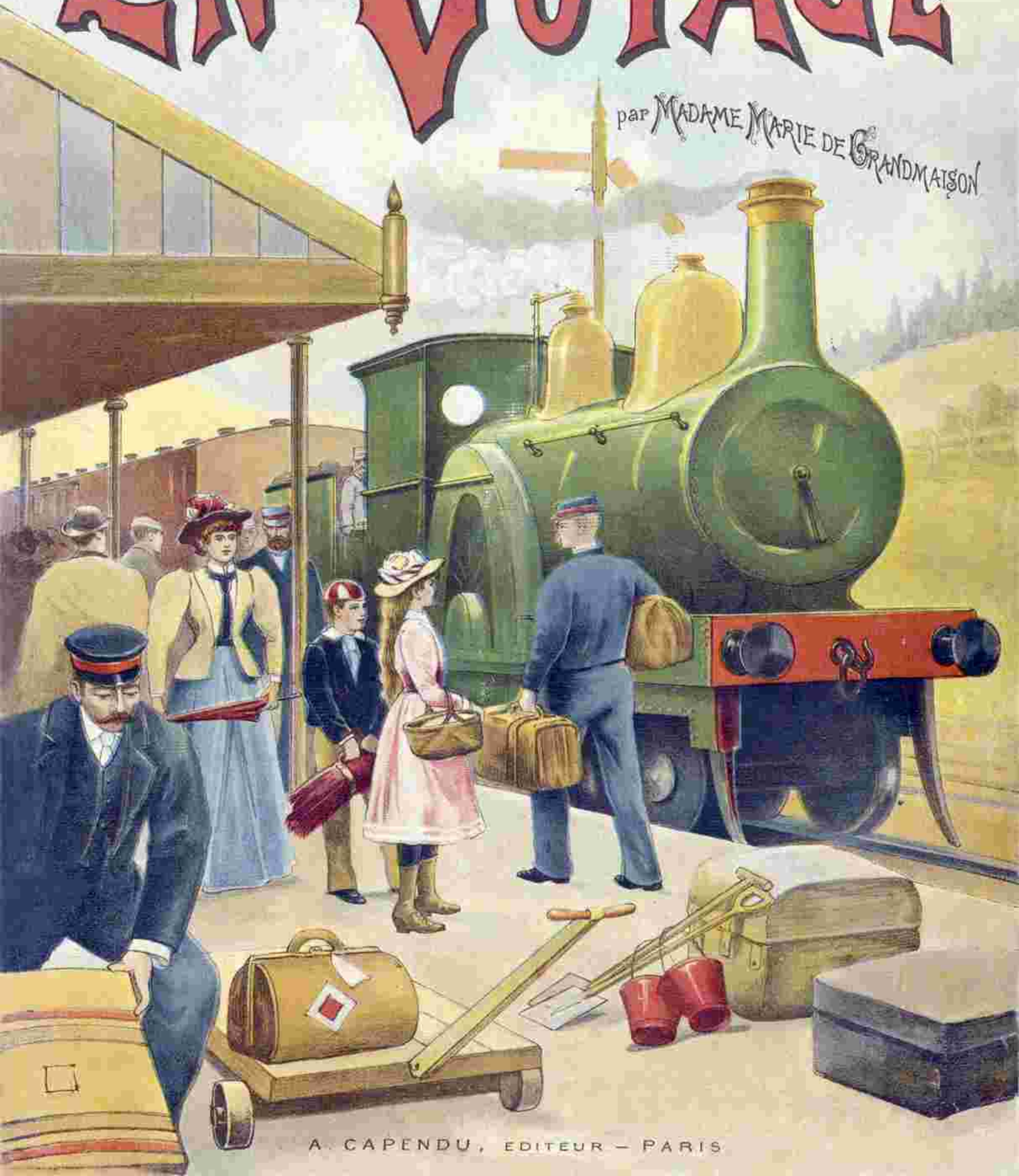


VOLUME INDÉCHIRABLE SUR TOILE.

EN VOYAGE

par MADAME MARIE DE GRANDMAISON



A. CAPENDU, ÉDITEUR - PARIS

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Au lecteur

EN VOYAGE

par

MADAME MARIE DE GRANDMAISON

A. CAPENDU, EDITEUR — PARIS

—Quel bonheur! disait Hélène à son frère Jacques, c'est aujourd'hui que nous partons.

—Et cette fois appuya le petit garçon, pour un vrai voyage! Ça ne sera plus comme à notre départ pour la campagne, qui ne nous laisse que quelques heures dans le train; on a à peine le temps de s'installer.

—Autrefois, remarqua Hélène, quand les chemins de fer n'existaient pas, il fallait plusieurs jours pour s'y rendre en diligence.

—C'est là qu'on devait s'amuser à voir courir les chevaux et à regarder toutes les maisons les unes après les autres. Ça devait ressembler aux excursions en *mail-coach* que papa nous fait faire pendant l'été.

—J'aime mieux la nouvelle manière de voyager, dit la fillette, on est plus vite arrivé. Pense donc au temps que nous mettrions pour aller en Suisse en diligence et en revenir; les vacances seraient terminées et nous ne pourrions pas y séjourner.

—Et ça doit être si beau la Suisse avec toutes ses grandes montagnes, s'exclama Jacques. Je suis si content que j'en ai rêvé cette nuit. Tu ne devinerais jamais de quelle façon nous partions.

—Comment? demanda Hélène.

—En ballon!... Maman n'avait pas voulu nous accompagner, et nous étions seuls avec papa, pour monter dans la nacelle. Maman nous saluait avec son mouchoir en guise de drapeau. Il y avait beaucoup de monde réuni pour voir notre ascension. L'aérostat était superbe, tout rouge avec une grande bande jaune sur laquelle on lisait: *Victoria!* c'est-à-dire: *Victoire!* Je me souviens de tous ces détails comme si c'était la vérité; et au moment où papa criait: «*Lâchez tout*» et où nous allions nous élever dans les airs, j'ai ouvert les yeux dans mon petit lit.

—C'est bien drôle répliqua Hélène, car moi aussi, j'ai été poursuivie de l'idée de notre voyage jusque dans mon sommeil. J'étais persuadée que nous faisions tous deux la route à bicyclette. Il nous arrivait toutes sortes de mésaventures. Nous étions souvent obligés de nous arrêter pour graisser nos machines ou pour regonfler nos pneus. Dans les descentes, nous pédalions à toute vitesse. C'était toujours moi qui ouvrais la marche.

—Tu voulais sans doute m'entraîner? répartit Jacques.

—Ne suis-je pas l'aînée? approuva la fillette. Quand il survenait des montées, nous mettions pied à terre et prenions nos vélos à la main. Je crois encore y être! Tout à coup, il m'a semblé que mon guidon se brisait, j'ai poussé un cri, et je me suis éveillée croyant rouler par terre...

—Mais ce n'est pas tout, continua Hélène; lorsque j'ai recommencé à dormir, c'est sur un bateau que je me trouvais. Nous glissions sur une eau limpide au près de belles montagnes.

—Etions-nous traînés par des cygnes?

—Ne te moque pas de moi, ou je ne te raconterai plus rien!

—Si, si, continue, dit Jacques, je serai grave comme un rameur. Il y avait des rameurs, n'est ce pas?

—Pas du tout, Monsieur, notre petit bateau marchait au moyen d'un moteur à pétrole, comme celui de ton parrain, quand il nous a conduits sur la Seine.....

—Le jour des régates? interrompit le jeune garçon. Oh! comme je me suis amusé cette fois là. C'était si joli, toutes ces périssoires filant comme des flèches! Les concurrents ressemblaient à ces araignées qui courent à la surface des mares.

—J'en voyais aussi de ces embarcations dans mon rêve, et de beaucoup d'autres sortes: un bac, un petit voilier et même une barque qu'un cheval traînait.

Le mail-coach.

Le départ du ballon.

«Nous pédalions à toute vitesse.»

Tous les modes de navigation entrevus par Hélène.

L'excursion en yacht, où Hélène tient le gouvernail.

Le déjeuner dans le wagon-bar.

La promenade à cheval.

Dans la voiturette Bolée.

Parents et enfants en automobile.

Au bord de la mer.

La visite du navire.

Quand nous serons en tramway.....

—C'est sans doute la promenade en canot que papa nous a fait faire au bois de Boulogne qui t'est revenue à l'esprit, expliqua Jacques.

—Peut être, fit Hélène; mais je souhaiterais bien recommencer sur un vrai lac. Les enfants devaient voir leur vœu se réaliser. Ils allaient à Genève; et un oncle chez lequel la famille descendait leur fit faire plusieurs excursions sur le lac Léman, dans son yacht de plaisance. Quel enchantement pour tous deux de voguer sur une onde azurée qui parfois moutonnait comme la mer.

D'ailleurs, tout ce voyage était plein de nouveautés et d'agréments. Ç'avait été une telle joie de passer une nuit en chemin de fer, et surtout de déjeuner le lendemain dans le wagon-bar, si confortable! Des fenêtres bien larges permettaient d'y admirer le paysage tout en mangeant et roulant.

Puis l'oncle s'entendait si bien à distraire son monde! Pendant que ses enfants montaient à cheval, il conduisait Hélène et Jacques dans la voiturette Bolée.

Qu'il faisait donc bon de fendre ainsi l'air sans fatigue et sans qu'un affreux dos de cocher vienne gêner les plus beaux points de vue!

D'autres fois les voyageurs et leurs hôtes, tantôt dans des automobiles, tantôt à bicyclette, entreprenaient de visiter un peu les environs, en se gardant toutefois des

trop grandes montées, qui eussent faussé le mécanisme des voitures.

On devine quels regrets éprouvèrent Jacques et Hélène quand sonna l'heure du départ. Heureusement qu'avant de voir finir les vacances ils avaient encore la perspective d'un séjour au bord de la mer.

Là encore plus d'une surprise les attendait. Un jour, leur tante loua une petite voiture attelée d'un gentil bourriquet gris, que l'on conduisait tour à tour.

Tour à tour aussi les aînés tiraient une charrette anglaise dans laquelle les plus jeunes prenaient place. Sans parler de tous les amusements de la plage; les châteaux de sable, la pêche aux crevettes, la récolte des coquillages etc.

Le plus intéressant fut la visite d'un bâtiment faisant escale dans le port où se trouvaient Jacques et Hélène. Leur tante connaissait le capitaine. Il leur fit voir le navire en détail: la cuisine, la salle à manger du bord, le salon avec ses sofas et ses glaces; puis les cabines aux lits superposés.

—Voilà, dit Jacques, une belle façon de voyager! Combien j'aimerais à vivre ainsi de longs mois entre le ciel et l'eau! Ah! les marins sont bien heureux!

—Tu oublies les tempêtes, les accidents, les naufrages. Rappelle toi l'histoire de Robinson Crusoë perdu dans une île déserte.

—Tant pis, répartit Jacques, quand je serai grand, je ferai le tour du monde.

—M'emmèneras-tu? questionna Hélène en riant.

—Oh! non! Les filles restent à la maison; il n'y a que les garçons pour entreprendre de si grandes choses.

—C'est pourtant à moi que mon oncle avait confié le gouvernail sur le lac de Genève.

—Voilà qui est malin, il te disait quand il fallait tirer à droite ou à gauche.

—Tu as beau dire, je suis brave, tandis que j'en connais qui n'aiment pas à se trouver seuls dans l'obscurité.

—Plus maintenant, interrompit Jacques. Je suis un homme, depuis que j'ai fait un si long voyage.

—Maman avait bien raison, conclut Hélène de dire qu'on apprend beaucoup de choses en voyageant. Aussi l'année prochaine demanderons-nous à avoir le même bonheur.

—Jusque là, nous nous contenterons de *grrrandes* excursions en... tramway!

—Il nous suffira de nous faire illusion, répartit Hélène en riant. Avec un peu de bonne volonté nous pourrons nous croire en route pour le Mont Blanc tout aussi bien que pour St. Cloud.

Impr. Emrik & Binger, Haarlem.

Au lecteur

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