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### Introduction

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## Introduction

### Pre-Hetzel Verne: Bohemian Paris

*An Excursion at Sea, The Thousand and Second Night, La Guimard ...* For over a hundred and fifty years, these plays languished in Jules Verne's desk and then on the dusty shelves of the Nantes Municipal Library before Christian Robin was able to publish them in 2005, in honor of the centenary of Verne's death. That anniversary triggered a plethora of commemorations, new editions of Verne's works, events, and conferences, among many different activities and endeavors. Robin's remarkable collection included all of Verne's previously unpublished plays in a volume titled *Théâtre inédit*, issued by the Cherche-Midi press in Paris.<sup>1</sup> All in all, Robin collected and edited twenty-one plays that, for the most part, had never even been performed, let alone translated into English. Fortunately, the Palik Series, in addition to stories and novels, and the plays in this volume, has also published the original translation of the theatrical version of *Around the World in 80 Days* (very different from the novel of the same title), along with six more plays translated for the first time in the volumes *Mr. Chimp, and Other Plays* and *Castles of California*.<sup>2</sup>

1. Jules Verne, *Théâtre inédit*, édition dirigée par Christian Robin, Collection La Bibliothèque Verne (Paris: Le Cherche Midi, 2005).
2. Jules Verne and Adolphe D'Ennery, *Around the World in Eighty Days—The 1874 Play*, the original translation commissioned by the Kiralfy Brothers (Albany, GA: BearManor Fiction, 2013); Jules Verne, with Michel Carré, Charles Wallut and Victorien Sardou, *Mr. Chimp, and Other Plays*, translated by Frank

One could be tempted to assume, to paraphrase Fran Leibowitz, that there had to have been a reason why these plays hadn't seen the light of day for all these years, besides the fact that people forgot about them in order to concentrate on Verne's more famous and beloved novels. One might question the quality of plays left to wither away in obscurity for over a century were the author of those plays not Jules Verne—and more importantly—were these plays not, in actual fact, theatrical gems, filled with whimsy, charm and even pathos. *An Excursion at Sea* (*Une Promenade en mer*, completed in 1851), for example, which contains a delightful song, “The Song of the Topmen” (“Chanson des Gabiers”), originally part of a series of poems Verne wrote in his early twenties, could easily have been written by Gilbert and Sullivan as it depicts a comical sea outing involving swashbuckling French smugglers pitted against an aristocratic English family taking a pleasure cruise on their yacht. *An Excursion at Sea* is an excursion that is delightfully lightheaded but also touches upon important Verneian themes of class, British-French rivalry, nautical adventures and hidden and revealed love. These are all themes that are found in, for example, *Five Weeks in a Balloon* (*Cinq Semaines en ballon*, 1863), and would be developed further in many of Verne's novels such as *The Children of Captain Grant* (*Les Enfants du capitaine Grant*, 1868), *Mathias Sandorf* (1885), and of course *Around the World in Eighty Days* (*Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*, 1872). The smuggler's boat in *An Excursion at Sea*, in fact, is named *Passe-Partout*, which prefigures Phileas Fogg's beloved manservant, but also the young Verne's artistic and real desires to *passer-partout*, to go everywhere and to have no limits in terms of imagination, art or travel. Indeed, the unpublished plays unearthed by Robin cover a wide scope of themes and historical periods: the corrupt Borgias in his very first play, *Alexandre VI* (also titled *Cesar Borgia*) in 1847; the Guy Fawkes' Rebellion in *The Powder Conspiracy* (*La Conspiration des poudres*, 1848); *A Drama Under Louis*

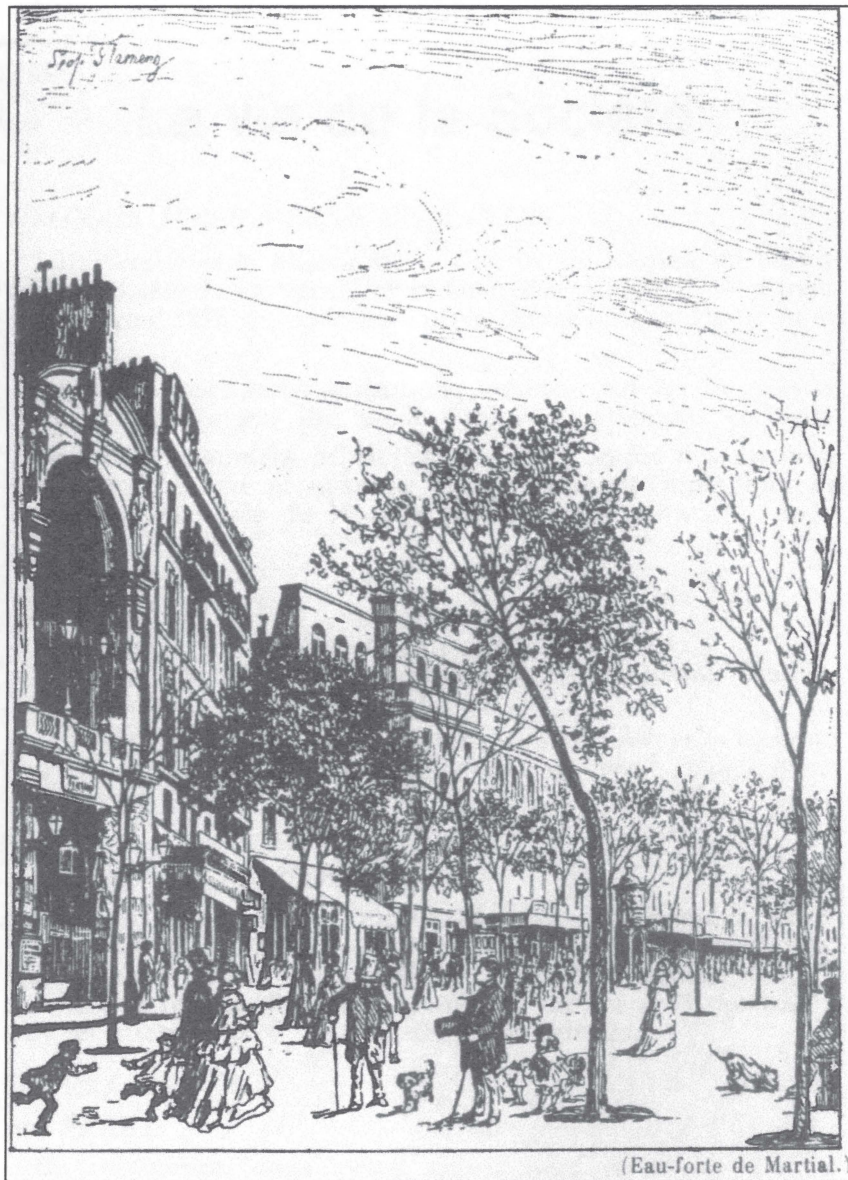
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Morlock (Albany, GA: BearManor Fiction, 2011), including *Mr. Chimpanzee*, *The Knights of the Daffodil*, *An Adoptive Son*, and *Eleven Days of Siege*; Jules Verne, *Castles of California: Two Plays by Jules Verne*, translated, with an introduction and notes, by Kieran O'Driscoll (Albany, GA: BearManor Fiction, 2017), including *The Castles of California* and *A Nephew from America*. The North American Jules Verne Society's first book was *Journey Through the Impossible* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2003), a science fiction stage original written in collaboration with Adolphe D'Ennery, translated by Edward Baxter.



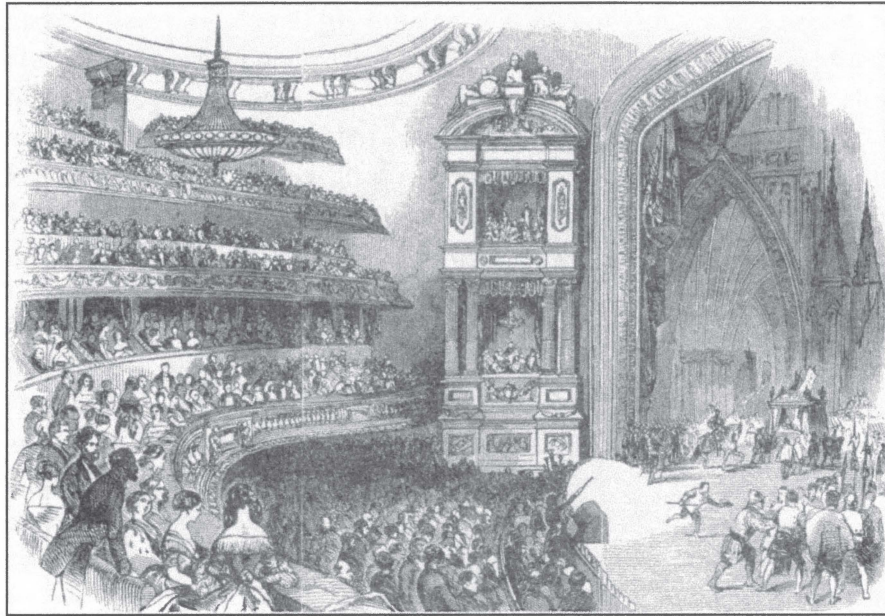
**JEAN PASSEPARTOUT.**

Passepartout in the novel *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours*  
(*Around the World in Eighty Days*, 1873).



Exterior of the Théâtre Lyrique in Verne's time.

*XV* (*Un Drame sous Louis XV*) and *Abd'Allah* (both 1849) delve into 18<sup>th</sup>-century French society; and *The Thousand and Second Night* (*La Mille et deuxième nuit*, 1850) harkens back to romantic orientalist visions of the Middle East so admired by 19<sup>th</sup> century artists and writers such as Flaubert and Delacroix among many others ever since Antoine



Interior of the Théâtre Lyrique.

Galland published his translations of the *Arabian Nights* into French in the early 1700s.

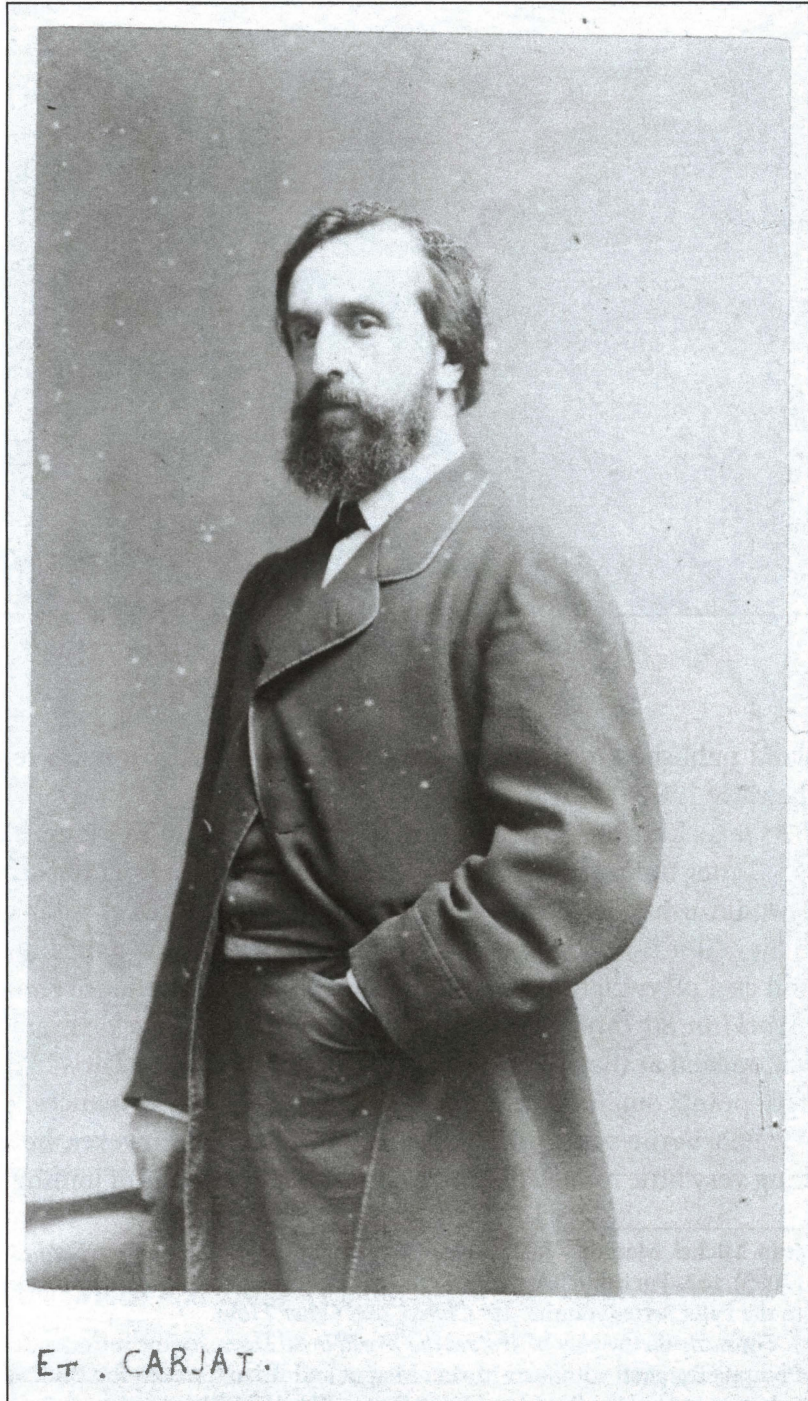
As Jean-Michel Margot points out in his article “Jules Verne, Playwright,” after the success of *Five Weeks in a Balloon*, among the others that would usher in Verne’s gigantically popular career as a novelist with his editor P-J. Hetzel, Verne “was almost better known during this period as a playwright than as a novelist.”<sup>3</sup> His production of *Around the World in 80 Days* (*Le Tour du monde en 80 jours*), for example, which opened at the Théâtre de la Porte Saint-Martin in Paris had, as Margot points out, “a hugely successful run of 415 performances.”<sup>4</sup>

When Verne was writing *An Excursion at Sea*, however, he was making very little money despite having great ambitions of joining the

3. Jean-Michel Margot, “Jules Verne Playwright,” *Science Fiction Studies*, 32 (2005), 153. For a much expanded version of this essay see Margot’s Introduction in the Palik Series volume, *Mr. Chimp, and Other Plays*.

For more on the play of *Around the World in 80 Days*, see the Introduction by Philippe Burgaud with Jean-Michel Margot and Brian Taves in the Palik Series volume, *Around the World in Eighty Days—The 1874 Play*.

4. Margot, “Jules Verne Playwright,” 153.



Aristide Hignard, courtesy Volker Dehs.

literary heavyweights of his time such as Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, who were known as much for their plays as they were for their novels and poetry. When Verne accepted the job as secretary for Dumas' Théâtre Lyrique (which had previously been called the Théâtre Historique when Dumas first ran it), Verne was only making about 100 francs a month with the added lure by Jules Seveste, the theater's director, that the theatre might produce a few of his plays. The youthful Verne enjoyed a bachelor but artistically stimulating life in Paris, when he moved near the theater district on Bonne Nouvelle, one flight above his comrade from Nantes, the composer Aristide Hignard (1822-1898), with whom he would collaborate on four musical plays as well as some poems of Verne's which Hignard put to music.<sup>5</sup> It is undoubtedly true, as Margot has pointed out several times, that Verne's plays would have been much more successful and might have avoided oblivion if he had collaborated not with Hignard but with Jacques Offenbach, whose theater, the Bouffes Parisiennes, had produced *Mr. Chimpanzee* in 1855. However, the truth of the matter is that Verne and Hignard were friends, practically roommates, and immersed themselves in the artistic fervor that spending one's beginning years in Paris as an artist could ignite. Together, they lived through the political upheavals leading to Napoleon III's rise to power and the astounding theater scene that lit up the Parisian boulevards in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As Gilles de Robien explains regarding Verne's loyalty to Hignard:

Ballasted by his friend Aristide Hignard for ten years already, Jules had difficulty taking off. Perhaps he should reconsider a collaboration that is taking too much time to show its fruits? Yet, convinced as he was of the incomparable genius of his fellow Nantes native, loyal and opinionated as he is in all of his relationships, he cannot imagine working with another composer. Perhaps Aristide's talent is less important to him than his friendship. Jules needs to breathe fresh air, the carefree and independent winds that the composer brings to the table.<sup>6</sup>

5. Some of Hignard's melodies were released in 2005 on a CD celebrating his collaboration, entitled *Jules Verne: Mélodies inédites*, by the Académie de Bretagne et des Pays de Loire.

6. Gilles de Robien, *Jules Verne: Le rêveur incompris* (Paris: Editions Michel Lafon,



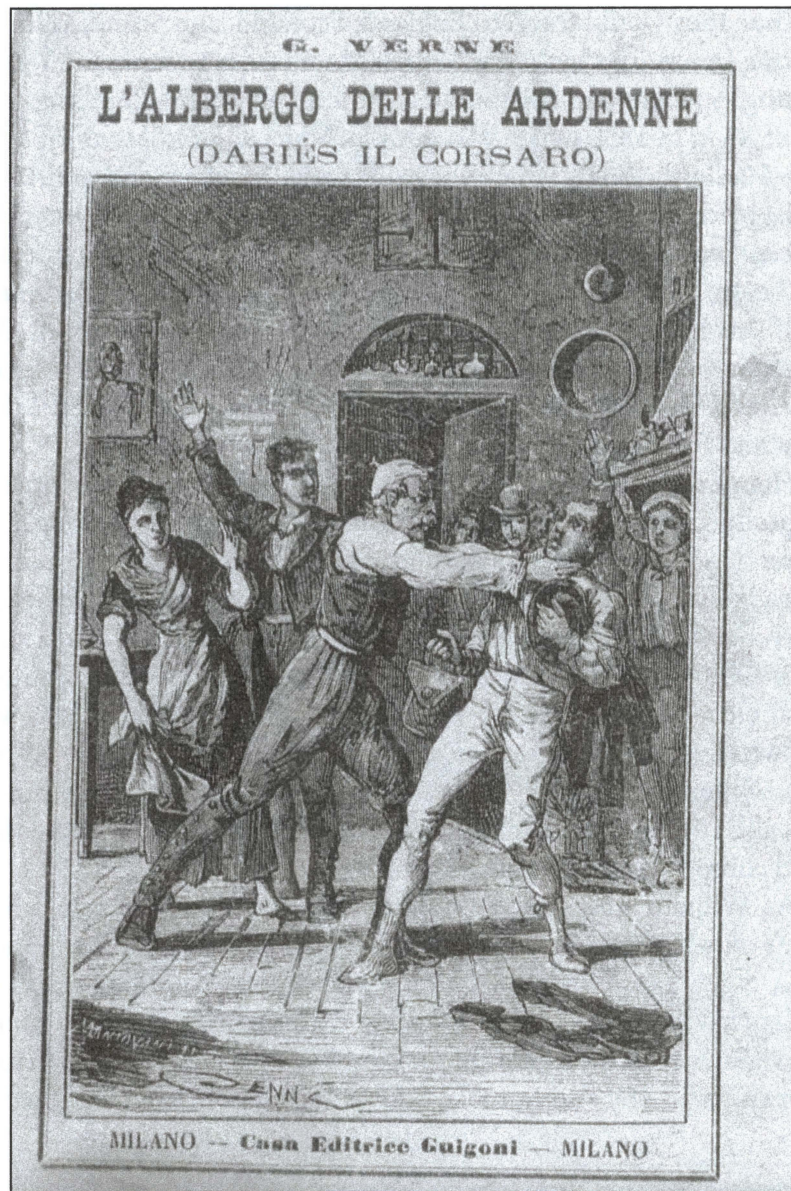


Together, they would travel to England, Scotland, and Scandinavia, all resulting in writings by Verne.<sup>7</sup> Hignard was even a witness at Verne's wedding, and the two collaborated on four plays: *The Thousand and Second Night* in 1850 which was never produced; *Blind Man's Bluff* (*Le Colin-Maillard*, 1852), which they did with Verne's friend and co-librettist Michel Carré, along with *The Companions of the Marjoram* (*Les Compagnons de la marjolaine*) in 1853 which had 24 performances at the Théâtre Lyrique; and *The Ardennes Inn* (*L'Auberge des Ardennes*) which was also performed at the Lyrique in 1860 in addition to *Mr. Chimpanzee*.<sup>8</sup> All of these plays provided for a valuable testing period and a development of the writer's craft both in terms of Verne the dramatist and future novelist.

Hignard, besides putting to music some of Verne's early poems, also produced his own works, such as an opera based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1857-63) which won the prestigious Prix de l'Académie de Beaux Arts in 1868, and a type of sequel to Moliere's *Monsieur Pourceaugnac* called *The New Pourceaugnac* (*Le Nouveau Pourceaugnac*) in 1860. In Paris, Verne and Hignard would live out the quintessential *vie de Bohème* during which many young writers, artists and composers would drop by their place and discuss their work. At one point, while he was still at the Lyrique, Verne created a weekly dining club called The Eleven Bachelors (*Les Onze Sans Femme*) where they would compose raunchy songs and skits.

As William Butcher describes it: "By some trick of fate, all of Verne's misogynous companions, although mostly unknown then, would, a generation later, form a roll call of the good and great."<sup>9</sup> As for Hignard himself, sadly and despite winning his prize for *Hamlet*, he never achieved the attention that would allow him to have a happy career in Paris. Shy and humble, he was largely forgotten and died in

7. Verne's accounts of these trips with Hignard would only be published well after the author's death: *Voyage à Reculons en Angleterre et en Ecosse* (Paris: Cherche-Midi, 1989); "Joyeuses misères de trois voyageurs en Scandinavie," *Géo*, Special Issue, 2003. In *Voyage à Reculons en Angleterre et en Ecosse*, the character Jonathan Savournon represents Hignard.
8. *Les Compagnons de la marjolaine* was translated by Frank Morlock as *The Knights of the Daffodil* in the Palik Series volume *Mr. Chimp, and Other Plays*.
9. William Butcher, *Jules Verne: The Definitive Biography* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2006), 94-95.



Cover of an 1892 translation of the Verne-Hignard stage collaboration, *The Ardennes Inn*.

Vernon in the care of his wife.

As the newspaper *Le Monde Illustrée* wrote about Hignard's music to *Mr. Chimpanzee*, Hignard's melodies were pleasant enough but tilted towards the strange and inaccessible. "Mr. Hignard's melodies

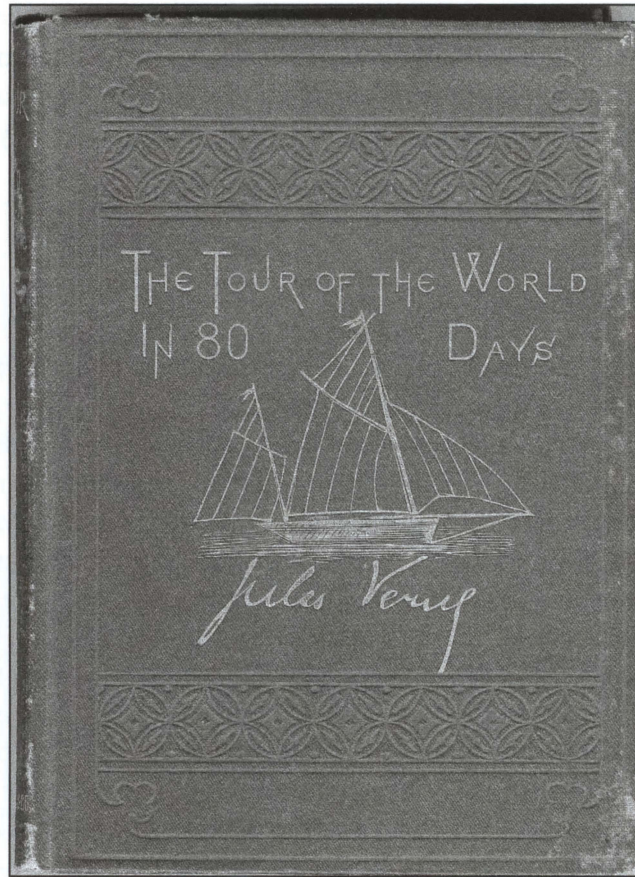
are easy enough and he certainly knows how to bring them out, to shine light on them with all the resources of his art; he has, moreover, a marked tendency towards originality, or rather, as we fear, as though he were taken by an all too slippery slope towards the abyss of the bizarre.”<sup>10</sup>

### *An Excursion at Sea*

At first glance, *An Excursion at Sea* might seem but a trifle of a piece, as it was written as a *vaudeville*, a light comedy. It is the story of an encounter between a yacht, the *Saint-Dunstan*, and a French smuggling vessel called the *Passe-Partout* which is looking to unload its merchandise onto the Isle of Wight. As the *Saint-Dunstan* is running out of supplies, its owner and captain, Lord Gray, decides to teach the smugglers a lesson by attacking it while the sea is calm and, while they are at it, taking the supplies for his family, guests and crew. Lady Gray, their daughter Anna, Lord Packet (an elderly man whom she is supposed to marry) and Lady Ossulton (Lady Gray's cousin) all stay aboard while the men go off in a skiff to attack the ship. Lord Packet gets sick and complains of it throughout the play. When the skiff returns, however, it has been taken over by the French who seize the *Saint-Dunstan* and hold on to Lord Gray and his officers as prisoners. Georges, a young man secretly in love with Anna and disguised and hired as a midshipman, tries to liberate the ship for Anna but is himself captured and sentenced to death by Antoine, the French captain, who uses the English skiffs to unload his merchandise in relative safety. When Anna and Georges admit their love for each other before he is about to die, Antoine allows her to marry him (through a seaman's clause stating that a woman can save a man from execution if she agrees to have him as a husband). Although her father was bitterly opposed to the union prior to this event, he acquiesces as the play ends happily, merrily and in song.

Throughout this little play, however, one can see many Vernian nautical motifs. In addition to Verne's novels which feature sea adventures, Verne himself enjoyed his own yachts in later years. Although the play is extremely light, it could easily have turned into a tragedy, as most

10. Cited by Robien, *op. cit.*, 85, from *Le Monde Illustrée*, February 17, 1858, my translation.

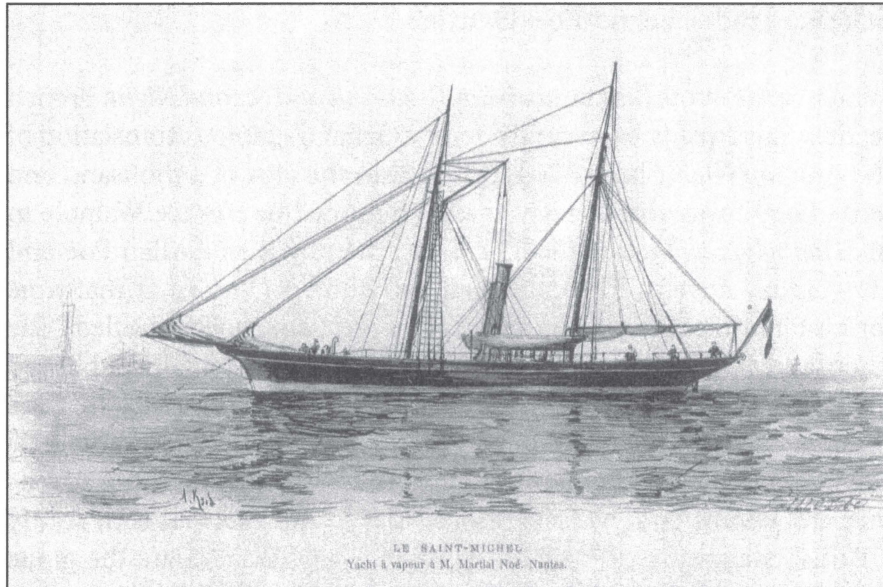


The Saunterer edition of *Around the World in Eighty Days*, published in the United States by Osgood in 1874, showed Verne's own sketch of his first yacht, *Saint-Michel*.

comedies could, under a different lens. Lady Ossulton fears cannibals for example and is hysterical over a potential shipwreck as she evokes the shipwreck of the *Medusa* immortalized by Gericault in his famous painting. Similarly, in *The Chancellor* (*Le Chancellor*, 1875), Verne writes harrowingly about the shipwreck of a British sailing vessel from the perspective of one of the passengers, in terms which Verne himself described as displaying “terrifying realism.”<sup>11</sup> Yet, as it is a young man's comedy, *An Excursion at Sea* ends in marriage and with some bawdiness straight out of his bachelor club at that time. As Philippe Valetoux

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11. Herbert R. Lottman, *Jules Verne: An Exploratory Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 155.



Verne's third and final yacht, *Saint Michel III*, in 1886.

sees it, in his introduction, “the debauchery and vulgarity with its forced laughter nonetheless hides a romantic backbone to the story: the young midshipman is in love but, because of his social class, is prevented from marrying the one he loves.”<sup>12</sup> For Philippe Valetoux, this predicament mirrors Verne himself at that time as he too was deeply in love with the beautiful but inaccessible Herminie Arnault-Grossetière, but couldn't marry her because he was not yet sufficiently established to do so.<sup>13</sup> She would end up marrying a much older man, similar to the play's Lord Packet, which was an event that broke Verne's heart and made him bitter towards such matches. Indeed, Verne had written over thirty poems to her and felt betrayed by her betrothal to a man with more money than him. As Verne wrote at the time, the pairing was one of “white hair mixed with black, the half-century married to the quarter-century.”<sup>14</sup>

12. *Théâtre inédit, op. cit.*, 338, my translation.

13. Philippe Valetoux in Verne, *Théâtre inédit, op. cit.*, 356-357.

14. Lottman, *op. cit.*, 14-15.

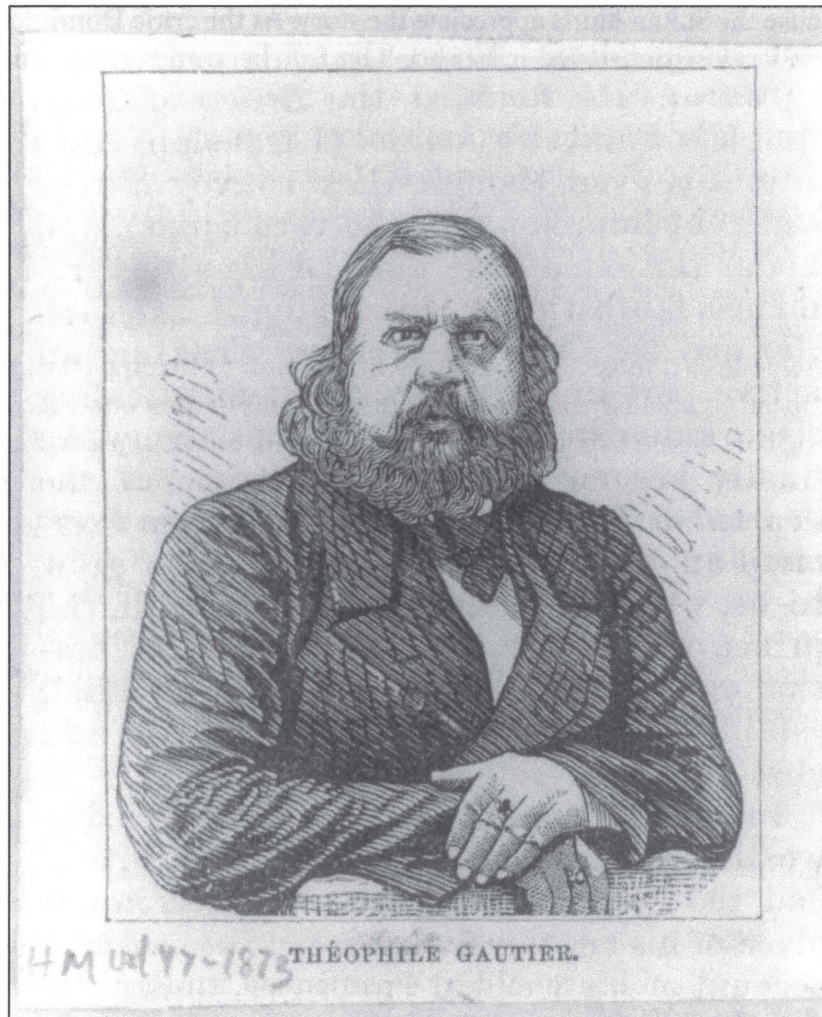
### Scheherazade: Verne-Poe-Gautier

When Verne wrote his comical *The Thousand and Second Night*, French readers had already been captivated by Galland's famous translation of the *Arabian Nights* from 1704 to 1719, but the idea of a thousand and second night was also conceived and attempted by Horace Walpole in his *Hieroglyphic Tales* (1766-1772) and then by Edgar Allan Poe and 19<sup>th</sup> century novelist Théophile Gautier who was known at that time for his fantastic tales. Poe's parody of the *Arabian Nights*, entitled "The Thousand and Second Tale of Scheherazade," was originally published in the Philadelphia magazine *Godey's Lady's Book* in 1845. In Poe's version, Scheherazade tries to stay alive by telling her husband a new story about Sinbad the Sailor, who goes to port one day seeking adventure and climbs onto what he thinks is a sea monster but is in reality a British steamship on which he is able to circumnavigate the globe (which he suddenly realizes is round and not flat), and discovers many wondrous things. Indeed, Poe's version is quite different from Verne's which he wrote as an exuberant operetta that ends joyously with the wedding of Scheherazade's sister Dinazarde to Hassan (which the Sultan opposed) and is interrupted by many duets and songs.

Yet, if Poe's version doesn't resemble Verne's, it *does* resemble—at least in the abstract—the concept of *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (*Vingt Mille Lieues sous les mers*, 1870) in which the *Nautilus* is first taken for a giant Kraken before Aronnax and Ned Land realize that it is actually a submarine. They too, like Sinbad, will accidentally be able to go around the world (although underwater for the most part). While any comparison to Poe is merely speculative in terms of their writings, we do know that Verne greatly admired Poe and in fact wrote an article titled "Edgar Allan Poe and his Works" ("Edgar Poe et ses œuvres") for the magazine *Musée des Familles* (*Family Museum*) in April 1864, in addition to his amazing novel, *The Ice Sphinx* (*Le Sphinx des glaces*, 1897), which Verne wrote as a response to Poe's 1838 novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.<sup>15</sup>

Gautier's *The Thousand and Second Night* (*La Mille et Deuxième*

15. For more on Verne and Poe, see the critical material in the Palik Series volume, *A Priest in 1835*, translated, with an introductory essay and notes, by Danièle Chatelain and George Slusser (Albany, GA: BearManor Fiction, 2016).



Théophile Gautier

*Nuit*) is also completely different from Verne's as it is bracketed by a Parisian narrative which finds Scheherazade coming to Paris to ask a writer of serials to come up with a story for her as she has exhausted her supply. It was written in 1842, also for the *Musée des Familles* magazine, for which Verne wrote as well. Gautier's narrator provides the inspiration-drained Scheherazade with what would become Gautier's Oriental ballet, *La Pétri* (1845), but it fails, nonetheless, to save Scheherazade's life as he learns that she was beheaded on returning home



because the Sultan didn't appreciate the story. As the critic Dominique Julien has justly observed in her book on Scheherazade's reception in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the *Arabian Nights* were pervasive within the French psyche.<sup>16</sup> In addition to Gautier's version, Scheherazade appears in Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo* (*Le Comte de Monte-Cristo*, 1845), and *The Mohicans of Paris* (*Les Mohicans de Paris*, 1854), and Eugène Sue's *The Mysteries of Paris* (*Les Mystères de Paris*, 1843), among many other works. In fact, as Edward Said has demonstrated so well in *Orientalism*, "orientalist" approaches to the Middle East were very much in vogue in art, music and literature in addition to being part of the European colonialist *zeitgeist*.<sup>17</sup> Of course, Verne's modest one-act cannot be considered a major part of the movement Said discusses, but it is a pleasant jewel of a play filled with comical scenes and charming songs. Once again, Verne ends his story with an optimistic wish fulfillment of love, rather than an unhappy ending such as Gautier's. As with Georges and Anna in *An Excursion at Sea*, Verne allows for an improbable wedding instead of an execution, as the Sultan who orchestrates it rediscovers his own love for Scheherazade and disavows his bloodthirsty pattern.

### ***La Guimard: Artists, Muses and Artists***

Finally, *La Guimard*, the longest play in this collection, was finished in 1853. It is inspired by the historical relationship between the famous dancer, Marie-Madeleine Guimard (known simply as "La Guimard," and who lived from 1743-1816) and the young painter Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) before he became famous during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte. La Guimard, in her heyday, was known not only for having been a brilliant ballet dancer at the Comédie Française but also for having been very *mondaine* and active socially. She had several powerful lovers and hosted stimulating parties. David had indeed made a portrait of her which she liked and as a result acted very generously towards him, as she protected him and supported his early work.

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16. Dominique Julien, *Les Amoureux de Schehrzade: Variations modernes sur les Mille et une nuits* (Geneva: Droz, 2009).

17. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).



Frontispiece of *The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz*.

In Verne's version, however, la Guimard actively has a romantic relationship with David, and seduces him while he is in a relationship with a young woman named Valentine. In a Machiavellian spin on love, she will orchestrate Valentine's being placed in a nunnery to be married off by her guardian; David's winning the Rome Prize by setting up a jury that she can control; and eventually his liberation from the Bastille so that she can run off with him to Rome. When she sees that he and Valentine are really in love, she abandons her efforts and goes back to her art as she realizes that true lovers should be together. Although there are many comical moments in *La Guimard*, including some slapstick scenes with a couple of clumsy suitors, *La Guimard* is also a rather deep examination of love, art, the role of the muse in art, and the lives of painters. Moreover, La Guimard is not content merely being considered a muse, or an inspiration for great art; it is clear in Verne's play that she is the one who is very much in control and in the end, uses her power for self-sacrifice rather than selfish but fleeting pleasure.

Verne tackled a similar dialectic between a proto-famous artist and his muse in his one-act comedy *Monna Lisa (Mona Lisa)*, which he worked and reworked on and off from 1851 to 1855.<sup>18</sup> *Mona Lisa* had only been permitted a reading in Amiens in 1874 before being published in French in the *Cahiers de l'Herne* in 1974.<sup>19</sup> In *Mona Lisa*, Verne focuses on a young Leonardo who is trying to capture the right smile for a portrait of Mona Lisa commissioned by her husband. Although Leonardo and Mona Lisa fall in love, Leonardo becomes distracted by her bracelet and then loses interest in her in favor of another painting he will do, *The Last Supper*. When Mona Lisa sees how distracted he becomes, she ceases to model for him and leaves him abruptly as she understands that he is more interested in his art, or rather the illusion that art provides, than in real people with real love. This is not dissimilar to Pierre Vidal's notions of art, beauty and invisibility in one of Verne's very last novels, *The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz (Le Secret de Wilhelm Storitz)*, posthumously published in 1910.<sup>20</sup> At

18. This play will appear as *Mona Lisa* in a translation by Kieran O'Driscoll in the upcoming Palik Series volume *Worlds Known and Unknown*.

19. Pierre-André Touttain, editor, *Cahiers de l'Herne, Jules Verne* (Paris: Les Editions de l'Herne/Fayard, 1974), 23-56.

20. The 1910 publication of *The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz* was a text revised by Verne's son and literary executor, Michel Verne. In 1985, the original

the end of *Monna Lisa*, Leonardo declares that he prefers, as Verne biographer Herbert R. Lottman concludes, “the ideal image all poor poets carry in their heads” to the ups and downs of reality.<sup>21</sup> For Verne, the famous melancholic smile so familiar to the visitors of the Louvre, is a result of both scorn and pity for an artist who, according to Jean-Jules Verne, “placed his vision above earthly love.”<sup>22</sup>

In this paradigm, la Guimard is doubly mature and strong as she both appreciates and is excited enough by David’s art to champion him at the Rome Prize, but is also wise enough to know that true love should be honored. She understands that putting her own desires over a couple’s happiness would in the end be a futile and empty pursuit. La Guimard is also more mature than Musset’s portrayal of the famous ballet dancer La Camargo in one of his very first plays (written when he was nineteen years old but never produced during his lifetime), *Les Marrons au feu* (*Chestnuts in the Fire*), in which the beautiful dancer must choose between a handsome rogue whom she loves but who doesn’t really care about her and an abbot who adores her but who is quite ugly.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, she orchestrates a duel in which the rogue is killed by the abbot. While Musset’s play in verse is replete with shipwrecks, costumes, violence and mistaken identity, Verne’s *La Guimard*, in contrast, is a play in which wisdom triumphs over artistic narcissism and where the real beauty, as in *The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz*, is *within* rather than in appearance which is prone to illusion and disillusion.

In an article written by Gautier on Verne in the newspaper the *Moniteur Universel* in 1883, about Verne’s imaginary voyages, Gautier urges his readers to forgo actually going to the theater after a disappointing season but rather to retreat to their armchairs instead where, if they could read a Verne novel, they would be able to travel endlessly in the comforts of their homes. “The show from their armchairs

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manuscript from Jules Verne’s own hand was published in France. Both of these versions have been translated, the Michel Verne text by I.O. Evans (Westport, CT: Associated Booksellers, 1963), and the Jules Verne text by Peter Schulman (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011).

21. Lottman, *op. cit.*, 51.
  22. Jean-Jules Verne, *Jules Verne* (Paris: Hachette, 1973), 47, 291-292, cited by Lottman, *op. cit.*, 52.
  23. Alfred de Musset, *Les Marrons du feu*, in *Premières Poésies*, 1829-1835 (Paris: Charpentier, 1863), 23-67.
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is the one best suited to such times," he declares, concluding his article with a ringing endorsement of Verne's amiable characters which, he says, should inspire one to go out and "spend a few hours with these fine companions in a desert of ice in a house of snow."<sup>24</sup> I would disagree with Gautier on one point, however: going to the theater is still a unique experience, and through the fine work of the Palik Series, my hope is that the plays in this collection not only find their way into readers' laps at home but that Verne's characters might finally get a chance to come alive and have their voices heard. Their home is on the stage for modern audiences to appreciate and enjoy.

– Peter Schulman  
Norfolk, Virginia

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24. Théophile Gautier, "Les Voyages imaginaires de M. Jules Verne," *Moniteur Universel*, 197 (July 16, 1866), reprinted in Touttain, *op. cit.*, 85.