

# **VOYAGE EN GRÈCE**

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Voyage en Grèce by François-René de Chateaubriand

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**FRANÇOIS-RENÉ DE CHATEAUBRIAND**

**VOYAGE  
EN GRÈCE**



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VOYAGE EN GRÈCE

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## GENERAL PREFACE

THE teaching of Modern Languages should be founded on a carefully graduated Reader, which is to serve as a basis for the acquisition of Vocabulary and Grammar and for their application in speaking and writing. To this should be added, as soon as the pupil is advanced enough, the study of good books and good literature. In reading such books we have two distinct objects in view—(1) the revision and enlargement of linguistic knowledge, (2) the understanding, appreciation, and acquisition of such thoughts and facts as they contain; and for this purpose we use annotated texts. The process, however, of attaining these ends in a thorough manner is necessarily a slow one; and if we confine ourselves to this elaborate treatment of the reading-book, the danger arises of the pupils forgetting part of the vocabulary and phraseology previously learnt, for the simple reason that the same words and phrases present themselves to their minds at intervals too far apart for the memory to retain them. To prevent such a misfortune some books must be read rapidly. Whether the rapid reading and the more detailed study of a text should go on side by side in the

same term, or should be taken in alternate terms, must depend on the time available for the teaching of Modern Languages. Whenever possible, it would seem advisable to read two books, one to be studied carefully, and the other to be read cursorily. The present series is an attempt to provide suitable material for Rapid Reading. In the Vocabularies added to each book will be found, in addition to the more difficult words and phrases, several sentences illustrating grammatical points. The notes are confined to the elucidation of points bearing on the subject matter found in the texts.

It is hoped that the books of this series will also be given to boys and girls for private reading in the holidays or as term-extras. The Words and Phrases at the end will enable pupils to dispense with a Dictionary, and in this way they may be encouraged to acquire a taste for reading good French works out of school. A book read in this manner should furnish material for a friendly literary causerie between teacher and pupil, which may do much to foster a taste for literature, if it is stimulating and helpful, and does not assume the form of an examination.



## INTRODUCTION

FRANÇOIS RENÉ, Vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) was born at St. Malo. He belonged to one of the oldest and proudest families of Brittany. His early years were spent partly by the sea at St. Malo, and partly in the seclusion of the woodland château of Combourg in the forest of Brécilien, familiar to those acquainted with the legend of the Holy Grail. After serving for a short time in the army, he sailed in 1791 for North America, and spent eighteen months in the travels recounted in his *Voyage en Amérique*. On hearing of the arrest of Louis XVI., he returned to France and joined the army of the émigrés. During the retreat of the Prussians he was left behind for dead near Namur, but contrived to make his way to that town, and thence, with no little difficulty, to England. For some years he maintained himself in London by teaching and translation-work. In 1797 he published an *Essai sur les Révolutions*, and in 1800 he was able to return to Paris. *Atala*, a love-story of savage life, the scene of which is laid in the American forests and prairies, appeared in 1801, and established Chateaubriand's literary reputation. The *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) raised him to the foremost position amongst the French writers of the day. The merit of this famous work lies rather in its brilliant descriptions than in the force of its arguments; but the book appeared at a time when there was a widespread reaction against scepticism, and its success was in consequence enormous. In 1803 Chateaubriand was appointed secretary to the Embassy at Rome, where he wrote his *Lettres sur l'Italie*, and in 1804 he was sent as ambassador to the little republic of Valais, in Switzerland; but on the murder of the Duc d'Enghien he resigned, not wishing to hold office

under Napoleon. He set out for Greece, visited Egypt and Palestine, and returned to France in 1807. Two years later he published *Les Martyrs*, a prose epic, the action of which takes place in the days of Diocletian. In 1814 he issued a pamphlet, *De Buonaparte et des Bourbons*, which Louis XVIII. declared to be worth an army to the Legitimist cause. For the next ten years he was a strong supporter of the Restoration monarchy. He was made a peer and a minister of State, and from 1822 to 1824 held the post of ambassador extraordinary to the British Court. It was his ambition to become a guiding power in French politics; he believed it lay with him to reconcile Legitimism and liberty. He was disappointed, however, and after figuring from 1824 to 1830 as a Liberal politician, on the downfall of Charles X. he refused to swear allegiance to Louis-Philippe, and went back to the Royalist party. Soon after he withdrew from public affairs and wrote his *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*. He died in 1848.

Chateaubriand is undoubtedly one of the greatest writers of the nineteenth century. When he is at his best, his brilliant and glowing diction acts on the reader like an enchantment, and his power of conveying the beauty and mystery of nature is unsurpassed. His style, with its magic play of colour, was quite a novelty in French prose, and marked the beginning of a literary epoch; and he fully deserves to be looked upon as the father of the Romantic school, of which Victor Hugo became the leader.

The present edition forms the first part of the author's *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem*, which was published in 1811, and of which M. Emmanuel des Essarts, doyen de la Faculté des lettres de l'Université de Clermont, says: "C'est en effet à la fois l'œuvre d'un penseur et d'un peintre. Les voyageurs récents ont admiré son exactitude scrupuleuse. En quelques lignes, à la façon des anciens, il fait tenir tout un paysage. C'est la grande manière des maîtres, purifiée des fautes de goût intermittentes que renfermaient ses ouvrages antérieurs" (Petit de Julleville, vol. vii.)

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J'AVAIS arrêté le plan des *Martyrs* : la plupart des livres de cet ouvrage étaient ébauchés ; je ne crus pas devoir y mettre la dernière main avant d'avoir vu le pays où ma scène était placée : d'autres ont leurs ressources en eux-mêmes, moi j'ai besoin de suppléer à ce qui me manque par toutes sortes de travaux.

Au principal motif qui me faisait, après tant de courses, quitter de nouveau la France, se joignaient d'autres considérations : un voyage en Orient complétait le cercle des études que je m'étais toujours promis d'achever. J'avais contemplé dans les déserts de l'Amérique les monuments de la nature : parmi les monuments des hommes, je ne connaissais encore que deux sortes d'antiquités, l'antiquité celtique et l'antiquité romaine ; il me restait à parcourir les ruines d'Athènes, de Memphis et de Carthage. Je voulais aussi accomplir le pèlerinage de Jérusalem.

Je quittai de nouveau ma patrie le 13 juillet 1806.

De Paris à Milan, je connaissais la route. A Milan, je pris le chemin de Venise : je vis partout, à peu près comme dans le Milanais, un marais fertile et monotone. J'arrivai à Venise le 23 ; j'examinai pendant cinq jours les restes de sa grandeur passée, et le 28 je m'embarquai à dix heures du soir pour me rendre en terre ferme. Le