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Arthur B. Evans

Hetzel and Verne: Collaboration and Conflict

Olivier Dumas, Piero Gondolo della Riva, Volker Dehs, eds. *Correspondance inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1863-1886). Tome I (1863-1874)*. Genève: Editions Slatkine, 1999. 287 pp. 260FF/39.64€.

In Vernian scholarship, it has long been known how the nineteenth-century editor and publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel "discovered" Jules Verne in 1862, immediately recognized his potential, and published his first novel *Cinq semaines en ballon* (Five Weeks in a Balloon) the following year. It is also common knowledge how he asked Verne to write other "scientific fictions" for his very successful family journal *Magasin d'éducation et de Récréation* and how, throughout the ensuing 24 years of their collaboration, Hetzel personally "guided" Verne in the writing of his earliest and most celebrated *Voyages Extraordinaires*—a series first announced in Hetzel's editorial preface to Verne's *Voyages et aventures du capitaine Hatteras* (1866, *Voyages of Captain Hatteras*). And, finally, Verne scholars have also long been aware that Hetzel was not only Verne's publisher, editor, and literary mentor but also served as a kind of *père spirituel* to his young protégé: a never-ending source of paternal encouragement, professional advice, and sometimes—as evidenced by his firm rejection of Verne's manuscript of *Paris au XXe Siècle* (1994, *Paris in the Twentieth Century*)—editorial discipline.

What has not been known, however, were the precise details of Verne and Hetzel's personal and professional collaboration. For example, to what

extent was Hetzel a "hands-on" editor—i.e., responsible not only for accepting, rejecting, and/or editing Verne's manuscripts, but also for generating the very ideas in the manuscripts themselves? How and where did Hetzel, for ideological or commercial reasons, feel obliged to censor Verne's works? How did Verne react to Hetzel's censorship? How did he respond to Hetzel's proposed rewrites? And in what way did the dynamics of their relationship change as Verne became progressively more famous?

Such details of how Verne and Hetzel actually worked together have, until recently, been very difficult to ascertain. Toward the end of his life, Verne destroyed all his personal letters; most of his original manuscripts were either lost or have been in private collections and inaccessible to scholars; and Hetzel's papers were hidden away in the archives of the Bibliothèque Nationale. During the past few decades, however, thanks to the efforts of Verne scholars and collectors such as Olivier Dumas (president of the Société Jules Verne) and Piero Gondolo della Riva, much of the correspondence between Verne and Hetzel has slowly come to light. And, this past year, Dumas, della Riva, and Verne scholar Volker Dehs have published what will certainly prove to be a milestone book entitled *Correspondance inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel*—the first of an expected three-volume set that will reproduce all the known correspondence between Verne and Hetzel, nearly 430 letters by the former and 250 letters by the latter (copies of which were found in the Hetzel Archives). This veritable treasure-trove of primary materials will no doubt revolutionize our understanding not only of the editorial relationship between Hetzel and Verne, but also of the *Voyages Extraordinaires* themselves and how they came to be what they are.

For example, scholars have generally acknowledged that Hetzel sometimes acted as Verne's censor, requiring the latter to conform his narratives to "house rules" in all matters of pedagogy, morality, and ideology—a dictate that eventually caused Verne to complain about the "milieu assez restreint où je suis condamné de me mouvoir" ("the rather narrow milieu that I am condemned to move around in") (Parménie 107). The textual consequences of this censorship are clearly visible throughout the *Voyages Extraordinaires* themselves, particularly if one compares those novels first

published in Hetzel's *Magasin d'éducation et de Récréation* (or published therein after Hetzel's death in 1886) with those that originally appeared elsewhere. In the latter, the long pedagogical passages are diminished in length and intrusiveness, science and technology are less central to the plot itself, Verne's sometimes risqué humor and word-play are more apparent, and questions of politics, religion, and human morality now tend to occupy center-stage in the narrative. Compare, for instance, the role of pedagogy and science in *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1870, *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*) or *L'Île mystérieuse* (1875, *Mysterious Island*) with its more fanciful treatment in *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1864, *Voyage to the Center of the Earth*) or *Mathias Sandorf* (1885, *Mathias Sandorf*), or even its comparative absence in novels such as *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873, *Around the World in 80 Days*) or *Les Tribulations d'un Chinois en Chine* (1879, *The Tribulations of a Chinaman*)—all of which were first published in the journal *Le Temps*. As for Verne's humor, note the striking contrast between the rather burlesque decorum of *Les Enfants du capitaine Grant* (1867, *In Search of the Castaways*) and the often bawdy tone of his later novels such as *Clovis Dardentor* (1896, *Clovis Dardentor*). And, finally, consider the many "heroic" scientists and engineers appearing in Verne's early positivistic works such as *Cinq semaines en ballon* or *De la terre à la lune* (1865, *From the Earth to the Moon*) versus their evil and/or satiric counterparts portrayed in various post-Hetzel novels such as *Sans dessus dessous* (1889, *The Purchase of the North Pole*) or *Maître du monde* (1904, *Master of the World*).

But Hetzel's role in shaping Verne's fiction becomes even more apparent if one closely examines the correspondence between them. Here, the documentary evidence is irrefutable. Hetzel did much more than simply edit Verne's rough drafts for style and ideology: he actually collaborated in writing them, and his input fundamentally altered the content of these works. Examples of Hetzel's (often dictatorial) editorial intervention are too numerous to quote in their entirety, but a selected number of excerpts will give an idea of its proportions.

Throughout the early years of their collaboration, Verne was both sensitive to and thankful for Hetzel's suggestions and critiques, and he invariably

modified his texts accordingly. Note, for example, Verne's reaction to the substantial corrections that Hetzel proposed for his *Voyages et aventures du capitaine Hatteras*, which included, among others, totally rewriting the conclusion of the novel (Verne had originally portrayed Hatteras as committing suicide by throwing himself into an active volcano, followed by his faithful dog Duk [sic]. Hetzel strongly objected. So Verne went back to the drawing-board and came up with a more "psychological" ending where Hatteras returns alive but is now hopelessly insane, obsessively walking toward the North):

Je vous affirme que j'en tiendrai compte, car toutes ces observations sont justes. ... Ce n'est point un directeur qui m'a écrit, c'est un ami en qui j'ai la plus entière confiance; d'ailleurs, je vous le répète, je sens comme vous....

Je pense, d'après votre lettre, que vous approuvez en somme la folie et la fin d'Hatteras. Je suis fort content, c'est ce qui me préoccupait le plus....

Nous causerons de tout cela à votre retour, et nous en causerons bien. Est-ce que vous m'avez jamais trouvé récalcitrant dans la question des coupures ou réarrangements? Est-ce que, dans le *Ballon*, j'ai pas suivi vos conseils, supprimé le grand récit de Joe, et cela sans douleur?

Vous me dites des choses bien aimables, et même bien flatteuses, sur mon style qui s'améliore.... Rien ne m'a donc fait plus de plaisir qu'une telle approbation venant de vous. Je vous l'assure, rien ne pouvait plus me toucher. Mais, dans un coin de ma caboche (comme vous dites), je me demande si vous n'avez pas voulu dorer un peu la pilule. Je vous assure, mon bon et cher Directeur, qu'il n'y avait rien à dorer—j'avale très convenablement et sans préparation. (27-28)

[I promise you that I will take them into account, for all these observations are correct.... It is not a director who writes to me, it is a friend in whom I have the utmost confidence; besides, I repeat, I feel as you do....

I think, after reading your letter, that you generally approve of the insanity and the end of Hatteras. I'm very pleased; it has been worrying me....

We'll chat about all this upon your return, and we'll chat about it at length. Have you ever found me recalcitrant on the question of deletions or rewrites? Didn't I follow your advice in the *Balloon* [*Five Weeks in a Balloon*] and took out the long narrative by Joe, and did so without pain?

You say some very nice, even flattering, things about my style which is improving.... Nothing gives me more pleasure than such approval coming from you. I assure you, nothing means

more to me. But in one corner of my thick skull, as you say, I wonder if you haven't sugar-coated [gilded] the pill a bit. I assure you, my good and dear Director, that there is no need to sugar-coat [your critiques]—I will swallow [them] dutifully and without sweetener.]

Throughout this early period, Verne's correspondence is repeatedly punctuated with expressions of almost filial gratitude for Hetzel's extensive input and guidance. For example:

je m'en occupe extrêmement, et je travaille fort à vous contenter. (30) [I'm spending an extremely large amount of time on it, and I'm working hard to make you happy.]

Je suis impatient de vos notes, mon cher Hetzel. (32) [I am impatient to receive your notes, my dear Hetzel.]

J'ai tenu compte de toutes vos observations, et cela m'a l'air de marcher couramment. (38) [I have taken into account all your observations, and they seem to me to work smoothly.]

Parbleu, mon cher maître, j'avais besoin de votre lettre pour me fouetter le sang! Cela m'a mis tout en rumeur. Vous avez bien fait de m'écrire cela. (40) [By thunder, dear master, I needed that letter of yours to whip up my blood! It really got me moving. You did well to write me that.]

Je suis très impatient de revoir le manuscrit.... C'est par vos notes surtout, de vos colères au crayon, que je comprendrai bien ce qui ne va pas. (44) [I am very impatient to review the manuscript.... It's especially by your notes, by your penciled-in fits of anger, that I will truly understand what doesn't work.]

Je vous remercie de tout ce que vous me dites et vous avez parfaitement raison en tout. (98) [I thank you for all you've said, and you are perfectly right in everything.]

J'ai reçu votre petit mot et le manuscrit de la *Lune*. Toutes vos observations sont parfaites. (115) [I have received your note and the manuscript of the *Moon*. All your observations are perfect.]

This editorial "honeymoon" came to an abrupt halt, however, when Verne and Hetzel found themselves in total disagreement over certain aspects of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, especially Verne's proposed portrayal of Captain Nemo and the motives for his vengeance. Verne originally depicted Nemo as a brilliant Polish scientist driven to violence by his intense hatred for the Russian czar who had massacred his family (a reference to the bloody Russian suppression of the Polish insurrection five years earlier).

But Hetzel was deeply concerned about the possible diplomatic ramifications of such a fictional characterization as well the likelihood that the book would be banned in Russia—a lucrative market for Verne’s books. So, for political and commercial reasons, he proposed that Nemo be portrayed instead as a sworn enemy of the slave trade, thereby providing a clear ideological justification for Nemo’s merciless attacks on certain seagoing vessels. Verne strongly disagreed. In the end, neither Verne nor Hetzel would give in. And so, in the final version of *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, Nemo’s exact motives remain intriguingly obscure—at least until his later reappearance in the final chapters of *L’Île mystérieuse*, where his true identity as Dakkar, Prince of India and implacable foe of the British, is finally revealed.

In the flurry of author-editor correspondence during this incident, the following letter from Verne to Hetzel (dated May 17, 1869) seems especially revealing. It demonstrates very clearly how the overall tenor of their working relationship had apparently changed from that of father/son or master/pupil—where the inexperienced Verne was quick to obey—to one of a professional disagreement among equals where Verne, although still cordial and carefully deferential, now stands up to his erstwhile mentor and refuses to back down:

Mon cher Hetzel,

Votre lettre m’a tracassé fort pendant deux jours, et j’ai voulu bien réfléchir avant d’y répondre....

Je vois bien que vous rêvez un bonhomme très différent du mien. C’est très grave, et d’autant plus grave que je suis parfaitement incapable de réaliser ce que je ne sens pas. Or, décidément, je ne vois pas le capitaine Nemo comme vous....

Il suffit que je justifie l’action terrible du capitaine par la provocation dont il est l’objet. Nemo ne court pas sur les navires pour les couler; il n’attaque pas; il répond aux attaques. Mais, nulle part, quoiqu’en dise votre lettre, je n’en ai fait un homme qui tue pour tuer. C’est une nature généreuse dont les sentiments s’exercent à l’occasion dans le milieu où il vit. Sa haine de l’humanité est suffisamment expliquée par ce qu’il a souffert en lui-même et dans les siens...

Vous m'avez dit: l'abolition de l'esclavage est le plus grand fait économique de notre temps. D'accord, mais je crois qu'il n'a rien à voir ici. L'incident de John Brown me plaisait par sa forme concise, mais, à mes yeux, il amoindrit le capitaine. Il faut conserver le vague et sur sa nationalité et sur sa personne et sur les causes qui l'ont jeté dans cette étrange existence. ... Si Nemo voulait se venger des esclavagistes, il n'avait qu'à servir dans l'armée de Grant...

Vous avez raison pour l'effet produit sur Aronnax, et je la changerai; mais pour le capitaine Nemo, c'est autre chose, et en l'expliquant d'une manière différente, vous me le changez au point que je ne puis le reconnaître....

Bref, votre lettre m'a fort tourmenté. Néanmoins, je pense que nous nous en tirerons en procédant comme d'habitude. Relisez jusqu'au bout.... Faites vos observations, et là-dessus, je tiendrai compte de tout ce qui sera possible....

(106-08)

[Your letter greatly disturbed me for two days, and I wanted to reflect much on it before responding.

I see now that you are imagining a fellow very different from my own. And this is very serious, even more serious because I am totally incapable of depicting what I don't feel. Obviously, I don't see Captain Nemo as you do.

I justify this terrible action of the Captain by the provocation that is aimed at him. Nemo doesn't sink ships simply to sink them; he does not attack; he responds to attacks. Nowhere, despite what your letter says, have I portrayed a man who kills for the sake of killing. He is a man of generous nature whose emotions sometimes become incensed by the milieu in which he is living. His hatred of humanity is sufficiently explained by what he and his loved ones have suffered....

You have said to me that abolition of slavery is the greatest economic fact of our time. I agree, but it is totally irrelevant here. I liked the incident of John Brown because of its concision, but, in my opinion, it weakens the Captain. We must keep vague his nationality, his person, and the events that threw him into this strange existence.... If Nemo wanted to avenge himself on the slavers, he would only need to serve in Grant's army....

You are right about Aronnax's reaction, and I'll change that. But for Captain Nemo, that's something else. In explaining him in a different manner, you change him to such an extent that I can no longer recognize him....

In sum, your letter really worried me. Nevertheless, I think that we can work this out by proceeding as we always have. Reread [the text] to the very end.... Make your observations and I will take into account all that are possible....]

Obviously, the editorial dynamic here has changed. Verne's previous willingness to blindly follow Hetzel's editorial suggestions ("All your observations are perfect") has now become a willingness to *consider but not necessarily to follow* such advice from his mentor ("Make your observations and I will take into account all that are possible").

A few years later, Verne and Hetzel once again came to loggerheads over a manuscript that, after much editorial wrangling, would eventually be published as *L'Île mystérieuse*. At one point, following his receipt of a letter from Hetzel containing yet another lengthy list of criticisms – among others, about his portrayal of the character Ayrton – Verne, clearly exasperated, replied to Hetzel in the following terms on September 23, 1873:

Mon cher Hetzel, il me faudrait des pages pour vous répondre, et les discussions par lettre n'amènent à rien. Je serai à Paris la semaine prochaine et nous causerons aussi longtemps que vous voudrez

Seulement, je ne vous cache pas que ... vous finiriez par me dégoûter du livre, et comme je suis en plein dans le 3e volume, il faut que je conserve ma foi, jusqu'au bout.

Tout ce que vous me dites du sauvagisme d'Ayrton est pour moi sans importance. Tous les aliénistes du monde n'y feront rien. J'ai besoin d'un sauvage

Vous avez plusieurs fois déjà jeté des doutes dans mon esprit au sujet de cet ouvrage. J'ai pourtant la conviction--et je vous en parle comme s'il était d'un autre—qu'il ne sera point inférieur aux derniers, et que, bien lancé comme eux, il réussira.... [J]e vous répète, ce sont des douches d'eau froide que vous me versez sur le cerveau.

Question de forme, accordée. Je vous ai cent fois dit que je n'y verrai clair que sur les placards. La diversité de langage pas assez marquée entre les divers personnages, accordée aussi. Mais tout cela se fera sans peine.

Enfin nous causerons... (208-09)

[My dear Hetzel, it would take pages to answer you, and discussions by letter are pointless. I will be in Paris next week, and we will chat as long as you want....

However, I won't hide from you [the fact] that you are going to end up making me disgusted with this book. And, since I am in the middle of the third volume, I must keep my faith in it until the very end.

All that you say to me about Ayrton becoming a savage is, for me, of no importance. All the psychiatrists of the world won't change a thing. I need a savage....

I nevertheless strongly feel — and I will say this to you as I would to another — that it [this book] will be no worse than the others and that, marketed as well as them, it will be a success.... To repeat, these [constant critiques] are like buckets of cold water that you are dumping on my brain.

Insofar as the format is concerned, granted. I have told you a hundred times that I can see it clearly only on the proofs. The differences of language not being emphasized enough among the various characters, also granted. But all that can be done without difficulty.

In any event, we'll chat....]

Hetzel, no doubt taken aback by the frustrated and aggravated tone of Verne's letter — and perhaps fearful that his highly popular author might be contemplating a change of publishing venue — promptly replied a few days later with a soothing and highly uncharacteristic letter that addresses the very nature of their editorial relationship:

Mon cher Verne,

Me voici de retour. J'ai revu avec un soin féroce les 15 premiers placards du 1er volume de *L'Île mystérieuse*.

Il avait gagné énormément sous vos doigts. Je suis sûr qu'avec mes indications nouvelles, mes ajoutés dont quelques-uns vous paraîtront utiles, ... cela fera un bijou.

Mais, mon vieux, ne me découragez pas de ces révisions.... Je sens que je vous aide sérieusement, en vous rendant possible de vous livrer à votre fougue avec cette sécurité qu'un œil ami et pas trop bête arrivera par là-dessus.

Supportons-nous donc dans notre double rôle, mon bon vieux, et quand mutuellement nous nous enrageons un peu, passons par là-dessus, en nous disant que le bien commun en ressort. ...

Tout à vous, J. Hetzel

[My dear Verne,

I'm back home. I have very carefully [with "ferocious care"] looked over the first 15 sets of proofs for the first volume of *Mysterious Island*.

It has been enormously improved by you. I am certain that, with my new comments [and] additions, some of which may be useful to you, ... it will be a real jewel.

But, my old friend, don't discourage me from revising.... I feel that I am seriously helping you by making it possible for you to let your imagination fly, secure in the knowledge that a friendly and not too foolish eye will look over your work afterwards.

Let us therefore support each other in our double roles, my old friend. And, when we both become a bit angry, let us get beyond it by telling ourselves that it results in a common good....

Yours, J. Hetzel]

Ironically, Hetzel's next letter to Verne (dated Oct. 11, 1873) reads as follows:

Mon cher Verne,

J'apprends que vous avez renvoyé vos placards corrigés directement à l'imprimerie. Or, pour ma révision, il est nécessaire que je voie le premier ces placards. Il faut bien que je sache ce que vous avez adopté ou pas adopté de mes indications ...

Ergo, envoyez-moi vos placards corrigés tout d'abord ...

Tout à vous, J. Hetzel

[Mon dear Verne,

I have learned that you sent your corrected proofs directly to the printer. For my editorial revisions, it is necessary that I see these proofs first. I really must know what you have adopted or not adopted from among my suggestions....

Therefore, send your corrected proofs to me first....

Yours, J. Hetzel]

And, two days later, Hetzel writes to Verne again, saying:

Mon cher Verne,

Ce n'est pas pour revoir à nouveau les épreuves que vous avez corrigées définitivement en placard que je les demande avant l'imprimeur. C'est pour savoir ce que vous avez admis parmi mes corrections ...

ôtez-vous de la tête que la passion de la révision peut me pousser au superflu. J'aimerais cent fois mieux d'avoir qu'à faire imprimer. Mes yeux, mon temps s'en arrangeraient, croyez-le bien.

Mais la conscience que j'ai que ces travaux sans gloire profitent à votre oeuvre, à vous, et par suite à la Maison, me pousse seule à les faire. ...

Est-ce compris? ...

Tout à vous, J. Hetzel

[It is not to once again reedit the proofs that you have definitively corrected that I am asking you for them before the printer. It is to know which of my corrections you have accepted....

Remove from your head the idea that a passion for editorial revisions is pushing me to the superfluous. I would prefer a hundred times over having only to send them to the printer. My eyes and my time would be the better for it, believe me.

It is my awareness of the benefit that my inglorious toil can bring to your work, to you, and accordingly to the Company that pushes me to do it...

Is that understood? ...

Yours, J. Hetzel]

Apparently, contrary to their usual protocol, Verne had sent his corrected proofs directly to the printer instead of returning them (once again) to Hetzel for a final edit before printing! Although most likely a simple oversight by Verne, it is nevertheless very symptomatic of the extent to which Hetzel's unrelenting editorial intrusions were beginning to get on the author's nerves. And it is also illustrative of how their working relationship had changed: Hetzel now feels the need to both explain and justify his editorial practices to Verne, pleading for his understanding.

Lastly, although it is not included in this first volume of the Verne-Hetzel *Correspondance*, Verne's most uncompromising response to Hetzel's demands for extensive manuscript revisions occurred in 1882 and concerned another "robinsonnade" called *L'Ecole des Robinsons* (Robinson's School). Without apology and without the deferential rhetoric he customarily used

when corresponding with Hetzel, Verne now firmly rejects the latter's advice, saying:

Mon cher Hetzel.... J'ai lu attentivement votre lettre relative à *L'école des Robinsons*. Il me semble que la portée philosophique que vous indiquez est tout à fait en dehors de mon sujet et de nature à l'alourdir....

Dans vos observations, il y en a dont je tiendrai compte, mais il y en a d'inadmissibles....

Croyez-moi, mon cher Hetzel, et soyez certain que je me laisserai pas passer une observation juste, mais il y en a qui sont en désaccord absolu avec le sujet tel que je le comprends, et tel que j'ai voulu le faire.

Je vous enverrai prochainement de la copie, et en attendant, à vous bien cordialement.

Jules Verne (Parménie 106)

[My dear Hetzel.... I have read very attentively your letter about *The Robinson School*. It seems to me that the philosophical dimension that you are suggesting is totally irrelevant to my subject matter, and would weigh it down....

In your observations, there are some that I will take into account, but there are others that are unacceptable [intolerable]....

Believe me, my dear Hetzel, and rest assured that I would not let a correct observation slip by. But there are some that are in complete disagreement with the subject as I understand it and as I intended to express it.

I will send you more copy soon. Until then, I remain cordially yours,

Jules Verne]

The manner in which Verne closes this particular letter—its "formule finale" or "complimentary close"—is also especially noteworthy. Verne's earlier correspondence with Hetzel invariably closed with effusive expressions of friendship and devotion such as:

Sur ce, mon cher Hetzel, je vous embrasse de tout mon coeur. (31) [With this, my dear Hetzel, I embrace you with all my heart.]

Votre dévoué de tout coeur. (33) [With heartfelt devotion.]

A vous de tout coeur, mon cher ami. (143) [Yours from the heart, my dear friend.]

The closings of Verne's later correspondence with Hetzel, in contrast, tend to demonstrate considerably less warmth and effusiveness:

Je vous serre la main. (188) [I shake your hand.]

Tout à vous. (188) [Yours.]

A vous bien cordialement. (197) [Very cordially yours.]

In other words, in examining not only their content but also the epistolary style of these letters, it appears quite obvious that the "balance of power" has shifted between author and editor.

But, despite Verne's increasingly energetic defense of his rough drafts as exhibited in these letters, it must be acknowledged that Hetzel's overall impact on the *Voyages Extraordinaires* was substantial indeed. In addition to the evidence offered by their editorial correspondence, several of Verne's original manuscripts have also recently been discovered and published through the efforts of Piero Gondolo della Riva, Olivier Dumas, and others. And, as a result, scholars are now just beginning to understand the enormous magnitude of Hetzel's influence on Verne and his works.

On the one hand, we can now appreciate to what extent Hetzel's obsessive editing *did* unquestionably improve many of Verne's early novels—deepening their characterization, tightening their narrative structure, enriching their literary style, and adding a variety of episodes and references that served to broaden their appeal. With an uncanny sense of what the public desired and how best to give it to them, Hetzel succeeded in harnessing Verne's vast imaginative energy, disciplining it, and channeling it toward the creation of this new and phenomenally popular genre.

On the other hand, Hetzel's "harnessing" of Verne's creative instincts often involved much more than friendly editorial feedback—it meant requiring Verne's fiction to adhere to the *Magasin's* conservative moral standards and targeted clientele. In other words, it meant *censorship*. Among many other examples, it meant replacing certain risqué paintings in the Nautilus such as the portrait of a "femme à demi-vêtue" [half-dressed woman] with a

virgin by Leonardo da Vinci as well as an exotic "courtisane" with a demure Biblical personage by Titian. It meant changing sentences in stories like *Frrritt-Flacc* (1884) from "il jure comme un chrétien, se relève, regarde" [he curses like a Christian, gets up again, and looks] to "il se relève en jurant et regarde" ["cursing, he gets up again and looks"]. And, perhaps worst of all, it meant having the proud Captain Nemo uncharacteristically repent and confess his sins at the end of *L'Île mystérieuse* when Hetzel changed his deathbed words from "Indépendance!" ["Freedom!"] to "Dieu et Patrie!" ["God and Country!"].

Understandably, some modern Verne scholars have strongly denounced Hetzel's heavy-handed editorial practices and interventionist role in shaping the novels of Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires*. Jean-Pierre Picot, for example, expressed the opinion of many when he stated that:

le moralisme calamiteux, l'opportunisme commercial, l'absence de génie poétique, l'esprit de punaise laïque du sieur Hetzel ont ... gravement parasité la créativité vernienne. (133)

[Hetzel's calamitous moralism, commercial opportunism, absence of poetic genius, and secular narrow-mindedness ... seriously compromised Verne's creativity.]

Such unilateral retrospective condemnations, however, strike me as both naive and anachronistic. After all, for better or for worse, without Hetzel, the novels of Jules Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires* might never have been written. And without Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires*, the nineteenth-century publisher Pierre-Jules Hetzel would probably be all but forgotten today. For both, what started out as an enthusiastic "mariage d'amour" may have ended up as a rather strained "mariage de raison." But this sometimes stormy literary partnership did give birth to a truly historic legacy, and generations of sf authors and readers have been its fortunate beneficiaries.

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