Chapter I

IN WHICH PHILEAS FOGG AND PASSEPARTOUT ACCEPT EACH OTHER,

THE ONE AS

MASTER, THE OTHER AS MAN

Mr. Phileas Fogg lived, in 1872, at No. 7, Saville Row, Burlington

Gardens, the house in which Sheridan died in 1814. He was one of the

most noticeable members of the Reform Club, though he seemed always to

avoid attracting attention; an enigmatical personage, about whom little

was known, except that he was a polished man of the world. People said

that he resembled Byron—at least that his head was Byronic; but he was

a bearded, tranquil Byron, who might live on a thousand years without

growing old.

Certainly an Englishman, it was more doubtful whether Phileas Fogg was

a Londoner. He was never seen on 'Change, nor at the Bank, nor in the

counting-rooms of the "City"; no ships ever came into London docks of

which he was the owner; he had no public employment; he had never been

entered at any of the Inns of Court, either at the Temple, or Lincoln's

Inn, or Gray's Inn; nor had his voice ever resounded in the Court of

Chancery, or in the Exchequer, or the Queen's Bench, or the

Ecclesiastical Courts. He certainly was not a manufacturer; nor was he

a merchant or a gentleman farmer. His name was strange to the

scientific and learned societies, and he never was known to take part

in the sage deliberations of the Royal Institution or the London

Institution, the Artisan's Association, or the Institution of Arts and

Sciences. He belonged, in fact, to none of the numerous societies

which swarm in the English capital, from the Harmonic to that of the

Entomologists, founded mainly for the purpose of abolishing pernicious

insects.

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

The way in which he got admission to this exclusive club was simple

enough.

He was recommended by the Barings, with whom he had an open credit.

His cheques were regularly paid at sight from his account current,

which was always flush.

Was Phileas Fogg rich? Undoubtedly. But those who knew him best could

not imagine how he had made his fortune, and Mr. Fogg was the last

person to whom to apply for the information. He was not lavish, nor,

on the contrary, avaricious; for, whenever he knew that money was

needed for a noble, useful, or benevolent purpose, he supplied it

quietly and sometimes anonymously. He was, in short, the least

communicative of men. He talked very little, and seemed all the more

mysterious for his taciturn manner. His daily habits were quite open

to observation; but whatever he did was so exactly the same thing that

he had always done before, that the wits of the curious were fairly

puzzled.

Had he travelled? It was likely, for no one seemed to know the world

more familiarly; there was no spot so secluded that he did not appear

to have an intimate acquaintance with it. He often corrected, with a

few clear words, the thousand conjectures advanced by members of the

club as to lost and unheard-of travellers, pointing out the true

probabilities, and seeming as if gifted with a sort of second sight, so

often did events justify his predictions. He must have travelled

everywhere, at least in the spirit.

It was at least certain that Phileas Fogg had not absented himself from

London for many years. Those who were honoured by a better

acquaintance with him than the rest, declared that nobody could pretend

to have ever seen him anywhere else. His sole pastimes were reading

the papers and playing whist. He often won at this game, which, as a

silent one, harmonised with his nature; but his winnings never went

into his purse, being reserved as a fund for his charities. Mr. Fogg

played, not to win, but for the sake of playing. The game was in his

eyes a contest, a struggle with a difficulty, yet a motionless,

unwearying struggle, congenial to his tastes.