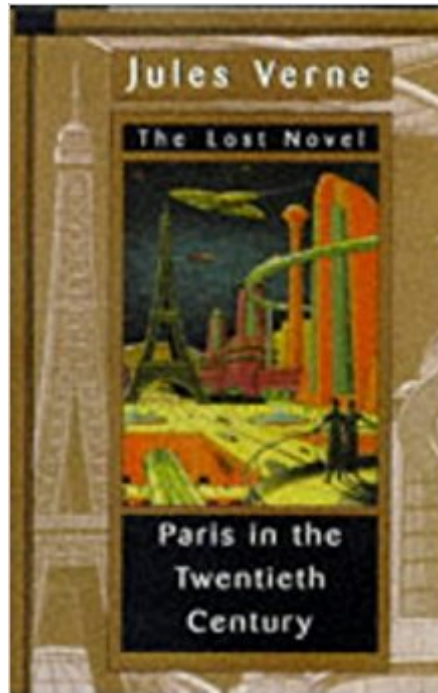




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Paris In The Twentieth Century



Synopsis

This newly rediscovered novel, written by Jules Verne in 1863, is set in Paris in 1960. Money and technology have taken over society and the narrator, a young poet, is forced to work in a bank. Verne's vision of our mechanized time is prescient: there are fax machines, automobiles, computers, subways, and electronic musical instruments. Illustrations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1863, Jules Verne was a young writer with one published novel under his belt and a new multibook contract with a prominent French publisher in hand. The publisher, however, rejected Verne's second manuscript, opting to bring out his *Journey to the Center of the Earth* instead. That manuscript apparently disappeared into a drawer, not to see the light of day again until it was rediscovered and published in 1994. Now it has been rendered into English by the eminent poet and translator Richard Howard. Verne's early books tend to feature adventure plots and a positive attitude towards technology. This novel, however, shows Verne in a darker, frankly dystopian mood. His mid-20th century Paris is an enormously wealthy society, a place of technological wonders, but, like Huxley's *Brave New World*, it is also a society without meaningful art. Engineering and banking are the prime industries of this civilization and, as the book's protagonist discovers, not even the most talented poet can find a place for himself unless he's willing to produce odes to blast furnaces or locomotives. While the narrative contains many startling predictions—among them fax machines, electronic calculators, automobiles and elaborate subway systems—there is little here in the way of either plot or character development. It's clear, in fact, that in opting for *Journey to the Center of the*

Earth, Verne's publisher chose the better book. Drawings not seen by PW. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Verne is well known as an early science fiction writer; this novel, which was lost for 125 years, is remarkably prescient in its predictions about the technology that is omnipresent now. Set in the 1960s, though written a century earlier, the novel depicts Michel Dufrenoy as a poet and humanities scholar at sea in a crass commercial world that has strong overtones of Soviet realism. He befriends a young musician with whom he works; reconnects with his long-lost uncle, a literature professor; and even falls in love with the professor's granddaughter. But despite the kindnesses of his friends, Michel fails to succeed with the technological culture around him. Notable are the predictions about the subway, electric lights, and electronic music. A curiosity; recommended for public and academic libraries. Ann Irvine, Montgomery Cty. P.L., Md. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The times Verne lived through may have shown future glimpses of technology, entertainment and education changes, but overall his gift of seeing the absolute amazing future of the world culture and values are jaw dropping. Other reviews claim the featured character as lazy. I did not find him other than passionate about the important issues and not swayed by societies greed, stress and growing lackadaisical lifestyle. Very few observations miss the mark. If only they had come to be. I highly recommend this great read. It is very helpful to research the actual future dates that Verne's observations actually occurred. The mores and values he states are right on the mark for today's society, especially Americas. My much hilted copy will be passed around to friends and family for days to come.

A social comedy/tragedy that those familiar with Verne will appreciate more, as there is no rescue for the protagonist as he falls into poverty and despair at the end. This is a near future novel that will appeal less to scifi fans who will already be familiar with the extrapolations.

It's kind of a hard read, because you're trying to picture and visualize Jules Verne's vision of the 1960's keeps colliding with the reality of the way the 60's actually looked

This is an interesting take on the Twentieth Century before it actually happened. It is inspired strongly by the development of Electrical physics at the time of the writing of the book.

I already read it in a different language and it is amazing! The style is not 100% "Verneian" as this is not a finished work but an early and rather rough piece, yet it is jaw dropping to say the least. I already made this a gift to several people I know.

I guess I was expecting more from Jules Verne. This is definitely NOT his best work.

Interesting look to the future by an excellent writer. It is not as interesting as his many other books but an excellent picture of 'what could have been'

An amazing picture of the future from the mid 1800s. And yet in so many ways right on.

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