



P E N G U I N



C L A S S I C S

JULES VERNE

Around the World in Eighty Days

I

In which Phileas Fogg and Passepartout agree their relationship, that of master and servant

In the year 1872, the house at number 7 Savile Row,¹ Burlington Gardens – the house in which Sheridan² died in 1814 – was lived in by Phileas Fogg, Esq., one of the oddest and most striking members of the Reform Club,³ even though he seemed determined to avoid doing anything that might draw attention to himself.

And so one of the nation's most brilliant parliamentary speakers had been replaced by the enigmatic figure of Phileas Fogg, about whom nothing was known except that he was the most courteous of men and one of the most handsome gentlemen in English high society.

People compared him to Byron – because of his good looks, certainly not because of a limp – but a Byron with a moustache and whiskers, an impassive-looking Byron, who could have lived for a thousand years without showing the signs of age.

Though he was undoubtedly English, Phileas Fogg was not necessarily a Londoner. He had never been seen at the Stock Exchange or the Bank of England, or in any of the financial institutions of the City. No dock or basin in London had ever handled a ship whose owner was called Phileas Fogg. The gentleman in question did not figure on any list of board of directors. His name had never echoed through an Inn of Court,⁴ either the Temple, Lincoln's Inn or Gray's Inn. He had never pleaded in the Court of Chancery, nor on the Queen's Bench, nor in the Court of Exchequer, nor in the Ecclesiastical Court.⁵ He was neither a factory owner, nor a businessman, nor a merchant, nor a landowner. He was not a member of the Royal Institution, nor of the London Institution, nor of the Artisan Club, nor of

the Russell Institution, nor of the Literary Society of the West of England, nor of the Law Society, nor of the Combined Society for the Arts and Sciences, which enjoys the direct patronage of her Gracious Majesty. He belonged to none of those numerous societies that proliferate in the English capital, from the Harmonic Society down to the Entomological Society,⁶ whose main purpose is the destruction of harmful insects.

Phileas Fogg was a member of the Reform Club, and that was it.

Anyone who may be surprised that a gentleman so shrouded in mystery should belong to this honourable association should realize that he had been admitted on the recommendation of Messrs Baring Brothers,⁷ with whom he had an account. His financial standing was such that his cheques went through immediately and his current account was always in credit.

Was Phileas Fogg a wealthy man? There could be no doubt about that. But even the best-informed people were unable to say where his wealth came from, and Mr Fogg was the last person they would have dared to ask directly. In any case, he was careful about money without being mean, since whenever a noble, useful or generous cause was short of funds, he made up the amount required without making a fuss, without even giving his name.

In a word, he was the most uncommunicative of gentlemen. He talked as little as possible and this silence served only to increase his aura of mystery. Though he lived his life quite openly, he carried out his activities with such mathematical precision that it fuelled other people's imagination.

Was he well travelled? Quite probably, since he had a better knowledge than anyone else of world geography. There wasn't a single out-of-the-way place that he didn't seem to know in detail. Sometimes, by a brief but precise intervention, he corrected idle club speculation about travellers who had disappeared or got lost. He offered the most likely explanation of what had happened to them, and his words often seemed to be inspired by a second sight, since they were always borne out by events. Here was someone who must have travelled a lot – in his head, at any rate.

What was beyond doubt, however, was that Phileas Fogg had not been outside London for many years. Those who had the privilege of knowing him better than most could confirm that the only sightings of him were as he walked each day from his house straight to his club. His only pastimes were reading the newspapers and playing whist. He often won when he played this silent game that was so well suited to his temperament, but his winnings never went into his own pocket. They made up instead a large part of what he gave to charity. It should also be noted that it was obvious that Mr Fogg played for enjoyment and not to win. The game of whist was for him a combat, a struggle against difficulty, but a struggle that did not require him to go anywhere or travel around or tire himself out, and all that suited his temperament.

As far as was known, Phileas Fogg didn't have a wife or children – something that can happen to the most respectable of people – but he had no relatives or friends either, which is less common. Phileas Fogg lived alone in his house in Savile Row, and never let in visitors. The inside of his house was never mentioned. A single manservant was enough for his needs. He took lunch and dinner at the club like clockwork, always in the same dining-room and at the same table. He never entertained his fellow members at table, never invited guests, and went back home only to sleep, at exactly midnight, without ever making use of one of the comfortable bedrooms that the Reform Club makes available to its members. Out of every twenty-four hours he spent ten in his home, either sleeping or getting himself ready. When he went for a walk, it was always at a carefully measured pace and in the club's entrance hall, with its inlaid wooden floor, or in the round gallery, above which rose a blue stained-glass dome supported by twenty Ionian columns in red porphyry. When he had lunch or dinner, it was the club's kitchens, larder and pantry, its fish store and dairy, that supplied his table from their delicious reserves. It was the club's servants, solemn-looking figures dressed in black uniforms and wearing soft-soled shoes, who served the meal in special china and on the finest table linen. It was the club's cut glass, made to a one-off design, that held his sherry, his port or his claret served with cinnamon

'To go around the world ... in such a short time and with the means of transport currently available, was not only impossible, it was madness'

One ill-fated evening at the Reform Club, Phileas Fogg rashly bets his companions £20,000 that he can travel around the entire globe in just eighty days – and he is determined not to lose. Breaking the well-established routine of his daily life, the reserved Englishman immediately sets off for Dover, accompanied by his hot-blooded French manservant Passepartout. Travelling by train, steamship, sailing boat, sledge and even elephant, they must overcome storms, kidnappings, natural disasters, Sioux attacks and the dogged Inspector Fix of Scotland Yard – who believes that Fogg has robbed the Bank of England – to win the extraordinary wager. *Around the World in Eighty Days* gripped audiences on its publication and remains hugely popular, combining exploration, adventure and a thrilling race against time.

Michael Glencross's lively translation is accompanied by an introduction by Brian Aldiss, which places Jules Verne's work in its literary and historical context. There is also a detailed chronology, notes and further reading.

Translated with notes by MICHAEL GLENCROSS
with an introduction by BRIAN ALDISS

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Cover: Detail from 'The Ride on the Elephant, Fogg in relative comfort, Passepartout somewhat unhappy', original illustration by L. Benett for *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873 edition) [photo: Mary Evans Picture Library]. Hand-colouring by Helena Zakrzewska-Rucinska



Penguin Literature

U.K. £6.99 CAN. \$15.00 U.S.A. \$10.00

ISBN 0-140-44906-X



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