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<https://www.amazon.com/Jules-Verne-The-Biography/dp/B085W6H531>

★★★★★ **Thoroughly researched, accurate, scholarly and engaging biography of Verne**

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**Verified Purchase**

William Butcher is probably the world's foremost scholarly authority on the life and literature of the French writer Jules Verne. Having written numerous articles and monographs on the life and literary output of the prodigious and often under-estimated and misunderstood French novelist, over many years, and having retranslated some of the best-known Verne novels such as 'Around the world in eighty days' in the last ten years or so, few are more qualified than Butcher to produce this detailed insight into Verne's life.

Butcher systematically demolishes the many misperceptions of Verne's life and of the quality of his writings. He corrects the errors of previous biographies and of previous truncated and erroneous translations of Verne's novels, and brings to light some hitherto undetected subtexts in Verne's works, notably the degree of sexual allusion and the ingenious narrative structures. Butcher highlights the way in which Verne's lifetime publisher, Hetzel, expurgated many of Verne's works prior to publication, thus denaturing, tragically, much of their literary worth: to remedy this situation somewhat, Butcher's scholarship is unique in having gone back to the original manuscripts in order to reveal the unpublished, true genius of Jules Verne's themes and in order to reinterpret his novels.

Butcher's meticulous research brings the reader right into the intimate spaces inhabited by Verne from childhood through to old age, and though his style is rigorously academic, he sometimes recounts episodes and physical surroundings in an almost novelistic fashion. This makes the reader's vantage point, as a fly on the wall observer of Verne's journeys through life, particularly close, realistic, intimate and fascinating.

What has most struck me about this biography is the seemingly bittersweet nature of Verne's life, in which his success and happiness was at all times tempered with sadness, disappointment and even tragedy. The iconic French novelist is revealed, by Butcher, in all his humanity: this biography brings Verne to life with extraordinary vividness and Butcher's knowledge and writing skills help us to empathise with Verne and to admire him.

As I am currently doing doctoral research on translations of Verne, this biography is proving to be an indispensable reference. In sum, I wholeheartedly recommend this text to a wide audience of readers, not merely scholars of Verne, but to anyone and everyone who has ever enjoyed Verne's works and wants to learn about the man behind the iconic novels and films. Butcher deservedly subtitles this tome the 'Definitive Biography'.

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