



ALAN ALEXANDER MILNE

162 艾伦·亚历山大·米尔恩(Alan Alexander Milne, 1882—1956), 生于伦敦, 早年就读于剑桥大学的三一学院, 获数学学士学位。米尔恩曾在英国皇家沃里克郡军团服役, 退伍后成为伦敦的自由撰稿记者。1906—1914 年曾任《笨拙》(Punch) 周刊的助理编辑。

米尔恩著名的作品有童话《小熊维尼》(Winnie-the-Pooh, 1926), 及其续篇《拐角处的房子》(The House at Pooh Corner, 1928)。他在《笨拙》上发表的幽默小品收入《就是那些岁

月》(Those Were the Days, 1929), 《年复一年》(Year in, Year out, 1952)。他的诗歌被收入《当我们年轻的时候》(When We Were Very Young, 1924), 《我们现在在六个人》(Now We Are Six, 1927) 等集子。他还著有剧本《皮姆先生路过这儿》(Mr. Pim Passes By, 1921) 和侦探小说《红房子奇案》(The Red House Mystery, 1922)。

米尔恩的散文是典型的小品文。他善于以小见大, 从普通的生活中间发出其对人生哲理的认识。



Golden Fruit

Of the fruits of the year I give my vote to the orange.¹ In the first place it is a perennial — if not in actual fact, at least in the greengrocer's shop. On the days when dessert is a name given to a handful of chocolates and a little preserved ginger, when *macedoine de fruits* is the title bestowed on two prunes and a piece of rhubarb, then the orange, however sour, comes nobly to the rescue;² and on those other days of plenty³ when cherries and strawberries and raspberries and gooseberries riot⁴ together upon the table, the orange, sweeter than ever, is still there to hold its own.⁵ Bread and butter, beef and mutton, eggs and bacon, are not more necessary to an ordered existence⁶ than the orange.

It is well⁷ that the commonest fruits should be also the best. Of the virtues of the orange I have not room fully to speak. It has properties of health-giving, as that it cures influenza and establishes the complexion.⁸ It is clean, for whoever handles it on its way to your table, but handles its outer covering, its top coat, which is left in the hall.⁹ It is round, and forms an excellent substitute with the young for a cricket ball.¹⁰ The pips can be flicked at your enemies, and quite a small piece of peel makes a

- 1 I give my vote to the orange: 我推荐桔子。
- 2 On the days... rescue: 在一些季节, 当点心指的是一把巧克力和几块干姜片, 而什锦水果则是两片梅脯与一块大黄叶梗时, 桔子尽管很酸, 却像使士一样前来解救这一窘境了。the days: 指水果淡季。macedoine de fruits: [法]什锦水果, 水果零食。rhubarb: 大黄叶梗(菜用)。
- 3 other days of plenty: 果实丰盛的时节。
- 4 riot: 原意为“暴乱”, 此处指众多水果一起上了餐桌, 形成了争奇斗胜的热闹场面。作者用拟人手法, 笔意幽默。
- 5 hold its own: 保持原先的地位, 和过去一样受人喜爱。
- 6 an ordered existence: 井然有序的生活。
- 7 well: 说得恰当的, 合理的。
- 8 It has properties... complexion: 它有保健的功效, 能够治疗流感, 还能使人面部健美。establishes the complexion: 使人容光焕发。
- 9 It is clean... hall: 它很清洁, 因为桔子上桌前不管是谁为你作准备, 他手碰的只不过是桔子的外表, 也就是它的皮, 剥下来后留在大厅里。for: 因为。handles it on its way to your table: 端上餐桌前的处理。but: 只不过。
- 10 It is round... ball: 它呈圆形, 孩子们把它当板球来打, 是再好不过的了。

slide for an old gentleman. ¹¹

But all this would count nothing had not the orange such delightful qualities of taste. I dare not let myself go upon this subject. I am a slave to its sweetness. I grudge every marriage in that it means a fresh supply of orange blossom, the promise of so much golden fruit cut short. ¹² However, the world must go on.

Next to the orange I place the cherry. The cherry is a companionable fruit. You can eat it while you are reading or talking, and you can go on and on, absent-mindedly as it were, though you must mind not to swallow the stone. ¹³ The trouble of disengaging this from the fruit is just sufficient to make the fruit taste sweeter for the labour. ¹⁴ The stalk keeps you from soiling your fingers; it enables you also to play bob cherry. ¹⁵ Lastly it is by means of cherries that one penetrates the great mysteries of life — when and whom you will marry, and whether she really loves you or is taking you for your worldly prospects. ¹⁶ (I may add here that I know a girl who can tie a knot in the stalk of a cherry with her tongue. It is a tricky business, and I am doubtful whether to add it to the virtues of the cherry or not.)

There are only two ways of eating strawberries. One is neat in the strawberry bed, and the other is mashed on the plate. ¹⁷ The first method generally requires us to take up a bent position under a net ¹⁸ — in a hot sun

very uncomfortable, ¹⁹ and at any time fatal to the hair. The second method takes us into the privacy of the home, for it demands a dressing-gown and no spectators. ²⁰ For these reasons I think the strawberry an overrated ²¹ fruit. Yet I must say that I like to see one floating in cider cup. It gives a note of richness to the affair, and excuses any shortcomings in the lunch itself. ²²

Raspberries are a good fruit gone wrong. ²³ A raspberry by itself might indeed be the best fruit of all; but it is almost impossible to find it alone. I do not refer to its attachment to the red currant; rather to the attachment to it of so many of our dumb little friends. ²⁴ The instinct of the lower creatures for the best is well shown in the case of the raspberry. ²⁵ If it is to be eaten it must be picked by the hand, well shaken, and then taken. ²⁶

When you engage a gardener, the first thing to do is to come to an understanding with him about the peaches. The best way of settling the matter is to give him the carrots and the black currants and the rhubarb for himself, to allow him a free hand with the groundsel and the walnut trees, ²⁷ and to insist in return for this that you should pick the peaches when and how you like. If he is a gentleman ²⁸ he will consent. Supposing that some satisfactory arrangement were come to, ²⁹ and supposing also that you had a silver-bladed pocket-knife with which you could peel them in

11 and quite... gentleman: (地上)一小块桔皮也能让一位老先生滑一跤。作者用一种理所当然的笔调写来,增加了幽默情趣。

12 I grudge... short: 西方婚礼上常用桔子花作为装点,因此作者说,每碰上一次婚礼,我总是为之抱憾,因为又要采一批鲜桔花,这意味着又有那么多的金果将被扼杀了。

13 stone: 果核。

14 The trouble... labour: 虽说把果核与果肉分开有些麻烦,但这麻烦恰恰使这种水果的滋味更加甜美。

15 play bob cherry: bob, 一种游戏,用线把水果(如苹果)吊起来,然后用嘴去咬。此句意为:樱桃的果核可以让人做吊樱桃的游戏。

16 Lastly it... prospects: 西俗。人们吃完樱桃后,使一边数果盘里的樱桃核,一边说:“补锅匠,裁缝,士兵,水手,富翁,旁

鬼,叫花子,贼。(Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief.)”说完一遍,又从头说起,直到数完所有的核为止。最后那个果核落在哪种人头上,你就将与哪种人结婚。未婚男女也常边数樱桃核边说:“他,她爱我,不爱我,爱我,不爱我……”最后一粒落在哪种态度上,情人对自己就会持哪种态度。这里作者有意把这些小游戏与樱桃联系在一起,并戏称樱桃使人得以“洞悉人生奥秘”,以增强小品文戏谑幽默的语气。

17 One is neat... place: 一种(草莓)整整齐齐地长在草莓园里,另一种则捣碎后放在餐盘里。作者这么写也是出于幽默的目的。strawberry bed: 草莓园。mashed on the plate: 放在盘子里的草莓酱。

18 under a net: 种植草莓需要网覆盖。这里说,在果园里吃草莓时必须弯腰弓背,探身到网下采摘。

19 in a hot sun very uncomfortable: 省略句,原来是 in a hot sun which is very uncomfortable,草莓成熟时英国正当盛夏,故说这时烈日炎炎,令人难受。

20 for it... spectators: 意为,由于在家吃草莓,因此大多比较随便,所以穿着晨衣亦可,而且即使吃相不雅,也无旁观者评头品足。

21 overrated: 名不副实的。这里是说草莓并不像常人说的那么好。

22 It gives... itself: 它为这杯苹果酒增添了一丝华贵的色彩,从而也就掩饰了午餐的不足之处。affair: 指喝苹果酒。

23 Raspberries... wrong: 木莓是一种好水果,但它却有缺陷。

24 dumb little friends: 不会说话的小朋友

们。这是指爬在木莓上的小昆虫,参见注释26。

25 The instinct... raspberry: 低级生物本能地追求最好的东西,木莓的情况清楚地表明了这一点。the lower creatures: 指那些昆虫。the best: 指作者称为“好水果”的木莓。

26 If it is... taken: 要是想吃木莓,你就得用手把它摘下来,好好地摇几下(把上面的小昆虫弄掉),然后再吃。

27 to give... trees: 由他全权掌握胡萝卜、黑茶藨子和大黄叶,自由支配千里光和黑桃树。

28 gentleman: 是指通情达理的人。

29 Supposing... come to: 假如达成了某项使双方都感到满意的安排。

the open air, then peaches would come very high in the list of fruits. But the conditions³⁰ are difficult.

Gooseberries burst at the wrong end and smother you;³¹ melons — as the nigger boy discovered — make your ears sticky;³² currants, when you have removed the skin and extracted the seeds, are unsatisfying; blackberries have the faults of raspberries without their virtues; plums are never ripe. Yet all these fruits are excellent in their season. Their faults are faults which we can forgive during a slight acquaintance, which indeed seem but pleasant little idiosyncrasies in the stranger.³³ But we could not live with them.

Yet with the orange we do live year in and year out. That speaks well for the orange.³⁴ The fact is that there is an honesty about the orange which appeals to all of us — if it is going to be bad — for the best of us³⁵ are bad sometimes — it begins to be bad from the outside, not from the inside. How many a pear which presents a blooming face to the world is rotten at the core. How many an innocent-looking apple is harbouring a worm in the bud.³⁶ But the orange has no secret faults. Its outside is a mirror of its inside, and if you are quick you can tell the shopman so before he slips it into the bag.³⁷

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- 30 conditions: 指与管果园的人达成协议等事。
- 31 Gooseberries... you: 鹅莓会不当地爆裂,使你感到窒息。此处作者用了夸张笔法。
- 32 melons —... sticky: 由于这种瓜切成块后呈弧形,捧食时两头触及耳朵,糖液会沾在食者的耳朵上。nigger: 对黑人的贬称。这里 the nigger boy 是指西方人心目中美国南方种植园中的小黑奴形象。
- 33 Their faults... stranger: 当我们对这些果类还了解不深时,是可以原谅这些缺点的,它们仿佛不过是陌生人身上的某些微小怪癖罢了。during a slight acquaintance: 当我们对它们还了解不多时。
- 34 That speaks well for the orange: 那句话是对桔子的很好评价。
- 35 the best of us: 我们中的大多数。这里的 best 相当于 most,但作者同时也巧妙地把握 best and bad 作一个并列反差的对比,从而把文章对水果的评论导向对人或人性善恶的评价。
- 36 harbouring a worm in the bud: 在发育生长时里面就已隐藏着一条蠕虫。
- 37 and if... bag: 如果你眼尖,你可以向店主指出(烂桔子),免得他一下子把它塞进包装袋。此句可称是点睛之笔,直接把对水果的讽喻引入了人世之间。诚实的桔子和不诚实的店主间的对比自然会引起我们的深思。

题解

本文赞美了水果中并不引人注目的桔子。作者采用对比的方法来烘托桔子。自然界的水果林林总总,无法一一加以描述。文章选取了最常见的几种,在与桔子的比较中,略加评点,给人留下了深刻的印象。

作者对桔子的偏爱是显而易见的。对别的水果,采用的是攻其一点不及其余的方法,抓住其弊端,加以贬损,以此来突出桔子之“美德”。对于桔子,则一味讲好话,甚至不避捉襟见肘之嫌,夸奖其皮与核之并不受人欢迎的“功效”。然而通过对比却不仅展示了桔子诱人的长处,而且也介绍了众多其他水果的特点,颇值得玩味。

议人论事,是散文常用的手段。表面看来,本文着意刻画的是桔子的个性:它实实在在,表里一致,当别人最需要它时,它并不奇货可居,待价而沽,而是“comes nobly to the rescue”;当其他水果争奇斗艳时,它也并不泄气,默默地作着自己的奉献。它终年陪伴着人们,为生活增添了光彩。细细一想,就会发现,作者不仅赞美桔子,而且塑造了一个诚实可靠的普通人形象,他虽然平凡,却值得人们敬仰。

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Comprehension questions

1. This essay is entitled “Golden Fruit”. Why should the author give much space to the discussion of other fruits such as cherry, strawberries, raspberries, gooseberries?
2. Can we read an ode to some human beings in this ode to orange?
3. What is the tone of this essay? Give examples to support your answer.
4. What are the merits of the orange as the author has mentioned? What do you think of them?
5. Read the last paragraph and discuss why the author should end the essay in this way.