



# Jules Verne and the Heroes of Birkenhead.

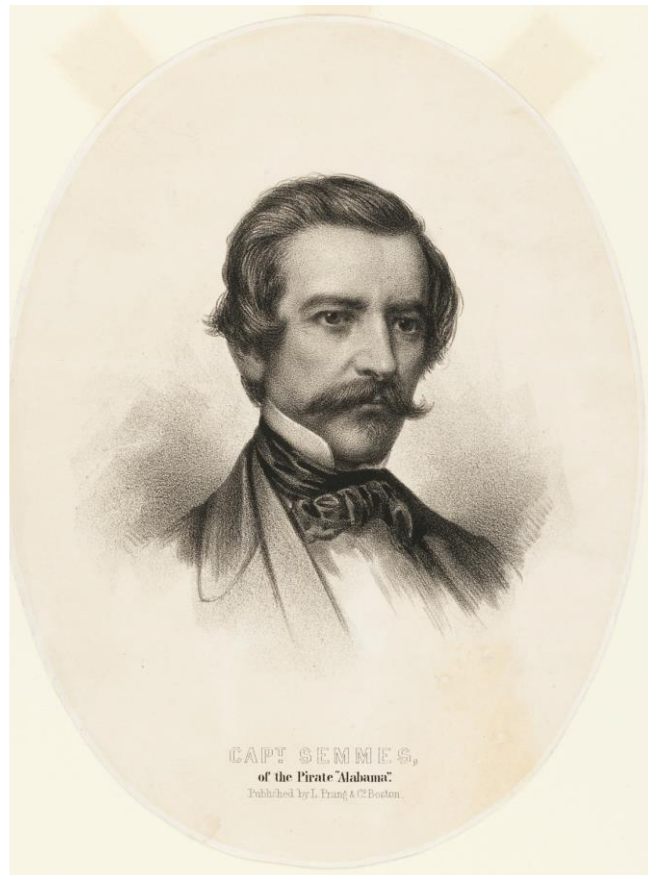
## Part 25

Revealing Captain Nemo - Conversations in Literature.

Jules Verne and Raphael Semmes.

By John Lamb

(Former Head of Geography, The Liverpool Blue Coat School, England).



Raphael Semmes (1809-77)

UBI FIDES IBI LUX ET ROBUR



## Part 25.

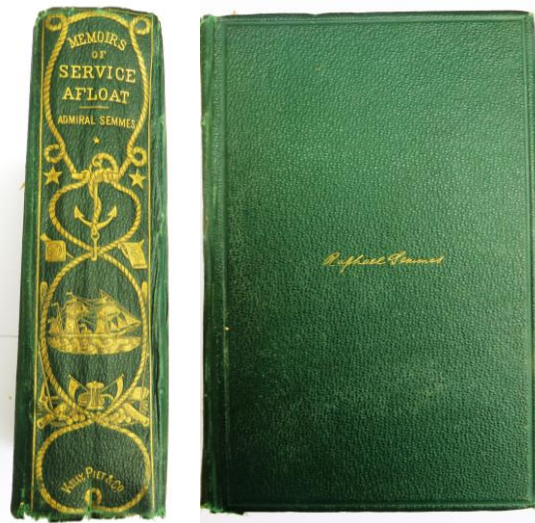
### Revealing Captain Nemo - Conversations in Literature.

#### Jules Verne and Raphael Semmes.

After the sinking of the CSS *Alabama* and his rescue by the Royal Mersey Yacht Club of Tranmere, Birkenhead on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 1864, Raphael Semmes would write in his memoirs.

*I considered my career upon the high seas closed by the loss of my ship, and had so informed Commodore Barron, who was our Chief of Bureau in Paris...*

***Memoirs of Service Afloat During the War Between the States. Raphael Semmes (1869).***



*...My health was broken down to that degree, that I required absolute quiet, for some months, before I should again be fit for duty. I, therefore, threw off all care and responsibility, as soon as I had wound up the affairs of the Alabama, and went up to enjoy the hospitality of my friend Tremlett, at Belsize Park, in London.*

*Here we arranged for a visit, of a few weeks, to the continent, and especially to the Swiss mountains, which was carried out in due time. One other gentleman, an amiable and accomplished sister of my friend Tremlett, and two other ladies, connections or friends of the family, accompanied us.*

**The Reverend Francis Tremlett**

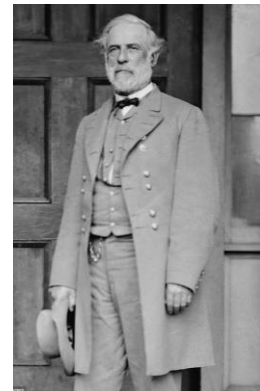
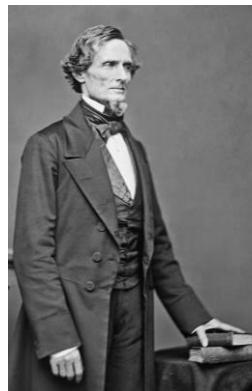
*We were absent six weeks; landing at Ostend, passing hurriedly through Belgium—not forgetting, however, to visit the battle-field of Waterloo—stopping a few days at Spa, for the benefit of the waters, and then passing on to the Rhine; up that beautiful and historic river to Mayence, and thence to the Swiss lakes—drawing the first long breath at Geneva, where we rested a few days. There, reader! I have given you my European tour in a single paragraph; and as I am writing of the sea, and of war, and not of the land, or of peace, this is all the space I can appropriate to it.*

*I must be permitted, however, to say of my friend Tremlett, that I found him a veteran traveller, who knew how to smooth all the difficulties of a journey; and of the ladies of our party, that their cheerfulness, good-humor, and kind attention to me, did quite as much as the Swiss mountain air toward the restoration of my health.*

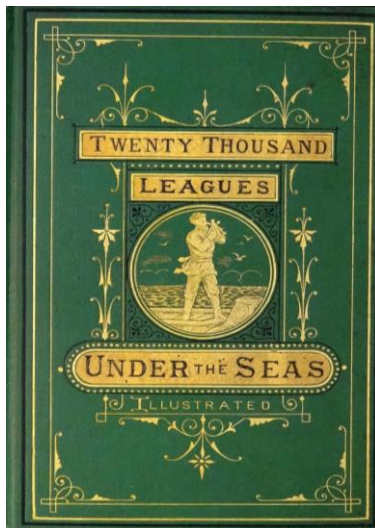
***Memoirs of Service Afloat, During the War Between the States, by Raphael Semmes (1869).***

The Reverend Francis Tremlett certainly did smooth Semmes's journey as he had organised a fake passport for Semmes to travel unmolested to the continent under the name of Raymond Smith. Tremlett was a member of the Royal Mersey Yacht Club of Tranmere, Birkenhead.

The same passport later enabled Raphael Semmes to return to the southern states where he reported back to his friends, the Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Robert E. Lee.



**Jefferson Davis (left) and General Robert E. Lee (right)**



Raphael Semmes fails to mention in his memoirs that the rest of the vacation party had departed for England on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1864, leaving Semmes alone in Paris for at least another two weeks. Given the evidence that is to follow, the only logical conclusion is that Raphael Semmes spent a large part of September 1864 in deep conversation with the author Jules Verne.

As we shall see the memoirs of Raphael Semmes aboard his Birkenhead built CSS *Alabama* will become the memoirs of Captain Nemo aboard his Birkenhead built *Nautilus* in the novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.

***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea by Jules Verne (1869).***



The historian Stephen Fox gives more information on Semmes's relationship with Francis Tremlett's sister Louisa Tremlett.

*Over the next three months, some sort of romantic connection, impossible to define precisely, grew between Semmes and Louisa Tremlett. She was in her late twenties, never married, not pretty, of slightly equine features. The most ardent of Confederates, along with her brother, she had known Semmes since his brief visit to London in May 1862.*

**Houllier-Blanchard Revolver Presented to Captain Raphael Semmes by the Tremletts, 14 May 1862. (Museum of Mobile).**



*From the Cape of Good Hope, in August 1863, he sent her a sewing machine captured from a prize.*



*She followed his career with the Alabama, worrying about him, heard about the impending battle with the Kearsarge, worried even more, heard that the Alabama was sunk, and then – after an anxious interval learned that the captain was saved. At last he, a wounded hero, came back to her home, sad and defeated, needing her care and sympathy, and stayed a while...*

**Raphael Semmes Photographed After the Sinking of the CSS Alabama, with what appears to be his injured right hand.**

*And now here was Louisa, adoring and unattached (and sixteen years younger than Anne). She picked flowers from her garden and spread them around the house. They played croquet together...She gave him a ring, which he wore next to his wedding band.*

*Their later letters, most of which have survived, include cryptic words of endearment. Addressing her as “my dearest Miss Louisa,” he called himself a “swain.” She wrote, in overt reference to his gift of the captured sewing machine, that “stolen fruits are always the sweetest.” It may be that he became in some way her stolen fruit; and perhaps she was his belated retaliation for Anne's affair and child back in 1847 – which also happened under the dislocations of war.”*

**Wolf of the Deep. Stephen Fox (2007)**

Raphael Semmes's adultery with Louisa Tremlett will finally be exposed in our fifth novel and that admission will use the secret numerical cipher that Semmes generously explained in his memoirs and had used throughout the American Civil War.

Semmes immediately resumed service with the Confederate States Navy as Commander of the James River Fleet defending Richmond in the latter stages of the American Civil War. He later scuttled the fleet and left Richmond to join General Lee's Confederate Army.

Jules Verne himself could not resist laying an amusing 'literary decoy', almost reminiscent of the military decoys used by the Allies in the Second World War. In March 1869 Verne wrote to his publisher Pierre Jules Hetzel about the nationality of Captain Nemo.

*His nationality needs to be kept vague, together with the causes which cast him into his strange existence. In addition the incident of an Alabama or a false Alabama is unacceptable and inexplicable; if Nemo wanted to take revenge on the slavers, he only had to serve in General Grant's army and everything was settled.*

**Jules Verne (letter to Pierre Jules Hetzel – March 1869).**

Raphael Semmes of course was a 'slaver' who eventually went to join General Lee's army.

**Pierre Jules Hetzel (1814-86)**



In March 1869 Raphael Semmes finally released his *Memoirs of Service Afloat* – an account of his American Civil War service in command of both the CSS *Sumter* and the CSS *Alabama*.



Jules Verne has already gone out of his way to provide us a 'literary code' to prove that *The Mysterious Island* is set in Birkenhead, the birthplace of both the CSS *Alabama* and Captain Nemo's *Nautilus*.

Verne will provide similar deliberate evidence that conclusively matches Semmes's memoirs to his own classic novel *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.

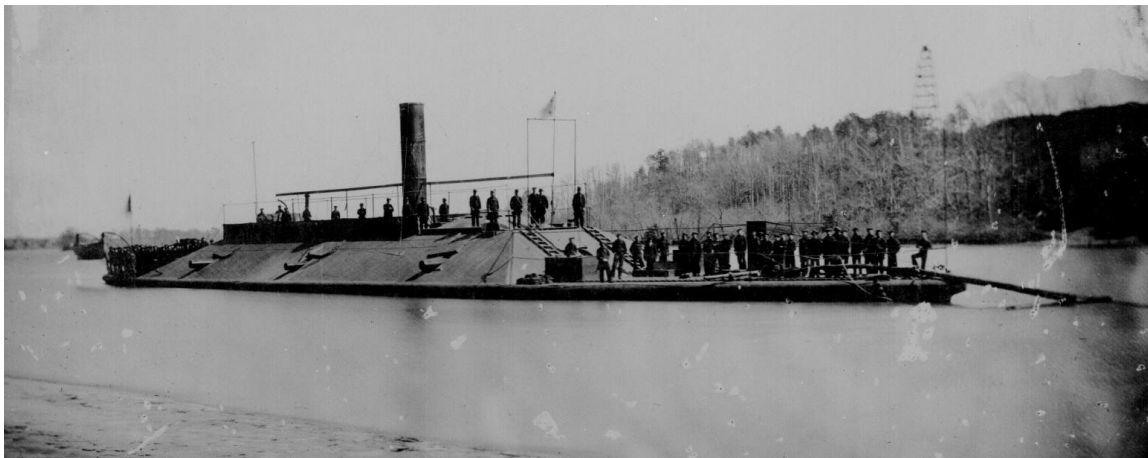
***Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. (Frontispiece 1869).**

Such is the preciseness of Jules Verne's revealed storylines in both *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *The Mysterious Island* that it allows us to reconstruct what Jules Verne must have said to Raphael Semmes both during and after the American Civil War.

### **Verne and Semmes**



If Semmes did agree to cooperate with Jules Verne, starting in the late summer of 1864, then it did not stop Semmes from returning to the southern States in early 1865 to fulfil his duty and take command of the James River Fleet. A newspaper report of Semmes's custodianship of his new flagship the CSS *Virginia* will inspire the name of one of the main characters in our fifth novel.



### **The Last Flagship of Raphael Semmes – The CSS *Virginia II*.**

The following pages are a dramatized reconstruction of several conversations that Jules Verne must have had with Raphael Semmes between 1864 and Semmes's death in 1877. The reconstruction of their supposed meeting(s) into just one imaginary conversation is the best way to illustrate where our story will continue to lead us. There will of course be some time discrepancies as not all of Jules Verne's presumed words were said on one occasion.

Every reconstructed sentence will be later supported by the writings of Jules Verne in both his novels *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and its sequel *The Mysterious Island*.

This is quite straightforward to put together because Jules Verne always planned it this way.



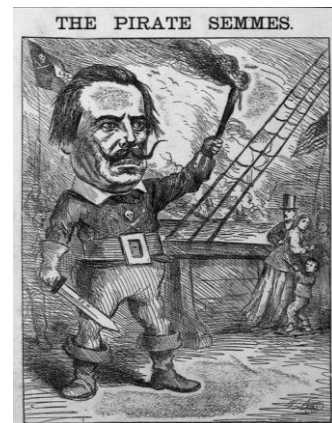
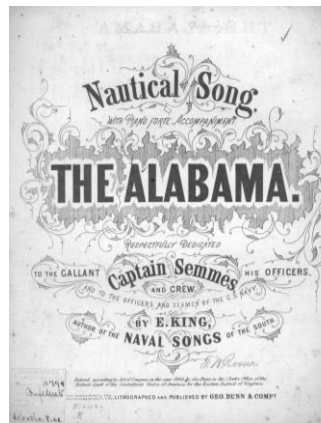
## Jules Verne's Words to Raphael Semmes (1864-77) – A Dramatized Reconstruction.

By John Lamb.

*"I welcome you to Paris Monsieur Semmes, I trust you are recovering well from the injury you suffered upon the sinking of the Alabama. Was it the left or the right hand?"*

*I am intrigued to stand in front of someone who has achieved worldwide fame and been compared to the illustrious Captain Kidd!*

*You are at once famous and infamous monsieur.... you are as much loved in the south of your country as you are reviled in the north, such a person as yourself cannot fail to attract the close attention of poets, artists, and writers.*

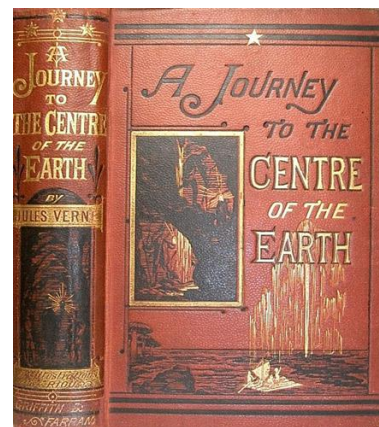


*Indeed, I have already paid homage to your exploits. My first novel published this year is called the 'Voyages et Aventures du Capitaine Hatteras' and involves a ship, of unusual design, built under secret conditions in Birkenhead for an unknown Captain for an unspecified mission.*

*The USS Hatteras was of course, the name of the United States warship you sank on 11<sup>th</sup> January 1863.*

*My second novel, also published this year, is entitled 'A Journey to the Centre of the Earth' in which the geologist Professor Liedenbrock follows the trail of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Icelandic explorer Arne Saknussemm to the very core of our planet.*

*Saknussemm's coded directions are finally revealed by reading them backwards, an idea of mine taken from your palindrome surname SEMMES.*



*The name 'Arne Saknussem' is of course an all too obvious play on your name. If you give me a little indulgence, I shall quickly write out my secret code on this parchment.*

*Here is the name of the Icelandic explorer who first discovered the passage to the centre of the earth...*

*Let us move the first 'E' and the 'S' to the end to form your surname. This gives us...*

*Then read the last two words backwards and this gives us...*

*Arna is Nordic for 'the powerful eagle'*

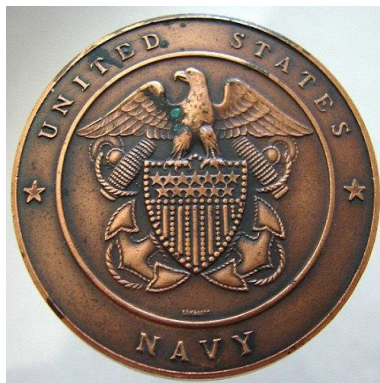
*So, we can now finish our translation as...*

ARNE SAKNUSSEMM

ARNA KNUS SEMMES

SEMMES SUNK ARNA

***'Semmes sunk the powerful eagle'.***

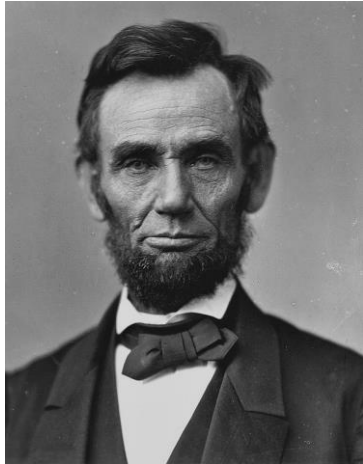


*From there it was an obvious step to make Arne Saknussem a character based on the Icelandic scholar Arni Magnusson and start my adventure in Iceland. Can you see Monsieur Semmes? . . . your surname inspired my story of Journey to the Centre of the Earth!*





*To share an open secret, whether it be between three men or between the three countries, is a most powerful bond of friendship ..... do you not agree sir?*



*In sending you on a journey to the centre of the earth, I have already sent you 'down below' Monsieur Semmes – needless to say, that is where many people believe you should firmly remain. If this be the case, then only you can raise yourself up again.*

*As Abraham Lincoln has said, “I am not concerned that you have fallen - I am concerned that you arise”.*

*I have perused your journals in great detail, and I can now disclose to you, my intentions. In all fairness, I shall not be kind to you, but like any good Christian I do believe in repentance by atoning for one's sins and seeking redemption.*

*I will now digress Monsieur, but it will be a digression that will serve to make my intention very clear.*

*I know you are also familiar with the writings of my favourite author, Charles Dickens?*

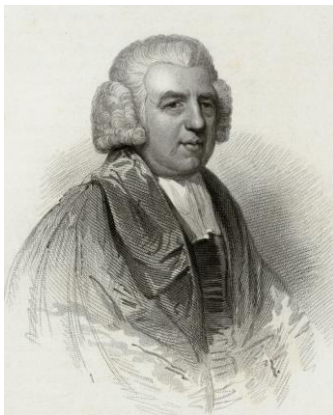
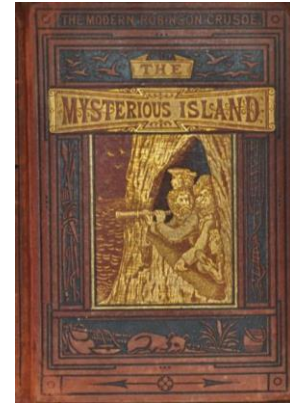
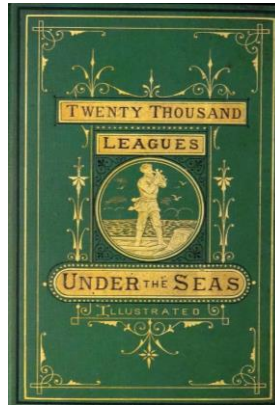
*Monsieur, you are doubtless aware that in the novel 'A Christmas Carol' that mean and miserable man Ebenezer Scrooge is a man who absolutely hates Christmas, that is until he is visited by three ghosts, the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future.*



*By looking at past experiences, empathising and visualising the consequences for the future, Ebenezer Scrooge eventually realises the error of his ways, and he is truly sorry – in other words he repents sir in the finest Christian tradition. Not only that, but for the rest of his days Ebenezer Scrooge treats everyone with kindness, generosity and compassion, and so embodies the spirit of Christmas for the remainder of his life – in other words he atones for his sins sir – and he dies fulfilled!*

*You, Sir, shall be my 'Ebenezer Scrooge' and I shall give you the chance to repent, at least in literature for something far more important than you not liking Christmas. You shall repent for your role in the American Civil War and your belief that the institution of slavery is for the benefit of the black race. How you atone for your sins will be revealed in good time.*

*In your case you will not be haunted by three ghosts M. Semmes, instead you will be haunted by four very different versions of your own self who will appear as characters in my novels "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea" and "The Mysterious Island".*



*Your repentance shall be hidden in 'plain sight', but I should warn you that my readers are very astute, and it is highly likely that your secret may be discovered at any time. You should prepare for this eventuality as you will be instantly judged as to whether your repentance is genuine and worthy of our forgiveness. Have faith in peoples' strength to forgive – as we forgave the trespasses of that other Captain of a Liverpool 'slave ship' – John Newton!*

*Rest assured Monsieur, if your repentance is genuine, then it shall play no further part in your future roles in my novels or any of those who follow me.*

*The secrets of your existence M. Semmes, as I say, will be in plain sight as if floating in a sealed container and cast upon the oceans of the world. The sealed container will never sink, but equally it may never be found.*

*Who knows when and where the secrets of your existence will wash up and who shall find it? We must have faith in Providence that he or she can piece together those secrets - for where there is faith there is light and strength.*

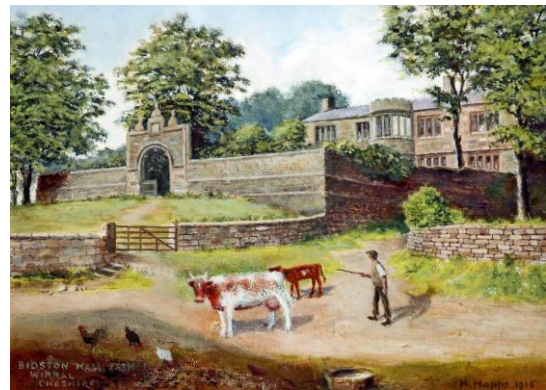




*I know you are also familiar with another of my favourite writers – William Shakespeare.*

*You can see his statuette over there on the mantelpiece, next to the one of Moliere.*

*William Shakespeare has so many links with the Derby family who, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century owned much of the land around Liverpool, Birkenhead and Bidston Village. Birkenhead of course being the birthplace and home port of your ship – The CSS Alabama.*



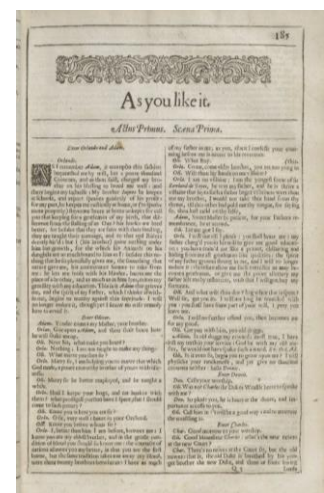
*‘Lord Strange’ the Fifth Earl of Derby, owned Bidston Hall and employed Shakespeare in his own troupe of travelling players known as Lord Strange’s Men.*

*Well sir, I have formed my own version of Lord Strange’s Men and with your cooperation I have now enrolled you as a member of my secret band of players who lie hidden within my novels.*

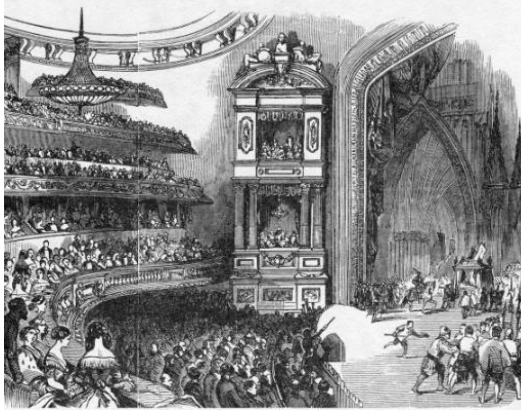
*I refer you to William Shakespeare’s play ‘As You Like It’ and one of the bard’s most famous lines spoken by the character of Jacques.*

*‘All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts.’*

*In your time Monsieur Semmes, you will play many parts.*





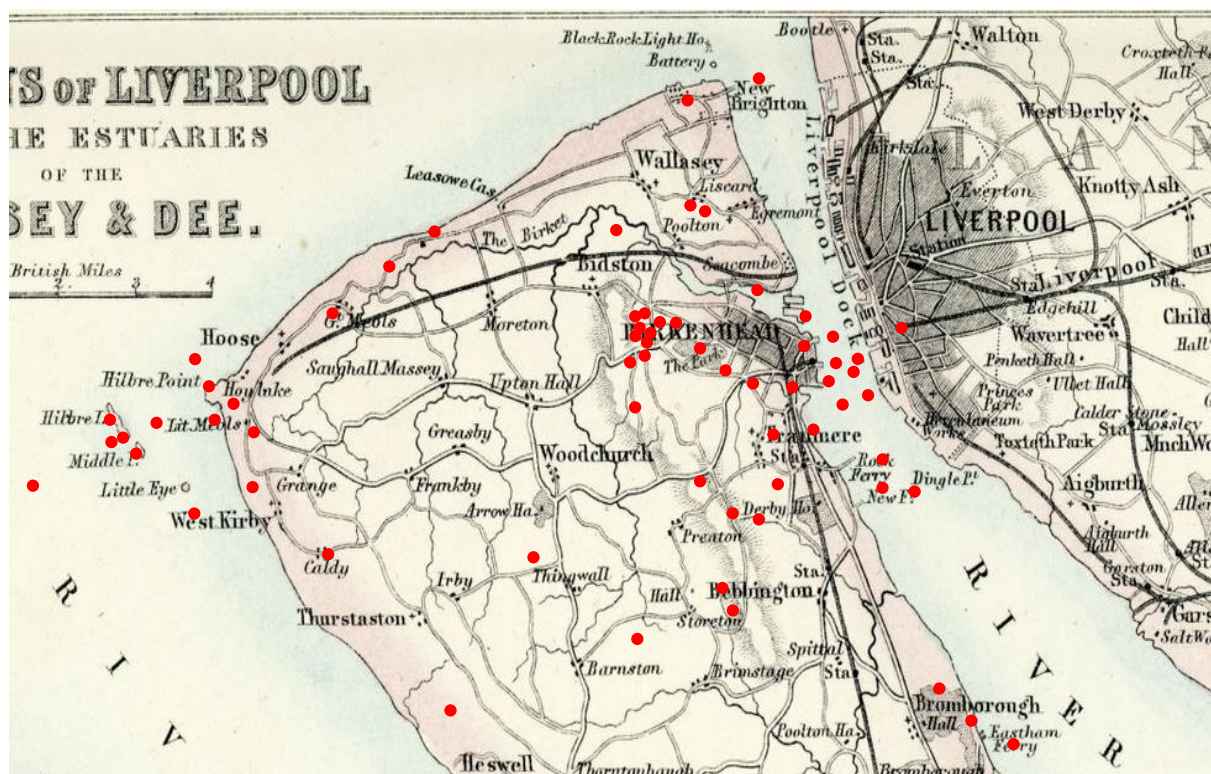


*You may be aware sir that in my younger days, I was the Director of Plays at the Theatre Lyrique in Paris. We had to work on a budget and with a very small band of very talented actors, it would not be unusual for one actor to play two or even three roles in a production..... indeed it was not unusual.... it was expected!*

*It is also something I expect of you.*

*All the World's a stage, as Shakespeare said, but what shall your stage be sir?*

*Your stage shall be the veritable town of Birkenhead, and just like an outdoor version of the Theatre Lyrique, we shall reuse the same scenery for different locations and even put the place in storage for use in later productions – at no extra expense to our sponsors of course! I adored the stage, and all connected with it, and the work that I have enjoyed the most has been my writing for the stage.*



*And what if our secret band of players and their 'theatre' is never discovered Monsieur?*

*Then we shall be like the knights of King Arthur, asleep, in our cave, waiting to be awakened when England needs us most. If we are not called upon then we may indeed sleep for eternity, in the comfort that, anything one man can imagine, other men can make real.*

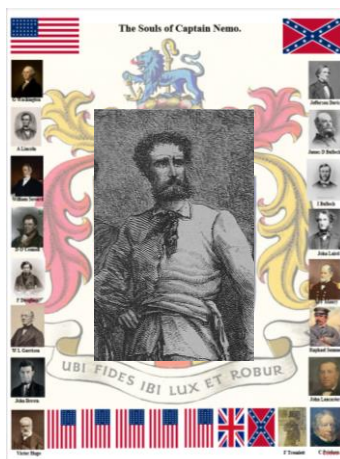
*In death you will have the satisfaction Monsieur that our secret may well bond together the three great countries of the United States, Great Britain and France at times when they need us most.*

*In the meantime, we shall continue to sleep in our cave as we may never know when our secret bond may be needed.*



*In this light, this is what I propose Monsieur.*

*In my novel 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea' and its sequel 'The Mysterious Island' you shall play the largest part of the soul of Captain Nemo, a man who is a metaphor for the United States of America torn apart by a Civil War.*

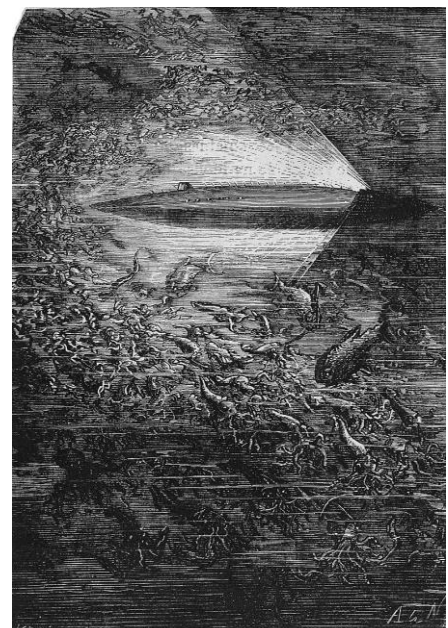


*Nemo's soul is therefore split exactly down the middle between Unionist and Confederate, and his soul not only contains yourself but some of your greatest allies and friends, men such as James Dunwoody Bulloch, Jefferson Davis and Matthew Fontaine Maury.*

*Nemo's soul also contains some of your bitterest enemies such as Abraham Lincoln and William Seward.*

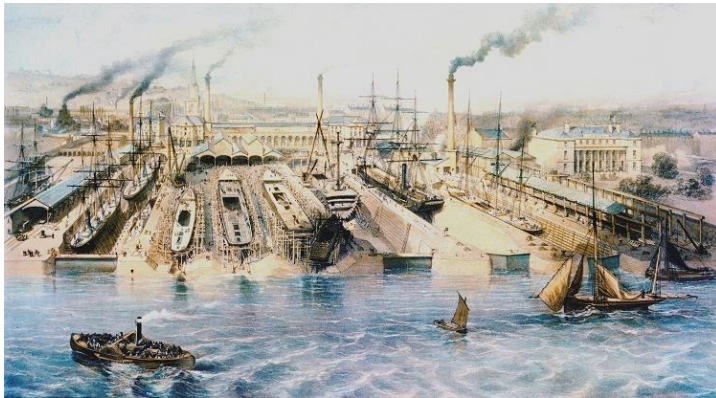
*You shall therefore be a man torn apart by constant turmoil and most importantly driven by perhaps the worst emotion that can follow any unresolved conflict – vengeance – a vengeance that can never be quelled until you accept another's differing point of view and move on together as brothers in the pursuit of happiness.*

*Until then Captain Nemo will shun the surface world and escape underwater in his masterpiece of modern technology - a submarine called the Nautilus.*



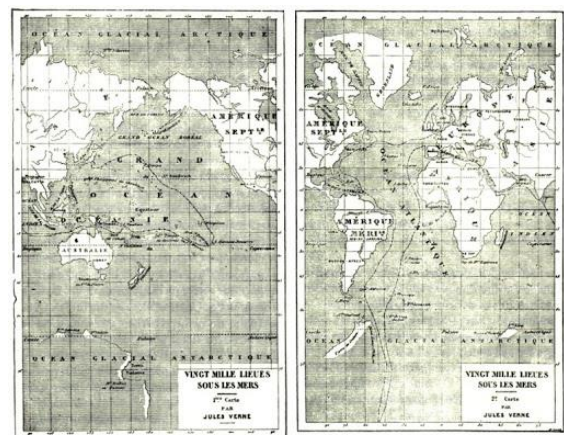
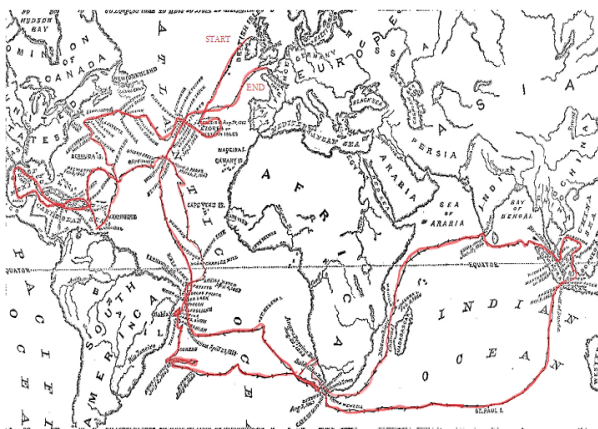


*You will share much in common with the fictional Captain Nemo, like yourself, he is a gentleman, of high intelligence, impeccable manners, he is a lover of literature, art, and music and like you a speaker of several languages, and also like you he will have a great passion for the natural history of God's oceans. After all, you sir, have done more than anyone to save the whale from certain extinction and that is a story in itself.*



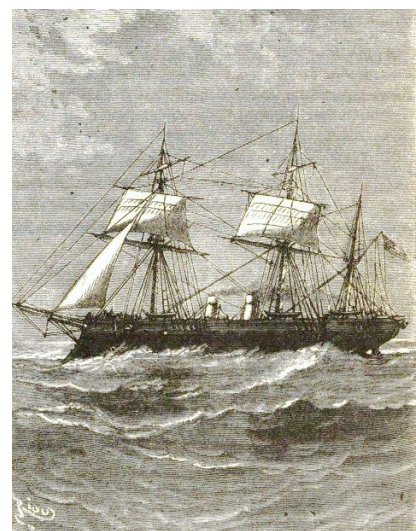
*Nemo, like you, will command a vessel that was mainly built at Lairds shipyard of Birkenhead and later completed on a desert island. Nemo, like you will terrorise the world's oceans, and have a bounty put on his head by the United States Government.*

*Nemo like you will be chased over a distance of 70,000 miles or put it another way 20,000 Leagues.*



*Nemo like you will both be chased by a naval officer named Farragut and by Abraham Lincoln, but this time it will be Abraham Lincoln the warship and not Abraham Lincoln the man.*

*Indeed, you sir will end up helping President Lincoln and his political friends build a new fairer unified America. For we all know that the future strength of America will come from Abraham Lincoln's soul.*





*I should warn you now sir that in my script, I shall lampoon you mercilessly - no weak points will be left untouched, no malicious trait in your thoughts left unchallenged and that includes your views on the black race and other races.*

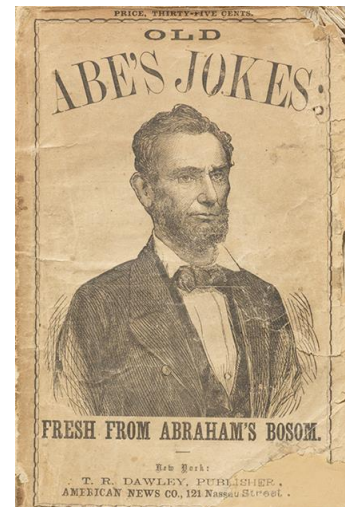
*Again, I am driven by the words of Abraham Lincoln after he, like you, had suffered a catastrophic defeat in the American Civil War.*

*'Gentlemen' he said, 'Why do you not laugh? With the fearful strain that is upon me day and night, if I did not laugh, I should die'.*

*The words of Abraham Lincoln together with the words of your Declaration of Independence shall be my guiding force  
Monsieur Semmes.*

*After all, are not all men created equal and have the same right to pursue happiness?*

*And yet how can we honestly pursue happiness together without laughter? So, in the face of adversity let us not take this too seriously.*



*In this light...*

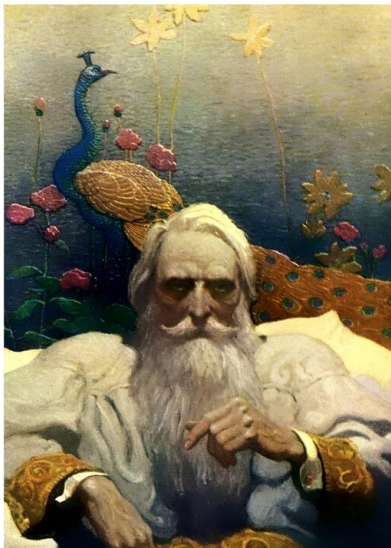
*... As the main player of Captain Nemo, you shall have a motto of 'Mobilis in Mobile'.*

M O B I L I S   I N   M O B I L E .  
N

*I am sure that the literary scholars of the future will endlessly debate the clever nuances of their Latin declensions, especially as I have given them the false translation of 'Mobile in the Mobile Element'.*

*...whereas we both know that you are a part time lawyer from Mobile, Alabama.*

*As much as you profess your love for Britain and its Empire and carry the Union Flag on your family crest, your character of Captain Nemo shall openly hate Britain and its Empire.*



*In as much as you state in your memoirs that India should never be free from British rule, I will make you the Indian Prince Dakkar, son of the Rajah of Bundlekund, who fought to be free from British rule.*

*And what shall be the origin of Prince Dakkar's name?*

*It is the song penned in your honour in South Africa called 'Daar Kom Die Alibama'.*

*Move the letter 'k' two spaces to the left, and from*

*Daar Kom Die Alibama*

*we get....*

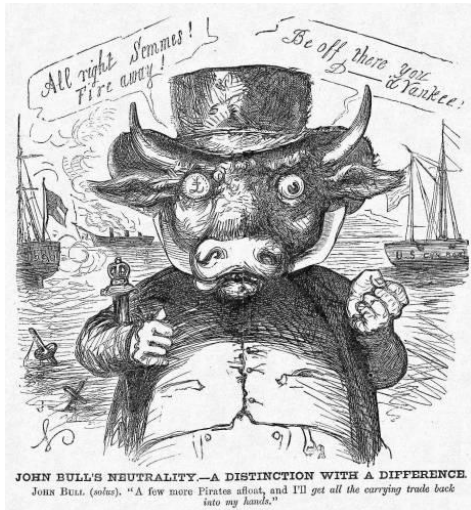
***Dakar om Die Alibama!***

*I see my little joke has drawn a smile Monsieur.*

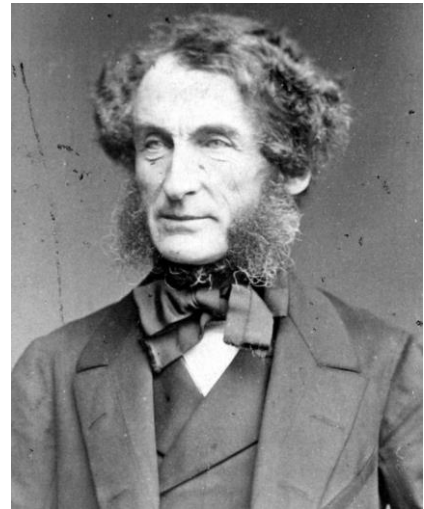
**Daar Kom Die Alibama**

Arr. Philip Capeman Traditional

The musical score is for the song 'Daar Kom Die Alibama'. It is arranged by Philip Capeman, based on a traditional tune. The score is written for piano, acoustic bass, and drumset. The first system shows the piano part with the melody and the acoustic bass part with a simple harmonic accompaniment. The drumset part is a simple pattern. The second system shows the piano part with a more complex melody and the acoustic bass part with a more complex harmonic accompaniment. The drumset part is a more complex pattern.



*In as much as you have been called the 'British Pirate' and the 'Son of John Bull' you will indeed be the son of John Laird the man who had the honour of building both the CSS Alabama and your submarine the Nautilus in my novel 20,000 Leagues Beneath the Sea.*

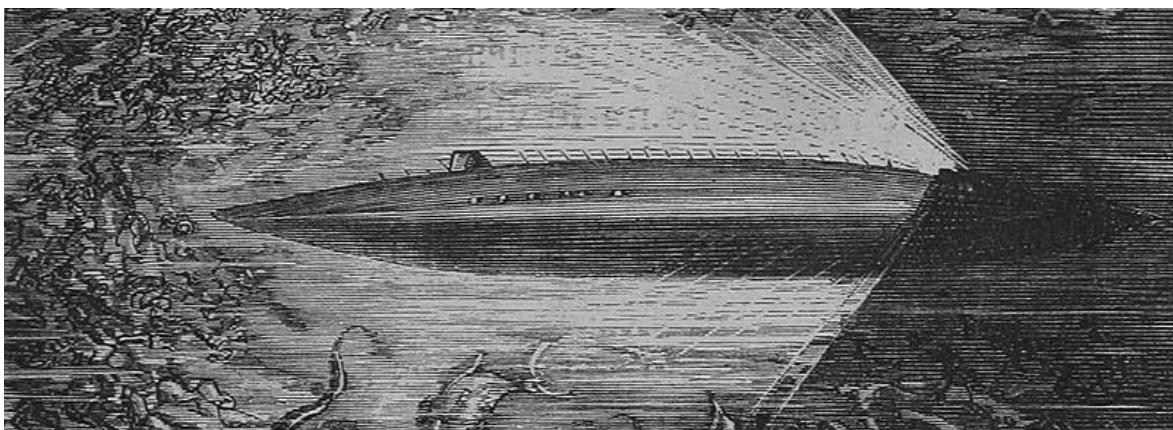


*You are the son of the rajah of Bundelkund.*

*But, how many places start with a 'B', contain a 'K' and end in a 'D'?*

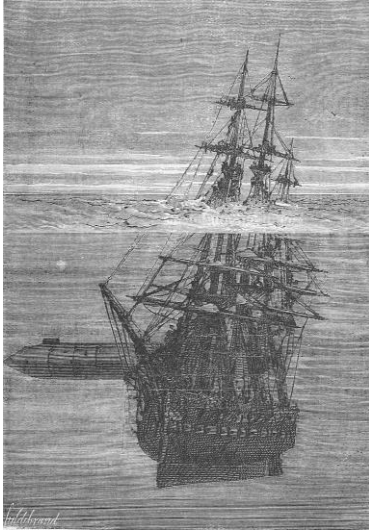
*You are the son of the 'King of Birkenhead'!*

*In as much as the Alabama Cigar Mutiny showed your failings as a commander, so I will send you around the oceans, trapped as a prisoner inside your own giant steel cigar, described by Ned Land as 'an iron cage' and an 'iron crate' and 'worth only its weight in scrap'.*



*And, in as much you are a great navigator and rarely, if ever make mistakes, Nemo will run aground in Indonesia, get stuck in the ice of Antarctica, and steer the Nautilus into a deadly whirlpool off the coast of Norway while in a hallucinogenic trance. As you are cool and methodical, he shall be hot-headed and impulsive.*



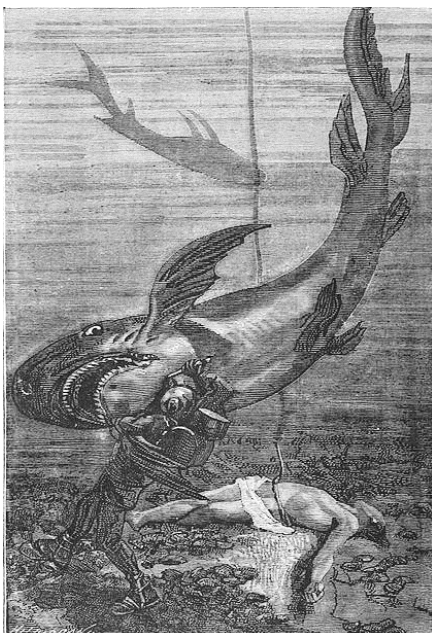


*No one ever died aboard the 52 ships you burned, Monsieur Semmes whereas Nemo shall be, as the great Cicero said, your .... 'alter ego' .... your alternative self...*

*... a mass murderer who kills without warning.*

*However, in Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, the greatest difference between you and Captain Nemo will be your attitude to slavery and the black race.*

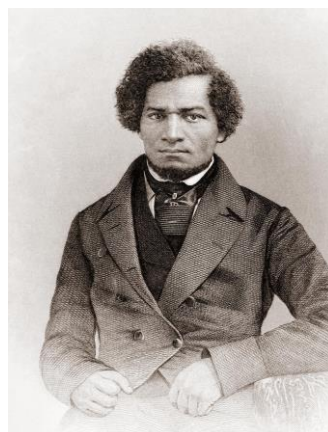
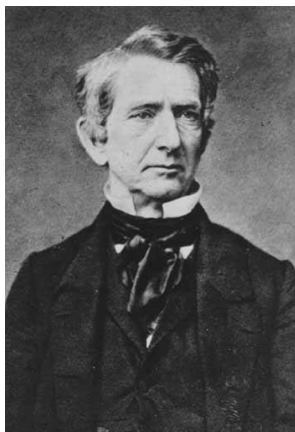
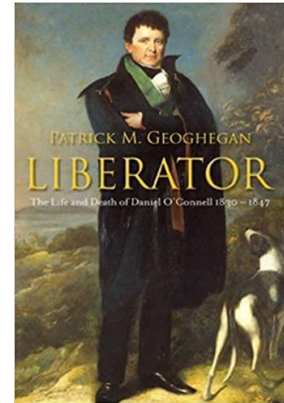
*In the same way you praised the brutal suppression of a workers' rebellion on the island of Jamaica, as Captain Nemo you will give funds to fuel a workers' rebellion on the island of Crete.*



*As Captain Nemo you will deplore the exploitation of native peoples for economic gain, particularly the pearl divers of Sri Lanka, you shall risk your life to rescue a person of colour from the clutches of a shark off Sri Lanka and you shall fight for all the oppressed races on the earth. In this respect Nemo shall be everything sir that you are not, but everything that you one day you can be.*

*I know that you have the portraits of your friends Jefferson Davis and General Robert E Lee adorning the bedchamber wall aboard your Birkenhead built CSS Alabama, so we now come to the portraits of your heroes that shall adorn the bedchamber wall of your Birkenhead built Nautilus.*

*As Captain Nemo your cabin shall hold the portraits of amongst others, the great Irish abolitionist Daniel O'Connell, the 'liberator of enslaved races' around the world and he will join the man you despise the most, President Abraham Lincoln as they both stare down upon you while you try to sleep in your own iron prison.*



*They will be joined by John Brown that martyr to the freeing of the black race, hanging from the gallows and so terribly drawn by my friend Victor Hugo... and by literary association, they will also be joined by William Seward and Frederick Douglass... the fiery 'Black O'Connell'.*

*As champions of downtrodden peoples and the liberators of enslaved races these heroic souls shall form the abolitionist soul of Captain Nemo.*

*As Captain Nemo you will employ the same shock and murderous ambush tactics at sea as John Brown has used on land.*

*Tactics that, my friend Victor Hugo said were a 'sacred duty' and justified to rid the world of slavery.*





*Nemo will use the rich oratory of my fellow abolitionists Daniel O'Connell, Frederick Douglass, William Lloyd Garrison, William Seward, and Victor Hugo.*

*And as much as you detest the man, Nemo will also use the power and spirit of Abraham Lincoln to help emancipate the black race and all enslaved races.*

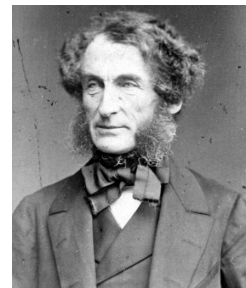
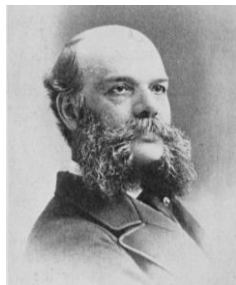
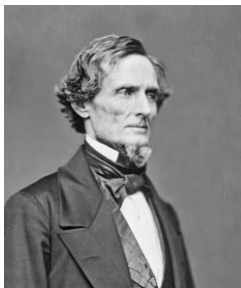
*These great figures will all look down on you, ready to pronounce their judgement on your own soul Monsieur Semmes.*



*The portraits, of course only represent half of Captain Nemo's soul. As one side is an abolitionist and freedom fighter, the other side represents your Confederate self, as portrayed in the journals you have bequeathed to me – as I have written, you are indeed 'a hero of this terrible American Civil War, this frightful but forever glorious battle'.*

*You will not be alone Monsieur as solitude, isolation, are painful things, and beyond human endurance.*

*You shall be joined by amongst others Jefferson Davis, James Dunwoody Bulloch, his brother Irvine Bulloch, and the shipbuilder John Laird – all of whom you know well.*



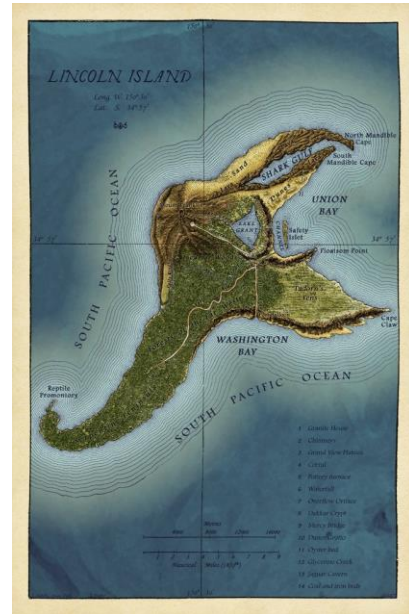
*As I say, your life will be like a container thrown into the sea, we do not know when or where the secret of your life Monsieur Semmes will wash up. We do not know who shall find the secret of your existence and whether they will be able to explain it – that is for Providence to decide.*



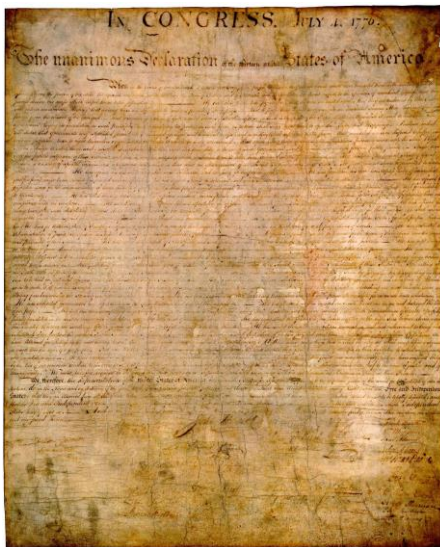


*There will be a sequel novel to 'Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea' and I shall call it 'The Mysterious Island'. As the largest single part of Captain Nemo's soul, you Monsieur Semmes will help six new colonists, including an already freed black slave Neb, to build a 'New America' and a free and fairer society on the aptly named Lincoln Island.*

*This will be in the spirit of equality that Abraham Lincoln himself envisaged, had he not been so cruelly cut down by an assassin's bullet.*



*In The Mysterious Island you will act like a 'supernatural force' in that you will help the six colonists in any way you can, but remain hidden, as they must never suspect your presence on the island until the very end.*



*You will help those colonists build their 'New America' with due respect to the United States Declaration of Independence and apply it equally to all races - 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.'*

*You shall build this 'New America' in Birkenhead – the birthplace of your pirate ship the CSS Alabama.*

*Indeed, I shall hide a map of my Mysterious Island in Birkenhead Park!*

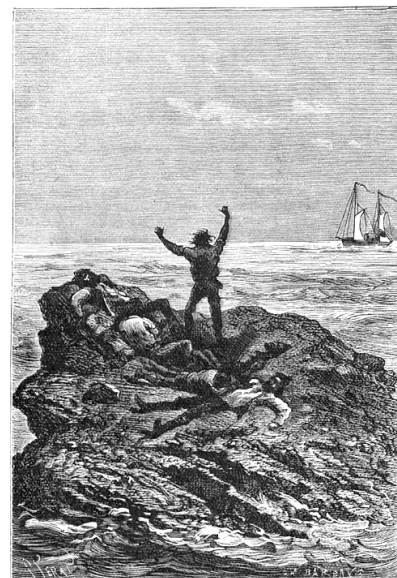
*In the novel you will save the abolitionist Cyrus Harding after he was thrown from the castaways' balloon before it landed on the Mysterious Island. You will provide a chest of provisions to help the colonists build their New America in Birkenhead, you will place a message in a bottle to alert the castaways of the presence of the repentant pirate, Ayrton on nearby Tabor Island. You will do all this and much more.*

*And when you are most needed, you will blow up the pirate ship that threatens the colonists. The vessel will explode on the exact site of the final Confederate surrender of the American Civil War at Tranmere, Birkenhead on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1865.*



*You will then save the young boy Herbert from certain death by bringing the sulphate of quinine to cure his malaria and allow the young boy, like many, to go on and lead a productive life in the service of a reunited United States of America.*

*You will warn the colonists of the danger of the exploding volcano and leave a note on Tabor Island, to guide Captain Grant's rescue ship to find the colonists on what remains of Lincoln Island.*



*You will bequeath what riches you can, to the survivors as they start a new colony in America, leaving a freed black slave and his friends to pursue happiness as brothers.*

*Your work is still not done however Monsieur Semmes as you have three more acting roles to play in The Mysterious Island before you have stated your repentance, in fiction at least.*

*To quote William Shakespeare.*

*‘One man in his time plays many parts’*

*These three roles in many ways shall replicate the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future. They will be your last three lessons in empathy and repentance before I explain to you how you can atone for your sins.*

*Firstly, apart from Captain Nemo you will also play the role of the Unionist sailor Pencroft – a man who loves the United States of America, as I do myself, sir.*

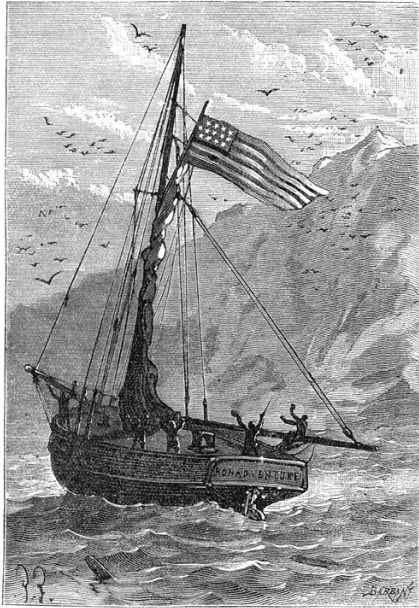


*Pencroft will be obsessed with fire and tobacco – you of course already know how that feels.*

*However, in as much as you despised the Stars and Stripes as ‘Hates Polluted Rag’. Pencroft will be a great supporter of the United States of America, he will love the Stars and Stripes and even embroider his own flag – so you will know how that feels.*







*Pencroft will then hoist the Stars and Stripes flag on his new boat, the Bonadventure, which in a labour of love has taken him many hundreds of hours to build.*

*The boat will then be quickly destroyed by pirates, so you will now know how that feels.*

*Pencroft worked so hard to build something for his new 'family' on Lincoln Island – only to have his hopes and aspirations taken away by pirates.*

*Pencroft will hate pirates with a vengeance, so you must know how that feels as part of your path to repentance.*



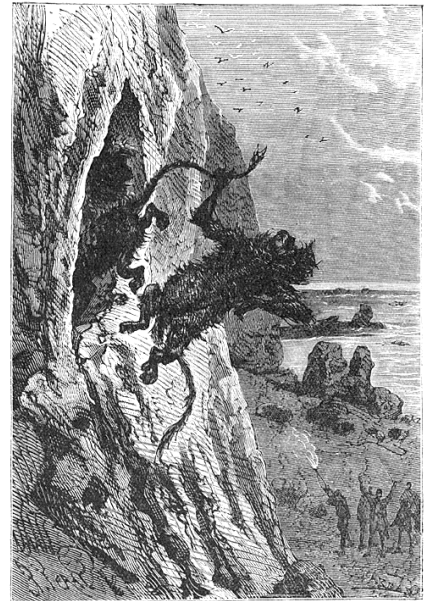
*And finally, Pencroft will become the greatest of friends with Neb, the freed black slave - so most importantly you will know how that feels.*

*In your second role I have again taken inspiration from Abraham Lincoln who once said.*

*“Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.”*

*In this light you will play Jup the orangutan, who is made a slave by the colonists of Lincoln Island– so you will be treated as sub-human with no rights to speak and know how that feels.*

*Jup will become a slave after having his family slaughtered by the otherwise amiable and well-meaning colonists.*



*The same colonists who, like us, are oblivious to the hidden death toll caused by abducting human beings in Africa and transporting them on the so called ‘Middle Passage’.*

*Although treated well, you will be stripped of the right to talk, for only then can you empathise with what it is like to be a slave. Only then can you truly empathise and repent and be forgiven for your sins in supporting slavery.*





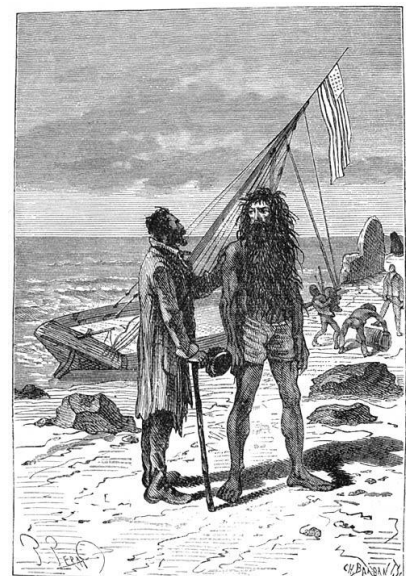
*The final role you will play is in many ways the most important, as it is the role of the repentant pirate Ayrton, and in agreeing to take on this role you will be stating unequivocally in literature Monsieur Semmes that you too have repented.*



*As Ayrton the pirate, you will serve a twelve-year sentence marooned alone on Tabor Island, as punishment for your piratical career.*

*The isolation will turn you into a mad violent savage, and you shall revert to an 'ape like status.'*

*As the burner of 52 Unionist ships, your enforced primitive state will mean that you have 'forgotten how to make fire', there will not even be a 'spark in your savage countenance' to 'rekindle your soul'.*



*Ayrton will eventually help the colonists and do many good deeds, he will atone for his sins, and be fully accepted by the 'Little America' that has been created in Birkenhead.*

*As you complete your repentance you will come to know how good that feels too.*



*The colonists will then use the words of John Newton, the repentant Liverpool slave trader to describe Ayrton as a wretch who has been saved. And just like John Newton, Monsieur Semmes you too, a man who was also once a captain of a Liverpool 'slave ship' will have started upon the journey of being saved.*

*Historians will not judge you well Captain Semmes, because we have not yet discussed how you will atone for your sins. You must hope that one day the floating container containing the secret of your existence is found and your story of repentance can be told. It is a story of how, like the invisible supernatural force of Captain Nemo, you helped America grow, protect it from its enemies, but also let people take responsibility for their own decisions. After all sir 'God helps those who help themselves!'*

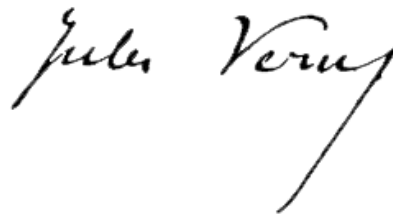
*I leave the final words to Abraham Lincoln, who will continue to bind our story together.*

*"I am a patient man, always willing to forgive on the Christian terms of repentance; and also to give ample time for repentance."*

*'The only way to predict the future is to create it'.*

*Monsieur Semmes, we shall write our two books in tandem and release them together.*

*Signed this day.*

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raphael Semmes". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jules Verne". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with a long, sweeping underline.

In March 1869, Raphael Semmes released his *Memoirs of Service Afloat During the War Between the States* – an account of his experiences commanding the CSS *Sumter* and the CSS *Alabama* during the American Civil War.

In the same month of March 1869 and four thousand miles away, Jules Verne released his latest novel, it was called *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*.

**Next in Jules Verne and the Heroes of Birkenhead.**

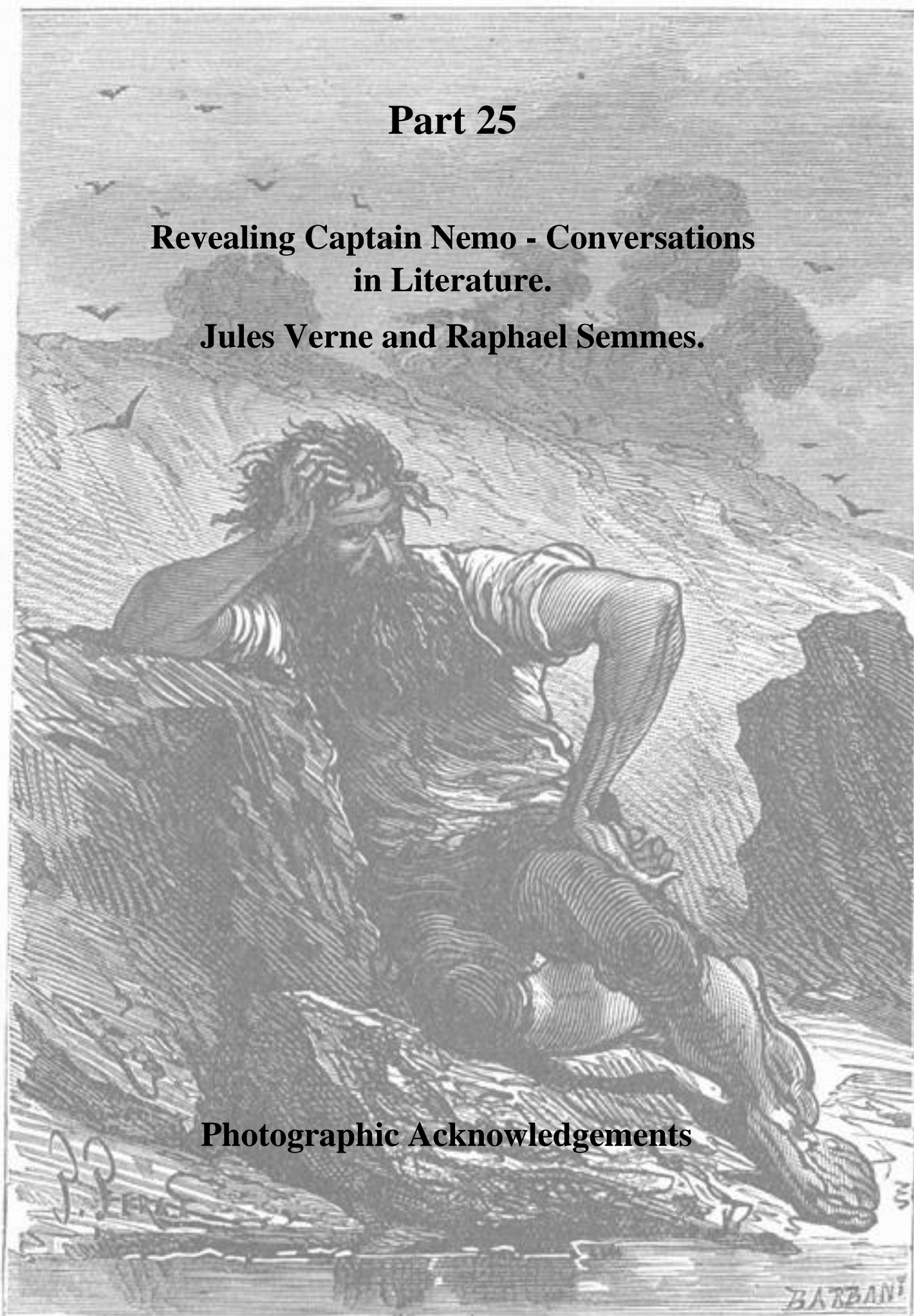
**Part 26 Playing the Part of Jack Pencroft – The Unionist Sailor... is Raphael Semmes.**

## **Part 25**

### **Revealing Captain Nemo - Conversations in Literature.**

**Jules Verne and Raphael Semmes.**

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