

**LE VOYAGE DE
MONSIEUR
PERRICHON: COMÉDIE EN
QUATRE ACTES**

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Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon: Comédie en Quatre Actes by Eugène Labiche & M. E. Martin

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DE
MONSIEUR PERRICHON

COMÉDIE EN QUATRE ACTES

PAR
EUGÈNE LABICHE ET M. E. MARTIN

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

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INTRODUCTION

EUGÈNE LABICHE

EUGÈNE LABICHE was born in Paris on May 5th, 1815. His father, a rich grocer, intended him for the bar, but the young man had no taste for that career, and soon abandoned law for literature.

His jovial and genial humor especially fitted him for the career of a dramatist, and in 1838 he gave the public his first play: *Monsieur de Coislin ou l'Homme infiniment poli*, which was represented at the Palais Royal Theater.

Like Eugène Scribe, Labiche has had many associates or *collaborateurs*, such as Édouard Martin, Émile Augier, Delacour, Jolly, Gondinet, etc. But in all their productions, the reader cannot fail to detect the supremacy of Labiche's talent and wit.

His plays form a collection of ten volumes bearing the name of *Théâtre Complet*. The principal ones are *Le Chapeau de Paille d'Italie*, *La Cagnotte*, *La Poudre aux Yeux*, *Les Petits Oiseaux*, *Le Choix d'un Gendre*, *La Grammaire*, *Le Voyage de Monsieur Perrichon*.

This last play is, according to the opinion of several literary critics, the masterpiece of Labiche. For class use it presents abundant advantages for the acquiring of a vocabulary, as it places the reader alternately in a railroad station, in a country inn, in Perrichon's city home, etc., and makes him familiar with terms needed by travelers, and with words and expressions pertaining to a household. Indeed, every scene of this wonderfully

amusing and witty play is in itself a little dictionary. Labiche's productions are mainly comical; it is just as enjoyable to read his plays as to see them acted, and the moral is good.

Le Voyage de M. Perrichon, which is a perfect type of pure comedy, was represented for the first time in 1860 with enormous success.

Labiche loved the country and agriculture, and retired in 1876; his past success was enough for his contentment, and he wrote no more. Some of his plays were revived, and won many new laurels for their author, especially *Perrichon* in 1879. In 1861 Labiche was created Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, and ten years later received the cross of Officer of that order. The French Academy opened its doors to him in 1880, and he died eight years later.

ÉDOUARD MARTIN

ÉDOUARD MARTIN was also a child of Paris, where he was born in 1828. His first literary productions, *Vaudevilles*, were eminently successful, and with such a *collaborateur* as Labiche, he soon crossed the threshold of the temple of fame.

Unfortunately, in 1864, he became completely blind. This affliction so grieved him that it brought on a brain trouble, which in 1866 carried him to an untimely grave.

G. CASTEGNIER.

NOTE

THE original text, especially in two scenes, has been modified so as to suit class reading. The aim of the annotator is to place in the hands of pupils a book entirely void of any objectionable passages. Only very few of the ejaculations common to middle-class people have been retained, as they add nothing to the interest of the play, mar the reading, and are often misunderstood by the inexperienced reader.

PERSONNAGES

PERRICHON.
LE COMMANDANT MATHIEU.
MAJORIN.
ARMAND DESROCHES.
DANIEL SAVARY.
JOSEPH, domestique du commandant.
JEAN, domestique de Perrichon.
MADAME PERRICHON.
HENRIETTE, sa fille.
UN AUBERGISTE.
UN GUIDE.
UN EMPLOYÉ DE CHEMIN DE FER.
COMMISSIONNAIRES.
VOYAGEURS.

LE VOYAGE DE MONSIEUR PERRICHON

ACTE PREMIER

La gare du chemin de fer de Lyon, à Paris. — Au fond, barrière ouvrant sur les salles d'attente. Au fond, à droite, guichet pour les billets. Au fond, à gauche, bancs, marchande de gâteaux; à gauche, marchande de livres.

SCÈNE PREMIÈRE

MAJORIN, UN EMPLOYÉ DU CHEMIN DE FER,
VOYAGEURS, COMMISSIONNAIRES

5 MAJORIN (*se promenant avec impatience*). Ce Perrichon n'arrive pas! Voilà une heure que je l'attends... C'est pourtant bien aujourd'hui qu'il doit partir pour la Suisse avec sa femme et sa fille... (*Avec amertume.*) Des carrossiers qui vont en Suisse! des carrossiers qui
10 ont quarante mille livres de rente! des carrossiers qui ont voiture! Quel siècle! Tandis que, moi, je gagne deux mille quatre cents francs... un employé laborieux, intelligent, toujours courbé sur son bureau... Aujourd'hui, j'ai demandé un congé... j'ai dit que j'étais de
15 garde... Il faut absolument que je voie Perrichon avant son départ... je veux le prier de m'avancer mon trimestre... six cents francs! Il va prendre son air protec-

5 *Ce*: for Mr.; scornful — 9 *Des*: do not render in translation.

teur... faire l'important!... un carrossier! ça fait pitié!
 Il n'arrive toujours pas! on dirait qu'il le fait exprès!
(S'adressant à un facteur qui passe suivi de voyageurs.)
 Monsieur, à quelle heure part le train direct pour
 5 Lyon?...

LE FACTEUR *(brusquement)*. Demandez à l'employé.
(Il sort par la gauche.)

MAJORIN. Merci... manant! *(S'adressant à l'employé
 qui est près du guichet.)* Monsieur, à quelle heure part
 10 le train direct pour Lyon?...

L'EMPLOYÉ *(brusquement)*. Ça ne me regarde pas!
 voyez l'affiche. *(Il désigne une affiche à la cantonade à
 gauche.)*

MAJORIN. Merci... *(A part.)* Ils sont polis dans
 15 ces administrations! Si jamais tu viens à mon bureau,
 toi!... Voyons l'affiche... *(Il sort par la gauche.)*

SCÈNE II

L'EMPLOYÉ, PERRICHON, MADAME PERRICHON, HENRIETTE

Ils entrent par la droite.

PERRICHON. Par ici!... ne nous quittons pas! nous
 ne pourrions plus nous retrouver... Où sont nos ba-
 gages?... *(Regardant à droite; à la cantonade.)* Ah!
 20 très bien! Qui est-ce qui a les parapluies?...

HENRIETTE. Moi, papa.

PERRICHON. Et le sac de nuit?... les manteaux?...

MADAME PERRICHON. Les voici!

PERRICHON. Et mon panama?... Il est resté dans
 25 le fiacre! *(Faisant un mouvement pour sortir et s'ar-
 rêtant.)* Ah! non! je l'ai à la main!... Que j'ai chaud!

16 *toi*: the second person singular is used instead of *vous* to show
 contempt.