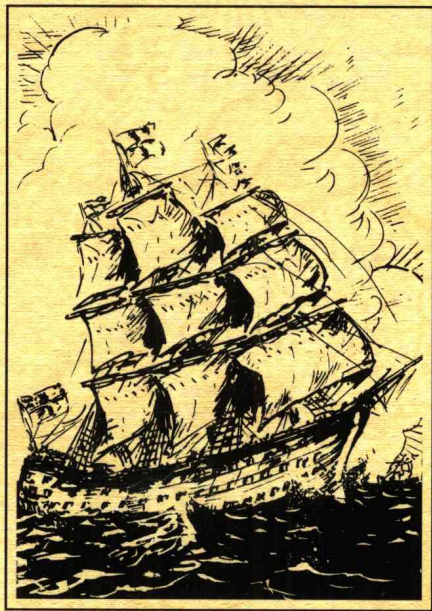


英汉双语·经典译丛



THE STORY OF
MANKIND

人类的故事



[美] 房龙◎著



中国城市出版社
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(英汉对照)

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[美] 房 龙 ⊙ 著

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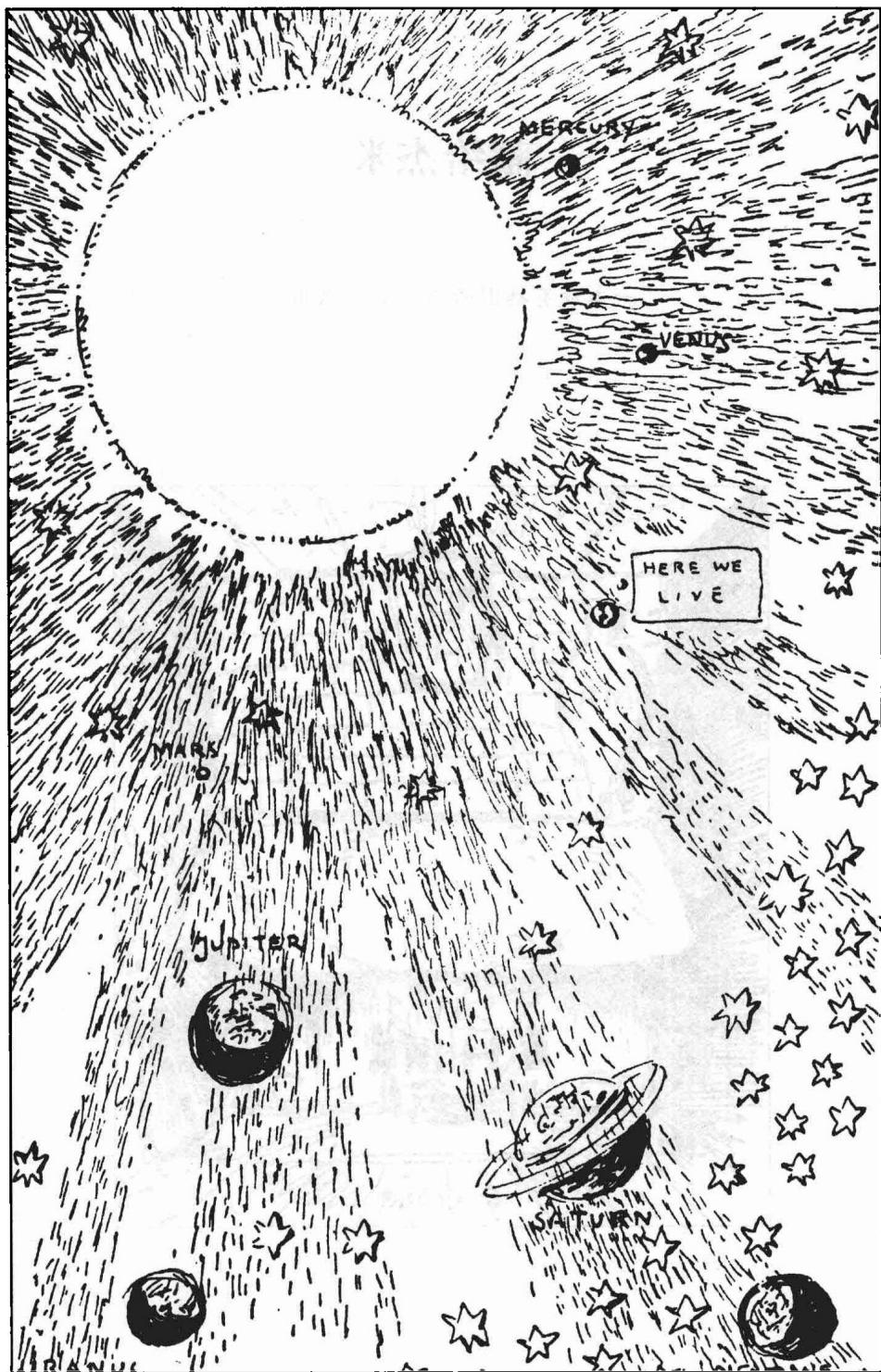
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“一本没有插图的书，有什么用呢？”

——艾丽丝





我们的历史发生在浩瀚宇宙中一个小小的星球上

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在北方一个叫斯维斯约德的土地上，耸立着一块巨石。它高 100 英里，宽 100 英里。每隔 1000 年，就有一只小鸟飞到这块石头上磨自己的喙。

巨石就这样被磨光之后，永恒中才过了一天。

FOREWORD

For Hansje and Willem:

When I was twelve or thirteen years old, an uncle of mine who gave me my love for books and pictures promised to take me upon a memorable expedition. I was to go with him to the top of the tower of Old Saint Lawrence in Rotterdam.

And so, one fine day, a sexton with a key as large as that of Saint Peter opened a mysterious door. "Ring the bell," he said, "when you come back and want to get out," and with a great grinding of rusty old hinges he separated us from the noise of the busy street and locked us into a world of new and strange experiences.

For the first time in my life I was confronted by the phenomenon of audible silence. When we had climbed the first flight of stairs, I added another discovery to my limited knowledge of natural phenomena—that of tangible darkness. A match showed us where the upward road continued. We went to the next floor and then to the next and the next until I had lost count and then there came still another floor, and suddenly we had plenty of light. This floor was on an even height with the roof of the church, and it was used as a storeroom. Covered with many inches of dust, there lay the abandoned symbols of a venerable faith which had been discarded by the good people of the city many years ago. That which had meant life and death to our ancestors was here reduced to junk and rubbish. The industrious rat had built his nest among the carved images and the ever watchful spider had opened up shop between the outspread arms of a kindly saint.

The next floor showed us from where we had derived our light. Enormous open windows with heavy iron bars made the high and barren room the roosting place of hundreds of pigeons. The wind blew through the iron bars and the air was filled with a weird and pleasing music. It was the noise of the town below us, but a noise which had been purified and cleansed by the distance. The rumbling of heavy carts and the clinking of horses' hoofs, the winding of cranes and pulleys, the hissing sound of the patient steam which had been set to do the work of man in a thousand different ways—they had all been blended into a softly rustling whisper which provided a beautiful background for the trembling cooing of the pigeons.

Here the stairs came to an end and the ladders began. And after the first ladder (a slippery old thing which made one feel his way with a cautious foot) there was a new and even greater wonder, the town-clock. I saw the heart of time. I could hear the heavy pulsebeats of the rapid seconds—one—two—three—up to sixty. Then a sudden quivering noise when all the wheels seemed to stop and another minute had been chopped off eternity. Without pause it began again—one—two—three—until at last after a warning rumble and the scraping of many wheels a thunderous voice, high above us, told the world that it was the hour of noon.

On the next floor were the bells. The nice little bells and their terrible sisters. In the centre the big bell, which made me turn stiff with fright when I heard it in the middle of the night telling a story of fire or flood. In solitary grandeur it seemed to reflect upon those six hundred years during which it had shared the joys and the sorrows of the good

汉斯和威廉：

我十二三岁的时候，我一位让我爱上书画的叔叔许诺，要带我参加一次难忘的探险活动。我将和他一起，登上鹿特丹古老的圣劳伦斯塔顶。

就这样，在一个晴朗的日子里，教堂司事拿着和圣彼得那把一样大的钥匙，打开一扇神秘之门。他说：“当你们回来想出来的时候，就按一下铃。”伴随锈迹斑斑、破烂老化的铰链发出的一阵刺耳的吱吱声，他把我们和闹市的嘈杂声隔离开来，把我们锁进了一个充满新奇体验的世界。

这是我有生以来第一次感受听得见的寂静。爬完第一段楼梯时，我对于自己有限的自然知识又有了一个新的发现——可触摸到的黑暗。一根火柴给我们照亮了上去的路。我们爬到上面一层，然后又一层。直到最后我已数不清是第几层，但还是接着往上爬。突然，我们看到一片亮光。这一层与教堂的屋顶一样高，做储藏室使用。这里存放着一个神圣信仰的废弃物件，它表面覆盖了厚厚的灰尘。许多年前，城中的好市民就已经抛弃了这个信仰。对我们的祖先来说，这些东西曾经意味着生与死，如今却沦落为废物。勤劳的老鼠在精雕细刻的神像里建造自己的窝，一贯谨慎的蜘蛛也在一位和蔼圣徒伸开的手臂间忙碌。

再往上一层，我们才知道先前的光线从何而来。装有粗重铁栏的敞开的窗户，让这间身居高处而又人迹罕至的屋子变为成百上千只鸽子的栖息之地。风儿穿过铁栏吹进来，空气中弥漫着神秘而优美的乐曲声。其实，那是我们下面市井的喧闹之声，但由于相距甚远，它已经被净化了。人们千方百计地利用一些工具来帮自己干活，于是出现了大卡车的隆隆声、马蹄的叮当声、起重机和滑轮的缠绕声、耐心的蒸汽机发出的嘶嘶声。它们混合在一起，变成轻柔的、沙沙的耳语，衬托出鸽子颤颤的咕咕声的美妙动听。

到这里，楼梯就爬完了，开始换成云梯。爬完第一段云梯（这是一种很滑很古老的梯子，让人觉得必须用脚小心探索），迎来一个既新颖又更伟大的奇观，即本市的大钟。我看到了时间的核心。我可以听到快速走动的秒针发出沉重的脉动，一下——两下——三下——直到六十下。这时突然响起一阵颤抖的嘈杂声，大钟所有的齿轮似乎停止转动，又一分钟永远地流逝了。然而时间不肯停步，又开始下一分钟，一下——两下——三下。终于，在一阵警示的轰鸣和许多齿轮摩擦之后，我们头顶响起雷鸣般的声音，它在告诉世人，现在是正午时分。

再上面一层是钟楼。那里有可爱的小钟和可怕的大钟。中间是大钟，每次半夜听到它敲响时，我总会吓得发抖，因为那说明发生了火灾或水灾。大钟孤独而庄严，似乎在回想 600 年来的经历，在此期间，它一直分享鹿特丹市民的快乐和疾苦。在它的

people of Rotterdam. Around it, neatly arranged like the blue jars in an old-fashioned apothecary shop, hung the little fellows, who twice each week played a merry tune for the benefit of the countryfolk who had come to market to buy and sell and hear what the big world had been doing. But in a corner—all alone and shunned by the others—a big black bell, silent and stern, the bell of death.

Then darkness once more and other ladders, steeper and even more dangerous than those we had climbed before, and suddenly the fresh air of the wide heavens. We had reached the highest gallery. Above us the sky. Below us the city—a little toy-town, where busy ants were hastily crawling hither and thither, each one intent upon his or her particular business, and beyond the jumble of stones, the wide greenness of the open country.

It was my first glimpse of the big world.

Since then, whenever I have had the opportunity, I have gone to the top of the tower and enjoyed myself. It was hard work, but it repaid in full the mere physical exertion of climbing a few stairs.

Besides, I knew what my reward would be. I would see the land and the sky, and I would listen to the stories of my kind friend the watchman, who lived in a small shack, built in a sheltered corner of the gallery. He looked after the clock and was a father to the bells, and he warned of fires, but he enjoyed many free hours and then he smoked a pipe and thought his own peaceful thoughts. He had gone to school almost fifty years before and he had rarely read a book, but he had lived on the top of his tower for so many years that he had absorbed the wisdom of that wide world which surrounded him on all sides.

History he knew well, for it was a living thing with him. “There,” he would say, pointing to a bend of the river, “there, my boy, do you see those trees? That is where the Prince of Orange cut the dikes to drown the land and save Leyden.” Or he would tell me the tale of the old Meuse, until the broad river ceased to be a convenient harbour and became a wonderful highroad, carrying the ships of De Ruyter and Tromp upon that famous last voyage, when they gave their lives that the sea might be free to all.

Then there were the little villages, clustering around the protecting church which once, many years ago, had been the home of their Patron Saints. In the distance we could see the leaning tower of Delft. Within sight of its high arches, William the Silent had been murdered and there Grotius had learned to construe his first Latin sentences. And still further away, the long low body of the church of Gouda, the early home of the man whose wit had proved mightier than the armies of many an emperor, the charity-boy whom the world came to know as Erasmus.

Finally the silver line of the endless sea and as a contrast, immediately below us, the patchwork of roofs and chimneys and houses and gardens and hospitals and schools and railways, which we called our home. But the tower showed us the old home in a new light. The confused commotion of the streets and the market-place, of the factories and the workshop, became the well-ordered expression of human energy and purpose. Best of all, the wide view of the glorious past, which surrounded us on all sides, gave us new courage to face the problems of the future when we had gone back to our daily tasks.

History is the mighty Tower of Experience, which Time has built amidst the endless fields of bygone ages. It is no easy task to reach the top of this ancient structure and get the benefit of the full view. There is no elevator, but young feet are strong and it can be done.

Here I give you the key that will open the door.

When you return, you too will understand the reason for my enthusiasm.

Hendrik Willem Van Loon.

周围，挂着一些小钟。这些小家伙就像老式药房里蓝色的瓶瓶罐罐一样，整齐地排列着。村民每周来集市两次，或做买卖，或打听世界新闻，这时它们就会为他们演奏欢快的乐曲。但是在一个角落里有一口黑色大钟，它独居一处，远离同伴，沉默而严肃——这就是丧钟。

再上去是黑暗和更多的梯子。这些梯子比我们先前攀爬的那些要陡得多、险得多。接下去，突然迎来一片开阔的天空，其中弥漫着清新的空气。我们爬到了最高楼层。头顶是天空，脚下是城市——玩具般的小城。小城里面到处是蚂蚁般忙碌的人，来去匆匆，每个人都在想着自己的事情。城边的乱石堆之外，则是空旷广袤的田野。

这是我第一次看到这个大千世界。

从那以后，只要有机会，我就会爬到塔顶，独自享受着这份快乐。尽管上塔顶是件苦差事，但爬楼梯不过费些体力，却回报丰厚。

况且我知道我的回报会是什么。我将会看到绿地和蓝天，听我的好朋友讲故事。他是塔楼的看护人，住在一个隐蔽角落处搭建的小屋子里。他看护着时钟，是这些钟的父亲。他还负责火灾警报。但他仍有很多空闲时间，这时他就会吸着烟斗，想着自己那些舒心的事。大约50年前，他进过学堂，却没读什么书。但是，在塔顶生活了这么多年，被广大的世界包围着，他汲取了其中的智慧。

他精通历史，在他看来，历史是有生命的。他指着河流的一个转弯处说：“那里，在那里，孩子，你看见那些树了吗？就是在那儿，奥兰治亲王挖掉堤坝，淹没自己的土地，拯救了莱顿城。”有时他也给我讲老默兹河的传说，一直讲到这条宽广的河流不再是便利的港口，而是神奇的交通要道，运送德·勒伊特和特罗姆普的战舰踏上著名的最后征程。这一次，他们为了让天下人共享海洋，献出了自己的生命。

然后是一些小村落，环绕着保佑它们的教堂。许多年前，教堂曾是圣人保护者的家。在远处，我们可以看到代尔夫特斜塔。站在斜塔的高拱处，可以看到沉默者威廉遭暗杀的地方。也是在那里，格劳修斯学会了造自己的第一个拉丁句。再远一点，是绵长低矮的高德教堂，那是著名的伊拉斯谟早年的家。当时他只是孤儿院里寄养的孩子，可历史证明，他智慧的力量胜过任何一位国王的千军万马。

最后是漫无边际的大海边银色的海岸线。与之形成对比的是，就在我们脚下的屋顶、烟囱、房舍、花园、医院、学校和铁路，它们拼凑在一起，成了我们所谓的家。但是塔楼让我们用新的眼光来审视这个老家。街道、集市、工厂和车间的喧闹，明确地表达出人类的能力和目標。对辉煌历史的正确审视，是最珍贵的东西，它贯穿于我们生活的方方面面。当我们回到日常生活中时，它会给我们新的勇气，去面对今后的问题。

历史是势气磅礴的经验之塔，是时间在逝去的岁月里、在无边的田野间建造起来的。要登上这座古老建筑的顶部，大饱一览全景的眼福，并非易事。塔楼没有电梯，不过年轻人腿脚强劲有力，可以办到。

现在，我给你们这把开启大门的钥匙。

当你们回来的时候，就会彻底了解我为何如此热心了。

亨德里克·威廉·房龙

1 THE SETTING OF THE STAGE

We live under the shadow of a gigantic question mark.

Who are we?

Where do we come from?

Whither are we bound?

Slowly, but with persistent courage, we have been pushing this question mark further and further towards that distant line, beyond the horizon, where we hope to find our answer.

We have not gone very far.

We still know very little but we have reached the point where (with a fair degree of accuracy), we can guess at many things.

In this chapter I shall tell you how (according to our best belief) the stage was set for the first appearance of man.

If we represent the time during which it has been possible for animal life to exist upon our planet by a line of this length, then the tiny line just below indicates the age during which man (or a creature more or less resembling man) has lived upon this earth.



Man was the last to come but the first to use his brain for the purpose of conquering the forces of nature. That is the reason why we are going to study him, rather than cats or dogs or horses or any of the other animals, who, all in their own way, have a very interesting historical development behind them.

In the beginning, the planet upon which we live was (as far as we now know) a large ball of flaming matter, a tiny cloud of smoke in the endless ocean of space. Gradually, in the course of millions of years, the surface burned itself out, and was covered with a thin layer of rocks. Upon these lifeless rocks the rain descended in endless torrents, wearing out the hard granite and carrying the dust to the valleys that lay hidden between the high cliffs of the steaming earth.

Finally the hour came when the sun broke through the clouds and saw how this little planet was covered with a few small puddles which were to develop into the mighty oceans of the eastern and western hemispheres.

Then one day the great wonder happened. What had been dead, gave birth to life.

The first living cell floated upon the waters of the sea.

For millions of years it drifted aimlessly with the currents. But during all that time it was developing certain habits that it might survive more easily upon the inhospitable earth. Some of these cells were happiest in the dark depths of the lakes and the pools. They took root in the limy sediments which had been carried down from the tops of the hills and they

1 舞台布景

我们生活在一个巨大问号的阴影之下。

我们是谁？

我们从哪里来？

我们到哪里去？

但是凭着百折不挠的勇气，渐渐地，我们已经把这个问号朝遥远的地平线推移，并期望在地平线之外找到答案。

我们并没有走出多远。

我们仍然知之甚少，但是已经到达一定阶段，我们可以（比较精确地）推测许多事情。

我将在本章告诉你（根据我们现有的知识），人类刚出场时的舞台是如何布置的。

如果我们用一条这么长的线段，来表示动物在地球上生存的时间，那么这条细线也就表示了人类（或者一种与人类多少有些相似的生物）在地球上生存的时间。

人类是最后一个来到这个世界的动物，但他却首先开动脑筋，征服了自然力量。我们为何研究的是人类而不是猫、狗、马或者其他动物，就是出于这个原因。当然，这些动物身后，也有着非常有趣的发展历程。

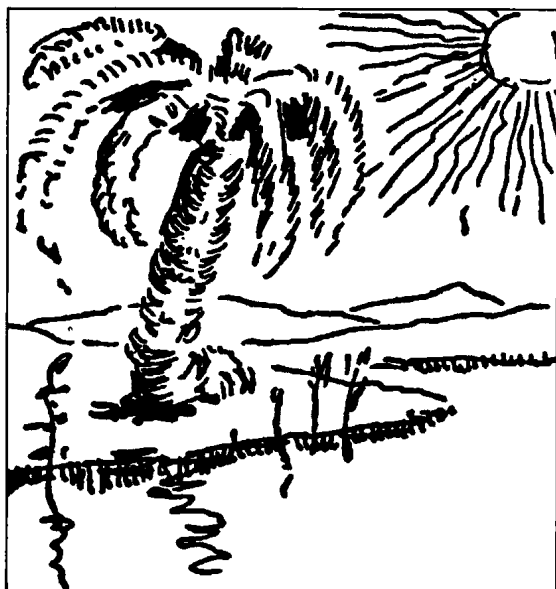
起初，我们赖以生存的地球（据我们所知）是一团大火球，是浩瀚的宇宙之洋中一缕云烟。经过了几百万年，它的表面渐渐烧光，并覆盖了薄薄的岩石层。大雨不停地倾盆而下，打在这些没有生命的岩石上，冲刷着坚硬的花岗岩，并把砂石带进山谷。那时地球上蒸汽腾腾，山谷掩藏在峻岭之间。

终于，时机来了，太阳冲破云层，它看到这个小星球上有了几处小水坑。后来，这些水坑发展成东西半球的大海洋。

就在这一天，伟大的奇迹出现



□ 大雨滂沱



植物离开了大海

became plants. Others preferred to move about and they grew strange jointed legs, like scorpions and began to crawl along the bottom of the sea amidst the plants and the pale green things that looked like jelly-fishes. Still others (covered with scales) depended upon a swimming motion to go from place to place in their search for food, and gradually they populated the ocean with myriads of fishes.

Meanwhile the plants had increased in number and they had to search for new dwelling places. There was no more room for them at the bottom of the sea. Reluctantly they left the water and made a new home in the marshes and on the mudbanks that lay at the foot of the mountains. Twice a day the tides of the ocean covered them with their brine. For the rest of the

time, the plants made the best of their uncomfortable situation and tried to survive in the thin air which surrounded the surface of the planet. After centuries of training, they learned how to live as comfortably in the air as they had done in the water. They increased in size and became shrubs and trees and at last they learned how to grow lovely flowers which attracted the attention of the busy big bumble-bees and the birds who carried the seeds far and wide until the whole earth had become covered with green pastures, or lay dark under the shadow of the big trees.

But some of the fishes too had begun to leave the sea, and they had learned how to breathe with lungs as well as with gills. We call such creatures amphibious, which means that they are able to live with equal ease on the land and in the water. The first frog who crosses your path can tell you all about the pleasures of the double existence of the amphibian.

Once outside of the water, these animals gradually adapted themselves more and more to life on land. Some became reptiles (creatures who crawl like lizards) and they shared the silence of the forests with the insects. That they might move faster through the soft soil, they improved upon their legs and their size increased until the world was populated with gigantic forms (which the hand-books of biology list under the names of Ichthyosaurus and Megalosaurus and Brontosaurus) who grew to be thirty to forty feet long and who could have played with elephants as a full grown cat plays with her kittens.

Some of the members of this reptilian family began to live in the tops of the trees, which were then often more than a hundred feet high. They no longer needed their legs for the purpose of walking, but it was necessary for them to move quickly from branch to branch. And so they changed a part of their skin into a sort of parachute, which stretched between the sides of their bodies and the small toes of their fore-feet, and gradually they covered this skinny parachute with feathers and made their tails into a steering gear and flew from tree to tree and developed into true birds.