

for a walk, but in the afternoon he was back. I heard him come in. I heard him down in the big room whistling a funny tune that would go up and down, up and down. But I was busy about the house away up-stairs opening windows and looking into old rooms. I was too busy to notice how late it was getting, until I looked up and saw it was almost sunset. Down below I heard a noise. A door into the hall was opening. I looked down over the old carved banisters. Mr. Stephen was walking toward the front door very quickly. He jerked hard at the handle and slammed the door behind him. It did not seem odd then. Quite often lately he would walk out at sundown.

"But I don't know how it was. After he left I seemed very lonely in that house. Though I had been there often, I had never felt that way before. The wind was making creaking noises, quite the way it does in a swaying boat. I could hear a door squeaking on its hinges. I could hear the old warped boards on the stairs give, and rustling noises in the hall. It kept reminding me of clothes and people's steps. I don't know why it was, but it made me restless. It made me feel as though something was happening that I couldn't understand.

"And then—I don't know why—I was looking out of a window at the river. The sun was going down in the clouds, making them all purple and red; the way the sun does in autumn, and the river was red too and quite smooth, for the wind was slackening. But it wasn't the sunset I was

looking at. Out by the bar quite near where the waves were breaking I saw a little boat that was bobbing and dancing up and down, and a man in it was rowing very fast out toward the open sea. It was Mr. Stephen in that boat, sir—and I know why he was there, and—you know why."

He paused and for a moment I thought he was finished, but he began to speak again, watching me wide-eyed with that half-puzzled look.

"And you know that sometimes I think he was right and all the rest of us were wrong, for, as I said, he was not queer, but different. I sometimes think he saw his ship, really saw it. You won't laugh at it, will you, sir? You understand?"

Though he had stopped, I could still hear the appeal in his last words. As I gazed at him across the table, it seemed to me that he was older than I had thought and sadder and more wistful. It gave me a desire to please him, and I knew what would please him most.

"Henderson," I said, "bring me a glass of port."

I raised the thin glass until it sparkled in the light, and the rays went through it, ruddy like the setting sun. I know what I did seems absurd as I tell it. I felt it then, just as Henderson felt the absurdity of his story. Yet I continued, possibly with some idea of tribute to something I could not grasp, or perhaps because I was sleepy and the hour was very late.

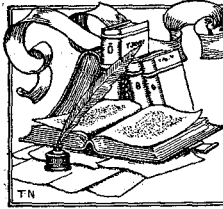
"To the Ship, Henderson," I said, and Henderson nodded very slowly.

Retrospect

BY WILLIAM H. HAYNE

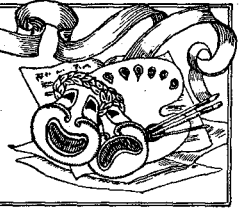
LIKE the whisper of wind in quiet places,
Or the scent of roses in gardens old,
The mind looks back, and memory traces
The long lost hours of gray or gold.

Fragments of joy, and of keen-edged sorrow;
Days bright with the sun, or filmed by rime—
All that the thoughts of the past may borrow,
Glimpsed through the cobwebs spun by time.



AS I LIKE IT

BY WILLIAM LYON PHELPS



LATELY I have been going back to Jules Verne, and reading him with the double pleasure that comes from good narrative and happy reminiscence. To read a youthful favorite after the lapse of many years is like revisiting some European scene first beheld in boyish rapture; the principal is intact, and the accumulated interest a notable addition. The delight I find to-day in the French magician is not caused by the fact that some of his dreams have come true; as a mere reader, I do not care whether his stories are possible or impossible; nor do I know whether or not I should rejoice in the practicability of the submarine, for from the human-welfare point of view it would thus far seem to be a liability rather than an asset. It is as an imaginative, not as a scientific, writer that Jules Verne appeals to me.

For this reason I find the old solemn accusations made against his scientific accuracy decidedly amusing; and once more, not because he occasionally happened to confound his adversaries by guessing right, like some charlatan who predicts the weather for the next winter, but because such attacks were and are just as valuable as solemn impeachments of the accuracy of Munchausen. I wonder how many remember "M. W. H." of the *New York Sun*, who used to write a full-page review every week of some new book, and write it with such detail that it became quite unnecessary to buy the book? His judgment in many fields of literature was sound and his criticisms penetrating; but this morning I have been reading again his portentous condemnation of Jules Verne, which he handed down from the solar chair more than forty years ago. The following paragraph gives a fair idea of the whole essay: "The astonishing vogue of these productions constitutes their chief claim to criticism, but they may also be said to challenge it by a special eminence in worthlessness. In

most works of the kind extravagant blunders are only occasional, or at worst sporadic, relieved by intervals of tolerable accuracy; but our French author's unvaracity must be accounted chronic, since he can rarely complete a dozen pages without some perversion of fact."

I remember how I resented this attack in my boyhood; the author denounced for "inaccuracy" was my friend, who by his magic had taken me to the centre of the earth, twenty thousand leagues under the seas, around the world in eighty days, to the moon, and given me a delightful round trip to the planets and back, on a luxurious comet. I then vaguely resented Mr. Hazeltine's animadversions; now they seem funny enough, a greater curiosity than anything to be found in the Frenchman's romances.

Nor was Jules Verne received with much favor by French critics, in spite of what Mr. Hazeltine said to the contrary; they did not take him seriously as an author until millions of foreign children learned to love France and Frenchmen through him. One winter day in 1903, being in Amiens to see the cathedral, I called at his house to tell him of the happiness he had added to my childhood; the housemaid said he was out walking near the great church, and as we drew near to the façade, we met him. He was a white-bearded old gentleman, with an expression of peculiar benevolence, as though he carried in his dear old face some reflection of the adoring gratitude of all the children in the world. We talked a few moments, and he went on his way. A few years later, when I revisited Amiens, he had departed on an adventure which I hope was more thrilling than anything he had imagined in his books; we found not him, but his statue. And it is pleasant to remember that the statue had been dedicated with tributes from members of the French Academy.

To-day his stories have lost none of