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## THE ADVENTURES OF CAPTAIN HATTERAS

JULES VERNE was born in Nantes in 1828, the eldest of five children in a prosperous family of French, Breton, and Scottish extraction. His early years were happy apart from an unfulfilled passion for his cousin Caroline. Literature always attracted him and while taking a law degree in Paris he wrote a number of plays. His first two books, entitled *Journey to England and Scotland* and *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, were not published in his lifetime. However, *Five Weeks in a Balloon* was accepted by the publisher Hetzel in 1862, and became an immediate success. It was followed by *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, and sixty other novels covering the whole world—and beyond. Verne himself travelled over three continents, before suddenly selling his yacht in 1885. Eight of the books appeared after his death in 1905—although in fact partly written by his son, Michel.

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JULES VERNE

The Extraordinary Journeys

*The Adventures of  
Captain Hatteras*



*Translated with an Introduction and Notes by*

WILLIAM BUTCHER

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## PREFACE

WHY publish a little-known Verne book in Oxford World's Classics, complete with detailed critical apparatus? The answer may be found in the work itself.

*The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (1864–5) is a gripping story about a quest for the North Pole. The 140,000-word double-decker was the second book Jules Verne published and, with *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*, his most personal novel.

*Hatteras* constitutes the formal beginning of the Extraordinary Journeys, Verne's sixty-four-work, fifty-year series of adventure books. Commentators have been unanimous about this debut novel. Real-life explorers have said that it gives one of the most accurate pictures of Arctic life ever.<sup>1</sup> George Sand described it as 'captivating', Gautier, as 'excellent'; Zola, as embodying 'a great imagination and very keen intelligence'; Julien Gracq, as 'a masterpiece'. Ionesco said 'all my texts were written, directly or allusively, to celebrate [Hatteras's] discovery of the North Pole'. Modern critics have similarly considered it 'masterly' and 'perhaps [Verne's] greatest masterpiece'.<sup>2</sup>

And yet this novel is not well known. Only three or four full-length articles have been written about it, and no attempt has been made to analyse the work as a whole. The changes between the manuscript and the serial and book editions have usually been ignored, as has the novel's intellectual history.

To coincide with the Navy's last North Polar expedition, four different translations appeared in the 1870s, but the book has not been translated since. The paradox is that, although this classic 'British' novel is selling steadily in every major language and is high on the Amazon.fr list, it has long been unavailable in English. The present edition will attempt to fill both gaps by providing a comprehensive critical analysis and the first unabridged translation.

<sup>1</sup> e.g. Charcot, cited by Jules-Verne, *Jules Verne* (1973), 101, or Finn Ronne, 'Introduction', in *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* (New York: Didier, 1951), 5–6.

<sup>2</sup> René Escaich, 'A propos des *Aventures du capitaine Hatteras*', *BSJV* 28 (1973), 88; Dumas, *Jules Verne* (1988), 123. Stevenson is a lone dissenter, accusing Verne of 'torturing us too much upon the way' and the 'sin of . . . a bad end' ('Jules Verne's Stories', in *The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson*, 28. *Essays, Literary and Critical*, 190–3 (192)).

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- BSJV* *Bulletin de la société Jules Verne*  
'1867' the first illustrated, single-volume, book publication of *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* [Hetzel, 1866], the edition followed here  
'1866' the first Hetzel edition (unillustrated, in two volumes)  
HL Amateur Hervé and Ferdinand Lanoye (eds), *Voyages dans les glaces . . . extraits des relations de Sir John Ross, Edward Parry . . . MacClure [sic]* (1854), the most important source for *Hatteras*  
*JCE* *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*  
*MÉR* *Le Magasin d'éducation et de récréation*; without other reference, *MÉR* refers to the serial publication of *Hatteras* (I–IV, 1864–5)  
MS the manuscript (1863–4) of *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras*  
*Travellers* *The Travellers of the Nineteenth Century*  
*20T* *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Seas*

References to *Hatteras* are of form 'II 19' (i.e. Part II, ch. 19), '*MÉR* IV 33' (i.e. *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation*, volume 4, page 33), or '*MÉR* IV 33 II 19'.

References to other works by Verne are by chapter number (e.g. *JCE* 18) plus volume number if any (e.g. *20T* II 1).

Extracts from letters are from *Correspondance inédite de Jules Verne et de Pierre-Jules Hetzel (1863–1886)*, ed. Olivier Dumas, Piero Gondolo della Riva, and Volker Dehs, vols. 1, 2, and 3 (1999, 2001, and 2002).

References to texts available online at the French National Library (<http://gallica.bnf.fr>) are indicated simply as 'Gallica'.

All translations from French are my own.



## INTRODUCTION

*Jules Verne (1828–1905)*

JULES-GABRIEL VERNE was born in 1828, on an island in central Nantes, western France. His father had a successful law practice, and wrote amateur verses. His mother's maiden name was Allotte de la Fuÿe, derived from Seigneur N. Allott, a fifteenth-century immigrant in Louis XI's Scottish Guard of archers.<sup>1</sup>

The family biographer tells us that the boy would often visit his great-uncle, Jules-Joseph de la Celle de Châteaubourg, Chateaubriand's nephew. Chateaubriand claimed to have originally gone to America to find the Northwest Passage to Cathay before the British got there. (We now know that he invented much on the liner back, probably not even getting as far as the Mississippi.)

In 1847 Jules arrived in Paris to study law. For the next ten years, he lived in a succession of single rooms, sometimes with barely enough to eat. Devoting himself to play writing, seven of his thirty pieces had been performed or published by 1863, one with the help of Dumas *père*.

Verne also published five short stories, in which many of the themes and structures of his famous novels are already visible. All concern the difficulty of getting things going (like Verne's own career) and all are set in foreign parts, are late Romantic in conception, and finish tragically.

In 1856 the playwright met Honorine de Viane, a widow with two daughters; they married a few months later, with Verne turning to stockbroking to support his new family.

Verne's journey to Britain in 1859 (his first outside France) had a major impact on him, especially Edinburgh and the Highlands. In just eight days, Verne and his collaborator Aristide Hignard managed to fit in Liverpool docks, open prostitution, scenes from Scott's novels, Arthur's Seat (his first mountain), ten-storey medieval houses, flirtation with an Edinburgh lass, nude sea bathing, a 'chateau'

<sup>1</sup> Verne's British ancestry was proved with the identification of the chateau built by Allott, later Allotte, Member of the Royal Household (Butcher, *Jules Verne* (forthcoming)).

in Fife, Loch Katrine, Ben Lomond, Mme Tussaud's, and the *Great Eastern*. *Backwards to Britain* was the first book Verne completed, but lay hidden until 1989, when it was hailed as a fine piece of travel writing and a vital document for understanding the young man.

In 1861, Verne visited Norway and Denmark—missing the birth of his only child, Michel. Travelling with Hignard and a lawyer friend, he navigated the locks up to Christiania and visited the wild Telemark region, spending seven weeks away. The sole surviving chapter of the book describing his travels, 'Joyous Miseries of Three Travellers in Scandinavia', was published in 2003. Both travel works point the way to the first novels, especially *Hatteras* and *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864), which heads into a volcano in Iceland and down through the layers of the globe's history. All four books, written in four years, feature small groups of male travellers, borrow from the same exploration and travel literature, have the same atmosphere of anguish and mystery, involve labyrinths, electrical storms, and volcanoes, and employ the same metaphors and writing strategies. Three of the works pass through (or under) Liverpool, and three, Hamburg and Denmark.

'Joyous Miseries' proposes a manifesto for the four works:

I was drawn to the hyperboreal regions, like the magnetic needle to the north, without knowing why. . . . I love cold lands by temperament. The book of M. Énault, *Norvège*,<sup>2</sup> [contains] the following passage: 'As you head north, you continually get higher; but so uniformly and imperceptibly that you only realize the height you've got to by looking at the rise in the barometer and the drop in the thermometer.'

Verne equates altitude with latitude and the deliciously cold temperature—three scales measuring out his obsession for the north. This three-way equivalence in turn 'over-determines' the monomaniacal quest for a unique culminating point that generates and structures *Backwards to Britain*, 'Joyous Miseries', *Hatteras*, and *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, and lies at the very heart of the Extraordinary Journeys.

<sup>2</sup> Louis Énault, *La Norvège: Christiania, les paysans, Trondhjem, chez les Lapons, Bergen, le Cap Nord* (1857). The first document Verne uses for his British trip is similarly Énault's *Angleterre, Ecosse, Irlande* (1859). Elsewhere in 'Joyous Miseries', he cites Cook, Ross, Dumont d'Urville, [Dr John] Richardson, and Dumas, plus the new periodical *Le Tour du monde*.

From the beginning Verne had visited literary salons, thanks to another uncle; there he befriended Alexandre Dumas *père* and *fils* and photographer and balloonist Nadar. Through them he met Alfred de Bréhat, a boys' writer and fellow Breton, who, in July 1862, introduced him to his new publisher Jules Hetzel (1814–86). This towering figure had brought out Balzac, Stendhal, and Hugo—as well as his own books for boys. A member of Lamartine's government, he had spent eight years in exile after the 1848 Revolution.

Within months of the crucial encounter, *Five Weeks in a Balloon* became a huge success.

The novelist spent 1863–4 in a whirlwind of activity. The family now had five members, one of them a difficult and squalling baby, and moved to a larger flat in suburban Auteuil. Verne was busy writing or publishing four novels as well as several other pieces. He brought out an article praising 'Edgar Allan Poe and his Works' and a historical novella, *The Count of Chanteleine*, and contributed to a second collection of songs with Hignard. He submitted *Paris in the Twentieth Century*, but Hetzel categorically rejected it, calling it 'a painful thing, so dead . . . inadequate on every line' (it became the most successful French novel ever in the United States). Verne also wrote *Hatteras* and *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*,<sup>3</sup> much of the former during an extended stay at his parents' country house, with noisy children all around. All the while, he was slaving at his day-job.

On 16 September 1863 Verne declined to invest 40,000 francs (about £160,000 in modern-day terms) in his publisher's company; he cited financial problems, probably due to the move, his broking commitments, and uncertainty about his future. Hetzel only offered a second one-book contract on 1 January 1864, when *Hatteras* was three-quarters finished, and again took more than five-sixths of the profits and failed to provide any advance for future novels.<sup>4</sup>

And yet Verne was to be pivotal to his new publishing venture, the fortnightly *Magasin d'éducation et de récréation* (March 1864–1906).

<sup>3</sup> Although *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* came out in November 1864, the second contract, of 1 January 1864, makes no reference to it, and Verne's letters mention only *Hatteras*, finished by March 1864. *Journey* was probably therefore written after most of *Hatteras* and submitted in about May.

<sup>4</sup> The contract specified payment of 3,000 francs, a print-run of 10,000 plus an indefinite number in the *MÉR*, an option on two volumes per year, and an advance of 300 francs per month on a history of exploration.

Co-directed by Republican educationalist Jean Macé (and by Verne himself from 1867), the *MÉR* aimed for a young readership, with a pedagogical and moralistic approach. The illustrated magazine was given away with the leading newspaper *Le Temps* for the first eleven months, a 200,000-franc loss-leader that ensured its success. The first issue opened with chapters 1 and 2 of *Hatteras*, which dominated for the next twenty-two months, in conjunction with Hetzel's rewriting and appropriation of *The Swiss Family Robinson*.

Perhaps because of the strain, the novelist suffered an acute attack of facial paralysis in August 1864, with half his face going dead.

In 1866, *Hatteras* appeared in book form, inaugurating Verne's series of Extraordinary Journeys. According to the rather brash Publisher's Announcement, their aim was 'to sum up all the geographical, geological, physical, and astronomical knowledge amassed by modern science and rewrite the story of the universe'.

In 1867 the family moved to the seaside village of Le Crotoy. The same year, Verne sailed to America on the liner the *Great Eastern*. He also bought three boats of successively greater size, visiting the British Isles a total of twelve times and going as far as North Africa. In 1872 the family moved to Amiens. In 1885, Verne sold his yacht for financial reasons and gave up travelling.

Michel tried his hand at many careers, including writing, one story being published under his father's name. After Jules Verne's death in 1905, eight novels and three short stories appeared in the Extraordinary Journeys. Only in 1978 was it realized that Michel had made radical changes. Two-thirds of *The Survivors of the 'Jonathan'*, for instance, are his, including the many philosophico-political passages; and perhaps even more of the masterpiece 'Edom', set 20,000 years in the future.

### *The Inception of Captain Hatteras*

*Captain Hatteras* can be quickly summarized. Richard Shandon receives a mysterious letter asking him to construct a reinforced ship in Liverpool, purchase six years of supplies, and assemble a highly paid crew for an unknown destination. As the ship heads off for Melville Bay in April 1860, only a 'dog-captain' has appeared. At seventy-eight degrees, the ship is freezing up and the men are

unhappy—when a crewman reveals himself as John Hatteras. Despite two previous tragedies, the captain is determined to use his steam-engine to plant the Union Jack at the North Pole. Hatteras hits it off with Dr Clawbonny, who has Dickensian optimism, curiosity, and commonsense, and they set out over the icy wastes to search for fuel. They rescue Altamont, the sole survivor of an American expedition, but when they return, the crew have mutinied and blown up the ship. Hatteras and his companions remain without resources at the coldest point on earth.

The five men build an ice-house 350 miles from the Pole and over the winter months discuss previous expeditions. When Altamont insists on calling the land New America, an argument breaks out, for Hatteras suspects him of designs on the Pole. However, Altamont saves Hatteras from musk oxen and the two are reconciled. Having cannibalized the American ship, the explorers trek north to a warmer zone, with paradisaical frolicking animals. There they discover an open sea, teeming with monsters and birds.

From the beginning, Verne was fascinated by the polar regions, amongst the last virgin areas on the globe. In 1851 he is reported to have visited a maternal uncle in Dunkirk, a major port for Arctic whalers; and consequently to have written ‘Wintering in the Ice’ (1855), a precursor to *Hatteras*.

The two works share motifs of death, blood, and ice, plus a mutiny, a bear attack, and the immobilization of the brig when forced out of the ice. In the original version, the villains end up eating their faithful huskies, despite the terrible smell—perhaps why the cooking is omitted in a similar episode in *Hatteras*. The story has a note, probably written by the author, describing it as ‘in [Fenimore] Cooper’s manner’ and based on an analysis of ‘every traveller’s tale’. Verne’s attraction to the Arctic consequently predated any interest in science. A decade before meeting Hetzel, he had discovered his path of adventure fiction in remote areas.

Three later novels take place amongst the ice, *The Fur Country* (1873) in northern Canada, *An Antarctic Mystery* (1897), and *The Lighthouse at the End of the World* (1905) at the tip of Patagonia. The 1897 work is a sequel to, or rather continuation of, *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*, the focus of Verne’s 1864 study of Poe. It explains Pym’s disappearance with a giant magnet in the shape of a

Sphinx which irresistibly attracts all metals, including the nails holding boats together. *Hatteras, An Antarctic Mystery*, Verne's only literary study, and Poe's lone novel are thus linked. Even the title *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras* echoes *The Adventures of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

Verne's polar obsession is visible in many other works. Captain Nemo dives under the icecap to plant his flag at the South Pole, which is also flown over in *Clipper of the Clouds* (1886). The hero of *The Wreck of the 'Cynthia'* (1885) sails the Northwest Passage and makes the first circumnavigation of the Pole. The title of *The Purchase of the North Pole* (1899) speaks for itself. The Arctic receives one chapter in *Famous Travels and Travellers* (1878) and twenty-one in Verne's unpublished collaboration 'The New World' (1881).

For Mediterranean countries, the north represented barbarian invasion and ill fortune, but Verne was also influenced by classical legends of the warm waters of Hyperborea, the land behind the north wind.

The sources of *Hatteras* have unfortunately not been investigated to date, so only brief indications can be given here. The seventy-five footnotes may be due to the influence of Scott's and Poe's excesses in this regard. Writing at the cusp of Romanticism and Realism, Verne echoes contemporary descriptions of nature, and occasionally pastiches Baudelaire's 'desolations'. The names of his characters are taken from Cooper's *Miles Wallingford* (1844) and Thackeray's *History of Pendennis* (1850); and there are direct borrowings from Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), Chateaubriand's *Travels in America* (1827), and Victor Hugo (see the Explanatory Notes, below, for details).

Above all, *Hatteras* borrows extensively from scores of polar accounts, nearly all British. That nation's dominance of Arctic exploration is often ascribed to Waterloo, for the overmanned post-war Navy was encouraged to channel energy into the Northwest Passage. When Sir John Franklin's 1845 expedition disappeared, more than sixty ships, many financed by his widow, went in search. The Franklin mystery, with its subtext of cannibalism, was much debated,<sup>5</sup> and haunts *Hatteras*.

<sup>5</sup> Dickens, as one example, claimed cannibalism could not have been possible; but was refuted by John Rae (23 Dec. 1854).

But with the discovery of the Northwest Passage (1854), preliminary indications of Franklin's fate (1855), and a document in a cairn (1859), the Franklin question was more or less closed, and attention turned to the Pole.

Closely connected was the idea of an Open Sea, supposedly located beyond the limit of exploration at North Cornwall (see map on pp. xlv–xlvi). Following sightings of open water by several explorers in the 1850s, geographers Maury and Petermann defended this thesis, often ascribed to volcanic activity or the Gulf Stream. It lost currency only in the 1890s, when it was found that although the Polar Sea did exist, it was invariably frozen.

Verne put to great effect maps produced by the Admiralty in 1859 and by geographer Malte-Brun. The astonishing number of Arctic expeditions he cites are indicated below in the Selection of Contemporary Documents in the Select Bibliography and in Appendix B: A Chronology of Arctic Exploration.

The expeditions which influenced *Hatteras* the most are those by Scoresby (1806, 1817) who reached about eighty-two degrees, and wrote a definitive *Account of the Arctic Regions* (1820); and by Parry (1819–20 and 1827) who left his ship north of Spitzbergen and continued by boat and sledge, reaching  $82^{\circ} 45'$ , a record until 1876. The exploration Verne refers to most often is James Ross's (1829–33), when his nephew John Ross discovered the Magnetic Pole. The 1850–4 McClure expedition was the first to cross the Arctic; Verne invariably describes it as having 'sailed' the Passage, a view shared by many modern authorities, although the claim was disputed in the United States. Hatteras's vessel is modelled on McClintock's screw-driven brig (1857–9), and Verne delights in revisiting many of the places of the real-life explorer.

However, it should be borne in mind that Verne could not read English. Furthermore, only about half a dozen of the accounts were translated, principally those by Franklin, Parry, Back, Belcher, McClintock, and John Ross. Verne also used articles from *Le Tour du monde*, *Bulletin de la Société de géographie*, and *Nouvelles annales des voyages*. But three books are by far his most important sources: Hervé and Lanoye, 'Journeys in the Ice . . . Extracts from the Reports of Sir John Ross, Parry . . . McClure' (1854), Lucien Dubois, 'The Pole and the Equator' (1863), and Lanoye, 'The Polar Sea' (1864).