

【 插图 · 中文导读英文版 】

A Short History of America

美国简史

[美] 房龙 著

王勋 纪飞 等 编译



清华大学出版社



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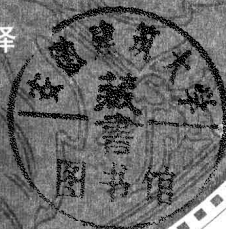


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内 容 简 介

《美国简史》是一部通俗、生动的美国史书，是历史类著作中的经典。作者以世界发展史作为背景，讲述了从哥伦布发现新大陆至第二次世界大战前的美国历史，对这个时期的历史事件、西方文明、科技发明以及美国的政治生活进行了深刻而独到的描述；还特别介绍了殖民地、独立战争、南北战争以及美国发展时期的一些重要历史人物，如哥伦布、亨利王子、乔治二世、华盛顿、富兰克林、拿破仑、林肯和罗斯福等；叙述历史的同时讲述了美国以及它的人民为了梦想而奋斗的故事。

该书自出版以来，一直畅销至今。无论作为通俗的美国简史读本，还是作为语言学习的课外读物，本书对当代中国的读者都将产生重要的影响。为了使读者能够了解每章内容概况，进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平，在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。同时，为了读者更好地理解书中的内容，在部分章节中加入了插图或照片。

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亨德里克·威廉·房龙（Hendrik Willem Van Loon，1882—1944），荷兰裔美国人，20 世纪美国著名的通俗历史学家、科普作家和文学家，在历史、文化、文明、科学等方面都有著作，被誉为“伟大的文化普及者，传播人类文明的文化骑士”。

1882 年 1 月 14 日，房龙出生于荷兰鹿特丹。幼年时对历史、地理、船舶、绘画和音乐感兴趣，这种兴趣伴随着他的一生。从 8 岁起，房龙先后进入一些著名的寄宿制学校，学习了拉丁文、希腊文和英文，10 岁时，房龙便立志要成为历史学家。1902 年，房龙入美国康奈尔大学学习，获学士学位；之后，入德国慕尼黑大学学习，1911 年获博士学位。房龙求学前后，当过编辑、记者、播音员，也先后在美国几所大学任教，游历过世界上很多地方。1913 年，房龙编著并出版了第一本历史书《荷兰共和国的衰亡》，虽然销路一般，但受到了书评界的赞扬。1920 年圣诞节期间，房龙出版了他的第二本书《古代的人》，这是一部带插图的通俗历史读本，市场反映良好。经过知识、阅历、研究成果等方面的积累，房龙于 1921 年出版了他的第三部历史著作《人类的故事》，并一举成名，从此房龙迎来了他创作的丰收期。之后，房龙陆续出版了《发明的故事》、《圣经的故事》、《美国简史》、《地理的故事》（《人类的家园》）、《人类的艺术》、《宽容》、《与世界伟人谈心》、《伦勃朗传》、《太平洋的故事》等二十多部著作。房龙作品的内容涉及历史、地理、宗教、文学、政治、艺术、科学和技术等诸多方面。房龙多才多艺，能用十种语言写作和与人交流，拉得一手优美的小提琴，还能画画，他的著作中的所有插图全部出自他自己手笔。1944 年 3 月 11 日，房龙在美国康涅狄格州去世，美国《星期日快报》刊登讣告时用了这样的标题“历史成就了他的名声——房龙逝世”。

房龙的作品文笔优美、知识广博，在世界各地广受读者喜爱。其作品内容丰富、资料翔实、知识广博而不乏真知灼见，文字深入浅出、通俗优



美、轻松风趣而又发人深省，贯穿着理性、宽容和进步的思想，具有经久不衰的魅力。他的绝大部分著作均是风靡世界的畅销书，历经近一个世纪仍不失魅力，影响了一代又一代的读者。房龙的作品饮誉世界，荷兰、德国、法国、瑞典、丹麦、芬兰、挪威、日本、印度、前苏联、西班牙、意大利、波兰、匈牙利、希腊等国都翻译出版了他的作品。

自 20 世纪 20 年代开始，房龙的主要作品几乎被同步介绍给中国的读者。翻译者把这个荷兰名字译为“房龙”。此后，这个名字为我国读者所熟悉，并流传下来。房龙作品深入浅出的通俗文风和百科全书般的渊博知识，对与之同时代的中国读者产生了巨大的影响。这是因为，一方面是房龙的文风正好适合于当时新文化运动所提倡的生活化的白话文，房龙的书也为中国求知者提供了关于人类和自然的启蒙知识；另一方面，房龙的写作技巧也给中国当时的作家以很多启发。据历史学家和著名报人曹聚仁回忆：20 世纪 20 年代，他在候车时偶然买到《人类的故事》中译本，“那天下午，我发痴似的，车来了，在车上读，到了家中，把晚饭吞下去，就靠在床上读，一直读到天明，走马观花地总算看完了。这 50 年中，我总是看了又看，除了《儒林外史》、《红楼梦》，没有其他的书这么吸引我了”。郁达夫曾说：“房龙的笔，有一种魔力……是将文学家的手法，拿来用以讲述科学……无论大人小孩，读他书的人，都觉得娓娓忘倦了。”20 世纪 80 年代是中国改革开放的年代，房龙的作品重新被发现，且被逐步引进。而自 20 世纪 90 年代后期开始，国内兴起“房龙热”，房龙的作品再次受到读者的青睐，这是因为他的著作特别符合现代中国人的心理：务实进取的时代，读书趋向于知识性、趣味性。

目前，国内已出版的房龙著作形式主要有两种：一种是中文翻译版，另一种是中英文对照版。其中的中英文对照读本比较受读者的欢迎，这主要是得益于中国人热衷于学习英语的大环境。从英文学习的角度来看，直接使用纯英文的学习资料更有利于英语学习。考虑到对英文内容背景的了解有助于英文阅读，使用中文导读应该是一种比较好的方式，也可以说是该类型书的第三种版本形式。采用中文导读而非中英文对照的方式进行编排，这样有利于国内读者摆脱对英文阅读依赖中文注释的习惯。基于以上原因，我们决定编译房龙系列著作中的经典，其中包括《人类的故事》、《圣经的故事》、《地理的故事》、《宽容》和《美国简史》，并采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。同时，为了读者更好地理解书中内容，在部分章节中加入了插图或照片，在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可



能保留原作的风格。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。我们相信，这些经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的科学素养和人文修养是非常有帮助的。

房龙始终站在全人类的高度在写作，他摒弃了深奥理论，却拥有自己独立的思想和体系，他的论述主要是围绕人类生存与发展等本质的问题，贯穿其中的精神是科学、宽容和进步，他的目标是向人类的无知与偏执挑战，他采取的方式是普及知识和真理，使它们成为人所皆知的常识。房龙毕生持人文主义立场，在有的问题上不免有与唯物主义者不同的观点；同时，由于他是生活在 20 世纪早期的美国作家，其思想的观点不可避免地会受到时代和历史的局限，比如在他的《地理的故事》一书中错误地将西藏放到“中亚高地”这一章，而不是“中国”这一章来讲述，又比如他以地理环境决定论来解释日本近代侵略行为，希望读者朋友阅读这些著作时能够甄别。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、左新杲、黄福成、冯洁、徐鑫、马启龙、王业伟、王旭敏、陈楠、王多多、邵舒丽、周丽萍、王晓旭、李永振、孟宪行、熊红华、胡国平、熊建国、徐平国、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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第一章 便宜的香料需求量大增

Chapter 1 Wanted: More And Cheaper Spices



由俭入奢易，由奢入俭难。这句话在此又应验了。在公元的第一个千年里，欧洲人还习惯于粗茶淡饭的生活，平日里的打打杀杀使他们无法讲究食不厌精的细致。而当新的千禧年到来之后，在安定下来的一代中奢靡的风气却在滋长。

在这点上，东方人是欧洲人的老师。穆斯林在7世纪奇迹般地崛起，并很快逼近地中海的北岸。新月与十字的厮杀混战未休，东方的精致与奢华却迷幻般地征服了这些粗朴的欧洲人。战后，在地中海上穿梭来往的不再是圣战军团，而是熙熙攘攘的商队，香料成为了欧洲人品质生活的必需品，其所带来的巨额利润，使得宗教狂热被搁在一边，基督的信徒和真主的皈依者你来我往。

而此时随鞑靼人涌向西方的一支小小部落却将改变历史。客居他乡反而使他们在百年后神话般地成为伊斯兰世界的王者，“土耳其人”——他们因此而名扬世界，同时新一轮的扩张被激起。

土耳其的胜利也将印证安拉的胜利。从乡野中重新振作起来的虔诚之心必须在帝国的土地上随处体现。僧侣们奔走各地，号召人们回归纯正的古兰经教义。与异教徒的贸易将遭到摒弃，商人们很快认识到恪守僧侣教诲的重要，而谨慎地断绝了与基督子民们的联系。

习惯了东方商品的欧洲人由此感到不适，市场上的东方商品凤毛麟角，投机商们抓住时机使它们身价倍增。以物易物不再通行，商人们只认黄金，而欧洲的大地出产不了这么多的金银。坏消息纷至沓来，土耳其的铁蹄继续在西亚和北非的土地上奔驰，同时也阻断了一条条曾经的商道。重新开启贸易看来是遥遥无期了。坐以待毙绝不是资本主义的态度。由此一小部分人开始幻想新的黄金之路，他们向南或向西走向未知的大海，去试探自己的命运——要么穷途潦倒，要么创造奇迹。

THE Guild of the Grocers was in dreadful straits.

Their supply of spices was well-nigh exhausted.

But the demand surpassed anything that had ever been seen before.

The Guild of the Grocers was in dreadful straits.

And thereby hangs a story.

It is a law recognized both by the professors of political economy and the judges of our police courts that those who have for a considerable time dined at the Ritz will not willingly return to Jack Mulhaly's far-famed fish-chowder and beans. Of course, in case of actual need they will content themselves with the simple fare of the excellent John. But before they reach that point of open and avowed defeat, they will fight tooth and nail to maintain the standard of excellence to which they have become accustomed.

The barbarians who overran the greater part of western Europe during the first ten centuries of our era were men of simple taste, which usually means men of no taste at all. With them, quantity came before quality, and a continent that had lain practically unscratched since the last great glacial epoch easily satisfied their demands for a wooden bench, a greasy slab of beef and unlimited ale.

Besides, there, was so much to be done and there were so few people to do what needed being done that their surplus energy was entirely exhausted by the chores of every-day life. Roughly speaking, it took them a thousand years to settle down. Then the job was done. Peace and quiet returned to this earth and with peace and quiet on the part of the elders came the Wanderlust of the younger generation.

Ten centuries before that Wanderlust would have led to another outbreak of anarchy. But by now the people of the West once more recognized a single master. He laid no claim to worldly power. His spiritual weapons, however, could annihilate entire battalions of Swiss mercenaries. His paper arrows could pierce the walls of the strongest castles.

His mere displeasure was more terrible than a threat of war on the part of emperor or king.

Surrounded by the cleverest of diplomats, the most astute of politicians, he was able to divert the rising tide of unrest into the practical channels of foreign conquest and to bring about that great migration towards the East which ever since has been known as the era of the Crusades. Unfortunately this episode has been so often chosen as a subject for romantic literary rhapsodies that we are apt to forget the true if more

prosaic nature of the conflict.

The ancient world was the world of the Mediterranean. He who had command of that vast tract of water could dictate his will to the rest of mankind.

It was an ambitious undertaking, and the small fry of pirates and buccaneers who infested the deep bays of the Spanish and Greek and Italian peninsulas and who lived along the shallow coast of Morocco and Tripoli and Egypt could not possibly hope for more than a trifling local success.

Nothing short of "racial groups"—vast agglomerations of people bound together by tens of thousands of years of a common social, economic and religious development were able to handle a problem that must be settled upon so gigantic a scale. They well knew the risk they took, for such quarrels were apt to be quite as disastrous to the victor as to the vanquished.

Only twice before had it come to an open break.

The first time in the fifth century before our era, when Greece as the champion of the West had defeated the invading hordes of the Persians and in a series of brilliant counter-attacks had pursued her enemies as far as the shores of the river Indus.

The second time two hundred years later, when the Romans narrowly averted disaster by such a display of national energy that the state almost perished before the last of the Carthaginian strongholds had been reduced to ashes.

Then, for more than eight centuries, there had been peace.

But in the year 622 Asia, marching under the banner of a brand-new prophet, was once more ready for the unequal struggle. This time the campaign was planned upon a truly gigantic scale. The left wing of the Mohammedan armies took possession of Spain. The right wing meanwhile made for Constantinople by way of Syria and Asia Minor. It was at that moment that the head of the Christian Church took fright and proclaimed a holy war.

This war, from a military point of view, was a complete failure. But its social consequences were of great and lasting importance. For the first time since the disappearance of the Roman state the nations of Europe were exposed to a civilization which in almost every respect was higher than their own. They went east to slaughter the infidel and to deprive him of his pagan possessions. They returned home with a new conception of comfort and luxury and with a profound dislike for the crudities of their own barren existence.

This sudden change in the general point of view was soon reflected in the houses of the people of the western mainland, in their clothes, in their manners, in the way

they spent their idle hours and in the things they ate and drank.

The older generation (after the habit of all older generations) continued to talk about the simple virtues of the ancestors. The children merely shrugged their shoulders and smiled. They had been to the "big city" and they knew better. Quietly they bided their time, but as soon as the old folks were dead they hastened to upholster the parlor, sent for a couple of outlandish cooks and despatched their sons to the nearby town that there they, might learn how to become bankers or manufacturers and acquire within a single lifetime wealth which the soil would not surrender in a thousand years of heart-breaking toil.

The Church grumbled.

This was a consequence she had not quite foreseen.

Alas! the returning heroes were no longer animated with that holy and unquestioning zeal which had been so characteristic of their parents and grandfathers. Familiarity with one's friends may breed contempt. But familiarity with an enemy is apt to create mutual respect.

As a result there was a slump in the building of churches. But private palaces and richly adorned municipal buildings were arising on all sides.

I do not say that this was a good thing. I do not say that it was bad. I merely state a fact. If you want to draw any conclusions, go ahead and suit yourself.

Meanwhile on the other shore of the Mediterranean there also had been a considerable decline in the ardor of that strange religious devotion which measured its love by the number of slaughtered captives. In short, both parties had accepted a stalemate and were willing to reach a compromise which meant money in the pockets of their respective merchants.

The ancient trade-routes, trampled down by millions of iron heels and hoofs, were put in a state of repair. Once more the patient camels carried their burdens from Kashgar to Damascus. Again, as in the days of old, the Venetian caravels and the Genoese galleys plied regularly between Alexandria and Famagusta.

Wherefore all was well with the world and the rate of interest upon a successful Levantine deal rose rapidly from just exactly nothing to four hundred per cent.

Then one of those insignificant incidents happened which (after the nature of insignificant occurrences) are apt to change the entire aspect of history for all time to come. It was during the middle of the thirteenth century. The dreadful Tartars had just gone on the warpath and from the Amur to the Vistula people were flying in blind panic before this flood of grinning little yellow devils. Among the fugitives was a

small group of nomads (two or three hundred families at the most) who since time immemorial had lived peacefully in the heart of Asia. They ran almost as far as the Mediterranean. Then they heard that the danger was past and decided to return home. In order to do this they must cross the river Euphrates. But an accident happened. Their leader slipped off his horse and was drowned. The others who were still on the western bank of the river took fright. They regarded this sudden calamity as a direct warning of Heaven and asked the King of Persia to let them stay where they were.

The rest is a matter of common knowledge. Within less than a hundred years these wandering shepherds had made themselves the masters of the empire that had given them hospitality and one generation afterwards they were the recognized rulers of the Mohammedan world and had started upon that career of conquest which eventually was to carry their horse-tail banners to the gates of Vienna and was to make the mere name of "Turk" a byword for cruelty and bravery for all ages.

Now if this sudden revival of Moslem fury had been merely a political movement, it would not have been so bad. But a profound spiritual frenzy swept across the plains and hills of western Asia. During the six centuries which had gone by since the death of the Prophet the original ardor of his followers had considerably cooled. The "faith of the fathers" was something very fine but so was the sweet profit derived from the traffic in pepper and cinnamon and indigo. It was unfortunate that this trade forced the true believers to be on amicable terms with the infidel dogs from the other side of the Mediterranean, but you know how it is. Business is business and one cannot draw the line at Christians if one is in trade.

Not so the inhabitants of the villages and the lonely valleys ! They took their religion seriously and encouraged by the military and the political success of their Turkish leaders they now decided to bring their erring brethren of the big cities back to the true faith.

Far and wide the Dervishes (the monks of the Mohammedan world) traveled through the realm of the Prophet. Some of them prayed, some of them danced, some of them whirled, some of them howled. But one and all they preached a return to the stem tenets of the original desert creed.

At first the merchants of Bagdad and Damascus laughed. But the "puritans" were in dead earnest. Soon the merchants even ceased to smile. A little later (warned by the fate of their murdered neighbors) they began to restrict their commercial operations to their own fellow religionists.

And in this way, just when the people of Europe had come to depend upon certain

Asiatic goods, the supply was suddenly cut off.

Of course this did not happen in a day or a week or even a single year. But those products which for more than two hundred years had flowed westward in such complete and uninterrupted abundance now began to disappear from the European markets. The available supplies were at once cornered by the speculators. Prices began to soar. Credit was withdrawn and payment had to be made in gold. This was something new in the West. The medieval worlds in its every-day transactions, had never insisted upon ready money. Every one lived within hailing distance of every one else. One man's pork was as good as another man's eggs. The honey of one cloister could readily be exchanged for the vinegar of another.

It is true, foreign trade had always insisted upon a certain amount of gold and silver coin. It had been impossible to satisfy the spice dealers of Calicut with slices of bacon and barrels of salt. Before they authorized their agents in Jidda or Aden to make delivery they had demanded a deposit of Venetian doubloons and pieces-of-eight.

But now the European market began to ask for cash on delivery. That greatly complicated matters,

For gold, the mysterious, yellow substance which seemed to defy the power of State and Church, was another article that had to be imported from abroad. There were a few silver mines in Europe but the small amount of gold—that was found in the mountains of Austria, Saxony and Spain was by no means sufficient to finance the ever-increasing operations of the speculators and the legitimate spice dealers.

Here was as pretty a vicious circle as the world had ever seen. A public ready and eager to buy—a decreasing amount of supplies—a rapid increase in prices—a general demand for bullion—a decrease in the available supply of gold—one country of western Asia and northern Africa after another falling into the hands of the relentless heathen—one caravan road after the other closed for an indefinite space of time and the young and lusty capitalistic system of Europe fighting for its life.

The capitalistic system (using this term in the sense in which it is understood or misunderstood by most of our contemporaries) has been accused of many and highly diversified crimes. But even its worst enemies cannot accuse it of laziness or deny that in times of a crisis it is able to develop an almost supernatural energy. It was just such a crisis which now threatened to ruin the western commercial world during the first half of the fourteenth century.

I have spoken of the plight of the grocers. They were most active and vociferous in their protestations. But the entire economic (which in the last analysis means the