HEP World's Classics

Natural History (VII)

自然史

第7卷

GEORGES-LOUIS LECLERC, COMTE DE BUFFON

TRANSLATED BY
JAMES SMITH BARR

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内容简介

布封是18世纪法国著名的博物学家和作家。他坚持以唯物主义的思想看待地球与生物的起源和发展，被誉为“和大自然一样伟大的天才”。《自然史》是一部博物志，书中以大量的科学观察为基础，从唯物主义的角度对自然界的各种现象做了详细的描述。书中提到的“物种可变”和“进化”的思想对当时的社会具有积极的启蒙作用，也对后来达尔文提出“物种起源”与“进化论”产生了深远影响。

《自然史》原著为法文，共44卷。本版为英国学者James Smith Barr在1797—1807年翻译出版的10卷册，是原著中最精华的部分，主要包括地球的理论、动物史、人类史、家畜驯养史，并简单介绍了矿物和植物等内容。本书可供生物学、生态学、地质学等专业的高校师生和相关科研人员以及博物爱好者阅读。

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Find Something Valuable

HEP World's Classics

There is a Chinese saying: "It is beneficial to open any book." It is even more fruitful to open and read classic books. The world is keeping on changing, but really fundamental and essential things stay the same since there is nothing new under the sun. Great ideas have been discovered and re-discovered, and they should be learnt and re-learnt. Classic books are our inheritance from all the previous generations and contain the best of knowledge and wisdom of all the people before us. They are timeless and universal. We cannot travel back in time, but we can converse with the originators of current theories through reading their books. Classic books have withstood the test of time. They are reliable and contain a wealth of original ideas. More importantly, they are also books which have not finished what they wanted or hoped to say. Consequently, they contain unearthed treasures and hidden seeds of new theories, which are waiting to be discovered. As it is often said: history is today. Proper understanding of the past work of giants is necessary to carry out properly the current and future researches and to make them to be a part of the history of science and mathematics. Reading classic books is not easy, but it is rewarding. Some modern interpretations and beautiful reformulations of the classics often miss the subtle and crucial points. Reading classics is also more than only accumulating knowledge, and the reader can learn from masters on how they asked questions, how they struggled to come up with new notions and theories to overcome problems, and answers to questions. Above all, probably the best reason to open classic books is the curiosity: what did people know, how did they express and communicate them, why did they do what they did? It can simply be fun!

This series of classic books by Higher Education Press contains a selection of best classic books in natural history, mathematics, physics, chemistry, information technology, geography, etc. from the past two thousand years. They contain masterpieces by the great people such Archimedes, Newton, Lavoisier, Dalton, Gauss, Darwin, Maxwell, and hence give a panorama of science and mathematics. They have been typeset in modern fonts for easier and more enjoyable reading. To help the reader understand difficult classics better, some volumes contain introductions and commentaries by experts. Though each classic book can stand in its own, reading them together will help the reader gain a bigger perspective of science and mathematics and understand better interconnection between seemingly unrelated topics and subjects.

Higher Education Press has been the largest publisher in China. Besides the long tradition of providing high quality books for proper education and training of university and graduate students, she has also set out to provide research monographs and references books to people at all levels around the world. Higher Education Press considers it her duty to keep the world science and mathematics community informed of what has been achieved in their subjects in easy and accessible formats. This series of classic books is an integral part of this effort.

万物皆有道　自然最奇妙

—— 写于《自然史》发行时 (代序)

在已探知的星球中, 唯地球有人类。人类社会和自然界构成了这颗星球的整个世界。人类来源于自然, 依赖于自然, 不断地探索自然, 了解自己从何而来, 向何而去? 为什么在这万物共生的自然界脱颖而出, 成为这个世界的主宰? 又怎样与这个世界大家庭和睦相处, 适应客观发展? …… 只有了解过去, 才能更好地认识现在; 懂得了过去和现在, 才能主动地面对未来。历史是最好的教科书, 在《地球简史》《人类简史》《时间简史》等纷纷面世的当代, 人们不由地把目光又投向 260 多年前就诞生了的《自然史》, 这部洋洋数百万字的旷世巨著, 开辟了科学史作的先河, 它从行星到地球, 从空气到海洋, 从动物到人类, ……天、地、生、人, 无所不包, 海、陆、空, 面面俱到, 是一部记述自然的百科全书。

书中全面论述了地球理论和地球历史, 展现了风、火、水、潮、雷、震 (地震)、光、热等各种自然现象; 对人和生物的论述更是生动形象, 丰富多彩。从生命的起源、器官的发育、青春期的特点, 到机能的退化, 直至死亡, 把人类生息繁衍的过程讲得有声有色。对生物, 特别是动物的描绘投下了重重笔墨, 占据了大量篇幅, 天上飞的, 地上长的, 野生的, 驯养的, 食肉的, 食草的, 大到熊、马, 小至鼠、兔, 畜、禽、鸟、兽, 花、草、树、木, 样样俱全, 活灵活现, 既有理性, 又有情趣, 好像无论哪种野性的动物都可以成为人类的宠物和朋友。法国著名思想家卢梭是这样评价的: “布封以异常平静而又悠然自得的语言歌颂了自然界中所有的重要物品, 呈现出造物者的尊严与灵性。他具有那个世纪最美的文笔。”

万物皆有道, 自然最奇妙。几乎所有涉及自然的事物都可以从《自然史》汲取营养, 得到启示。读这类名著, 既能增长知识, 丰富阅历, 又能赏心悦目,

闲情逸致。即使历史已过去了几百年，社会发生了巨变，也未失去这部历史巨著的价值和魅力。这就是一部不朽之作的历史地位。布封在书中提出“物种可变”和“进化”的思想，被生物进化论创始人达尔文称为“以现代科学眼光对待这个问题的第一人”。

哲语说，文如其人。《自然史》的作者布封，全名乔治·路易·勒克莱尔·布封 (Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707—1788)，如同他的不朽著作一样，也有一部不寻常的经历。他生于法国，自幼喜好自然科学，特别是数学。1728 年法律专业毕业后，又学了两年医学。20 岁时就先于牛顿发现了二项式定理；26 岁成为法兰西科学院机械部的助理研究员，翻译并出版了英国博物学者海尔斯的著作《植物生理与空气分析》和牛顿的《微积分术》；1739 年，32 岁的他转为法兰西科学院数学部的副研究员，并被任命为“巴黎皇家植物园及御书房”的总管；1753 年成为法兰西科学院院士。他用 40 年的时间写出了长达 36 卷的《自然史》，后又由他的学生整理出版了 8 卷，共 44 卷。此书一出版，就轰动了欧洲的学术界，各国很快有了译本。1777 年，法国政府给布封建了一座铜像，上面写着：“献给和大自然一样伟大的天才。”这是对布封的崇高评价。

《自然史》原著为法文，这里出版的是英国学者 James Smith Barr 在 1797—1807 年翻译的英文版 10 卷册，选取的是原著中最精华的部分。发行这样的英文版高级作品、高级读物，就像外文书籍、外文刊物一样，自然面对的也是高水平的读者和馆藏者，希望他们既可以接近原汁原味地欣赏原著，感受自然的魅力，受到自然科学和文学艺术的熏陶，同时又能自然而然地提高英文素养和写作水平。在广大知识分子外语水平普遍提高的今天，这样的科学传播形式也许会受到越来越多读者的青睐。

中国科学院院士
中国科学院地质与地球物理研究所研究员
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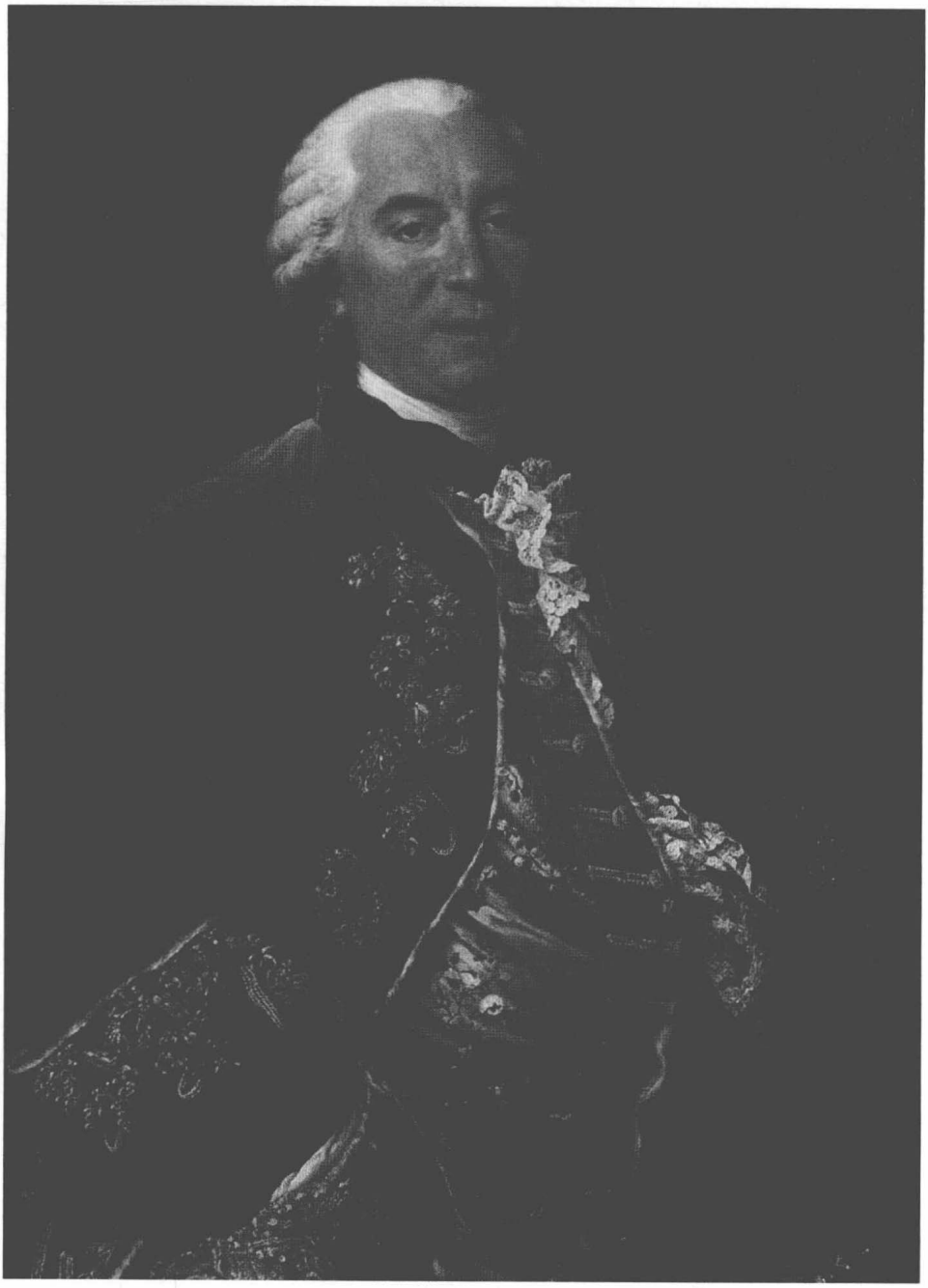

Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707—1788)

布封 (Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, 1707—1788), 18 世纪法国著名的博物学家和作家。他坚持以唯物主义的思想看待地球与生物的起源和发展, 被誉为 “和大自然一样伟大的天才”。

布封出生于法国蒙巴尔城的一个律师家庭, 自幼接受教会教育, 对自然科学始终有着浓厚的兴趣。1730 年, 大学毕业的布封结识了年轻的金斯顿公爵, 两人一起游历了法国南部、瑞士和意大利, 并在这位公爵的家庭教师的影响下开始研究博物学。1733 年, 布封进入法兰西科学院担任助理研究员, 1739 年, 成为巴黎皇家植物园园长, 1753 年, 当选为法兰西科学院院士。布封毕生从事博物学研究, 花费 40 年心血著成《自然史》这部煌煌巨著。《自然史》共 44 卷, 是一部博物志, 包括了地球史、人类史、动物史和矿物史等, 堪称百科全书式的巨著。书中提到的 “物种可变” 和 “进化” 的思想对当时的社会具有积极的启蒙作用, 也对后来达尔文提出 “物种起源” 与 “进化论” 产生了深远影响, 布封也因此被达尔文称为 “以现代科学眼光对待这个问题的第一人”。

Barr's Buffon.

Buffon's Natural History.

CONTAINING

A THEORY OF THE EARTH,

A GENERAL

HISTORY OF MAN,

OF THE BRUTE CREATION, AND OF

VEGETABLES, MINERALS,

&c. &c.

FROM THE FRENCH.

WITH NOTES BY THE TRANSLATOR.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VII.

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Directions for placing the Plates in the Seventh Volume.

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OF

THE SEVENTH VOLUME.

Of Carnivorous Animals.

BUFFON'S NATURAL HISTORY.

OF CARNIVOROUS ANIMALS.

OF TIGERS.

AS the word Tiger is a generic name, given several animals of different species, it is proper to begin with distinguishing them from each other. Leopards and Panthers have often been confounded together, and are called Tigers by most travellers. The Ounce, a small species of Panther, which is easily tamed, and used by the Orientals in the chace, has been taken for the Panther itself, and described as such by the name of Tiger. The Lynx, and that called the Lion's provider, have also sometimes received the name of Panther, and sometimes Ounce. In Africa, and in the southern parts of Asia, these animals are common; but the real tiger, and the only one which ought to be so called, is scarce, was little known by the ancients, and is badly described by the moderns. Aristotle does not mention him; and Pliny merely speaks of him as an animal of prodigious velocity; *tremendœ velocitatis animal*;* adding, that he was a much more scarce animal than the Panther, since Augustus presented the first to the Romans at the dedication of the theatre of Marcellus, while so early as the time of Scaurus, this Ædile sent 150 panthers, and afterwards 400 were given by Pompey, and 420 by Augustus, to the public shews at Rome.

* Pliny Nat. Hist. lib. viii. cap. xviii.

Pliny, however, gives no description of the tiger, or any of its characteristics. Oppian and Solinus appear to be the first who observed that the tiger is marked with long streaks, and the panther with round spots. This, indeed, is one of the characteristics which distinguishes the true tiger from a number of animals that have been so called. Strabo, in speaking of the real tiger, gives Megasthenes as his authority, for saying that in India there are tigers twice as large as the lion. The tiger then stands described by the ancients as an animal that is fierce and swift, marked with long stripes, and exceeding the lion in size; nor has Gesner, nor the other modern naturalists, who have treated of the tiger, added any thing to these observations of the ancients.

In the French language all those skins of which the hair is short, and are marked with round and distinct spots, are called tiger-skins, and travellers sharing in this error, have called all animals so marked by the general name of tigers; even the academy of sciences have been borne away by this torrent, and have adopted the appellation to all, although by dissection they found them materially different.

The most general cause, as we intimated in the article of the lion, of these ambiguous terms in Natural History, arose from the necessity of giving names to the unknown productions of the New World, and thus the animals were called after such of the old continent to whom they had the smallest resemblance. From the general denomination of tiger to every animal whose skin was spotted, instead of one species of that name, we now have nine or ten, and consequently the history of these animals is exceedingly embarrassed, writers have applied to one species what ought to have been ascribed to another.

To dispel the confusion which necessarily results from these erroneous denominations, particularly among those which have been commonly called tigers, I have resolved to give a comparative enumeration of quadrupeds, in which I shall distinguish, 1. Those which are peculiar to the old continent, and were not found in America when first discovered. 2. Those which are natives of the new continent, and were unknown in the old. 3. Those which existing alike in both continents, without having been carried from one to the other by man, may be considered as common to both. For which purpose it has been necessary to collect and arrange the scattered accounts given by the historians of America, and those who first visited this continent as travellers.