

Classic Poetry Series

Jules Verne

- poems -

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Jules Verne(8 February 1828 – 24 March 1905)

Jules Gabriel Verne (French pronunciation: [ʒyl vɛʁn]) was a French author who pioneered the science fiction genre in Europe. He is best known for his novels *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* (1870), *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (1864), and *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873). Many of his novels involve elements of technology that were fantastic for the day but later became commonplace. He is the second most translated author in the world (after Agatha Christie). Some of his books have also been made into live-action and animated films and television shows. Verne is often referred to as the "Father of Science Fiction", a title sometimes shared with Hugo Gernsback and H. G. Wells.

Early Life

Jules Verne was born in Nantes, in France, to Pierre Verne, an attorney, and his wife, Sophie Allote de la Fuÿe. He spent his early years at home with his parents in the harbor city of Nantes. The family spent summers in a country house just outside the city, in Brains on the banks of the Loire River. Here, he and his brother Paul would often rent a boat for one franc a day. The sight of the many ships navigating the river sparked Verne's imagination, as he describes in the autobiographical short story "Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse". At the age of nine, he and Paul, of whom he was very fond, were sent to boarding school at the Saint Donatien College (Petit séminaire de Saint-Donatien). As a child, he developed a great interest in travel and exploration, a passion he showed as a writer of adventure stories and science fiction. His interest in writing often cost him progress in other subjects.

Verne's second French biographer, his grand-niece Marguerite Allotte de la Fuÿe, formulated the rumor that Verne was so fascinated with adventure at an early age that he stowed away on a ship bound for the West Indies, but that his voyage was cut short when he found his father waiting for him at the next port.

Literary Debut

After completing his studies at the lycée, Verne went to Paris to study law. Around 1848, in conjunction with Michel Carré, he began writing libretti for operettas, five of them for his friend the composer Aristide Hignard, who also set Verne's poems as chansons. For some years, he divided his attentions between the theater and work. However, some travelers' stories he wrote for the Musée des familles revealed his true talent: describing delightfully extravagant voyages and adventures with cleverly prepared scientific and geographical details that

lent an air of verisimilitude.

When Verne's father discovered that his son was writing rather than studying law, he promptly withdrew his financial support. Verne was forced to support himself as a stockbroker, which he hated despite being somewhat successful at it. During this period, he met Victor Hugo and Alexandre Dumas, who offered him writing advice.

Verne also met Honorine de Viane Morel, a widow with two daughters. They were married on January 10, 1857. With her encouragement, he continued to write and actively looked for a publisher. On August 3, 1861, their son, Michel Verne, was born. Michel married an actress over Verne's objections, had two children by an underage mistress, and buried himself in debts. The relationship between father and son improved as Michel grew older.

Verne's situation improved when he met Pierre-Jules Hetzel, one of the more important French publishers of the 19th century, who also published Victor Hugo, George Sand, and Erckmann-Chatrian, among others. They formed an excellent writer-publisher team until Hetzel's death. Hetzel helped improve Verne's writings, which until then had been repeatedly rejected by other publishers. Hetzel read a draft of a Verne story about balloon exploration of Africa; the story had been rejected by other publishers for being "too scientific". With Hetzel's help, Verne rewrote the story, which was published in 1863 in book form as *Cinq semaines en ballon* (Five Weeks in a Balloon). Acting on Hetzel's advice, Verne added comical accents to his novels, changed sad endings into happy ones, and toned down various political messages.

From that point, Verne published two or more volumes a year. The most successful of these are: *Voyage au centre de la Terre* (Journey to the Center of the Earth, 1864); *De la Terre à la Lune* (From the Earth to the Moon, 1865); *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, 1869); and *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (Around the World in Eighty Days), which first appeared in *Le Temps* in 1872. The series is collectively known as the *Voyages Extraordinaires* ("extraordinary voyages"). Verne could now live on his writings. But most of his wealth came from the stage adaptations of *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1874) and *Michel Strogoff* (1876), which he wrote with Adolphe d'Ennery.

In 1867, Verne bought a small ship, the *Saint-Michel*, which he successively replaced with the *Saint-Michel II* and the *Saint-Michel III* as his financial situation improved. On board the *Saint-Michel III*, he sailed around Europe. In 1870, he was appointed as "Chevalier" (Knight) of the *Légion d'honneur*. After his first

novel, most of his stories were first serialised in the Magazine d'Éducation et de Récréation, a Hetzel biweekly publication, before being published in book form. His brother Paul contributed to 40th French climbing of the Mont-Blanc and a collection of short stories – Doctor Ox – in 1874. Verne became wealthy and famous. According to the Unesco Index Translationum, Jules Verne regularly places among the top five most translated authors in the world.

Later Years

On March 9, 1886, as Verne was coming home, his twenty-five-year-old nephew, Gaston, shot at him twice with a pistol. The first bullet missed, but the second one entered Verne's left leg, giving him a permanent limp that could not be overcome. This incident was hushed up in the media, but Gaston spent the rest of his life in a mental asylum.

After the deaths of Hetzel and his beloved mother Sophie Allotte de la Fruyë in 1887, Jules began writing darker works. This may partly be due to changes in his personality, but an important factor is the fact that Hetzel's son, who took over his father's business, was not as rigorous in his corrections as Hetzel had been. In 1888, Jules Verne entered politics and was elected town councilor of Amiens, where he championed several improvements and served for fifteen years. In 1905, while ill with diabetes, Verne died at his home, 44 Boulevard Longueville (now Boulevard Jules-Verne). Michel oversaw publication of his novels *Invasion of the Sea* and *The Lighthouse at the End of the World*. The "Voyages extraordinaires" series continued for several years afterwards in the same rhythm of two volumes a year. It has later been discovered that Michel Verne had made extensive changes in these stories, and the original versions were published at the end of the 20th century by Jules Verne Society (Société Jules Verne). The original novels published in French by Jules Verne Society are:

Le secret de Wilhelm Storitz (The Secret of Wilhelm Storitz) - 1985

La Chasse au météore (The Meteor Hunt) - 1986. See *The Chase of the Golden Meteor*

En Magellanie. (In Maggelania) - 1987. See *The Survivors of the "Jonathan"* (*Les Naufragés du « Jonathan »*, 1909)

Le beau Danube jaune (The beautiful yellow Danube) - 1988. See *The Danube Pilot* (*Le Pilote du Danube*, 1908)

Le volcan d'or (The Golden Volcano) - 1989.

In 1863, Jules Verne wrote a novel called *Paris in the Twentieth Century* about a young man who lives in a world of glass skyscrapers, high-speed trains, gas-powered automobiles, calculators, and a worldwide communications network, yet

cannot find happiness and comes to a tragic end. Hetzel thought the novel's pessimism would damage Verne's then-booming career, and suggested he wait 20 years to publish it. Verne put the manuscript in a safe, where it was discovered by his great-grandson in 1989. It was published in 1994, and around the same time many other Verne novels and short stories were also published for the first time, and these too are gradually appearing in English translation.

Memorials

A longtime resident of Amiens, many places are named after Verne such as the Cirque Jules Verne. Amiens is the place where he is buried. The house where Verne lived is now a museum. There is also the Jules Verne Museum in Nantes.

A restaurant built into the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France is named Le Jules Verne. In June 1989, the Jules Verne Food Court opened at the Merry Hill Shopping Centre in the West Midlands of England; however, it had closed by the mid-1990s due to disappointing trade.

Hetzel's Influence

Hetzel substantially influenced the writings of Verne, who was so happy to finally find a willing publisher that he agreed to almost all changes that Hetzel suggested. Hetzel rejected at least one novel (Paris in the Twentieth Century) and asked Verne to significantly change his other drafts. One of the most important changes Hetzel enforced on Verne was the adoption of optimism in his novels. Verne was in fact not an enthusiast of technological and human progress, as can be seen in his works created before he met Hetzel and after Hetzel's death. Hetzel's demand for optimistic texts proved correct. For example, The Mysterious Island originally ended with all the survivors returning to the mainland but then always feeling nostalgic about their island.

Hetzel decided that these men should live happily ever after, so in the revised novel, they use their fortunes to build a replica of the island. Also, to not offend France's military ally of the time, the Russian Empire, the origins and past of the submariner Captain Nemo were widely changed from those of a Polish refugee avenging the partitions of Poland, and the death of his family during the repressions of the January Uprising, to those of an Indian prince fighting from beneath the seas against the British Empire following the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

Connaissez-Vous Mon Andalouse

Jules Verne

Hésitation

Jules Verne

J'Aime Ces Doux Oiseaux...

Jules Verne

La Cloche Du Soir

Jules Verne

La Fille De L'Air

Jules Verne

La Nuit

Jules Verne

Le Génie

Jules Verne

Le Silence Dans Une Église

Jules Verne

Lorsque La Douce Nuit...

Jules Verne

Ô Toi, Que Mon Amour Profond...

Jules Verne

Quand Par Le Dur Hiver...

Jules Verne

Tempête Et Calme

Jules Verne

Vous Êtes Jeune Et Belle...

Jules Verne