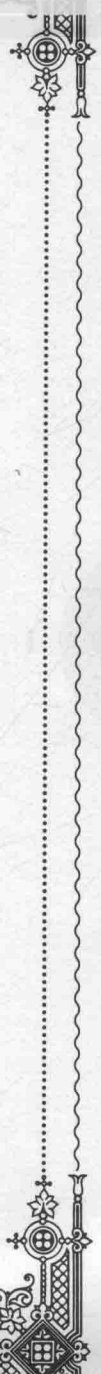
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# CONTENTS



Letters .....	373
TO: JOHN HARVIE, Jan. 14, 1760 .....	374
JOHN PAGE, December 25, 1762 .....	374
JOHN PAGE, July 15th, 1763 .....	378
JOHN PAGE, October 7, 1763 .....	379
ROBERT SKIPWITH, Aug. 3, 1771 .....	380
DR. WILLIAM SMALL, May 7, 1775 .....	381
JOHN RANDOLPH, ESQ., November 29, 1775 .....	382
FRANCIS EPPES, July 15th, 1776 .....	384
JOHN FABRONI, June 8th, 1778 .....	386
COLONEL JAMES MONROE, May 20th, 1782 .....	387
FRANÇOIS JEAN, CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX, Nov. 26, 1782 .....	388
MARTHA JEFFERSON, Dec. 22, 1783 .....	388
COLONEL MONROE, June 17, 1785 .....	389
DR. PRICE, August 7, 1785 .....	390
THE COUNT DE VERGENNES, August 15, 1785 .....	391
MRS. TRIST, August 18, 1785 .....	394
PETER CARR, August 19, 1785 .....	395
JOHN JAY, August 23, 1785 .....	400

TO: BARON GEISMER, September 6, 1785 .....	403
JAMES MADISON, September 20, 1785 .....	404
MR. BELLINI, September 30, 1785 .....	406
HOGENDORP, October 13, 1785 .....	408
J. BANISTER, JUNIOR, October 15, 1785 .....	409
REVEREND JAMES MADISON, Oct. 28, 1785 .....	412
A. STUART, ESQ., January 25, 1786 .....	416
JAMES MADISON, February 8, 1786 .....	418
JOHN PAGE, May 4, 1786 .....	419
MR. WYTHE, August 13, 1786 .....	420
MRS. COSWAY, October 12, 1786 .....	421
JAMES MADISON, December 16, 1786 .....	434
JOHN JAY, January 9, 1787 .....	435
MONSIEUR DE CREVE-COEUR, January 15, 1787 .....	436
COLONEL EDWARD CARRINGTON, January 16, 1787 .....	437
JAMES MADISON, January 30, 1787 .....	438
MADAME LA COMTESSE DE TESSÉ, March 20, 1787 .....	440
MARTHA JEFFERSON, March 28, 1787 .....	443
MARTHA JEFFERSON, April 7, 1787 .....	445
THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, April 11, 1787 .....	446
JAMES MADISON, June 20, 1787 .....	448
T. M. RANDOLPH, JUNIOR, July 6, 1787 .....	450
EDWARD CARRINGTON, August 4, 1787 .....	453
COLONEL MONROE, August 5, 1787 .....	454
PETER CARR, August 10, 1787 .....	455
JOHN ADAMS, August 30, 1787 .....	460
JOHN ADAMS, November 13, 1787 .....	463
COLONEL SMITH, November 13, 1787 .....	467
JAMES MADISON, December 20, 1787 .....	468
E. CARRINGTON, Dec. 21, 1787 .....	472
MR. A. DONALD, February 7, 1788 .....	473

## II



TO: THE COUNT DE MOUSTIER, May 17, 1788 .....	475
WILLIAM CARMICHAEL, May 27, 1788 .....	476
COLONEL CARRINGTON, May 27, 1788 .....	477
MR. IZARD, July 17, 1788 .....	479
E. KUTLEDGE, July 18, 1788 .....	480
MR. CUTTING, July 24, 1788 .....	480
JAMES MADISON, July 31, 1788 .....	481
JAMES MADISON, November 18, 1788 .....	483
DR. PRICE, January 8, 1789 .....	484
JOHN JAY, January 11, 1789 .....	489
FRANCIS HOPKINSON, March 13, 1789 .....	490
JAMES MADISON, March 15, 1789 .....	493
COLONEL HUMPHREYS, March 18, 1789 .....	496
DOCTOR WILLARD, March 24, 1789 .....	498
GENERAL WASHINGTON, May 10, 1789 .....	499
MONSIEUR DE ST. ETIENNE, June 3, 1789 .....	500
JOHN JAY, June 24, 1789 .....	503
JOHN JAY, June 29, 1789 .....	507
THOMAS PAINE, July 11, 1789 .....	510
JOHN JAY, July 19, 1789 .....	512
JAMES MADISON, September 6, 1789 .....	519
WM. HUNTER, ESQ., MAYOR OF ALEXANDRIA, March 11, 1790 .....	525
THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, April 2, 1790 .....	525
MARIA JEFFERSON, April 11, 1790 .....	527
MR. THOMAS MANN RANDOLPH, May 30, 1790 .....	528
JOHN GARLAND JEFFERSON, June 11, 1790 .....	529
MARIA JEFFERSON, June 13th, 1790 .....	532
COUNT DE MOUSTIER, December 3, 1790 .....	532
MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, Dec. 23, 1790 .....	533
MR. HAZARD, February 18, 1791 .....	533
MAJOR L'ENFANT, April 10, 1791 .....	534



目  
录

TO: THOMAS MANN RANDOLPH, June 5, 1791 .....	535
T. M. RANDOLPH, July 3, 1791 .....	536
JOHN ADAMS, July 17, 1791 .....	537
WILLIAM SHORT, July 28, 1791 .....	539
BENJAMIN BANNEKER, August 30, 1791 .....	540
MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH,	
January 15th, 1792.....	540
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,	
May 23, 1792 .....	541
THOMAS PAINE, June 19, 1792.....	551
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,	
September 9, 1792 .....	551
WILLIAM SHORT, January 3, 1793 .....	556
JAMES MADISON, June 9, 1793.....	557
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,	
July 31, 1793 .....	560
ELI WHITNEY, November 16, 1793 .....	561
JOHN ADAMS, Apr. 25, 1794 .....	562
TENCH COXE, May 1, 1794.....	562
JAMES MADISON, December 28, 1794 .....	563
MONSIEUR D'IVERNOIS, February 6, 1795 .....	564
M. DE MEUSNIER, Apr. 29, 1795 .....	567
MANN PAGE, August 30, 1795.....	568
GEORGE WYTHE, January 16, 1796 .....	569
PHILIP MAZZEI, April 24, 1796 .....	571
JOHN ADAMS, Dec. 28, 1796 .....	572
JAMES MADISON, Jan. 1, 1797 .....	573
ELBRIDGE GERRY, May 13, 1797 .....	574
EDWARD RUTLEDGE, June 24, 1797 .....	578
ELBRIDGE GERRY, January 26, 1799 .....	579
EDMUND PENDLETON, January 29, 1799 .....	581



TO: MARIA JEFFERSON EPPES, Feb. 7, 1799 .....	582
EDMUND RANDOLPH, August 18, 1799 .....	583
DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, January 18, 1800 .....	586
DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, January 27, 1800 .....	588
DR. WILLIAM BACHE, Feb. 2, 1800 .....	590
SAMUEL ADAMS, February 26, 1800 .....	590
DR. BENJAMIN RUSH, September 23, 1800 .....	591
MARTHA JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, January 26, 1801 .....	592
T. M. RANDOLPH, February 19, 1801 .....	593
JOHN DICKINSON, March 6, 1801 .....	594
DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, March 21, 1801 .....	595
SAMUEL ADAMS, March 29, 1801 .....	597
ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON, September 9, 1801 .....	598
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY (ALBERT GALLATIN), April 1, 1802 .....	600
DOCTOR BENJAMIN RUSH, April 21, 1803 .....	600
GENERAL HORATIO GATES, July 11, 1803 .....	605
MONSIEUR CABANIS, July 12, 1803 .....	606
WILSON C. NICHOLAS, September 7, 1803 .....	606
JEAN BAPTISTE SAY, February 1, 1804 .....	608
JUDGE JOHN TYLER, June 28, 1804 .....	609
C. F. C. DE VOLNEY, February 8, 1805 .....	610
THE CHIEFS OF THE CHEROKEE NATION, January 10, 1806 .....	611
THE REVEREND DOCTOR G. C. JENNER, May 14, 1806 .....	614
JOHN NORVELL, June 11, 1807 .....	614
GOVERNOR JAMES SULLIVAN, June 19, 1807 .....	616
DOCTOR CASPER WISTAR, June 21, 1807 .....	617
MONSIEUR DUPONT DE NEMOURS, July 14, 1807 .....	619





TO: CHARLES PINCKNEY, March 30, 1808 .....	620
THE PRINCE REGENT OF PORTUGAL, May 5, 1808 .....	621
MONSIEUR LASTEYRIE, July 15, 1808 .....	622
THOMAS JEFFERSON RANDOLPH, November 24, 1808 .....	623
THOMAS LEIPER, January 21, 1809 .....	627
JOHN HOLLINS, February 19, 1809 .....	627
M. HENRI GRÉGOIRE, ÉVÊQUE ET SÉNATEUR À PARIS, February 25, 1809 .....	628
MONSIEUR DUPONT DE NEMOURS, March 2, 1809 .....	629
THE INHABITANTS OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY, IN VIRGINIA, April 3, 1809 .....	629
JOHN WYCHE, May 19, 1809 .....	633
DOCTOR B. S. BARTON, September 21, 1809 .....	634
REV. SAMUEL KNOX, February 12, 1810 .....	636
GENERAL THADDEUS KOSCIUSKO, February 26, 1810 .....	636
GOVERNOR JOHN LANGDON, March 5, 1810 .....	639
GOVERNOR JOHN TYLER, May 26, 1810 .....	641
COLONEL WILLIAM DUANE, August 12, 1810 .....	642
J. B. COLVIN, September 20, 1810 .....	642
DR. BENJAMIN RUSH, January 16, 1811 .....	643
COLONEL WILLIAM DUANE, March 28, 1811 .....	649
DR. BENJAMIN RUSH, August 17, 1811 .....	650
JOHN ADAMS, January 21, 1812 .....	652
F. A. VAN DER KEMP, March 22, 1812 .....	654
JAMES MAURY, April 25, 1812 .....	655
JOHN MELISH, January 13, 1813 .....	657
COLONEL WILLIAM DUANE, January 22, 1813 .....	661
COLONEL WILLIAM DUANE, April 4, 1813 .....	662
JOHN ADAMS, May 27, 1813 .....	663

TO: JOHN ADAMS, June 27, 1813 .....	663
DR. SAMUEL BROWN, July 14, 1813 .....	665
ISAAC MCPHERSON, August 13, 1813 .....	666
JOHN ADAMS, October 13, 1813 .....	667
JOHN ADAMS, October 28, 1813 .....	669
DR. THOMAS COOPER, January 16, 1814 .....	671
MONSIEUR N. G. DUFIEF, April 19, 1814 .....	671
THOMAS LAW, ESQ., June 13, 1814 .....	672
JOHN ADAMS, July 5, 1814 .....	676
EDWARD COLES, August 25th, 1814 .....	677
PETER CARR, September 7, 1814 .....	678
DR. THOMAS COOPER, September 10, 1814 .....	688
SAMUEL H. SMITH, ESQ., September 21, 1814 .....	688
WILLIAM SHORT, ESQ., November 28, 1814.....	690
THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, February 14, 1815 .....	692
JAMES MAURY, June 15, 1815 .....	694
ALBERT GALLATIN, October 16, 1815 .....	695
COLONEL CHARLES YANCEY, January 6, 1816 .....	696
CHARLES THOMSON, January 9, 1816 .....	698
JOSEPH C. CABELL, February 2, 1816 .....	698
MR. JOSEPH MILLIGAN, April 6, 1816 .....	700
JOHN ADAMS, April 8, 1816 .....	705
JOHN TAYLOR, May 28, 1816 .....	707
SAMUEL KERCHEVAL, July 12, 1816 .....	711
JOHN ADAMS, August 1, 1816 .....	715
MRS. ABIGAIL ADAMS, January 11, 1817 .....	715
CHARLES THOMSON, Janry. 29, 1817 .....	717
JOSEPH DELAPLAINE, April 12, 1817 .....	718
BARON ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT,	
June 13, 1817 .....	719
MONSIEUR BARBÉ DE MARBOIS, June 14, 1817 .....	720
GEORGE TICKNOR, Nov. 25, 1817 .....	721



TO: JOHN TRUMBULL, Jan. 8, 1818 .....	722
COUNT DUGNANI, February 14, 1818 .....	722
DR. BENJAMIN WATERHOUSE, March 3, 1818 .....	723
NATHANIEL BURWELL, ESQ., March 14, 1818 .....	725
JOHN ADAMS, November 13, 1818 .....	728
DOCTOR VINE UTLEY, March 21, 1819 .....	728
MR. LAPORTE, June 4, 1819 .....	730
WILLIAM SHORT, October 31, 1819 .....	731
DR. THOMAS COOPER, March 13, 1820 .....	735
JOHN HOLMES, April 22, 1820 .....	736
WILLIAM SHORT, August 4, 1820 .....	737
JOHN ADAMS, August 15, 1820 .....	738
WILLIAM ROSCOE, December 27, 1820 .....	740
JOHN ADAMS, September 12, 1821 .....	740
JAMES SMITH, December 8, 1822 .....	741
ROBERT WALSH, April 5, 1823 .....	742
JOHN ADAMS, April 11, 1823 .....	743
GENERAL SAMUEL SMITH, May 3, 1823 .....	745
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (JAMES MONROE), October 24, 1823 .....	746
MONSIEUR A. CORAY, October 31, 1823 .....	749
THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, November 4, 1823 .....	750
MR. DAVID HARDING, PRESIDENT OF THE JEFFERSON DEBATING SOCIETY OF HINGHAM, April 20, 1824 .....	751
MAJOR JOHN CARTWRIGHT, June 5, 1824 .....	751
HENRY LEE, August 10, 1824 .....	752
CHARLES SIGOURNEY, August 15, 1824 .....	753
JOHN ADAMS, January 8, 1825 .....	754
THOMAS JEFFERSON SMITH, February 21, 1825 .....	755
HENRY LEE, May 8, 1825 .....	757

TO: ELLEN W. COOLIDGE, August 27, 1825 .....	757
DR. JAMES MEASE, September 26, 1825 .....	759
GEORGE WASHINGTON LEWIS, October 25, 1825 .....	760
JAMES MADISON, February 17, 1826 .....	764
ROGER C. WEIGHTMAN, June 24, 1826 .....	766



## Letters



# Letters



## Letters

### TO JOHN HARVIE

*Shadwell, Jan. 14, 1760*

SIR, —I was at Colo. Peter Randolph's about a Fortnight ago, & my Schooling falling into Discourse, he said he thought it would be to my Advantage to go to the College, & was desirous I should go, as indeed I am myself for several Reasons. In the first place as long as I stay at the Mountains the loss of one fourth of my Time is inevitable, by Company's coming here & detaining me from School. And likewise my Absence will in a great measure put a Stop to so much Company, & by that Means lessen the Expences of the Estate in House-Keeping. And on the other Hand by going to the College I shall get a more universal Acquaintance, which may hereafter be serviceable to me; & I suppose I can pursue my studies in the Greek & Latin as well there as here, & likewise learn something of the Mathematics. I shall be glad of your opinion.

### TO JOHN PAGE

*Fairfield, December 25, 1762*

DEAR PAGE, —This very day, to others the day of greatest mirth and jollity, sees me overwhelmed with more and greater misfortunes than have befallen a descendant of Adam for these thousand years past, I am sure; and perhaps, after excepting Job, since the creation of the world. I think his misfortunes were somewhat greater than mine; for, although we may be pretty nearly on a level in other respects, yet, I thank my God, I have the advantage of brother Job in this,

that Satan has not as yet put forth his hand to load me with bodily afflictions. You must know, dear Page, that I am now in a house surrounded with enemies, who take counsel together against my soul; and when I lay me down to rest, they say among themselves, come let us destroy him. I am sure if there is such a thing as a Devil in this world, he must have been here last night, and have had some hand in contriving what happened to me. Do you think the cursed rats (at his instigation, I suppose) did not eat up my pocket-book, which was in my pocket, within a foot of my head? And not contented with plenty for the present, they carried away my jemmy-worked silk garters, and half a dozen new minuets I had just got, to serve, I suppose, as provision for the winter. But of this I should not have accused the Devil (because, you know rats will be rats, and hunger, without the addition of his instigations, might have urged them to do this), if something worse, and from a different quarter, had not happened. You know it rained last night, or if you do not know it, I am sure I do. When I went to bed, I laid my watch in the usual place, and going to take her up after I arose this morning, I found her in the same place, it's true, but *Quantum mutatus ab illo!*<sup>[1]</sup> all afloat in water, let in at a leak in the roof of the house, and as silent and still as the rats that had eaten my pocket-book. Now, you know, if chance had had anything to do in this matter, there were a thousand other spots where it might have chanced to leak as well as at this one, which was perpendicularly over my watch. But I'll tell you, it's my opinion that the Devil came and bored the hole over it on purpose. Well, as I was saying, my poor watch had lost her speech. I should not have cared much for this, but something worse attended it; the subtle particles of the water with which the case was filled, had, by their penetration, so overcome the cohesion of the particles of the paper, of which my dear picture and watch-paper were composed, that, in attempting to take them out to dry them, good

[1] "How changed from what it was!"



God! *Mens horret referre!*<sup>[1]</sup> My cursed fingers gave them such a rent, as I fear I never shall get over. This, cried I, was the last stroke Satan had in reserve for me; he knew I cared not for anything else he could do to me, and was determined to try his last most fatal expedient. "*Multis fortune vulneribus percussus, huic uni me imperem sensi, et penitus succubui!*"<sup>[2]</sup> I would have cried bitterly, but I thought it beneath the dignity of a man... However, whatever misfortunes may attend the picture or lover, my hearty prayers shall be, that all the health and happiness which Heaven can send may be the portion of the original, and that so much goodness may ever meet with what may be most agreeable in this world, as I am sure it must be in the next. And now, although the picture be defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind, that I shall think of her too often, I fear, for my peace of mind; and too often, I am sure, to get through old Coke this winter; for God knows I have not seen him since I packed him up in my trunk in Williamsburg. Well, Page, I do wish the Devil had old Coke, for I am sure I never was so tired of an old dull scoundrel in my life. What! are there so few inquietudes tacked to this momentary life of ours, that we must need be loading ourselves with a thousand more? Or, as brother Job says (who, by-the-bye, I think began to whine a little under his afflictions), "Are not my days few? Cease then, that I may take comfort a little before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness, and the shadow of death." But the old fellows say we must read to gain knowledge, and gain knowledge to make us happy and admired. Mere jargon! Is there any such thing as happiness in this world? No. And as for admiration, I am sure the man who powders most, perfumes most, embroiders most, and talks most nonsense, is most admired. Though to be candid, there are some who have too much good sense

[1] "The mind shudders to recall it."

[2] "Pierced through by the many wounds of fate, I felt myself unequal to this one and succumbed utterly!"

to esteem such monkey-like animals as these, in whose formation, as the saying is, the tailors and barbers go halves with God Almighty; and since these are the only persons whose esteem is worth a wish, I do not know but that, upon the whole, the advice of these old fellows may be worth following.

You cannot conceive the satisfaction it would give me to have a letter from you. Write me very circumstantially everything which happened at the wedding. Was she there? because, if she was, I ought to have been at the Devil for not being there too. If there is any news stirring in town or country, such as deaths, courtships, or marriages, in the circle of my acquaintance, let me know it. Remember me affectionately to all the young ladies of my acquaintance, particularly the Miss Burwells, and Miss Potters, and tell them that though that heavy earthly part of me, my body, be absent, the better half of me, my soul, is ever with them, and that my best wishes shall ever attend them. Tell Miss Alice Corbin that I verily believe the rats knew I was to win a pair of garters from her, or they never would have been so cruel as to carry mine away. This very consideration makes me so sure of the bet, that I shall ask everybody I see from that part of the world what pretty gentleman is making his addresses to her. I would fain ask the favor of Miss Becca Burwell to give me another watch-paper of her own cutting, which I should esteem much more, though it were a plain round one, than the nicest in the world cut by other hands; however, I am afraid she would think this presumption, after my suffering the other to get spoiled. If you think you can excuse me to her for this, I should be glad if you would ask her. Tell Miss Sukey Potter that I heard, just before I came out of town, that she was offended with me about something, what it is I do not know; but this I know, that I never was guilty of the least disrespect to her in my life, either in word or deed; as far from it as it has been possible for one to be. I suppose when we meet next, she will be endeavoring to repay an imaginary affront with a real one; but she may save herself