

**LA CIGALE CHEZ LES
FOURMIS: COMÉDIE
EN UN ACTE**

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La Cigale Chez Les Fourmis: Comédie en Un Acte by Ernest Legouvé & Eugène Labiche

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ERNEST LEGOUVÉ & EUGÈNE LABICHE

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Heath's Modern Language Series

LA

°
CIGALE CHEZ LES FOURMIS

COMÉDIE EN UN ACTE

PAR

LEGOUVE ET LABICHE

EDITED WITH NOTES

BY

W. H. WITHERBY, M.A.

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Miss Eleanor Sullivan

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE title of this little play, "La Cigale chez les Fourmis," "The Grasshopper at the Ants'," is obviously taken from the famous fable of La Fontaine, "La Cigale et la Fourmi," which he in turn had adapted from the "Cicada et Formicæ" of Æsop.

The Cigale, said La Fontaine, sings all the summer long, and when the blasts of winter come, implores food of the ant, promising to repay when summer returns. But

*"La Fourmi n'est pas prêteuse;
C'est là son moindre défaut."*

Lending is not a weakness of the ant. "What were you doing all summer time?" asks she. "I sang the livelong day and night." "You sang! Well, now dance away!"

La Fontaine's fables are one of those books which are constantly present to the French mind. The "Cigale" and the "Fourmi" have become types of characters very familiar in our own day. The "Cigale" is the "butterfly," the man who spends gaily, without thought for the morrow. Paris knows him well.

The "Ant" is the successful trader, who finds it far easier to make his fortune than to spend it. He is essentially "bourgeois," and lacks artistic instinct. He is a favourite butt of the play-wright.

Labiche, in this comedy, gives quite a new turn to the fable. The Chameroys, stung by the taunt of "Ants" flung at them by a kind friend, invite the "Cigale" (Paul de Vineuil) into their nest to teach them to lend and to spend. Paul, who has lived right royally, though always with refined taste, while his own store lasted, has become a "consulting spend-thrift" for others, as he remarks. He horrifies the parent ants by his sweeping suggestions, but ends—in the usual manner—by falling a victim to the simple charms of the daughter.

PERSONNAGES.

— — —

PAUL DE VINEUIL.

CHAMEROY, industriel retiré.

MADAME CHAMEROY, sa femme.

HENRIETTE, leur fille.

Un Domestique.

— — —

La scène se passe de nos jours, à Paris.

LA CIGALE CHEZ LES FOURMIS.

*Un salon chez CHAMEROY, ameublement sans élégance.
Un bureau à gauche, à droite un canapé.*

SCÈNE I.—CHAMEROY, MADAME CHAMEROY.

Madame Chameroy (faisant de la tapisserie). Mon Dieu ! monsieur Chameroy, comme tu es nerveux aujourd'hui ! Reste donc tranquille !

Chameroy. Cela vous est bien facile, à vous autres femmes ! vous avez un calmant toujours prêt. Votre tapisserie. . . . Mais nous, pauvres hommes, quand quelque chose nous agite. . . .

Madame Cham. Pourquoi t'agites-tu ?

Cham. Pourquoi ? Le jour où je marie ma fille ! *matte*

Madame Cham. D'abord, tu ne la maries pas 10
encore . . . c'est aujourd'hui la première entrevue *interview*
sérieuse.

Cham. (allant à elle). Oui ! . . . Mais comment cette entrevue va-t-elle se passer ? Voyons, recordons-nous. Dis-moi bien ce qui est convenu. 15

Madame Cham. Quand tu te seras assis.

Cham. (s'asseyant). Voilà. . . . Eh bien !

Madame Cham. Eh bien, rien de plus simple. Monsieur le comte de Vêrac a dit hier soir à la