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The English Editions of *Five Weeks in a Balloon*

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Introduction

The following note is intended as a supplement to my earlier and more comprehensive study entitled “Jules Verne’s English Translations” and “A Bibliography of Jules Verne’s English Translations.” It was first published in *Science Fiction Studies* (vol. 32.1 [March 2005]: 80-141) and can be found online at <http://www.depauw.edu/sfs/covers/cov95.htm> and on Zvi Har’El’s Jules Verne website at <http://jv.gilead.org.il/evans/>. Whereas that study offered a broad-based introduction to the English-language editions of Verne’s *Voyages extraordinaires* (building upon the pioneering work of the late Walter James Miller; see <http://www.verniana.org/volumes/01/HTML/VerneSmiles.html>), the goals of this note are more modest. It seeks only to examine the available English translations of one single novel—*Cinq semaines en ballon* (1863) aka *Five Weeks in a Balloon*—and to decide which one is the best, judged according to criteria that are both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Publishing such a note in this issue of *Verniana* seems especially appropriate since the year 2013 marks the one hundred-fiftieth anniversary of the original publication of Verne’s novel in France.

To date, there exist seven different English translations of Verne’s *Cinq semaines en ballon*. They first appeared in the following editions:

Title	Year	Publisher	Translator	Reprint Used
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1869	New York: Appleton	William Lackland	Worthington, 1882
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1870	London: Chapman & Hall	?	Pocket Classics, Alan Sutton, 1995
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1875	London: Ward, Lock & Tyler	Frederick Amadeus Malleson	1921
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1876	London: Routledge	?	Didier, 1954
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1877	London: Goubaud	?	Hutchinson, 1893
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1926	London: Dent New York: Dutton	Arthur Chambers	
<i>Five Weeks in a Balloon</i>	1958	London: Hanison “Fitzroy Edition”	I.O. Evans	Panther, 1964

These different translations can best be identified by the name of their original publisher since, for nearly half of them, the translator is not known. In subsequent reprint editions by other publishers, the translations can be identified by the opening paragraph of the first chapter, which I have reproduced below. For purposes of comparison, I have also included the opening paragraph of Verne’s original French text as published by Hetzel. **NOTA BENE:** All French citations are taken from the illustrated Hetzel grand in-8 edition of *Cinq semaines en ballon* which first appeared in 1867. In all the textual documentation that follows, the symbol § indicates the chapter number, followed by the page number: for example, (§33:262) means chapter 33 and page 262. Not all of the English translations follow the same chapter sequencing as in the original French version.

Hetzel	Il y avait une grande affluence d’auditeurs, le 14 janvier 1862, à la séance de la Société royale géographique de Londres, Waterloo place, 3. Le président, sir Francis M..., faisait à ses honorables collègues une importante communication dans un discours fréquemment interrompu par les applaudissements.
Appleton	There was a large audience assembled on the 14th of January, 1862, at the session of the Royal Geographical Society, No. 3 Waterloo Place, London. The president, Sir Francis M—, made an important communication to his colleagues, in an address that was frequently interrupted by applause.

Chapman & Hall	There have been disputes as to the originator of the great idea of traversing the African continent, in a manner to be independent of its multitudinous and deadly obstructions; but the subjoined narrative will, we cannot doubt, be sufficient to assure the reader that the man who undertook, and in the face of unexampled difficulties carried out the project, conceived it, and stands indebted to no one for the honours now accumulating on the name of Dr Samuel Fergusson.
Ward, Lock & Tyler	There was a large audience, on the 14th of January, 1862, at the sitting of the Royal Geographical Society of London, 3, Waterloo-Place. The president, Sir Francis M—, made an important speech to his honourable colleagues, and was frequently interrupted by applause.
Routledge	On the 14th of January, 1862, there was a very large attendance of the members of the Royal Geographical Society of London, 3 Waterloo Place. The President, Sir Francis M—, made an impromptu communication to his colleagues in a speech frequently interrupted by applause.
Goubaud	At a sitting of the Royal Geographical Society, No. 3, Waterloo Place, on the 14th of January, 1862, the President, Sir Francis M—, made his colleagues an important communication in an address interrupted by frequent applause.
Dent / Dutton	There was a large audience at the meeting of the Royal Geographical Society of London, 3 Waterloo Place, on the 14th of January, 1862. The President, Sir Francis M—, made an important announcement to his honourable colleagues in a speech frequently interrupted by applause.
Hanison	There was a large audience, on the 14th January, 1862, at the session of the Royal Geographical Society of London, 3 Waterloo-Place. The president, Sir Francis M—, made an important speech to his honourable colleagues, and was frequently interrupted by applause.

Hanison is an abridged and somewhat revised version of the Ward, Lock & Tyler translation by Malleson.

The quality of these translations was determined, in large part, by their fidelity to the original. For example, I checked to see if they abridged Verne's French text or added to it. I took notice of corrections made by the translators (where they fixed Verne's mistakes and typos). I looked at their linguistic errors (in spelling, translation, or transcription), their tendency to anglicize (e.g., changing the characters' names or replacing French colloquialisms with British ones), and the accuracy of their treatment of Verne's scientific pedagogy. I examined their basic writing style, their handling of Verne's humor and wordplay, and their ideological tampering of Verne's text (such as censoring or altering its political, religious, or racial content). It is true that some of these concerns outweigh others. If a translation drops or adds entire chapters, for instance, it matters little if a specific aspect of Verne's style is rendered well or poorly—the translation is still a bad one. In assessing a translation's quality, macro issues always take precedence over micro issues. But it is nevertheless interesting to compare *all* of these translations according to *all* of the above

criteria in order to gain a complete picture of the strengths and weaknesses of each. And, as we shall see, the final results of such a comparison are a bit surprising.

Completeness – Deletions

Appleton

Very good. All chapters and episodes are present. Paragraphing generally follows the original. Chapter titles are included. But very few of Verne's explanatory footnotes are kept.

Chapman & Hall

Very poor. This edition contains only 37 chapters of the Verne's original 44. The first 10 chapters of Verne's text are condensed into 3, and the normal plot picks up in chapter 4 (chapter 7 in the original). The chapter about Joe (chapter 6 in the original) is omitted entirely as well as half of chapter 10. Chapter titles are included but modified. Several episodes, paragraphs, and sentences are omitted throughout. Some footnotes are kept.

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Fair-Good. All chapters are present. No chapter titles. Many paragraphs are merged; some sentences are omitted. There are some footnotes.

Routledge

Fair. All chapters are present. Most paragraphs are merged; many sentences are omitted. Chapter titles are reduced to single entries. No footnotes.

Goubaud

Fair-Poor. All chapters are present, but they are severely abridged. Many paragraphs are merged; many sentences are omitted. No chapter titles. Most footnotes are omitted.

Dent / Dutton

Good. All chapters are present. Chapter titles are included. Paragraphs are sometimes merged, with some sentences omitted. Several footnotes are included.

Hanison

Poor. Includes 43 chapters instead of 44 (chapter 4 in the original—summarizing African exploration—was deleted). This translation is recycled and revised from the Ward, Lock & Tyler edition, but the text is abridged even more. Most paragraphs

are merged, with many sentences omitted. No chapter titles. One footnote included and a few others integrated into the body of the text.

Completeness – Additions

Appleton

Very good. Only small parenthetical clarifications not in the original are added from time to time.

Example

“Although the neighboring marshes showed traces of the rhinoceros, the lamantine (or manatee) and the hippopotamus...” (§33:262) for “Bien que les marais environnants portassent des marques de rhinoceros, de lamenteins, et d’hippopotames...” (§33:198). (Although the surrounding marshes showed traces of rhinoceroses, manatees, and hippopotamuses)

Chapman & Hall

Very poor. Most of the opening chapter was composed by the translator from bits and pieces of Verne’s first 5 chapters.

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Fair-Good. No significant additions. Some rewriting for paraphrases.

Routledge

Very good. No significant additions.

Goubaud

Poor. Many additions and rewrites, mostly for paraphrases and summaries.

Dent / Dutton

Very good. No significant additions.

Hanison

Fair-Good. No significant additions. Some rewriting for paraphrases.

Corrections

Appleton

Fair. The translator attempts to correct many of the most obvious errors in Verne's text—sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

Examples

"Overwey" (§1:16) for "Overwey" (§1:7) — repeats Verne's error (his real name is "Overweg")

"MacCarthy" (§1:16) for "Maccarthie" (§1:7) — corrects Verne's error

"By Saint Andrew!" said Kennedy" (§8:62) for "'Par saint Patrick!' s'écria Kennedy" (§8:40) — corrects Verne's error (a Scottish saint should be invoked by Kennedy, not an Irish one)

"Now, the gases increase 1/480 of their volume for degree of heat applied. If, then, I force the temperature 18 degrees, the hydrogen of the balloon will dilate 18/480 or 1614 cubic feet, and will, therefore, displace 1614 more cubic feet of air" (§10:71) for "'Or, les gaz augmentent de 1/480 de leur volume par degré de chaleur. Si donc je force la température de dix-huit degrés, l'hydrogène de l'aérostat se dilatera de 18/480, ou de seize cent quatorze [sic] pieds cubes, il déplacera donc seize cent soixante-quatorze pieds cubes d'air de plus'" (§10:46-47). Here, the translator miscorrects Verne's error. There is a typo in Verne's original text: the first number, "ou de seize cent quatorze" (1614), should read "ou de seize cent soixante-quatorze" (1674). The translator has altered the second number—which, in Verne's text, correctly reads "seize cent soixante-quatorze" (1674)—to "1614 more cubic feet" in order to make it consistent with the previous number.

"Ann Radcliffe" (§39:307) for "Anne Radcliff" (§39:230) — corrects Verne's error

Chapman & Hall

Very Poor. Many passages deleted. Those remaining often repeat Verne's errors or abridge the text during the correction.

Examples

(list of African explorers not included)

(interjection by Kennedy not included)

"But each degree of heat increases the volume of the gas 1/480; if then I raise the temperature eighteen degrees, the hydrogen in the balloon will have expanded 18/480 or sixteen hundred and fourteen cubic feet; it will then displace sixteen hundred and seventy-four cubic feet more of air" (§3:18) — repeats Verne's error

(Ann Radcliffe citation not included)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Fair-Good. Some errors are corrected, some not.

Examples

"Overweg" (§1:10) — corrects Verne's error

“McCarthy” (§1:10) — miscorrects Verne’s error

“‘By St. Patrick!’ cried Kennedy” (§8:46) — repeats Verne’s error

“Gas augments its volume 1/480 by degree of warmth, so that if I increase the warmth to 18 degrees, the hydrogen in the balloon will dilate 18/480, or 1,614 cubic feet; it will therefore displace 1,674 more cubic feet of air” (§10:53) — repeats Verne’s error

(Ann Radcliffe reference not included)

Routledge

Good. The translator attempts to correct many of Verne’s errors (except those in the math).

Examples

“Overweg” (§1:14) — corrects Verne’s error

“Mccarthy” (§1:14) — miscorrects (slightly) Verne’s error

“‘By Saint Andrew!’ cried Kennedy” (§8:43) — corrects Verne’s error

“Now, gases increase 1/480 of their volume for every degree of heat. If, then, I create a temperature of 18°, the hydrogen in the balloon will increase 18/480, or 1,614 cubic feet; it will then displace 1,674 cubic feet of air more” (§10:49) — repeats Verne’s error

“Mrs. Radcliffe” (§39:208) — corrects Verne’s error (but changes it)

Goubaud

Fair. Some errors are corrected, some are not.

Examples

(list of African explorers not included)

“‘I swear by Saint Patrick,’ cried Kennedy” (§8:25) — repeats Verne’s error

“Now, gases increase 1/480 of their volume for every degree of heat. If, then, I raise the temperature eighteen degrees the hydrogen in the balloon will expand 18/480 or 1,614 cubic feet, and so will displace the same quantity of air” — repeats Verne’s error (and then abridges)

“Anne Radcliffe” (§39:195) — miscorrects Verne’s error

Dent / Dutton

Good. Most obvious errors are corrected; a few are not.

Examples

“Overweg” (§1:169) — corrects Verne’s error

“Maccarthie” (§1:169) — repeats Verne’s error

“‘I swear by Saint Andrew—!’ cried Kennedy” (§8:195) — corrects Verne’s error

“Now gases expand by [*blank space here*] of their volume per degree of temperature. If, therefore, I increase the temperature by 18 degrees, the volume of the hydrogen in the balloon will be increased by [*another blank space*] or 1674 cubic feet. It will this displace 1674 additional cubic feet of air” (§10:200) — corrects Verne’s error (but the fractions are missing in the published text)

“Ann Radcliffe” (§39:333) — corrects Verne’s error

Hanison

Fair-Good. For those passages not deleted, errors are sometimes corrected and sometimes not.

Examples

“Overweg” (§1:13) — corrects Verne’s error

“McCarthy” (§1:13) - miscorrects Verne’s error

“By Saint Patrick,’ cried Kennedy” (§7:36) — repeats Verne’s error

“When the temperature of the gas increases by one degree its volume increases by 1/480, so if I increase its temperature by 18 degrees it expands by 18/480. This will make it displace an extra 1,674 cubic feet of air.” (§9:42) — corrects Verne’s error but abridges the text.

(Ann Radcliffe reference not included)

Translator Errors

Appleton

Very good. Errors are rare and minor.

Examples

African explorers listed at the end of chapter 1 are occasionally misspelled.

“About four in the morning” (§17:131) for “Vers six heures du matin” (§17:94) (About six in the morning)

“This sheet of water was christened Uyanza Victoria” (§18:142) for “Ce lac a été nommé Nyanza Victoria” (§18:103) (This lake was named Nyanza Victoria)

Chapman & Hall

Good for those portions not deleted or abridged. But a few errors persist.

Examples

“Brave friend” (§21:100) for “Brave ami!” (§28:165) (Worthy friend)

“was carried down the current like a large ball” (§36:158) for “entraîné par un courant rapide, s’en alla comme une bulle immense” (§43:256) (carried away by the rapid current like a huge bubble)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Fair. Some errors of spelling, translation, and transcription.

Examples

African explorers listed at the end of chapter 1 are complete and correct

“Kokbur” (§1:9) for “Kokburn” (§1:5), “Gayfussac” (§13:73) for “Gay-Lussac” (§13:69), and “Dufhys” (§44:255) for “Dufays” (§44:258)

“what a bruise” (§5:27) for “une bosse pareille” (§5:22) (such a bump)

“Ten tons of sulphuric acid and ten tons of old iron” (§8:41) for “dix tonneaux d’acide sulphurique et dix tonneaux de vieille feraille” (§8:36) (ten barrels of sulphuric acid and ten barrels of old iron)

“That was a famous idea of yours” (§12:66) for “c’est tout de même une fameuse idée que vous avez eue là” (§12:62) (it was nevertheless an excellent idea you had there)

“Mind the dilatation of the gas.” (§15:85) for “Veille à la dilatation du gaz.” (§15:81) (Watch the dilation of the gaz.)

“It is frightful!” (§16:99) for “C’était effrayant!” (§16:94) (It was frightful!)

“The balloon had been sent hither and thither by opposite currents in a circle” (§17:99) for “Le ballon, tourant sur place” (§17:94-95) (The balloon, spinning in place)

“Towards nine a.m.” (§29:182) for “Vers neuf heures un quart” (§29:170) (Around 9:15 a.m.)

Routledge

Very poor. Many errors of spelling, translation, and transcription:

Examples

African explorers listed at the end of chapter 1 are occasionally misspelled “a strong Bautzen galvanic battery” (§10:48) for “une forte pile de Bunsen” (§10:45) (a strong Bunsen battery)

“the Buntzen-pile stopped working” (§26:144) for “la pile de Bunsen cessa de fonctionner” (§26:155) (the Bunsen battery stopped working)

“It is melancholy.” (§23:131) for “Cela est attristant” (§23:142) (It is saddening, It makes one sad)

“Ferguson did not stop to ascertain the cause of the phenomenon” (§30:167) for “Fergusson ne tarda pas à avoir l’explication de ce phénomène” (§30:184) (Fergusson did not delay in having the explanation for this phenomenon.)

“this is one of the greatest troubles I have ever had to deplore!” (§34:183) for “voilà l’un des plus grands chagrins qu’il m’ait été donné de ressentir!” (§34:201) (this is one of the greatest sorrows I’ve ever had to endure)

“It was a very happy idea of mine to throw myself into the Tchad” (§35:185) for “‘Il est heureux’ se dit-il ‘que j’aie eu cette pensée de me jeter dans le Tchad.’” (§35:204) (‘It was fortunate,’ he said to himself, ‘that I had this idea to throw myself into Lake Tchad.’)

“he burst through the wall with a vigorous application of his shoulder” (§35:188) for “il enfonça la muraille d’un coup d’épaule” (§35:208) (he broke through the wall with a push of his shoulder)

“Mad as ever!” (§37:198) for “Entêté!” (§37:219) (Obstinate man!)

“He sent up a most appetizing little supper of *frochette* of snipe” (§38:202) for “Il servit au souper une brochette de bécassines fort appétissantes” (§38:223) (For supper he served a most appetizing brochette of snipe)

“Is it the etiquette not to find any more of them?” (§39:211) for “Est-ce qu’à la rigueur on ne pourrait pas lui en trouver d’autres?” (§39:232) (If need be, couldn’t we find some more of them?)

“Is the balloon relieved at all?” (§41:217) for “Le ballon se relève-t-il?” (§41:240) (Is the balloon rising again?)

“it is to die by inches” (§41:217) for “C’est triste de s’en aller morceau par morceau” (§41:241) (It is sad to [see the balloon] die piece by piece)

Goubaud

Fair. Some errors of spelling, translation, or transcription.

Examples

incorrect illustrations used (taken from Verne’s *Hector Servadac*)

“Pennel” (§2:5) for “Pennet” (§2:9)

“twelve months after leaving Tripoli” (§4:12) for “douze mois et demi après avoir quitté Tripoli” (§4:19) (twelve and a half months after leaving Tripoli)

“ten tons of sulphuric acid and ten of iron filings” (§8:23) for “dix tonneaux d’acide sulphurique et dix tonneaux de vieille feraille” (§8:36) (ten barrels of sulphuric acid and ten barrels of old iron)

“Shall we often be obliged to reach those higher belts?” (§13:46) for “Est-ce que nous aurons souvent l’occasion d’atteindre ces zones supérieures?” (§13:68) (Will we often have to go up to those higher zones?)

“a real Havannah cigar” (§17:76) for “de délicieux havanes” (§17:102) (some wonderful Havana cigars)

“A famous idea’ said Joe” (§20:91) for “‘Une fameuse mode’ dit Joe” (§20:117) (‘A wonderful fashion idea,’ said Joe)

“On the 27th of May, about one in the morning” (§41:203) for “Le 27 mai, vers neuf heures du matin” (§41:237) (On May 27, about nine in the morning)

Dent / Dutton

Good. Few errors of spelling, translation, or transcription.

Examples

African explorers listed at the end of Chap. 1 are occasionally misspelled

balloon's provisions are incorrectly listed (§7:30)

"Towards the end of February..." (§8:30) for "Vers le 10 février..." (§8:35) (Around February 10th...)

"But as wise men fall, without hurting themselves." (§13:55) for "Mais comme doivent tomber des savants, sans se faire aucun mal" (§13:69) (But as scientists should fall, without hurting themselves)

Hanison

Poor. Most of the same errors of spelling, translation, and transcription as found in the Malleson translation in the Ward, Lock & Tyler edition, plus additional ones such as:

Examples

"they will keep the pieces as mascots!" (§19:93) for "ils se feront des talismans avec les morceaux!" (§20:116) (they will make talismans of the pieces!)

"he did not publish the recital of his travel still 1790" (§27:131) for "il publia ses voyages en 1790 seulement" (§28:166) (he did not publish the account of his travels until 1790)

"Enham" (§29:138) for "Denham" (§30:177)

Anglicizing**Appleton**

Fair. Original character names are changed: Fergusson to *Ferguson*, Pennet to *Bennett*, Peney to *Penney*.

Much anglicizing of colloquial expressions, interjections, etc. (some rather antiquated):

Examples

"Joe was fairly dancing and breaking out in laughable remarks. The worthy fellow soon became the jester and merry-andrew of the boatswain's mess" (§8:58) for "Joe bondissait, éclatant en propos burlesques; il devint promptement le loustic du poste des maîtres" (§8:37) (Joe hopped about, bursting with humorous comments; he promptly became the jester of the petty officers' quarters)

"Why, your master must be Old Nick himself." (§9:65) for "C'est donc le diable, votre maître?" (§9:41) (Is he the devil, your master?)

“Out upon stage-coaches!” (§12:84) for “Fi des diligences!” (§12:58) (Bah to coaches!)

“Egad, Samuel” (§13:92) for “ma foi! Samuel” (§13: (For heaven’s sake! Samuel)

Chapman & Hall

Fair-Good for those portions of text not deleted. Original character names are kept. Some anglicizing of colloquial expressions, interjections, etc.:

Examples

(Joe characterization deleted)

(“master” reference deleted)

“Confound coaches!” (§5:24)

“By Jove!” (§6:28)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Good. Original character names are kept. Some minor anglicizing.

Examples

“Joe [was] in the wildest spirits” (§8:42)

“your master must be the devil then” (§9:47)

“Coaches are nothing to it!” (§12:63)

(interjection deleted)

Routledge

Fair. Original characters’ names are changed: Fergusson to *Ferguson*, Pennet to *Penney*, Peney to *Beney*, etc.

Examples

“Joe jumped about, making absurd remarks, and was at once installed as the wag of the forecastle” (§8:212)

“Why your master must be the devil in person!” (§9:40)

“What is a diligence after this?” (§12:57)

(interjection deleted)

Goubaud

Fair-Good for those portions not deleted. Moderate anglicizing: Fergusson to *Ferguson*, Peney to *Penney*, etc.

Examples

(Joe characterization deleted)

("master" reference deleted)

"Rather better than a coach" (§12:38)

"Upon my word!" (§13:44)

Dent / Dutton

Good. Original character names are kept. Little anglicizing.

Examples

"Joe [was] exultant and venting his excitement in comic remarks. He at once became the wag of the boatswain's quarters" (§8:192)

"Your master must be the devil himself." (§9:196)

"A bit better than travelling by coach" (§12:207)

(interjection deleted)

Hanison

Good for those portions of text not deleted. Almost identical to the Malleson translation in the Ward, Lock & Tyler edition, but with a bit more anglicizing.

Example

"in the midst of a magnificent greensward" (§16:80) for "au milieu d'une magnifique pelouse" (in the middle of a magnificent lawn—Malleson says "lawn" [§17:106])

Pedagogical Integrity

Appleton

All historical, geographical, and scientific explanations are present, but there are frequently errors in the math.

Examples

"By giving the balloon these cubic dimensions, and filling it with hydrogen gas instead of common air—the former being fourteen and a half times lighter and weighing therefore only two hundred and seventy-six pounds—a difference of three thousand seven hundred and twenty four pounds in equilibrium is produced" (§7:50-51) for "En donnant au ballon cette capacité de quarante-quatre mille huit cent quarante-sept pieds cubes et en le remplissant, au lieu d'air, de gaz hydrogène, qui, quatorze fois et demie plus léger, ne pèse que deux cent soixante-seize livres, il reste une rupture d'équilibre, soit une difference de trois mille sept cent vingt-quatre livres." (§7:32) [no errors]

"Its weight, along with that of the network, did not exceed two hundred and fifty pounds" (§7:53) for "Son poids et celui du filet ne dépassaient pas deux cent quatre-vingts livres" (§7:33) [error: 250 for 280]

“For this purpose, there had to be employed eighteen hundred and sixty-six pounds of sulphuric acid, sixteen thousand and fifty pounds of iron, and nine thousand one hundred and sixty-six gallons of water” (§11:78) for “Il fallut employer, pour cette operation, dix-huit cent soixante-six gallons d’acide sulfurique, seize mille cinquante livres de fer, et neuf cent soixante-six gallons d’eau” (§11:52) [errors: pounds for gallons, 9166 for 966]

“The doctor was aware that, by the loss of the hydrogen in the first balloon, the ascension force at his disposal was now reduced to nine hundred pounds” (§33:260) for “Le docteur savait que, par la perte de l’hydrogène du premier ballon, sa force ascensionnelle se trouvait réduite de neuf cents livres environ” (§33:196) [error: “reduced to” for “reduced by”]

“and the *Daily Telegraph* struck off an edition of three hundred and seventy-seven thousand copies on the day when it published a sketch of the trip” (§44:344) for “et le *Daily Telegraph* fit un tirage de neuf cent soixante-dix-sept mille exemplaires le jour où il publia un extrait du voyage” (§44:259) [error: 377,000 for 977,000]

Chapman & Hall

Fair. Many historical, geographical, and scientific passages are deleted. In those scientific passages included, the math is generally correct (when it is not paraphrased).

Examples

“In giving the balloon, then, this capacity of 44,847 cubic feet, and in filling it in place of air with hydrogen gas, which fourteen and a half times lighter only weighs 276 lbs., there results a difference of 3724 lbs. (§2:11) [no errors]

“its weight and that of the net did not exceed 280 lbs. (§2:13) [no errors]

“For this operation there would have to be employed 1,866 gallons of sulphuric acid, 16,050 lbs. of iron, and 966 gallons of water!” (§4:21) [no errors]

“He knew that by the loss of the hydrogen of the first balloon the buoyancy had been lessened very considerably” (§26:120) [paraphrased]

(passage about the *Daily Telegraph* deleted)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Good. Most historical, geographical, and scientific passages are kept. But, similar to the Appleton edition, there are occasional errors in the math.

Example

“By giving to the balloon this bulk of 44,847 cubic feet, and by filling it, instead of air, with hydrogen gas, which is 14½ times lighter, and therefore weighs only 276 lbs., there remains a difference of 3,784 lbs.” (§7:36) [error: 3784 for 3724]

Routledge

Fair-Poor. Most historical, geographical, and scientific passages are intact. But the mathematical explanations are teeming with errors.

Examples

"By giving to his balloon the capacity of 44,877 cubic feet of air, and filling it, in lieu of air, with hydrogen gas (which, being 14½ times lighter than air, would not weigh more than 275 lbs.), there would remain a difference in the equilibrium to the amount of 3,724 lbs." (§7:36) [errors: 44,877 for 44,847 and 275 for 276]

"In this operation 1,866 gallons of sulphuric acid, 16,500 pounds of iron, and 966 gallons of water were employed." (§11:53) [error: 16,500 for 16,050]

"The doctor was aware that, by the loss of the hydrogen from the first balloon, his ascensional force was reduced to about 900 lbs." (§33:178) [error: "reduced to" for "reduced by"]

Goubaud

Fair-Poor. Many historical, geographical, or scientific passages are abridged, paraphrased, or deleted entirely. In those scientific passages included, the math is sometimes correct sometimes not.

Examples

"By giving his balloon a capacity of forty-four thousand eight hundred and forty-seven cubic feet, weighing about four thousand pounds, and inflating it with hydrogen gas weighing two hundred and seventy-six pounds, there remains a difference of three thousand seven hundred and twenty-four pounds" (§7:21) [no errors, but abridges the text]

"In this operation, eighteen hundred and sixty-six gallons of sulfuric acid, more than eight tons of iron, and nine hundred and sixty-six gallons of water were employed" (§11:34) [error: "more than eight tons" for 16,050 lbs.]

"the united weights of apparatus, crew, water, car, and its belongings, calculating fifty gallons of water, and four hundred pounds of fresh meat, the Doctor arrived at a total of 2,850 pounds." (§33:162-63) for "en réunissant les poids de l'appareil, des voyageurs, de la provision d'eau, de la nacelle et de ses accessoires, en embarquant cinquante gallons d'eau et cent livres de viande fraîche, le docteur arrivait à un total de deux mille huit cent trente livres." (§33:196) [errors: 400 for 100, and 2,850 for 2,830, and also abridges the text]

Dent / Dutton

Fair-Good. Most historical, geographical, and scientific passages kept. But there are occasional errors in the math.

Examples

"By giving the balloon this capacity of 44,847 cubic feet and filling it, not with air but with hydrogen, which is fourteen and a half times lighter and weighs only 276 lbs, a change of equilibrium caused amounting to a difference of 3780 lbs." (§7:188) [error: 3780 for 3724]

"And now for some exact figures. 25 gallons of water, decomposed into its constituent elements, gives 222 lbs. of oxygen and 25 lbs. of hydrogen. This represents, at atmospheric pressure, 2050 cubic feet of oxygen, and 4100 cubic feet of hydrogen, making 6150 [5670] cubic feet of the mixture." (§10:201) for "Voici maintenant des chiffres très exacts. Vingt-cinq gallons d'eau se décomposent en ses éléments constitutifs donnent deux cent livres d'oxygène et vingt-cinq livres d'oxygène. Cela

représente, à tension atmosphérique, dix-huit cent quatre-vingt-dix pieds cubes du premier et trois mille sept cent quatre-vingts pieds cubes du second, en tout cinq mille six cent soixante-dix pieds cubes du mélange.” (§10:48) [errors: 222 for 200, 2050 for 1890, 4100 for 3780, and 6150 for 5670]

Hanison

Fair. Similar to the Ward, Lock & Tyler translation. Very few math errors in the scientific explanations. But the abridging or deleting of many historical and geographical passages throughout (e.g., the loss of chapter 4) severely diminishes the integrity of the pedagogy in this translation.

Narrative Style

Appleton

Fair. In rendering the French text into English, the translator tends to oscillate between two extremes: excessive slavishness to the original (result: stilted phraseology) and creative adaptations of Verne’s prose (result: Victorian embroidery). The style is frequently dated and quaint: “Withersoever” (§3:29), “Egad!” (§13:92), “Forthwith” (§17:137), “fowling-piece” (§12:235), “vouchsafed me” (§22:181), “On the morrow” (§25:201), “Heaven may waft us wither it pleases!” (§39:310), etc.

Examples

“Nothing but that was wanted to cap the climax!” (§3:24) for “‘Il ne manquait plus que cela!’” (§3:13) (That was all that was lacking!)

“the gallant Scot gave way to a genuine explosion of wrath” (§3:25) for “Le digne Ecossais se mettait très sérieusement en colère” (§3:14) (The worthy Scot was becoming very angry)

“There Burton, who was completely worn out, lay ill for several months.” (§4:35) for “Là, Burton épuisé resta plusieurs mois malade” (§4:21) (There Burton, exhausted and ill, remained for several months)

“Don’t fly away without us, doctor!” shouted Joe. ‘Never fear, my boy!—I am securely lashed.’” (§13:97) for “‘N’allez pas vous envoler, mon maître,’ s’écria Joe. ‘Sois tranquille, mon garçon, je suis solidement retenu.’” (§13:70) (‘Don’t go flying off, master,’ exclaimed Joe. ‘Don’t worry, my boy, I am securely tied down.’)

“Joe could handle fire-arms with no trifling dexterity” (§14:99) for “Joe maniait adroitement une arme à feu” (§14:70) (Joe was skillful with a firearm)

“Come, come, Joe! a truce to your suppositions; they’re anything but pleasant.” (§14:101) for “Voyons, Joe, trêve à tes suppositions; elles n’ont rien de plaisant.” (§14:72) (Come, Joe, enough with your suppositions; they’re anything but pleasant.)

“Then Joe took the viands from the oven, spread the savory mess upon green leaves, and arranged his dinner upon a magnificent patch of greensward ... and got a can of pure, fresh

water from a neighboring streamlet.” (§17:138) for “Alors Joe retira le dîner de la fournaise; il déposa cette viande appétissante sur des feuilles vertes, et disposa son repas au milieu d’une magnifique pelouse ... et puisa une eau fraîche et limpide à un ruisseau voisin” (§17:100) (Then Joe took the dinner from the oven, placed this appetizing meat onto green leaves, and put his meal in the middle of a magnificent lawn ... and drew some fresh, pure water from a nearby stream)

“Let us speak below our breath” (§21:166) for “Parlons à voix basse” (§21:122) (Let’s speak in a low voice)

“The stars sent him their trembling rays, and the moon wrapped him in the white winding-sheet of its effulgence.” (§23:183) for “les étoiles lui adressaient leur tremblante lumière, et la lune l’enveloppait dans le blanc linceul de ses rayons.” (§23:136) (The stars shed on him their shimmering light, and the moon wrapped him in the white shroud of its rays)

“Joe sprang to his feet precipitately; but judge of the loathing he felt when he saw what species of creature had shared his couch—a toad!” (§35:279) for “Joe se releva précipitamment, et que l’on juge du dégoût qu’il ressentit en voyant quel animal immonde avait partagé sa couche: un crapaud!” (§35:210) (Joe sprang to his feet, and you can imagine what disgust he felt in seeing what filthy animal had shared his bed: a toad!)

“Do you think that I felt easy in my mind about you?” (§37:291) for “Croyez-vous que j’étais tranquille de votre sort?” (§37:218) (Do you believe that I was unconcerned about your fate?)

“Myriads of grasshoppers, that are going to sweep over this country like a water-spout; and woe to it! for, should these insects alight, it will be laid waste.” (§40:313) for “Des milliards de sauterelles qui vont passer sur ce pays comme une trombe, et malheur à lui, car si elles s’abattent, il sera dévasté!” (§40:234) (Billions of locusts who are going to pass over this country like a tornado; and woe to wherever they descend upon it, for it will be devastated!)

Chapman & Hall

Good. Few twisted sentences. Sometimes archaic vocabulary is used. The translator sometimes seems to prefer technical instead of common nouns: “cynocephalous monkeys” (baboons), “Gier-Eagles” (vultures), etc.

Examples

“This only was wanting!” (§1:10)

(passage about Kennedy’s anger deleted)

(passage about Burton deleted)

“Mind you don’t fly away, master,” cried Joe. “Make yourself easy. I am very safely secured.” (§6:31)

“Joe ... knew very well how to handle a gun” (§7:32)

“Look here, Joe; a truce to your suppositions, they have nothing pleasant about them.” (§7:33)

“Joe then withdrew the dinner from the oven, and placed the appetizing meal upon some green leaves in the centre of an exquisite piece of greensward ... and drew some cool and limpid water from a neighboring brook” (§10:54)

“Speak in a whisper” (§14:69)

“The trembling light of the stars and the rays of the moon fell full upon him.” (§14:79)

“Joe started precipitately to his feet. Imagine his disgust to see the filthy animal which had slept close to him—a toad!” (§28:130)

“Do you think I took your fate quietly?” (§30:136)

“Millions on millions of locusts pass over this country like a whirlwind; and woe to the place where they alight—it is certain devastation to it.” (§33:145)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Very good. Occasional stylistic oddities, but quite readable overall. Too abridged at times.

Examples

(comment deleted)

“The worthy Scotchman was getting angry” (§3:17)

“There, Burton, who was worn out, remained three months ill” (§4:25)

“‘Don’t fly away, master,’ said Joe. ‘Don’t be uneasy, my boy. I am securely fastened.’” (§13:74)

“Though not a rifleman, Joe used a firearm skilfully.” (§14:75)

“Don’t suppose such horrible things, Joe.” (§14:76)

“Joe then took the meal out and placed it on green leaves in the midst of a magnificent lawn ... and drew cool and limpid water from a neighboring brook.” (§17:106)

“speak low” (§21:129)

“the stars shone upon him with their trembling light, and the moon wrapped him in the white shroud of her rays.” (§23:143)

“he jumped up quickly; his disgust at what he saw may be easily imagined. A frog had shared his couch!” (§35:216)

(passage on being concerned about his fate deleted)

“it is a swarm of grasshoppers. It will be unfortunate for the district where they alight.” (§40:237)

Routledge

Poor. The translator’s phraseology is very idiosyncratic (the archaic alternating with the colloquial) and seems frequently stilted.

Examples

“That was all that was needed to complete his vagaries!” (§3:18)

“The worthy Scot was waxing very angry” (§3:19)

“Here Burton, quite knocked up, remained ill for several months” (§4:26-27)

“Don’t you fly away, sir, please,’ cried Joe. ‘Be quite easy, my lad; I am firmly fixed here.’” (§13:67)

“Oh! bother, Joe, a truce to your suspicions; you are a regular ‘Job’s comforter.’” (§14:69)

“Then Joe took the dinner from the oven, placed it upon green leaves, and laid the repast in the center of a meadow-like space ... and fetched some fresh and sparkling water from a neighboring stream.” (§17:95)

“The stars sent down to him their trembling light, while the moon wrapped him in the pure refulgence of her beams.” (§23:126)

“Joe rose hurriedly, and judge of his horror when he perceived that he had unwittingly shared his bed with an enormous frog” (§35:190)

“Can you believe that I was easy about you?” (§37:197)

“millions of locusts, which pass over the ground like a waterspout, and very unfortunately for the district, for if they alight it will be devastated.” (§40:212)

Goubaud

Fair. The translator uses archaic phraseology at times. But his style is still quite readable.

Examples

“The maddest trick of all!” (§3:8)

“The worthy Scotchman got very angry.” (§3:9)

“where Burton remained ill for several months” (§4:14)

“Don’t get under weigh without us, Sir,’ cried Joe. ‘Never fear; I have good holding.’” (§13:47)

“A truce to your suppositions, Joe; they are not too agreeable.” (§14:50)

“Then Joe took their dinner out of the oven, laid it on green leaves, and arranged their repast on a beautiful piece of sward ... and drew fresh water from a limpid rivulet hard by.” (§17:75)

“the stars shed their quivering light upon him, and the moon wrapped him in its rays as in a snowy winding-sheet.” (§22:109)

“Joe rose in a hurry, and one may judge of his disgust when he saw what unclean animal had shared his bed: a toad!” (§35:175)

“Do you think I was not uneasy about you?” (§37:184)

“millions of locusts, which pass over the country like a whirlwind, and woe betide the country where they fall, for it will be entirely eaten up.” (§40:200)

Dent / Dutton

Good. Very readable. Occasional oddities of phraseology. The translator sometimes adopts a negative tone when portraying Joe.

Examples

“This is the last straw!” (§3:173)

“The worthy Scot was getting very angry.” (§3:174)

“There Burton, who was in a state of exhaustion, lay ill for several months.” (§4:180)

“Don’t go and fly away, sir!” Joe cried. ‘Don’t worry, Joe; I’m firmly fixed.’” (§13:215)

“Oh, shut up, Joe; your suppositions aren’t at all amusing” (§14:217)

“Taking it out of the oven, Joe placed it on some fresh leaves and laid the meal in the centre of a splendid stretch of smooth turf ... and drew some fresh water from a neighboring stream.” (§17:238)

“The stars showered upon him their twinkling rays and the moon wrapped him in a shroud of white.” (§23:264)

“Do you think I took your fate quietly?” (§30:136)

“Joe got up hurriedly. His disgust can be imagined when he saw what a loathsome creature had shared his bed—a toad” (§35:317)

“Do you think I wasn’t anxious about you?” (§37:323)

“Locusts ... thousands of them. They’ll sweep over the country like a sandstorm and it will be a bad look-out, for it they come down the land will be devastated.” (§40:336)

Hanison

Good for those portions not omitted. Same as Malleson translation in Ward, Lock & Tyler edition but even more abridged.

Humor and Wordplay

Appleton

Good. Most of Verne’s humor and wordplay are reproduced.

Examples

“You may eat as much as you like, and here’s a half-a-crown to buy you the ballast” (§6:49) for “tu peux manger à ton aise, et voilà une demi-couronne pour te lester à ta fantaisie” (§6:31) (you can eat as much as you wish, and here’s a half-crown to allow you to increase your ballast as much as you please)

“And Joe went on alone with a tremendous volley of exclamations. The ‘ohs!’ and ‘ahs!’ exploded one after the other, incessantly, from his lips.” (§12:83) for “Et Joe fit à lui seul une terrible consommation d’onomatopées. Les oh! les ah! les hein! éclataient entre ses lèvres.” (§12:57) (And Joe, to himself, indulged in a veritable feast of onomatopoeias. The ‘ohs!’ ‘ahs!’ ‘ehs!’ were bursting from his lips.)

“several other articles of witchcraft, all of them, by the way, most professionally filthy” (§15:111) for “divers objets de magie, d’une malpropreté d’ailleurs toute doctorale” (§15:80) (diverse objects of magic, which were of an appropriate [witch] doctoral dirtiness)

“I’ll think more than once of my lumps of solid gold-ore! There was something that would have given weight to our narrative!” (§40:316) for “je regretterai plus d’une fois mes cailloux en or massif! Voilà qui aurait donné du poids à nos histoires” (§40:236) (I will regret more than once my solid gold pebbles! They would have given weight to our tales)

Chapman & Hall

Poor. Some instances of humor and wordplay are included, but much has been deleted (with those passages cut from the original). Often, even if the passage is included, the humor or wordplay is lost in translation:

Examples

(“ballast” quotation omitted)

“So he gave himself up to the delivery of no end of exclamations—“Oh! Ah! By Jove!’ and other like exclamations kept bursting from his lips.” (§5:23)

“diverse magical objects of a dirtiness quite in keeping” (§8:38)

“‘Ah! sir,’ said Joe, with a great sigh, ‘if only had a big lump or two of the golden ore to show, people would then believe every word we say.’” (§33:147)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Poor. Most of Verne’s humor and wordplay is lost, either via omission or paraphrase.

Examples

“eat as much as you like, and here’s half-a-crown for you.” (§6:35)

“Joe broke into exclamations.” (§12:62)

“assorted magical objects, all dirty enough for their work” (§15:84)

(Joe’s “weighty” comments are omitted)

Routledge

Fair. Some of Verne’s humor and wordplay is lost, some retained.

Examples

“You may eat as much as you like, and here is a half-a-crown, so that you may indulge your tastes a little” (§6:207)

“Joe therefore gave way to a tremendous string of exclamations. The “ohs,” the “ahs,” and the “good heavens” were something astonishing.” (§12:56)

“many objects of magic use of a dirtiness, nevertheless, quite professional” (§15:75)

“I shall often regret that golden ore. Look what weight it would have given to our narratives.” (§40:214)

Goubaud

Fair. Some of Verne’s humor and wordplay is lost, some retained.

Examples

“You may eat as much as you like, and here is a half-a-crown, so that you may indulge your tastes a little” (§6:207)

“Joe therefore gave way to a tremendous string of exclamations. The “ohs,” the “ahs,” and the “good heavens” were something astonishing.” (§12:56)

“many objects of magic use of a dirtiness, nevertheless, quite professional” (§15:75)

“I shall often regret that golden ore. Look what weight it would have given to our narratives.” (§40:214)

Dent / Dutton

Good. Most of Verne’s humor and wordplay are kept.

Examples

“here’s a half-crown to ballast yourself in any way you like.” (§6:187)

“Joe broke into a succession of onomatopoeic sounds. A torrent of ‘ohs,’ ‘ahs,’ and ‘eehs,’ poured from his lips.” (§12:207)

“various devises used in the practice of magic, all of typically medical dirtiness” (§15:222)

“I shan’t find it easy to forget the loss of my gold!” said Joe with a deep sigh. ‘That would have given a bit of weight to our story” (§40:338)

Hanison

Poor. Some instances of humor and wordplay are included, but much has been deleted (same passages cut as in the Malleeson translation). Even in those passages included, the humor or wordplay is often lost in translation.

Ideological Tampering

Appleton

Good. Some euphemisms and a general toning down Verne’s sometimes colorful prose, but most original passages are included.

Examples

“But can a man get a drop of the real stuff there?” (§9:64) for “si on y trouve du gin?” (§9:41) (Can some gin be found there?)

“you’d be toddling after your mammy yet” (§9:65) for “tu téterais encore ta maman” (§9:42) (you’d still be sucking at your mother’s breast)

“Thus we see the millions rushing to the luxuriant bosom of America” (§16:123) for “Aussi voyons-nous déjà les peuples se précipiter aux nourrissantes mamelles de l’Amérique” (§16:88) (Thus we see peoples already rushing to the nourishing breasts of America)

Most religious references kept: Heaven, Providence, God, etc.

National references and stereotypes are included without modification:

Examples

“Numerous toasts were offered and quaffed, in the wines of France” (§1:16) for “Des toasts nombreux furent portés avec les vins de France” (§1:6) (Numerous toasts were made with the wines of France)

“The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Imaum of Muscat, and ally of France and England” (§11:84) for “L’île de Zanzibar appartient à l’iman de Mascate, allié de la France et de l’Angleterre” (§11:49) (The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Imam of Muscat, an ally of France and England)

“And I add that the Americans,’ said Joe, ‘will not have been the last to work at the machine!’ ‘In fact,’ assented the doctor, ‘they are great boiler-makers!’” (§16:124) for ““Et j’ajoute,’ dit Joe, ‘que les Américains n’auront pas été les derniers à travailler à la machine.’ ‘En effet,’ répondit le docteur, ‘ce sont de grands chaudronniers!’” (§16:88) (‘And I’d add,’ said Joe, ‘that the Americans would probably not be the last to work at such a machine!’ ‘Quite true,’ answered the doctor, ‘they are great boiler-makers!’)

Occasional use of pejorative racial terminology, but not of the badly offensive kind:

“negro” or “black” used most often, but also “blackamoor,” “negresses,” “dusky friends,” and “darkey” (Verne mostly used “nègre” [Negro])

Examples

“Down there! look! a crowd of blacks surrounding the balloon!” (§14:102) for “Là-bas, une troupe de Nègres qui assiègent le ballon!” (§14:73) (Over there, a group of Negroes surrounding the balloon!)

“Men, women, children, merchants and slaves, Arabs and negroes, as suddenly disappeared” (§15:110) for “Hommes, femmes, enfants, esclaves, marchands, Arabes et nègres, tout disparut” (§15:79) (Men, women, children, slaves, merchants, Arabs and Negroes, all disappeared)

“What! are you going alone into that blackamoor’s den?” (§15:113) for “Comment! tu iras seul chez ce moricaud?” (§15:81) (What? you are going alone to this wog’s home?)

“But this black?... ‘Shall we let this darkey drop all at once?’” (§15:119) for “Mais ce nègre? ... Est-ce que nous allons lâcher ce nègre tout d’un coup?” (§15:85) (But this Negro? ... Are we going to drop this Negro all at once?)

“Look at the faces of those astonished darkeys!” (§20:158) for “Voilà-t-il des faces des nègres assez ébahies!” (§20:116) (Look at the faces of those astonished Negroes!)

“Joe, leaning over to Kennedy’s ear and pointing down the tree, whispered: ‘The blacks!’” (§21:168) for “Joe, se penchant à l’oreille de Kennedy et lui indiquant la partie inférieure de l’arbre, dit: ‘Des nègres.’” (§21:123) (Joe, leaning over to Kennedy’s ear and pointing to the lower part of the tree, said: ‘Negroes!’)

“Are we still in the negro country, doctor?” (§29: 230) for “Est-ce que nous sommes toujours dans le pays des nègres, monsieur Samuel?” (§29:171) (Are we still in the country of the Negroes, mister Samuel?)

“That would give these negro races a superior idea of European power.” (§30:237) for “cela donnerait à ces nègres une bien autre idée de la puissance européenne.” (§30:177) (that would give these Negroes a completely different idea of European power)

“blacks instead of crocodiles!” (§35:274) for “des nègres au lieu de caïmans!” (§35:206) (Negroes instead of crocodiles!)

Chapman & Hall

Fair-Poor. Many passages are deleted or abridged. Those which are included are generally without euphemisms.

Examples

(gin quote deleted)

(mother’s breast quote deleted)

“Thus we see new nations rushing to the nourishing breasts of America” (§9:44)

Religious references generally maintained.

National references most often deleted:

Examples

(wines of France deleted)

(characterization of Americans deleted)

“The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Imam of Muscat, and is certainly the most beautiful of his possessions.” (§4:19) (mention of France and England deleted)

Strongly pejorative use of racial terminology: uses “negro” or “black” but, just as frequently, “nigger”:

Examples

““Down there; a troop of negroes besieging the balloon!” (§7:33)

“Men, women, and children, slaves, merchants, Arabs and negroes, all disappeared...” (§8:36)

“What! are you going alone to see this nigger?” (§8:39)

“But this nigger—?’ ... ‘Shall we let this nigger go slap?’” (§8:43)

“I can see the wonder-struck faces of the niggers.” (§13:65)

“Joe, bending down to Kennedy’s ear, pointed downwards, and whispered: ‘Niggers!’” (§14:70)

“Are we still in the country of niggers, sir?” (§22:104)

“That would more strongly impress these niggers with an idea of European power.” (§22:108)

“niggers in place of caymans” (§28:127)

Ward, Lock & Tyler

Fair-Good. Few euphemisms:

Examples

“That doesn’t matter, if they can only find gin.” (§9:47)

“you would still be sucking” (§9:48)

“We already see its people throwing themselves upon the nursing breasts of America.” (§16:92)

Religious references maintained.

National references and stereotypes are most often included, but not always:

Examples

“Numerous toasts were drunk in French wines” (§1:10)

“... the Americans won’t have been the last working the machine.’ ‘Yes,’ answered the doctor, ‘the Americans are great boiler-makers.’ (§16:93)

“The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Iman of Mascate, an ally of England” (§11:55)
(mention of France dropped)

Slightly pejorative use of racial terminology. Uses “negro” or “black” most frequently. Occasional use, however, of “nigger.”

Examples

“Why! there’s a troop of negroes besieging the balloon!” (§14:76)

“Men, women, children, slaves, merchants, Arabs, and negroes, all disappeared” (§15:83)

“What, do you mean to go by yourself to the old black?” (§15:85)

“But the negro?’ ... ‘Are we going to let the negro suddenly drop?’” (§15:89-90)

“How astonished those niggers do look!” (§20:122)

“Joe, whispering to Kennedy, and pointing to the lower part of the tree, said ‘Negroes.’” (§21:130)

“for we are still on negro land” (§29:182)

“that would give negroes a high idea of European power.” (§30:188)

“Negroes instead of alligators!” (§35:213)

Routledge

Fair-Poor. Some euphemisms:

Examples

“Well, it would be all right if one could find some grog up there” (§9:45)

“you would not be weaned yet” (§9:45)

“Also you can perceive that people are throwing themselves upon the richer bosom of American” (§16:83)

Most religious references maintained: Heaven, Providence, God, etc.

National references and stereotypes are sometimes kept:

Examples

“Numerous toasts were proposed” (§1:14) (mention of France deleted)

“Zanzibar belongs to the Imaum of Muscat, an ally of England and France” (§11:51)

“And I daresay that the Americans will not be the last to work at the machine,” said Joe. “In fact, those people are wonderful tinkers” (§16:84)

Pejorative use of racial terminology: uses “negro” or “black,” but also “blackamoor” and (very often) “nigger.”

Examples

“A whole tribe of black men down there besieging the balloon.” (§14:69)

“Men, women, children, merchants and slaves, Arabs and negroes, all disappeared” (§15:75)

“What! are you going alone into that blackamoor’s house?” (§15:77)

“But that nigger—’ ... ‘Shall we let him go altogether?’” (§15:81)

“Look at the astonished faces of the niggers!” (§20:108)

“Joe, stooping to Kennedy’s ear, and pointing to the lower portion of the tree, said: ‘Niggers!’” (§21:115)

“Shall we always be among negroes, Mr. Samuel?” (§29:157)

“... would give these negroes an excellent idea of European power.” (§30:163)

“Niggers instead of crocodiles!” (§35:187)

Goubaud

Fair. Many additions and rewrites, mostly for paraphrases and summaries. Good for those passages not abridged or deleted. Some euphemisms.

Examples

(gin passage deleted)

(mother’s breast passage deleted)

“Thus we now see nations seeking their food at the bosom of America” (§16:64)

Most religious references maintained: Heaven, Providence, God, etc.

National references and stereotypes are most often kept:

Examples

"Many toasts were drunk" (§1:4)

"The island of Zanzibar is the property of the Imaum of Muscat, an ally of France and England" (§11:32)

"Let me add," said Joe, "the Americans will not be the last to work at the machine." "True," replied the Doctor, "they are great boiler-makers." (§16:64-5)

Generally non-pejorative use of racial terminology:

Examples

"there's a troop of blacks attacking the balloon" (§14:51)

"Men, women, children, slaves, traders, Arabs, and negroes, all disappeared" (§15:56)

"Do you mean to say that you are going alone to see this raggamuffin?" (§15:58)

"But—this black fellow?" ... "Shall we let the black fellow down all at once?" (§15:61)

"Look at the faces of the astonished blacks!" (§20:90)

"Joe leaned over to Kennedy and whispered in his ear: 'Negroes!'" (§21:97)

"Are we still in the negro country, sir?" (§29:141)

"It would give these negroes a better idea of European power." (§30:147)

"he preferred negroes to caymans" (§35:172)

Dent / Dutton

Fair-Poor. Few euphemisms:

Examples

"Is there any gin there?" (§9:196)

"you'd still be drinking your mother's milk" (§9:197)

"Already the people are beginning to flock to the generous breasts of America" (§16:229)

Religious references maintained.

National references and stereotypes are most often included.

Examples

"Numerous toasts were drunk, in French wines" (§1:169)

"The island of Zanzibar belongs to the Imam of Muscat, an ally of France and England" (§11:202)

"And I bet the Yankees will have had a hand in it," said Joe. "Quite likely," the doctor replied." (§16:229)

Strongly pejorative use of racial terminology: "negro" and "black" appear far less frequently than "nigger":

Examples

"Over there. Niggers attacking the balloon." (§14:217)

“Men, women, children, slaves, merchants, Arabs and niggers all vanished” (§15:222)

“What! you’re going to see this cut-throat alone?” (§15:223)

“But this nigger—?’ ... ‘Shall we drop him off, sir?’” (§15:227)

“Those niggers look pretty astonished.” (§20:249)

“Joe, leaning towards Kennedy’s ear and pointing to the lower part of the tree, said: ‘Niggers!’” (§21:255)

“Are we still in negro country, sir?” (§29:289)

“It would give these niggers a different idea of European power.” (§30:294)

“They’re niggers, not crocodiles!” (§35:314)

Hanison

Fair-Good (for those passages not omitted entirely). Same as Malleson in Ward, Lock & Tyler edition.

Conclusions

While it may be better to have a poor translation than no translation at all, for the novel *Five Weeks in a Balloon* there is a wide range to choose from. After a detailed comparison of them, my conclusion is that the 1869 translation attributed to William Lackland, published by Appleton of New York, is the best of the group. Ironically, it is also the earliest—one might expect the first translation to be lacking in quality and succeeding translations to be progressively better. Of the seven English-language editions reviewed here, the Appleton edition is the most faithful to Verne’s original text and contains the fewest additions or deletions. It is far from perfect: its style is at times very clunky and its passages of scientific pedagogy are often untrustworthy. But it makes relatively few linguistic errors and does the best job of trying to capture Verne’s humor. This edition of *Five Weeks in a Balloon* continues to be reprinted today (mostly in facsimile by print-on-demand publishers such as Kessinger Publishing Co. in Whitefish, Montana). Electronic versions are also available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3526/3526-h/3526-h.htm> and at <http://jv.gilead.org.il/works.html>.

The worst edition of *Five Weeks in a Balloon* is the one published in 1870 by Chapman & Hall of London. Its translator is anonymous. It is ranked the worst primarily because of its “sins of omission”: it reduces Verne’s first 10 chapters into 3 and severely abridges the others. Despite ranking fair to very good in its linguistic errors and anglicizing as well as in its respect for Verne’s style, it also ranks fair to very poor in its pedagogical integrity, humor and wordplay, and ideological tampering. Modern reprints (unfortunately) exist for this translation as well—for example, the 1995 edition published in the UK by Alan Sutton in their “Pocket Classics” series. And an electronic version is also available online at

<http://www.mocavo.com/Five-Weeks-in-a-Balloon-a-Voyage-of-Exploration-and-Discovery-in-Central-Africa/632000>.

The other five translations fall somewhere in between these two in terms of their respective quality. The next-to-best translation is probably the one by Arthur Chambers and published by Dent (London) and Dutton (New York) in 1926. It scores “good” or “fair-good” on nearly all criteria, but its persistent use of “nigger” instead of negro/Negro or black (Verne consistently uses the term “nègre”) make this edition unpleasant to read. The next-to-worst English-language edition is clearly the I.O. Evans “Fitzroy Edition,” published by Hanison in 1958. The translation ranks as “fair-good” in many aspects: e.g., in correcting errors, lack of anglicizing, respecting Verne’s style, and avoiding ideological alterations. But the text is a highly abridged and modified version of the Malleson translation that first appeared in the Ward, Lock & Tyler edition in 1875. Large chunks of Verne’s original story have either been chopped out, paraphrased, or reduced in size (in this case, to fit the predetermined number of pages required by the “Fitzroy Edition” format). Finally, based purely on the question of linguistic errors in translating, the Routledge edition offers the most memorable howlers with sentences such as “this is one of the greatest troubles I have ever had to deplore!” (this is one of the greatest sorrows I’ve ever had to endure), “It was a very happy idea of mine” (It was fortunate that I had this idea), and “Is the balloon relieved at all?’ (Is the balloon rising again?).

After comparing these English-language versions of *Five Weeks in a Balloon* against Verne’s original French text, one fact seems indisputable: a truly excellent translation of this novel does not yet exist. But it is forthcoming. I am presently working with Verne scholar and translator Frederick Paul Walter on a new critical edition of *Five Weeks*. It will be published in the “Early Classics of Science Fiction” series of Wesleyan University Press (probably in late 2014). We are confident that it will be a vast improvement over the English-language editions of this novel heretofore available and reviewed here.

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