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导 读

被誉为“科幻小说之父”的法国作家儒勒·凡尔纳(Jules Verne, 1828—1905)。出生在法国南特市的一个律师家庭,有强烈的探索欲望和丰富的想象力。当他20岁时,在巴黎学习,当时,欧洲的科学技术开始飞速发展,年轻的凡尔纳便广泛涉猎各类书籍,积累了大量资料,为自己日后的创作打下了坚实的科学基础。1863年,他的第一部处女作——科幻小说《气球上的五星期》一出版,便深受读者的欢迎,并在国外传播开来。从此他专门从事科幻小说创作,由于他的科幻小说十分畅销,使他成为世界上拥有读者最多的科幻小说家。他的主要成就是总名为《已知和未知世界中奇妙的漫游》的系列科幻与惊险小说。其中最著名、最为读者所喜爱的有:《格兰特船长的儿女》、《海底两万里》、《神秘岛》、《八十天环游地球》、《气球上的五星期》、《地心游记》、《从地球到月球》、《环绕月球》、《蓓根的五亿法郎》、《烽火岛》等等。

写于1870年的《海底两万里》是凡尔纳著名的三部曲的第二部,(另两部是《格兰特船长的儿女》、《神秘岛》)。本书主要是描述法国生物学者阿龙纳斯1866年在海洋深处旅行的故事,当时海上发现了一只被断定为独角鲸的怪物,他受邀参与追捕时而不幸落水,恰好正骑到怪物的脊背上。其实,这个所谓的怪物,是一艘构造奇特的潜水船。而这艘潜水船的主人,是本书的另一个主人公尼摩船长,他是一个带有浪漫、神秘色彩,非常吸引人的人物。尼摩根据自己的设计建造了潜水船,想用它到海底进行科学研究,但这并不是他生活的全部。他竟是为免遭迫害而到海底寻找自由的一个悲剧人物。他在大洋中的荒岛上私自建造了这艘潜水艇。尼摩船长便邀请阿龙纳斯作海底旅行。他们从太平洋出发,经过珊瑚岛、印度洋、红海、地中海,进入大西洋,他们在旅途中看到许多平时见不到的海生动植物和水中各种各样的奇景,又历经与鲨鱼搏斗、冰山封路、章鱼袭击等,险象环生的情形。最后,当潜水船到达挪威时,阿龙纳斯却不辞而别,把此事公诸于众。

这部作品集中了凡尔纳科幻小说的所有特点。曲折紧张、扑朔迷

离的故事情节,瞬息万变的人物命运,丰富详尽的科学知识与逼真的美妙幻想融为一体。可是他的幻想作品却都是以科学为依据的,许多作品中所描绘的科学幻想竟能在今天得以实现。更重要的是他作品中的幻想大胆新奇,并极其逼真、生动、美丽如画令人读来趣味盎然。他的作品情节惊险曲折、人物栩栩如生、结局出人意料。所有这些使他的作品具有永恒的魅力。

译 者

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

A SHIFTING REEF

The year 1866 was signalised by a remarkable incident, a mysterious and puzzling phenomenon, which doubtless no one has yet forgotten. Not to mention rumours which agitated the maritime population and excited the public mind, even in the interior of continents, seafaring men were particularly excited. Merchants, common sailors, captains of vessels, skippers, both of Europe and America, naval officers of all countries, and the Governments of several States on the two continents, were deeply interested in the matter. For some time past vessels had been met by 'an enormous thing,' a long object, spindle-shaped, occasionally phosphorescent, and infinitely larger and more rapid in its movements than a whale. The facts relating to this apparition (entered in various log-books) agreed in most respects as to the shape of the object or creature in question, the untiring rapidity of its movements, its surprising power of locomotion, and the peculiar life with which it seemed endowed. If it was a whale, it sur-

第一部

第一章

飞逝的暗礁

因为一件极不平常的事情,1866年就成了一个引人注目的年份,对于这起神秘的、令人迷惑的现象,毫无疑问,没有人能够忘记它。海员们尤其激动,更不必提那些搅得港口居民们心神不宁,甚至引起内陆公众情绪激动的谣传了。欧洲和美洲的大商人、普通的水手、船主、船长、各国的海军官员,乃至上述两大洲的各国政府,都极为关注这起事件。不久以前,几艘过往的船只遇到了“一个巨大的物体”,一个长长的纺锤状物体,有时泛出磷光,比鲸鱼大得多,行动也快得多。与这个怪物有关的事实(记载在各种航海日志中),诸如这个物体或是生物的形状,它行进时快得出奇的速度,行动时显示出的令人吃惊的能量,和它那像是天赋的罕见活力,严格地讲,都还是相当吻合的。如果说它是一种鲸类的话,但它的体积却大大超过了科学曾经加以归类的所有鲸鱼。将各个不同时期的观

passed in size all those hitherto classified in science. Taking into consideration the mean of observations made at divers times - rejecting the timid estimate of those who assigned to this object a length of two hundred feet, equally with the exaggerated opinions which set it down as a mile in width and three in length - we might fairly conclude that this mysterious being surpassed greatly all dimensions admitted by the learned ones of the day, if it existed at all. And that it DID exist was an undeniable fact; and, with that tendency which disposes the human mind in favour of the marvellous, we can understand the excitement produced in the entire world by this supernatural apparition. As to classing it in the list of fables, the idea was out of the question. On the 20th of July, 1866, the steamer Governor Higginson, of the Calcutta and Burnach Steam Navigation Company, had met this moving mass five miles off the east coast of Australia. Captain Baker thought at first that he was in the presence of an unknown sandbank; he even prepared to determine its exact position when two columns of water, projected by the mysterious object, shot with a hissing noise a hundred and fifty feet up into

the air. Now, unless the sandbank had been submitted to the intermittent eruption of a geyser, the Governor Higginson had to do neither more nor less than with an aquatic mammal, unknown till then, which threw up from its blow-holes columns of water mixed with air and vapour.

Similar facts were observed on the 23rd of Ju-

察结果加以折中——排除那些不敢断言的估计,即把这个物体确定为二百英尺长,同样地去除掉那些夸大的看法,即所谓它有五海里宽三英尺长——我们可以完全肯定地下结论,如果这个神秘的生物确实存在的话,它的体积大大超过到目前为止为我们所知道的所有生物。然而,它确实存在着,这是个不可否认的事实;由于人类所固有的好奇心理,对于这个超自然的、离奇东西的出现给整个世界带来的骚动,我们是可以理解的。至于认为这是无稽之谈的论调,是不正确的。1866年7月20日,加尔各答一布纳希汽船公司的喜金孙总督号汽船,在澳大利亚东海岸五海里处,遇见过这个游动的物体。起初,巴克船长以为前面是一座无人知晓的暗礁;正当他准备测量它的准确方位的时候,两道水柱被这个神秘的怪物射出,呼啸着朝空中射到了一百五十英尺的高度。这么说来,要么是这座暗礁上面有一眼间歇性热喷泉,要么是喜金孙总督号所面对的恰好是一种至今尚不为人所知的海洋哺乳类动物,它从鼻孔中喷出气热混合的两道水柱。

同年7月23日,在太平洋海面

ly in the same year, in the Pacific Ocean, by the Columbus, of the West India and Pacific Steam Navigation Company. But this extraordinary creature could transport itself from one place to another with surprising velocity; as, in an interval of three days, the Governor Higginson and the Columbus had observed it at two different points of the chart, separated by a distance of more than seven hundred nautical leagues.

Fifteen days later, two thousand miles farther off, the Helvetia, of the Compagnie - Nationale, and the Shannon, of the Royal Mail Steamship Company, sailing to windward in that portion of the Atlantic lying between the United States and Europe, respectively signalled the monster to each other in 42° 15' N. lat. and 60° 35' W. long. In these simultaneous observations they thought themselves justified in estimating the minimum length of the mammal at more than three hundred and fifty feet, as the Shannon and Helvetia were of smaller dimensions than it, though they measured three hundred feet over all. Now the largest whales, those which frequent those parts of the sea round the Aleutian, Kulammak, and Ungullich islands, have never exceeded the length of sixty yards, if they attain that.

In every place of great resort the monster was the fashion. They sang of it in the cafes, ridiculed it in the papers, and represented it on the stage. All kinds of stories were circulated regarding it. There appeared in the papers caricatures of every gigantic and imaginary creature,

上,西印度-太平洋汽船公司的克利斯托巴尔哥郎号,观测到同样的事实。但是这个奇特的生物能够以惊人的速度从一个地方潜行到另一个地方,因为喜金孙总督号和克利斯托巴尔哥郎号曾在相距七百多海里的两个不同的地点分别见到过它,而间隔的时间只有三天。

十五天之后,在距上述两地两千海里处,国营轮船公司的海尔维地亚号和皇家邮船公司的山农号,在位于美国和欧洲之间的大西洋海面上迎面对驶时,分别在北纬 42 度 15 分和西经 60 度 35 分的地方同时看见了这个怪物。从这两条船同时观察到的结果来看,他们估计出这个哺乳动物至少有三百五十多英尺长,因为尽管山农号和海尔维地亚号两艘船各自都有三百英尺左右,但二者连接起来还不及它长。目前,最大的鱼,那些时常出没于阿留申群岛和翁居里克岛附近海面的,从来没有超过 60 码长,甚至没有达到这个长度。

在各大中心城市的每个地方,这个怪物都是家喻户晓的。人们在咖啡馆里赞叹它,在报刊上嘲弄它,在舞台上戏演它。传播着关于它的各种谣言。在报刊上出现了各种巨型奇异动物的漫画,从白鲸、北极海中

from the white whale, the terrible 'Moby Dick' of sub-arctic regions, to the immense kraken, whose tentacles could entangle a ship of five hundred tons and hurry it into the abyss of the ocean. The legends of ancient times were even revived. Then burst forth the unending argument between the believers and the unbelievers in the societies of the wise and the scientific journals. 'The question of the monster' inflamed all minds. Editors of scientific journals, quarrelling with believers in the supernatural, spilled seas of ink during this memorable campaign, some even drawing blood; for from the sea-serpent they came to direct personalities. During the first months of the year 1867 the question seemed buried, never to revive, when new facts were brought before the public. It was then no longer a scientific problem to be solved, but a real danger seriously to be avoided. The question took quite another shape. The monster became a small island, a rock, a reef, but a reef of indefinite and shifting proportions.

On the 5th of March, 1867, the Moravian, of the Montreal Ocean Company, finding herself during the night in 27° 30' lat. and 72° 15' long., struck on her starboard quarter a rock, marked in no chart for that part of the sea. Under the combined efforts of the wind and its four hundred horse power, it was going at the rate of thirteen knots. Had it not been for the superior strength of the hull of the Moravian, she would have been broken by the shock and gone down with the 237 passengers she was bringing home from Canada. The accident happened about five

可怕的“莫比·狄克”，直到庞大的“克拉肯”，它的触须能够缠住一艘五百吨重的大船，将其拖入海底。甚至提起了古代的传说。当时，在学术团体中和科学报刊上，轻信的人与怀疑论者之间爆发了无休止的争论。“怪物问题”使所有的人都情绪激动。科学期刊的记者和相信超自然存在的信徒们交起火来，在这场值得纪念的战争中泼洒了大量笔墨，有些人甚至还付出了血的代价；因为他们针对的不是海蛇，而是搞起了人身攻击。在1867年的头几个月里，这个问题好像是被遗忘了，没有人提及，就在这个时候，新的情况又出现在公众面前。此时，它已不再是一个有待解决的科学问题了，而是一个必须加以避免的严重的现实问题。问题显示出了完全不同的一面。这个怪物变成了小岛、岩石、暗礁，而且是一个行动莫测的、飞逝的暗礁。

1867年3月5日，蒙特利奥航海公司的摩拉维安号，夜间行驶至北纬27度30分、西经72度15分的位置时，船的右舷部位撞上了一座暗礁，任何航海图上都没有记载这个暗礁。在风力和它自身400马力的推动下，它能够以每小时十三海里的速度前进。若不是摩拉维安号船身质地特别坚固，它早已被撞的粉碎，连同从加拿大载来的237名乘客一起沉到海底去了。这起事故发生在清晨五点左右，正值天快亮的时候。船上值

o'clock in the morning, as the day was breaking. The officers of the quarter-deck hurried to the after-part of the vessel. They examined the sea with the most careful attention. They saw nothing but a strong eddy about three cables' length distant, as if the surface had been violently agitated. The bearings of the place were taken exactly, and the Moravian continued its route without apparent damage. Had it struck on a submerged rock, or on an enormous wreck? They could not tell; but, on examination of the ship's bottom when undergoing repairs, it was found that part of her keel was broken.

This fact, so grave in itself, might perhaps have been forgotten like many others if, three weeks after, it had not been re-enacted under similar circumstances. But, thanks to the nationality of the victim of the shock, thanks to the reputation of the company to which the vessel belonged, the circumstance became extensively circulated. The 13th of April, 1867, the sea being beautiful, the breeze favourable, the Scotia, of the Cunard Company's line, found herself in 15 @ 12' long. and 45 @ 37' lat. She was going at the speed of thirteen knots and a half. At seventeen minutes past four in the afternoon, whilst the passengers were assembled at lunch in the great saloon, a slight shock was felt on the hull of the Scotia, on her quarter, a little aft of the port-paddle. The Scotia had not struck, but she had been struck, and seemingly by something rather sharp and penetrating than blunt. The shock had been so slight that no

班的高级船员们迅速朝船的后部跑去。他们认真仔细地观察海面。除了看见在距离三链处有一个巨大的漩涡外,他们什么也没发现,好像这片洋面方才受到过猛烈的冲击。那个地点的方位被准确地记录下来,摩拉维亚号没有明显的海损又继续航行。它是撞上了一处海下的暗礁呢,还是一只巨大的遇难船只的残骸呢?他们没法知道;但是,在进船坞检查船底的时候,发现它的一部分龙骨已经破裂了。

这个事实本身是十分严重的,若不是在三个星期之后,在类似的情况下发生了同样的事件,它恐怕会同其他事件一样被人忘却。不过是由于受损船只的国籍及其所属公司的声望,才使之引起极大的轰动。1867年4月13日,海上风平浪静,斯戈蒂亚号正在西经15度12分、北纬45度37分的海面上行驶。它以每小时13.5海里的速度前进。下午四时十七分,乘客们正聚集在大厅里吃午餐,就在这个时候,斯各脱亚号船侧四分之一处,稍后一点靠左舷机轮的地方,发生了一次轻微的撞击。斯各脱亚号并没有撞上什么,而是被某种比钝器更锐利,更具有穿透力的东西撞了。这次碰撞感觉非常轻微,若不是船舱管理员跑到甲板上面叫喊,“我们要沉了!我们要沉了!”恐怕没有人会在意。起初,乘客们非常惊

one had been alarmed, had it not been for the shouts of the carpenter's watch, who rushed on to the bridge, exclaiming, 'We are sinking! we are sinking!' At first the passengers were much frightened, but Captain Anderson hastened to reassure them. The danger could not be imminent. The Scotia, divided into seven compartments by strong partitions, could brave with impunity any leak. Captain Anderson went down immediately into the hold. He found that the sea was pouring into the fifth compartment; and the rapidity of the influx proved that the force of the water was considerable. Fortunately this compartment did not hold the boilers, or the fires would have been immediately extinguished. Captain Anderson ordered the engines to be stopped at once, and one of the men went down to ascertain the extent of the injury.

Some minutes afterwards they discovered the existence of a large hole, two yards in diameter, in the ship's bottom. Such a leak could not be stopped; and the Scotia, her paddles half submerged, was obliged to continue her course. She was then three hundred miles from Cape Clear, and, after three days' delay, which caused great uneasiness in Liverpool, she entered the basin of the company.

The engineers visited the Scotia, which was put in dry dock. They could scarcely believe it possible; at two yards and a half below water-mark was a regular rent, in the form of an isosceles triangle. The broken place in the iron plates was so perfectly defined that it could not have been more neatly done by a punch. It was

恐,但船长安德生很快就打消了他们的疑虑。危险不会立即来临。再者,斯戈蒂亚号船是由水密舱壁把7间船舱分隔开来的,应该能够不受损害地顶得住任何漏洞。安德生船长迅即跑到底舱。他发现海水正在浸入第五个间隔间;而且浸入速度非常快,这说明水的压力是相当大的。幸运的是这个间隔间没有安装蒸汽锅炉,否则的话,炉火就会突然熄灭掉。安德生船长命令立即停船,并且叫其中一位水手潜水查清受损状况。

几分钟后,他们查明船底有一个两米宽的大洞。这样一个漏洞是不可能堵住的,因此,斯各脱亚号就不得不在它的船舷处于半淹状态下继续行驶。它当时距离克利亚海峡还有三百海里,在延误了三天之后,这次延误在利物浦造成了巨大的不安,它才驶进公司的码头。

在干船坞,斯各脱亚号被架了起来,工程师们对它进行了检查。他们不敢相信那是真的;在吃水线下两米半的地方露出一个规则的等边三角形裂口。铁皮上的裂痕非常整齐,就连打孔机也不能轧制得那般精确无误。显而易见,轧出这个洞的工具不

clear, then, that the instrument producing the perforation was not of a common stamp and, after having been driven with prodigious strength, and piercing an iron plate 1 3/8 inches thick, had withdrawn itself by a backward motion.

Such was the last fact, which resulted in exciting once more the torrent of public opinion. From this moment all unlucky casualties which could not be otherwise accounted for were put down to the monster. Upon this imaginary creature rested the responsibility of all these shipwrecks, which unfortunately were considerable; for of three thousand ships whose loss was annually recorded at Lloyd's, the number of sailing and steam-ships supposed to be totally lost, from the absence of all news, amounted to not less than two hundred!

Now, it was the 'monster' who, justly or unjustly, was accused of their disappearance, and, thanks to it, communication between the different continents became more and more dangerous. The public demanded sharply that the seas should at any price be relieved from this formidable cetacean.

CHAPTER II

PRO AND CON

At the period when these events took place, I had just returned from a scientific research in

是一种普通的钢材制作的,因为它以巨大的力量向前冲撞,凿穿了四厘米厚的铁皮以后,还能做出倒退动作,使其自身得以逃脱。

这就是最近这次事件的情形,结果它再一次使公众兴奋起来。从这时起,所有以前原因不明的海难事件,全都归到了这个怪物身上。这个神奇的动物负起了所有沉船事故的责任,不幸的是沉没船只的数目是一个巨大数字;根据统计年鉴记载,在每年受损的三千只船舶中,因下落不明而判定失踪的帆船和汽船,其数量起码不少于两百艘!

目前,这个“怪物”,无论公正与否,由于船只失踪受到了谴责,由于它的存在,各大洲之间的航行变得越来越危险了。公众强烈要求不惜一切代价把这条令人生畏的鲸怪清除掉。

第二章

赞成与反对

当这些事件发生的时候,我刚从美国内布拉斯加州的贫困地区从事

the disagreeable territory of Nebraska, in the United States. In virtue of my office as Assistant Professor in the Museum of Natural History in Paris, the French Government had attached me to that expedition. After six months in Nebraska, I arrived in New York towards the end of March, laden with a precious collection. My departure for France was fixed for the first days in May. Meanwhile I was occupying myself in classifying my mineralogical, botanical, and zoological riches, when the accident happened to the Scotia.

I was perfectly up in the subject which was the question of the day. How could I be otherwise? I had read and reread all the American and European papers without being any nearer a conclusion. This mystery puzzled me. Under the impossibility of forming an opinion, I jumped from one extreme to the other. That there really was something could not be doubted, and the incredulous were invited to put their finger on the wound of the Scotia.

On my arrival at New York the question was at its height. The theory of the floating island, and the unapproachable sandbank, supported by minds little competent to form a judgment, was abandoned. And, indeed, unless this shoal had a machine in its stomach, how could it change its position with such astonishing rapidity? From the same cause, the idea of a floating hull of an enormous wreck was given up.

There remained, then, only two possible solutions of the question, which created two distinct parties: on one side, those who were for a

一项科学研究工作回来。由于我是巴黎自然科学博物馆的客座教授,法国政府委派我参加这项科研。在内布拉斯加州度过了六个月之后,我带着一些珍贵的收集品,接近三月底到达纽约。我起程回法国的日期定在五月上旬。在此期间,我可以对我收集的那些矿物和动植物标本进行分类整理,就在这斯各脱亚号出事了。

我完全了解时下的那个时髦话题。我怎么会不了解呢?我反复阅读欧美报刊,但没有得到进一步的结论。这个谜使我困惑。拿不定注意,我只好在两种极端之间徘徊。这件事终究不能怀疑,就请怀疑者指出斯各脱亚号那个创口是怎么造成的吧。

当我到达纽约的时候,这个问题正是热门话题。由某些不学无术的人提出的,诸如浮动的小岛,不可接近的暗礁之类的假设,遭到了否定。而实际上,除非这礁石腹部有一台机器,不然的话,它怎么可能以这般神奇的速度四处移位呢?同样的原因,那是一大块漂浮着的巨大残骸的说法也被否定了。

那么,这个问题只剩下两种可能的解释,由此形成了两个观点截然不同的派别:一方认为,这是一种力大

monster of colossal strength; on the other, those who were for a submarine vessel of enormous motive power. But this last theory, plausible as it was, could not stand against inquiries made in both worlds. That a private gentleman should have such a machine at his command was not likely. Where, when, and how was it built? and how could its construction have been kept secret? Certainly a Government might possess such a destructive machine. And in these disastrous times, when the ingenuity of man has multiplied the power of weapons of war, it was possible that, without the knowledge of others, a State might try to work such a formidable engine.

But the idea of a war machine fell before the declaration of Governments. As public interest was in question, and transatlantic communications suffered, their veracity could not be doubted. But how admit that the construction of this submarine boat had escaped the public eye? For a private gentleman to keep the secret under such circumstances would be very difficult, and for a State whose every act is persistently watched by powerful rivals, certainly impossible.

Upon my arrival in New York several persons did me the honour of consulting me on the phenomenon in question. I had published in France a work in quarto, in two volumes, entitled *Mysteries of the Great Submarine Grounds*. This book, highly approved of in the learned world, gained for me a special reputation in this rather obscure branch of Natural History. My advice

无比的怪物;另一方认为,它是一艘功率十分强大的潜水艇。然而,后一种假设尽管有一定的道理,但经过在两大洲所进行的调查之后,它便站不住脚了。私人可以拥有这样一种机器是不大可能的。它是在何时,何地,怎样被制造出来的呢?并且,它的制造怎么能被保守住秘密呢?一个国家的政府可能拥有这种破坏性的机器。在人类为增强武器威力而绞尽脑汁的可悲时代,一个国家是可能会瞒着其他国家去制造这种可怕的武器的。

但这种战争器械的假设,在各国政府的声明面前又站不住脚了。因为这关系到公共利益的问题,既然海上交通遭到破坏,各国的坦诚自然不容置疑。此外,又怎么能够说这艘潜水艇的建造可以瞒得过公众的眼睛呢?在这种情形下,个人要想守住秘密尚且非常困难,而对于一个行动经常受到敌对势力密切监视的国家来说,就更加不可能了。

我一到纽约,就有几个人特意来向我征询对于这个正被议论的现象的看法。我曾在法国出版过一部书,四开本,共两卷,名为:《海底的神秘》。这本书受到了学术界的赏识,在自然科学一个颇为神秘的支系中,为我赢得了专家的称号。人们询问我的意见,想知道我能够否定这个事

was asked. As long as I could deny the reality of the fact, I confined myself to a decided negative. But soon, finding myself driven into a corner, I was obliged to explain myself point by point. I discussed the question in all its forms, politically and scientifically; and I give here an extract from a carefully - studied article which I published in the number of the 30th of April.

It ran as follows: 'After examining one by one the different theories, rejecting all other suggestions, it becomes necessary to admit the existence of a marine animal of enormous power.

'The great depths of the ocean are entirely unknown to us. Soundings cannot reach them. What passes in those remote depths - what beings live, or can live, twelve or fifteen miles beneath the surface of the waters - what is the organisation of these animals, we can scarcely conjecture. However, the solution of the problem submitted to me may modify the form of the dilemma. Either we do know all the varieties of beings which people our planet, or we do not. If we do NOT know them all - if Nature has still secrets in the deeps for us, nothing is more conformable to reason than to admit the existence of fishes, or cetaceans of other kinds, or even of new species, of an organisation formed to inhabit the strata inaccessible to soundings, and which an accident of some sort has brought at long intervals to the upper level of the ocean.

'If, on the contrary, we DO know all living kinds, we must necessarily seek for the animal in question amongst those marine beings already classed; and, in that case, I should be dis-

件的真实性的时候,我都肯定地予以否定。但是,不久,我出于无奈只好明确显示了自己的见解。我从政治上和学术上讨论这个问题的方方面面;我在这儿将我在4月30日发表的一篇材料极其丰富的文章摘录出来。

摘录如下:“在对各种不同的假设和所有不可能成立的猜想——认真研究之后,我们不得不承认确实存在着一种力量大得惊人的海洋生物。

“我们对海底深层一无所知。探测器也无法深入。在海洋深层有什么——或者可能有什么生命存在,海面下十二或者十五英里的地方——这些生物体的机体构造又是怎样的,我们实在很难预测。但是,我眼前的这个问题可以用二维推理的方式来解决。生活在我们这颗星球上的各种各样的生物,我们或许认识,或许不认识。要是我们都不认识所有这类生物——如果大自然仍对我们深深地保守着秘密的话,我们就不得不承认某些鱼类,或新类型的鲸类,甚至新品种的存在,它们在探测器所不能到达的海底深层形成一个组织,出于某种原因,一时兴起,偶尔也会浮出水面。

“反之,倘若我们认识所有生物,那么就必须从已经加以分类的海洋生物中找出我们讨论的这只动物;在这种情形下,我就不会否认有一种巨

posed to admit the existence of a gigantic narwhal.

‘The common narwhal, or unicorn of the sea, often attains a length of sixty feet. Increase its size fivefold or tenfold, give it strength proportionate to its size, lengthen its destructive weapons, and you obtain the animal required. It will have the proportions determined by the officers of the Shannon, the instrument required by the perforation of the Scotia, and the power necessary to pierce the hull of the steamer.

‘Indeed, the narwhal is armed with a sort of ivory sword, a halberd, according to the expression of certain naturalists. The principal tusk has the hardness of steel. Some of these tusks have been found buried in the bodies of whales, which the unicorn always attacks with success. Others have been drawn out, not without trouble, from the bottoms of ships, which they had pierced through and through, as a gimlet pierces a barrel. The Museum of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris possesses one of these defensive weapons, two yards and a quarter in length, and fifteen inches in diameter at the base.

‘Very well! suppose this weapon to be six times stronger and the animal ten times more powerful; launch it at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and you obtain a shock capable of producing the catastrophe required. Until further information, therefore, I shall maintain it to be a sea-unicorn of colossal dimensions, armed not with a halberd, but with a real spur, as the armoured frigates, or the “rams” of war, whose

大的独角鲸的存在。

“一般的独角鲸,或海麒麟,身长通常只有六十英尺。将这一长度加大五倍,或者十倍,给它以同它的身材成比例的力量,使其进攻型武器的性能增强,这样就得到了我们所需要的动物。它就具有山农号军官们测定的长度,有能够刺穿斯各脱亚号的触角和刺穿一只轮船船壳的力量。

“事实上,据某些博物学家所言,这条独角鲸有一柄骨质利剑或一把骨质的戟。那长牙像钢铁一般坚硬。在鲸鱼身上曾经发现过这样一些牙齿,这说明独角鲸总是能成功地用牙齿发起进攻。也有人从船底费力地拔起过类似的牙齿,它们穿透船底就好像利锥穿透木桶一样。巴黎医学院陈列馆就拥有这样的一根利器,长度是两码二十五厘米,底宽为十五英寸。

“那么!假设那武器的威力还要强十倍,那动物的力量还要大十倍;它以每小时二十英里的速度前进,这样一来,你就得到了要求的制造那种海难事故所需要的撞击力。因此,在获得更多的材料之前,我主张把这动物说成是一只体形巨大的海麒麟,身上长的不是一把剑戟,而是像铁甲船或‘战舰’那样的真正的冲角,而且还同