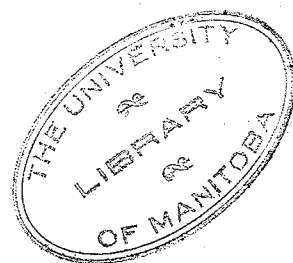


SOCIAL AND MORAL STANDARDS
IN
ROMAN COMEDY

BY
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PREFACE

In this study, all translations from Plautus are those of Paul Nixon in the Loeb Classical Library, and those from Terence are by John Sargeant in the Loeb Classical Library.

For many helpful suggestions and valuable criticisms in preparing this thesis, the author wishes to express his indebtedness to Professor William Meredith Hugill, Associate Professor of Latin and Greek, who directed this study.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: DIFFERENTIATION BETWEEN GREEK AND ROMAN CONTENT

The object of this study is to present an over-all picture of the social and moral standards of Roman Comedy as exemplified in the plays of Plautus and Terence, and to make any possible generalizations about such manners, customs and standards. Such a study involves a close scrutiny of family relationships, and of many aspects of the behavior of the individual in society at large, so far at least as such scrutiny is permitted by the limited social perspective of the comic plots. We may note individual differences between authors as shown by their varying treatment of similar characters, but it may be difficult or impossible to ascribe such differences to Plautus or Terence, rather than to the Greek original of either.

As we know, the Fabula Palliata follows the pattern of the New Greek Comedy, with some adaptations of the Athenian form and content to Roman tastes and requirements.¹ The New Comedy is essentially a comedy of manners with scenes drawn from private contemporary life, but with very little personal and political satire, so characteristic of the comedy of Aristophanes.² The characters in the plays represent familiar

types or classes rather than individuals. Among these types are the stern or indulgent father, the steady or wayward son, the faithful or shrewd and scheming slave, the vain-glorious soldier, the rapacious and fickle-minded courtesan, and the hungry parasite. The commonest theme of the plot is the uncertain course of love and the efforts of the lover, aided and abetted by his slave, to obtain possession of his mistress in spite of his father's opposition and intervention. Fortunately, however, for the happiness of all concerned, the lady in the case, who appears first as a courtesan, frequently proves to be a free-born Athenian citizen, and her marriage to her lover follows as a natural sequel of their courtship. Such were the popular topics of the New Greek Comedy as conceived by Menander, its leading exponent, and his rivals and contemporaries Diphilus, Philemon, and Apollodorus.

Menander is of special interest since Terence adopted him as his favorite model, employing his plays almost exclusively as a source for his own, an indebtedness which he acknowledges in almost every prologue of his six extant plays.³ Thus the Andria is a contamination of Menander's Andria and Perinthia; the Heauton Timorumenus is from Menander's Heauton Timorumenus; the Eunuchus from his Eunuchus and Kolax; the Adelphoe from his Adelphoe and such part of Diphilus' Synapothnescountes as Plautus did not use in his Commorientes. Terence's two remaining plays are adaptations of Apollodorus: the Hecyra from his Hecyra, and the Phormio from his Epidikazomenos. There can be little doubt of Terence's sources since the prologues are the genuine utterances of the play-

wright himself.⁴ Apart from indicating the source of each play, they plead for a favorable hearing, they serve as a rebuttal to the attacks of the spiteful old critic, Luscius Lanuvinus, and finally, as in the Hecyra, they reveal certain difficulties which beset the comic artist.⁵ It was a new departure for Terence to use his prologues as a weapon of defence against unfriendly critics, and to explain his principles of composition, but it is fortunate for modern students that he has supplied us with this information.

Plautus' prologues were added later and not by himself. Two points may be cited in favor of this conclusion. In the prologues to the Captivi⁶ and to the Poenulus,⁷ reference is made to seats in the theatre, but these did not exist in the time of Plautus.⁸ In the prologue to the Casina,⁹ the speaker states explicitly that the troupe is presenting a play of Plautus. Nine plays of Plautus lack prologues, in whole or in part. Arguments have been advanced in favor of the genuineness of the prologues to the Aulularia, the Rudens and the Trinummus, but the most that can be said is that they may contain fragments of the original Plautine prologues considerably interpolated or changed. All three prologues are exceptional in being spoken by gods or allegorical personages.

But whether the prologues prefaced to Plautus' plays are genuine or not, we need have little misgiving in accepting their statements about his sources, since they were presumably by persons who possessed the necessary information. From the prologues we learn that Philemon's Emporos was the model for the Mercator; his Phasma for the Mostellaria, and his Thesaurus

for the Trinummus; Demophilus' Onagos for the Asinaria; Diphilus' Clerumenoi for the Casina, while Menander was the source of the Stichus in a play named the Adelphoe. The Pseudo-Plautine prologue usually acquaints the audience with the situation at the opening of the play.¹⁰ From its habit of addressing the audience in very familiar tones,¹¹ it throws light upon social and theatrical conditions. In the case of both Plautus and Terence, the prologues reveal how greatly the two Roman playwrights were influenced by the leading writers of New Greek Comedy.

From a study of the Fabula Palliata, we are made fully aware then that the Roman playwrights followed their Greek models very closely, as the prologues of Plautus and Terence testify. Consequently it is difficult to say how far the moral atmosphere of the plays corresponds to that of Roman life and manners.¹² Perhaps it may be fair to assume that the plots and characters borrowed from Greek plays reflected ideas and ideals not too different from those held by the Romans themselves, if indeed they were expected to succeed with these practically-minded Italians.¹³ Ideas and ideals utterly foreign to the Roman audience or to which it was either apathetic or antipathetic might tend to diminish interest in the play and militate against its success, unless we are to believe, as has been suggested by Duff,¹⁴ that the Romans derived a Pharisaical satisfaction from seeing depicted upon the stage the decadent manners of a race which they regarded as morally inferior, so that they might leave the theatre with the comforting reflection that their own characters were better than those which they had

seen exposed before them. The latter view perhaps credits the popular Roman audience with too great powers of reflection and introspection. In any case our knowledge of the actual conditions of Roman life gives little support or justification for any Roman feeling of superiority in the field of manners.

With these considerations in mind, the Roman playwright in translating or borrowing moral and social ideas from Greek plays would be likely to employ only those themes and ideas which would wake a familiar echo in his audience. Plautus very definitely shows that he is thinking more of his Roman audience than his Greek model when he breaks the dramatic illusion, as he frequently does, by introducing Roman anachronisms illogically into his borrowed Greek plot.¹⁵ Terence is more scrupulous in avoiding this literary fault, and Terence likewise was less popular on the stage than Plautus as we know from his experience with the Hecyra.¹⁶ The known facts of Roman family organization and relationships will, to some extent, guard us from assuming too much. Perhaps, therefore, at the start, it may be well to mention some of the fundamental underlying principles of Roman family life.

It was in his home life that the Roman acquired the virtues which he held in highest honor, virtues which embraced not only physical courage, but also pietas, simplicitas, and gravitas.¹⁷ It is not irrelevant to quote here the remarkable tribute paid to the sanctity of the home by Cicero on his return from exile:

Is there anything more hallowed, is there anything more closely hedged about with every kind of sanctity than the home of each individual citizen? Therein he

has his altars, his hearth, his household gods, his private worship, his rites and ceremonies. For all of us this is a sanctuary so holy that to tear a man away therefrom is an outrage to the law of heaven.¹⁸

This deep-seated affection for the home and the family--the state in miniature--grew out of the fact that the Roman pater familias by law and tradition exercised unusual power over his family. His power, called patria potestas or patria maiestas or imperium paternum,¹⁹ he wielded absolutely over his children and other agnatic descendants. Sweeping in its power as the patria potestas was, it endured so long because it had salutary effects and above all was responsible for the discipline which made the Roman people great and powerful. The strength of the whole Roman social and political structure rested ultimately upon the pater familias and his conception of his duties to his family and their duties to him. The essential qualities constituting this relationship were obedience to authority, self-control, and self-respect.

While these principles were always basic to the Roman conception of the relationship between father and son, even Roman social conditions were not static, and we may fairly infer from the plots of Plautus and Terence that the old order was subject to change. Many deviations from the stricter interpretation of the older standards are shown in these plays, which must apply to Roman conditions as well as Greek.

In our examination of Latin Comedy, if we search in it for characteristic features of Roman life, we must always keep in mind another caution also. Ideas expressed by characters in a play cannot always be regarded as those of the author

himself. However, if the same ideas keep recurring in characters of the same type, it is safe to assume that they are the prevailing ideas of the author and in his opinion likely to be current among his audience as well.

In any case it is not the only or the chief purpose of this essay to isolate and select those customs, manners and standards of conduct which seem to be nationally Roman, though that is an interesting quest if any reasonable conclusions or inferences may be drawn; rather it is our principal business to make whatever generalizations we can about such manners and standards as we find in the comedies, even when it is quite impossible, as it usually is, to determine whether they obtained among the Greeks only of Menander's Athens, or whether they were common to both Greeks and Romans, which we suspect was often the case.

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CHAPTER II

RELATIONS BETWEEN FATHER AND SON

Perhaps no one Latin play gives a complete picture of the normal ancient relationship between father and son, but taken severally the different plays afford us the opportunity of re-creating the general situation. The period in the son's development which seems to give his father the greatest concern is the stage when he is coming of age and reaching the threshold of full citizenship and marriage. Only then does the son's true bent¹ and the success or failure of his upbringing reveal itself. He may cultivate wholesome friendships and aspire to a good name, steering clear of jealousy² and intrigues.³ He may choose to respect his father's wishes steadfastly, keeping to the good old ways.⁴ He may obey the dictates of reason,⁵ overcoming the promptings of inclination by due regard to self-control and self-respect.⁶ He may learn by another's folly.⁷ A son heeding such principles receives his father's blessing and is a constant source of joy to him. Lysiteles of the Trinummus is an example.⁸ On the other hand, the son may remain faithful and obedient only while still subject to his father's authority,⁹ but once freed from it, he may lose command of himself, falling into evil ways. In the ardor of youth, he may attach himself to a mistress, seduce her,¹⁰ but disregard the

responsibility which he has thereby incurred.¹¹ He may revel with his profligate friends,¹² entirely forgetful of moral values. To satisfy his own ends, he may become callous and indifferent to private property.¹³ He may even lie boldly to his father as Clitipho does in the Heauton Timorumenus in attempting to conceal the identity of his mistress.¹⁴ A son of such wayward tendencies has lent a dull ear to his father's precepts. He is no "victor victorum,"¹⁵ for his shiftlessness and indolence have made him the victim of his passions and his whims. His "hot blood"¹⁶ and loose-living have clouded his understanding and rendered his reasoning power wholly inactive.

Such extreme examples of moral rectitude or demoralization on the part of the son are the direct result of parental strictness or laxity respectively, although unrelenting strictness often becomes as detrimental as uncontrolled laxity. The Adelphoe of Terence offers a good study in contrast to illustrate this very point. Ctesipho, the son of Demea, who has had a strict upbringing, does his duty under the threat of punishment,¹⁷ and has no dread except in the thought of detection. Such authority has no more weight or lasting influence than that founded on the basis of unlimited laxity.¹⁸ Demea frowns on excessive license¹⁹ such as his brother Micio permits, maintaining that a father should never neglect an opportunity for moral instruction.²⁰ Like Chremes in the Heauton Timorumenus and Philto in the Trinummus of Plautus,²¹ he insists that a son should draw from others "a model for himself" of upright living.²² Then suddenly by an astonishing volte-face,²³ Demea resolves to imitate his brother Micio's geniality and air of

irresponsibility by proposing and carrying out a series of unwarranted but generous acts although at his brother's expense. In this way he illustrates and demonstrates the folly of Micio's facile system²⁴ and voices the need of reproving, correcting (and indulging sons "when it is right")²⁵ in points where youthful eyes cannot see so far, and where desires are stronger than inadequate reflection. The indulgent, easy-going Micio wants to accustom his adopted son, Aeschinus, Ctesipho's brother, to do right from his own inclination rather than from fear of another.²⁶ Yet his son disappoints him by wronging a maiden and keeping the affair secret. Micio scolds him severely for his heedlessness and lack of forethought, but since he passes off his son's misconduct as not "unnatural," he wins the real affection of the young man. Like Philto again,²⁷ Micio feels that a son bound to his father by kindness is sincere in his obedience; he strives to repay the kindness, and is the same "behind your back as to your face."²⁸ While both brothers have erred in the upbringing of their sons, Demea succeeds in proving to his brother that authority is superior to laxity.

Chremes in the Heauton Timorumenus, while pointing out to neighbor Menedemus the latter's shortcomings as a father,²⁹ lacks himself³⁰ the tact, the fairness and the frankness which he requires in the wise father.³¹ Clitipho, regarded by Chremes as a model son, attaches little worth to his father's examples,³² resentful that the latter pulls the reins to suit his own desires only.³³ The constant appeal to follow the standard of another's conduct seems to him like snobbery and

insincerity.³⁴ Consequently he revels in amorous intrigues³⁵ until his father detects them.

In the Andria, Simo, obsessed with the idea of patria potestas, is prompted by a desire to test the filial loyalty and obedience of his son. It seems to be his only motive in life and accounts for his attitude throughout the whole play. Pamphilus, who deeply revered his indulgent father³⁶ until he commanded immediate marriage, and that without any consultation³⁷ or warning, now questions the parental authority.³⁸ Like Clitipho, he feels his interests have been neglected and voices his resentment,³⁹ now that his faith in life has been momentarily shattered.⁴⁰

In the Phormio, Antipho's vacillating behavior reflects clearly the sternness⁴¹ and the stinginess⁴² of his father Demipho, and the fact that wealth is a motivating factor in the old man's standard of respectability.⁴³ The youth, marrying a respectable girl of "neither fortune nor family"⁴⁴ while his father is abroad, fearfully anticipates Demipho's adverse reaction⁴⁵ and bemoans his own folly.⁴⁶ At the same time, he lectures himself on his inaction and timidity⁴⁷ in the face of looming crisis. Phaedria, in the same play, has got himself a mistress, and is subsequently justified in his amour by his mother in her resentment at the infidelity of her husband Chremes: "Do you think it such a shocking thing for a young man like your son to have one mistress when you have two wives?"⁴⁸ In this play it is again evident that strictness on the part of Demipho and laxity on the part of Chremes have both failed to produce worthy sons capable of self-

respect and self-control. Had the fathers practised a via media in carrying out their conception of patria potestas, they would have reared better sons.

The Hecyra ends in the final happiness of a young couple although dark clouds hovered over the domestic scene when youthful Pamphilus separated from his wife after learning that she had been molested before their marriage.⁴⁹ Ignorant of his motives in rejecting his wife, Pamphilus' mother and father decide to move into the country entirely, thinking that they are the obstacle to the young people's happiness. "We old folks are distasteful to the young."⁵⁰ Old Phidippus, though believing that his son-in-law has resumed relations with his former mistress,⁵¹ dismisses such conduct with the protest that "the time will come when he will hate to think of it."⁵² Pamphilus, more careful of his reputation than he had been of his conduct, refuses to take his wife back again, much as he loves her, until a ring proves that he himself is the man who wronged her.⁵³ In this play Terence seems to show a real sympathy for true love and to suggest the attitude of sympathy and tolerance which parents should take to ensure happiness in the married lives of their children. He portrays Laches as a father who treats his son rationally, and who expects regard and open confidence in return.

Plautus deals with the relationship of father to son in only a few of his plays, preferring to build his plots upon situations more obviously and boisterously funny than upon psychological studies of the strength and weakness of young men's characters, and the effect upon them of parental dis-

cipline. He was perhaps more interested in getting a laugh from his audience than depicting problems of character to which Terence devotes considerable attention.⁵⁴ That in itself would account for a difference in treatment and emphasis. Besides, while Terence's subject matter is rather limited to the love entanglements of youth, and the moral lessons which he draws from them, Plautus handles a much wider variety of themes. The Trinummus is almost unique in Plautus for its moralizing upon the conduct of young men.⁵⁵ Morality is an obsession with Lysiteles who parades himself as an example of the moral son, virtuous, obedient, and respectful, while his father Philto resembles the Shakespearian Polonius with his tedious precepts.

The Captivi maintains a more natural tone, even while soaring to loftier heights. It reveals Hegio's deep affection for his two sons;⁵⁶ the one kidnapped in early childhood, the other, a recent prisoner of war. As a matter of fact the motivation for all his actions throughout the play is his unquenchable yearning for his sons--his father's love. His customary good nature is outraged and forgotten in the merciless punishment he inflicts upon the slave Tyndarus,⁵⁷ never considering that the latter in deceiving him was acting "in obedience to a prior loyalty"⁵⁸ and that he himself is violating another man's property. The situation is tragically ironical because his unnatural bitterness and severity is directly due to the depth of his disappointment at what he regards as the defeat of his cherished design to recover his lost son. He has good reason to feel remorseful when

Tyndarus proves to be his long lost son,⁵⁹ although it might be argued that he was driven into unrelenting cruelty by the severe blows which fortune had dealt him: "I am determined to pity no one since no one pities me."⁶⁰

In the same play, it is alleged that "Mr. Goldfield," the supposed father of the other captive, is so stingy with his money that he would not pay it out to ransom his son if the sum were too high.⁶¹ Even when sacrificing to his Guardian Spirit, Hegio is asked to believe, he uses only Samian earthenware for fear the Spirit may steal them.⁶² Undoubtedly Plautus exaggerates here in order to make his Roman audience laugh at the ridiculous stinginess of some fathers.

In the Cistellaria, the father decides to dissuade a courtesan from marrying his son Alcesimarchus on the plea that she "stands in the way of a dowry."⁶³ Meeting another courtesan while on this mission, the old fellow makes love to her, feeling that he can "still whinny to a little mare like her, if you'll put us alone together."⁶⁴ Even if he has his son's welfare at heart, he shows no intention of being the model father!

The Bacchides has a very similar theme, but the comic effect is heightened since both fathers, the indulgent Philoxenus and the strict Nicobulus alike, succumb to the wiles of the two sirens.⁶⁵ Little wonder that the sons, like their fathers, lead weak, unprincipled lives. The fathers can hardly begin to criticize their sons for squandering their reputation and money.

The Asinaria depicts a lewd old rogue agreeing to secure money for the purchase of a mistress for his son provided that he himself can enjoy the wench as soon as she is bought.⁶⁶ Here we have sympathy of a kind between father and son, but the father is abetting his son's moral turpitude. Plautus delights in plunging to the lowest depths for the sake of a coarse laugh.

Lysidamus goes one step farther in the Casina and deliberately sets himself up as his son's rival for the favours of their maid.⁶⁷ He proposes that his slave Olympio marry the girl while he himself will reap the fruits of the wedding without his wife suspecting a thing. For such a father no son can feel respect, and the result is deplorable if he is influenced by him in matters of conduct.

Periphanes, in the Epidicus, tortured by the report that his son has entangled himself with some music girl,⁶⁸ decides to settle on a wife for Stratippocles immediately. Stratippocles confides to his friend Chaeribulus that although he feels ashamed of his actions, he has done nothing to sully or outrage the girl's innocence.⁶⁹ The relationship between father and son in this play is a much more wholesome and reasonable one. At heart Periphanes is kind and indulgent; after his lost daughter is found, he pardons the slave for purchasing the music girl for his son,⁷⁰ although at his expense, and rewards him with his freedom.

Simo's attitude towards his son in the Pseudolus revolves upon his love of money which plays no small part in his ideas of virtue.⁷¹ When he hears that Callidorus is plan-

ning to purchase the freedom of a music girl⁷² with money obtained from him by his slave, Simo swears that the slave will not get the money from him in spite of his pledge to give it.⁷³ But the old fellow is really a genial, indulgent type, who can admit good-naturedly that he is not angry at his son or his slave even after the latter has accomplished what he set out to do.⁷⁴ It is an amusing but not uplifting sight to see the old master and slave leave the stage together to "go on a spree." Callipho, a very close friend of Simo in the same play, dismisses Callidorus' action by saying that the lad has done nothing surprising, considering what the moral standards are like.⁷⁵ Moreover, he admits that "it behooves a father to be blameless if he expects his son to be more blameless than he is himself."⁷⁶

Much the same moral attitude is shown by Tranio the slave, in the Mostellaria, when he confesses to Theopropides that the latter's son has caroused, borrowed and squandered money, had a mistress, but "has he done anything different from what sons of the best families do?"⁷⁷ Theopropides, whose frugality dictates his morality, forgives his son's misdeeds as soon as Callidamates promises to pay all the debts incurred by his youthful friend Philolaches.⁷⁸ "We are all at fault,"⁷⁹ concludes Callidamates, "because of our youth and folly."⁸⁰

The Stichus opens with two "grass-widow" sisters waiting faithfully for the return of their husbands from abroad. Their father Antipho advises them to marry again, believing both his sons-in-law to be reprobates.⁸¹ Upon their return, however,

Antipho throws himself affectionately upon his two "sons,"⁸² hinting by a clever parable⁸³ that he would like one of the music girls they brought for himself. Unlike the usual run of old gallants, he does not make himself the laughing stock of all, as Lysidamus does in the Casina.⁸⁴ The whole business does not seem quite so revolting when one considers that Antipho's wife is dead.

Demipho of the Mercator patterns his behavior after that of a seven year old boy, as he himself admits,⁸⁵ in all but his sensual passions. Falling in love with the music girl whom his son Charinus had bought abroad for himself, he buys her and plans to enjoy her at the home of his friend Lysimachus while the latter's wife is in the country.⁸⁶ His crony Lysimachus does not appear to be privy to his immoral intentions.⁸⁷ In the end, the scheme comes to light,⁸⁸ and Demipho, protesting truthfully that he never knew of his son's interest in the girl,⁸⁹ suffers abuse and humiliation at the hands of Lysimachus and the latter's son Eutyclus. "Why, if that's the proper thing--for oldsters to occupy their old age with affairs of gallantry--what'll become of our affairs of state?"⁹⁰ Demipho's actions do not constitute an example for any son to follow. After squandering his father's property on his mistress, Charinus ruefully contrasts the training his father and he had received: "Work on the farm, dirty work and plenty of it, that was his training; no visiting in the city except once in four years⁹¹ --I ought to do the same."⁹² Charinus' father had had no opportunity in his youth of lolling about in idleness or plunging himself into love affairs.⁹³ The son's

argument seems fallacious, since the father's better training had not produced better results. But at least the father had less excuse for his waywardness than the son, and he was doubly culpable not only for his own offence but also for setting a bad example to his son.

From the examples already reviewed it may be seen that the whole conduct of young men, as represented at least in Roman Comedy, is profoundly affected by the parental-filial relationship, and the examples and precepts of their fathers. This relationship reaches a climax at the point where the young man enters upon the state of matrimony. That step and the selection of a wife, according to ancient custom, was controlled more by the father than by the son. Since, nevertheless, it was a step in which the son must needs take more than a passing interest and since indeed it often conflicts with a friendship which he has already contracted with a member of the opposite sex, marriage usually marks a crisis between father and son and tests the filial tie. Sometimes it results in estrangement from his father of the son of strong will and individuality; sometimes it proves the strength of the habit of obedience and the discipline of the patria potestas. Sometimes the father is compromised and yields to his son's own preference. The situation is one of social significance and of great dramatic possibilities. At the risk of some apparent repetition, it may be instructive to glance back over the most striking examples of this critical situation in Plautus and Terence. The problem provides one of the commonest comic situations in the Fabula Palliata. The son becomes involved

in an intrigue; the father discovers it and gives vent to violent disapproval, but the girl usually proves in the end to be a free-born Athenian and often the daughter of a family friend; the parties concerned are reconciled and restored to harmony and concord. So a situation of animated conflict is resolved into one of complaisant harmony. This is the essence of comedy. Thus Simo, in the Andria, by virtue of his patria potestas, tries to discourage his son's passion for Glycerium, a girl of no means, until her true identity is discovered. For the first time Pamphilus questions his father's authority.⁹⁴ He feels resentment that his father, usually so considerate and indulgent, has decided upon immediate marriage for him without a moment's notice.⁹⁵ All his anxieties subside, however, and his difficulties disappear when his love proves to be Athenian born and a sister to the very girl whom Simo had chosen for his son's bride.⁹⁶

Chremes, in the Heauton Timorumenus, utterly provoked at Clitipho for keeping a mistress secretly,⁹⁷ will forgive his son only on condition that he marry the girl that he names for him.⁹⁸ A sign of the changing times reveals itself as the son refuses to marry "that red-haired girl with cat eyes, blotchy face, and tip-tilted nose,"⁹⁹ and is allowed to pick a more acceptable bride.¹⁰⁰

In the Eunuchus, Chaerea, overwhelmed by love at first sight,¹⁰¹ pursues and seduces a pretty girl at the home of Thais, the mistress of his brother, Phaedria. When Thais learns of the outrage and yet the sincerity of Chaerea's affection,¹⁰² she forgives the youth by remarking that she is

experienced enough to know the power of love.¹⁰³ The girl is traced by her brother, proved to be Athenian-born,¹⁰⁴ and united to her lover. Laches, father of the youth, briefly appears on the scene¹⁰⁵ but raises no objection if we may judge from the complete happiness of Chaerea as the play ends.¹⁰⁶

Antipho of the Phormio falls madly in love with a destitute orphan and marries her with the connivance of the parasite Phormio, who pretends that Antipho is her next-of-kin.¹⁰⁷ Demipho upon his return from abroad condemns his son's independent and irresponsible action.¹⁰⁸ He had agreed with his brother, Chremes, that Antipho should marry his niece. With the help of Chremes, he almost succeeds in breaking up the marriage when his brother discovers that the girl is actually his own illegitimate daughter and the one they had chosen for Antipho.¹⁰⁹ Chremes' own son, Phaedria, has acquired a mistress without his father's knowledge, but is permitted to keep her once Chremes' bigamous marriage comes to light.¹¹⁰

In the Adelphoe, Micio, out of genuine affection for his adopted son Aeschinus, permits him to marry his free-born but poverty-stricken love, much to the surprise of the young man.¹¹¹ Demea, not the easy-going father that his brother Micio is, becomes violently disturbed upon learning that his "model" son has a mistress, but in the process of imitating his brother's mode of life, agrees to let his son "have his will" for this one time.¹¹² His decision constitutes an even greater concession, since Ctesipho's love happens to be a slave girl.

A slightly different case appears when the upright Lysiteles in the Trinummus of Plautus asks his father permission to marry a girl of his choice without a dowry, for the purpose of relieving her financially-stricken brother who is a close friend of his.¹¹³ Because Lysiteles has always been such a good son, the father grants his unusual request and supports his suit.

In the Cistellaria, the father of Alcesimarchus, as soon as he learns of his son's amour, decides to curb his loose living by marrying him into a wealthy Lemnian family. The question of the dowry largely influences his action.¹¹⁴ He even proposes a visit to the courtesan's home to make her give up his son but loses his self-control upon seeing the girl's attractive guardian whom he mistakes for his son's fiancée.¹¹⁵ The son firmly refuses to desert his love, a decision which ends happily since the girl proves to be a long-lost daughter of Demipho, the wealthy Lemnian.¹¹⁶ With the situation resolving itself so happily, the parental-filial relationship has suffered no deterioration as could happen in delicate matters of this kind.

We have now cited and discussed examples from all the pertinent plays of both Plautus and Terence which serve to illustrate the relation of father to son. In endeavoring to draw our general impressions of that relationship let us repeat that in this particular study it is impossible to state dogmatically where Greek characteristics end and Roman begin. Nor is it necessary for us to do so since we are concerned here primarily with moral and social standards as they

are represented in Roman Comedy, regardless of whether it reflects actual Roman character or not. If any Romans justified their attendance at the plays of Plautus and Terence by the Pharisaical reasoning that Roman citizens would never be guilty of such contemptible conduct as was represented in those Greek comedies,¹¹⁷ that attitude in itself would be significant, but we do not know. Most theatre-goers were not Juvenals.

Terence tends to present the relationship of father and son as a study in contrast, as in his last two plays, the Phormio and the Adelphoe, setting an indulgent father in opposition to a strict one. Under both conditions the son proves to be wayward and capable of moral lapses, although he always shows respect for his father and feels ashamed of his own misbehavior. The inference thus intended by the author seems to be that excess in either direction on the father's part is a mistake. Too great sternness makes the son perverse and wilful through alienation, whereas too much complaisance only encourages a tendency to dissipation. Moderate strictness is better calculated to preserve respect, whereas reasonable tolerance is more likely to retain affection. Terence appears to be suggesting to his audience that a via media between the two extremes would be the most desirable course for the father to take. There should be a happy balance of "reproving, correcting and indulging when it is right."¹¹⁸

With Terence, the father maintains his authority although it is not the strict authority of the old Roman pattern when

a slight misdemeanor was sternly punished rather than leniently pardoned. Strict morals and a right conduct of life are the desired goal, and emphasis is placed on self-control and self-respect. A son should live virtuously in his own interest and not for his father's alone. Most sons show a tendency to immoral lapses, but having erred once, realize their folly and appreciate their fathers' oft-repeated advice.

The choice of a wife in marriage, as we have pointed out, is a matter which enjoys considerable prominence in the plays of Terence, probably because it lends itself so easily to dramatic or comic treatment. At the same time it is interesting to enquire whether his treatment of it suggests either any current tendency towards the relaxation of the established social practice of parental authority in this matter, or even any personal preference on Terence's part for a more romantic attitude towards marriage, in which the son's own choice might be accepted by his father. The behavior of Pamphilus in the Andria and Clitipho in the Heauton Timorumenus might be taken to lend some color to the latter contention.

A further point in the same connection concerns the essential importance of the dowry. The dowry, of course, represents the material side of marriage, and operates as a means of ensuring the economic equality of the wedded pair, or as a guarantee that the man will marry into the economic class to which he belongs himself. This has usually been regarded by parents of all ages as a necessary condition for

the happiness of their children. Young people under the influence of passion often regard it lightly. Terence was young when he died. We might expect him to sympathize with the more romantic point of view of youth. In his Adelphoe, Micio affirms that "money is the blot of old age."

It is perhaps significant that in the Andria, Terence's earliest play, and in the Phormio, almost his latest, Pamphilus and Antipho both eventually become the happy husbands of brides of their own choosing with the complete concurrence of their fathers. The romantic solution holds also for the other four plays. This seems more than a coincidence. It seems to reveal the attitude of Terence himself towards love and marriage, and since Terence, member though he was of the Scipionic circle, nevertheless hoped to win a popular audience, we may also assume that there was a general popular sympathy for the romantic ideal of marriage in Rome of the early second century B.C.

Corroboration for this conclusion may be found in the tolerant and accommodating humour shown by the parents in the Hecyra, who would even retire to the country to remove an obstacle to their son's married happiness. The play is an instructive study in that phase of family life which involves the inter-relationship of two generations. The tendency of the play is to promote a wholesome understanding between the young married couple and their parents; if separate establishments are necessary, this is desirable in the interest of harmony. We have ample evidence in the prologue of this play that it did not have much popular appeal, and therefore we

have no indication that its ideas found general acceptance, but they do round out our picture of the author's own thinking on this social problem.

Plautus writes of the same society as Terence but his portrayal of it is different. The more comical, boisterous and ludicrous situations and characters are preferred by him. He lacks the subtle, elegant and humane characterization of Terence;¹¹⁹ with few exceptions his fathers are as immoral as their sons, and do not command their respect and affection as they should. Terence's refined tastes did not permit him to depict a father sharing his son's amour or becoming his rival for the favours of a mistress. But while Plautus exhibits these base, old rogues for our amusement, he is not forgetful of the value of morality. Like Congreve and Wycherley, let us assume he emphasizes the seamier side to make it so revolting to his audience that they would never want to degrade themselves to such an immoral level. The whole produces a positive effect.

The proof of this seems to lie in the fact that Plautus can and does occasionally deal with the same problems of parental discipline and filial duty as Terence. His Trinummus is as concentrated a study of virtuous character as can be found in Terence's Adelphoe. His Captivi is probably the noblest of all Latin Comedies. Old Hegio in that play is as much wrapped up in the welfare of his son, as is Simo in Terence's Andria. The roisterer in Plautus' Mostellaria plunges into as remorseful an analysis of his own guilty soul as any introspective youth in Terence. The two sisters of the

Stichus are good examples of self-righteous virtue. Alcmena of the Amphitryon is as great a marvel of tender, serene strength and sheer goodness as Sostrata of the Hecyra. Plautus does subscribe to ethical standards but his range of interest is wider and his repertoire is fuller. Above all he had his ear closer to the ground, and he knew better how to amuse the groundlings.

The fact that we have found so many of the young men of Roman Comedy busily engaged in sowing wild oats whether they happen to be the sons of bourgeois parents or of the leisured aristocracy prompts a question about their training and education, but we are disappointed at the meagre information which the comedies supply even after the closest scrutiny. In the Andria, Simo gives us a very casual and superficial summary of the interests and activities of youth, which he comprises under hunting and attendance at lectures on philosophy,¹²⁰ but he gives us no reason to believe that he personally has exercised much supervision over his son's training. In fact he practically admits that Pamphilus has learned bad habits from Davus,¹²¹ the slave. He does indicate that Pamphilus has belonged to a certain set or club of young men who meet regularly and eat together,¹²² and that he has sometimes questioned the other young men about his son,¹²³ but we can infer that this curiosity and interest has been more recent than continuous. From other plays we learn more definitely that it is a common practice for fathers to entrust the direction and control of their sons to slaves, at least during their own absence from home. This is the case in the Phormio,

where Geta gives up after a half-hearted attempt¹²⁴ and con-
nives with his two young charges instead of restraining them.¹²⁵

Tutor Lydus of the Bacchides encounters only ridicule and impertinence when he tries to restrain the young Pistoclerus from going astray.¹²⁶ The young man's father does not even support the efforts of his son's tutor, although he admits in a later soliloquy that he is worried about his son's behavior. Much to Lydus' annoyance and disgust,¹²⁷ the tolerant father feels that a young man should have his fling until he begins to loathe it.¹²⁸ Micio of the Adelphoe, Phidippus of the Eunuchus, and Simo of the Andria hold the same point of view. It seems to be an unwritten code that a young man may have amours until a wedding is arranged, but after that, he is expected to straighten up.

The interests of the young men of comedy seem limited to loitering around barber shops¹²⁹ and the forum,¹³⁰ to membership in sets or clubs,¹³¹ and meeting mistresses in the street. The orthodox education of literature, music and gymnastic should have opened to them more worthy fields of endeavor. Pamphilus of the Andria took a moderate interest in the keeping of horses and hounds, and in attending philosophical lectures. Since he never showed a great yearning for any one of these pursuits, his was merely the education of the dilettante. Philolaches of the Mostellaria, before he fell into vice, was the model athlete for young men to copy, excelling in "discus, spear, ball, running, fencing, and riding."¹³² Pistoclerus of the Bacchides tells his tutor very frankly that "your system of education is no good to

either of us."¹³³ Strabax of the Truculentus, Clinia of the Heauton Timorumenus, and Ctesipho of the Adelphoe could make a good living and lead a good life on the farm, did not vice appear more attractive to them. The young men are not entirely to blame.

The traditional authority of patria potestas vested in the Roman father very wide and comprehensive responsibility for the education and training of his son. If there was any correspondence between the dramatic picture of parental guidance and control in the plays of Plautus and Terence and the Roman reality as it existed between the fathers and sons in the audience, we might conclude that the father's authority was inadequately and poorly exercised in the time of Plautus and Terence. It was either too strict and overbearing, or it was unreasonably lax and irresponsible. In a crisis, such extremes of authority produce sons who flounder about helplessly without presence of mind, without power of independent action, and with little courage. The lad's early upbringing, so sadly at fault, does not provide him with the necessary ballast, common sense and foresight, to surmount his difficulties and troubles. On his own, he finds himself lacking in self-confidence and self-control, since under his father's care he has had only to obey commands which force him to practise decent conduct often against his will. By constantly preaching against the ugliness of vice in all its forms, the father is actually defeating his own ends, since human nature will crave what it is forbidden to have. Temptation conquers, but once the son proves for himself that its fruits are bitter

and barren, virtue assumes the dignified and the respectful rôle accorded it by his father. But it would be indiscreet to suppose in this instance that Comedy mirrors Roman nature, or even reflects the whole of Greek nature. Vice is often more dramatic than virtue, and parents of the safe and sane variety may be deemed more numerous in real life than on the stage. We may recall, for our comfort and for the credit of Rome, Plutarch's story of the mother of the Gracchi, and his account of how Cato trained his son. And always, as we have said before, we must beware of the fallacy which equates Roman Comedy with Roman life.

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CHAPTER III

RELATIONS BETWEEN HUSBAND AND WIFE

As the family unit was so vitally important in the social fabric of Greece and Rome, the investigator of ancient social standards must necessarily concern himself at once with whatever evidence he can find in comedy about the success or failure of marriage and the relationship between husband and wife. In Athens, the wife found herself relegated to a position of subordination, and her function was little more than that of house-keeper and her activities restricted to the family circle. Moreover in the early days of Rome, the prevailing type of marriage left the wife almost completely in the power of her husband, or in manu, to use the legal term.¹ The growth of wealth and prosperity caused a gradual relaxing of the old standard, until a woman could be legally married without manus. Under this set-up, legal fictions were devised whereby the wife retained actually, if not nominally, certain property rights and a much greater degree of personal independence. In time, this independence helped her to acquire greater influence over her husband.

Under normal circumstances, the male head of the household in both Athens and Rome took the initiative in planning and executing marriage ties for his sons and daughters, with

an eye fixed keenly on the dowry. It was taken for granted that love and happiness would result after marriage. The amount of the dowry was not without its effect upon the relations of the wife and husband, a large dowry giving the wife greater assurance and independence.

The husband of the plays all too frequently bemoans the fact that he has sold his authority in receiving the dowry;² that it seemed attractive before marriage and not after,³ or that to marry a rich wife is to bring a barking dog into the house.⁴ Megadorus of the Aulularia expresses his opinion in no uncertain terms when his widowed sister sounds him on marriage:⁵

I have no fancy for those ladies of high stations and hauteur and fat dowries, with their shouting and ordering and their ivory-trimmed carriages and their purple and fine linen that costs a man his liberty.

Simo of the Mostellaria agrees on this score with Megadorus, declaring that "a man that marries a rich wife, and an old one, never suffers from somnolence," and that "fellows in that fix all abominate going to bed."⁶ Young men or old detest the thought of wives with large dowries, it seems, fearful of the overbearing nature of the wife and the fact that their own authority will be lessened correspondingly.

In Roman Comedy, the husbands do not as a rule show much sincere affection for their wives, but treat them harshly without any outward appearance of sympathy or understanding. In their estimation, wives are creatures given to nagging, complaining or commanding;⁷ they are foolish, disobedient, and capricious;⁸ they are vixens,⁹ bad bargains,¹⁰ and immortal.¹¹

Usually the husbands easily forget their own shortcomings and disregard the possibility that their own misbehaviour may be responsible for the mental agitation or bad temper of their wives and the resulting strained relations between them. But they quickly lose their arrogant and superior tones of authority if their wives discover their intrigues. In some cases they even cower in guilt or try to redeem themselves by an ostentatious and sudden pretense of love and affection towards their wives. Perhaps both parties have reason for complaint, but to what degree can only be determined by a thorough examination of the material we have to deal with.

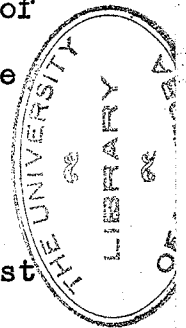
The most interesting and instructive play of Terence for our study of marital relationships between husband and wife is the Hecyra. In this play, the whole action centres about the bride, Philumena, who without explanation returns to her father's from her husband's home during his absence abroad. Laches, the father-in-law, assumes that his wife is to blame, berates her for quarreling with the girl, and falsely accuses her of mischief making, disgracing both him and herself, preparing sorrow for her son and turning friends into enemies.¹² "Women are all of one pattern," says Laches, "in obstinacy, in opposing their husbands, and in mischief."¹³ Sostrata in her quiet and unassuming way, tries to convince her bullying husband of her innocence but her efforts meet only with his scornful reproaches. With motherly concern, she tries twice to see Philumena,¹⁴ but is barred from entrance each time. In a final effort to effect a reconciliation between her son and his wife, Sostrata decides to retire com-

pletely from the scene and to move to the country.¹⁵ Her character leaves an indelible impression on one's mind. As Duff says, "she is a marvel of tender, serene strength, dignity which is never pride, patience which is never weakness, sympathy always watchful, wise and unfailing."¹⁶ No other woman in Plautus and Terence compares with her in simple nobility of character. Laches should have shown more appreciation of his wife's inherent goodness without launching such an unfair attack upon her. He should neither have jumped to conclusions, nor shown that he understood her so little as to blame her. Undoubtedly he is a devoted father, and keenly sensitive to every action that affects his son, but he seeks relief from his helplessness in the crisis by selecting as a scapegoat the one who least deserves the blame--the one indeed who loves him best. This is the age-old sacrifice of the selfless wife to the bullying husband.

On the other hand, in the bride's parents, the initiative is reversed. Her mother is a practical woman of action and her father usually acquiesces in his wife's acts,¹⁷ though he is almost never consulted beforehand and even misunderstands her intentions. Her efforts are almost entirely directed towards concealing Philumena's pregnancy¹⁸ and disposing of the undesired child in the belief that Philumena's husband is not its father.¹⁹ Myrrina wishes to save her daughter's marriage and safeguard her happiness. An amusing situation is created when Philumena's father breaks in at the critical moment, discovers the baby, and rejoices to think that it will now restore his daughter's happiness by cementing her marriage

ties.²⁰ The irony of the situation consists of the fact that he is actually right, although no one thinks him so, because the identity of the child's father is still a mystery. The mystery is finally resolved to the satisfaction of all. Thus we see that both parents and parents-in-law are primarily concerned with the domestic happiness of their children. Though they demonstrate this attitude with considerable variety of personality, the intentions of all four are good. Their standards of value are high, whether supported by strength of character as in the case of Laches and Myrrina, or by a mere willingness to cooperate and sympathize as in the case of Phidippus and Sostrata.

The experience of the young people themselves is a most searching test of conjugal happiness. Pamphilus is deeply in love with his wife, though he became so only after his marriage²¹ to which he yielded upon his father's insistence.²² At the time he was intensely in love with Bacchis, his mistress. His devotion receives a shock when he returns after a short journey to find that Philumena has given birth to a child which he cannot believe is his own.²³ Of course it is his own; the result of his having assaulted her before their marriage, an incident which he had lightly dismissed from his mind, thereby betraying his adherence to the so-called double standard of morality, according to which sexual adventures are pardonable in young men but not in young women. In the end, his actual fatherhood is proved and he is reconciled to his wife.²⁴ This is accomplished by one of the finest incidents in Roman Comedy in which the mistress, Bacchis, who still loves



Pamphilus, discovers the young couple to each other as the common parents of the child by producing the ring which Pamphilus had torn from the girl whom he had raped and given to her.²⁵ This selfless action is both a tribute to Bacchis' own nobility of character and to the value which the author sets upon wedded bliss.

In the Heauton Timorumenus, Chremes and Sostrata have a brief verbal exchange and disagreement upon the re-appearance of the daughter whom Chremes had ordered exposed at birth, but whom Sostrata's mother love had saved.²⁶ Chremes takes this opportunity of reproving his wife for what he calls her foolishness and her disobedience on that occasion, saying that women "know nothing of justice, reason or right"²⁷ but have "an eye for their own caprice only."²⁸ Playing up her husband's strength against her own weakness, Sostrata asks forgiveness which her husband magnanimously grants her, although admitting that his easy temper is a bad teacher for her.²⁹ His easy temper, however gives way to complaint and criticism when he discovers that his own son's amour refutes the very advice on parental discipline which he has been freely bestowing upon Menedemus. When the mother would shield her son against the bitterness of his disappointment, he complains that she is always set against him, and ironically adds that his wayward son "has no faults over and above the very ones you have."³⁰ The mother feels that Chremes' displeasure at the revelation of his son's intrigue and his threatened severity are too harsh and pleads that he be forgiven.³¹ She even assumes the responsibility of getting Clitipho a wife when

Chremes commands his son to marry, and she approves of the son's choice when her own did not satisfy his taste.³² The contribution to our data on the marital relationship made by this play is the picture of a husband who is an unpractical theorist, who offers free advice to others and makes plans for his own family which prove both unwise and ineffectual,³³ and of a wife who is a modest but wise woman of few words who shows natural affection and practical common sense, first in saving her infant daughter, and finally, in ensuring the future happiness of her son. Moreover, she is a woman of sufficient tact to effect these ends without wrecking her own domestic happiness.

The hen-pecked Chremes, in the Phormio, calls his wife a fury, and says that he himself "is the only thing in (his) house that (he) can call (his) own."³⁴ For that reason he wants to make doubly sure that she does not learn of his other wife and illegitimate daughter in Lemnos. The play, however, shows his wife, Nausistrata, to be a very reasonable woman, willing to cooperate,³⁵ and a good wife to her husband in spite of his double life. She is undoubtedly the victim of her husband's infidelity. He has mismanaged and appropriated the revenue of the estate which she inherited from her father, and, when it is revealed that these funds have been used to maintain a second wife, she has good reason to feel infuriated and contemptuous of him.³⁶ True to his character, Chremes begs her "to show your usual good humour and put up with it."³⁷ This she does at her own price.

The Amphitryon of Plautus is unique among extant Roman Comedies, among other reasons because of its delightful picture of a charming and affectionate wife. Alcmena, the faithful and loving wife of Amphitryon, is seduced by Jupiter, and suffers injustice both at the hands of the amorous god and of her husband who concludes that his wife, hitherto the model of honor and fidelity, has had relations with another man when she tells him that he came home the day before he actually arrived, that they had dinner together, and then shared the same bed.³⁸ Their marriage seems on the verge of shipwreck when Jupiter admits his guilty responsibility to Amphitryon, requesting that he "live again in fond concord as of old with thy wife; she has done naught to merit thy reproach; my power was upon her."³⁹ After the god assumes all the blame, Alcmena and Amphitryon resume harmonious relations again. This whole story of "Jovial Masquerade" is a burlesque of mythology. The affaires and amours of Jupiter were too well known to justify any imputation of sacrilege to Plautus. Neither must the zest with which the story is told be interpreted as lending any shade of approval to the conduct of Jupiter in the play. The impression of greatest importance which it leaves in the spectator or reader is that of Alcmena's purity and sincerity. The plot should be interpreted as supporting rather than undermining a high standard of conjugal fidelity.

In spite of Demeaneus' complaint in the Asinaria that he has given up his authority for a dowry⁴⁰ and that his wife is high-handed and hard to get along with,⁴¹ the behavior of

Artemona need not surprise us when she has discovered her husband sharing their son's amour. Having previously believed him to be "a paragon of men, a worthy, moral man"⁴² who loved his wife devotedly, her uncontrollable anger and sarcasm is now justifiable. She realizes what a promiscuous rake her husband really is;⁴³ not only does he steal her mantles to give them to his mistress⁴⁴ and accounts for his absence from home by feigned dinners with friends,⁴⁵ but he also corrupts their son.⁴⁶ Demaenetus shows brazen boldness when detected, calmly addressing his angry and disappointed wife as "dear,"⁴⁷ and coolly asking whether he may not stay with his mistress for dinner.⁴⁸ Even if Artemona's large dowry does enable her to dominate her husband as he alleges, that does not give him any excuse for completely disregarding all the obligations and moral responsibilities of the marital tie. On the other hand, Artemona's unquestionable integrity of character and her stubborn insistence that the maintenance of moral virtue is fundamental to the success of domestic happiness demands our approval. The play contributes a picture of conjugal infidelity and outraged virtue which precipitated a domestic crisis from which the appearance at least of domestic concord is saved by the strength of the wife's personality.

Cleostrata of the Casina has an equally worthless husband to contend with. When she learns that he is competing with his own son for the favours of the same mistress,⁴⁹ and that he plans to enjoy her as soon as he has induced his slave Olympio to marry her,⁵⁰ she refuses to cook for her

"sink of iniquity"⁵¹ until he comes to his senses again. When exposed by his wife's clever ruse, he shows real embarrassment⁵² and makes an effort to re-instate himself in her good graces,⁵³ saying that no one has a "more delightful wife"⁵⁴ than he, although earlier he had wished for her speedy death.⁵⁵ Cleostrata, unlike Artemona, seems to have been under no illusion as to her husband's real character. After first expressing her condemnation of his conduct in no unmistakable terms, and then by her strategy, defeating his intrigue, she finally accepts his surrender with equanimity and thus appearances are saved once more.

In the Menaechmi, both husband and wife appear to share the blame for their marital differences. The husband may justly complain that he has married a "custom-house officer" since he must declare "what he does, where he goes and what he is about."⁵⁶ His wife's persistent nagging no doubt is partly responsible for driving him to the society of his mistress, but no such provocation can explain away his unprincipled transgression in making his mistress presents of his wife's mantle and jewellery. Discovering the theft, the wife summons her father, who, perhaps because he knows his daughter's nature, at first gives her a lecture on wifely complaisance, advising tolerance of her husband's emotional irregularities⁵⁷ and suggesting that she should be sensible since she is well provided for.⁵⁸ But his attitude is altered when he learns that Menaechmus has been giving away his wife's possessions.⁵⁹ From this point, the father takes his daughter's part, but both are baffled by the husband's twin

brother, and the play does not provide us with a solution of the domestic problem except in so far as the mistress is eliminated and the affair with her broken off. The domestic pattern of this play is that of a jealous wife and an errant husband both of whom contribute to their mutual unhappiness. The introduction of the father is an interesting variation which, in this case, serves merely to emphasize the shortcomings of both of the principal parties. The jealousy of Menaechmus' wife is more pronounced than that of Daemones' wife in the Rudens.⁶⁰ In the latter play, the wife's jealousy neutralized the hospitality of Daemones, but her jealousy is soon placated and domestic harmony restored.

To avoid his wife's suspicions, the philandering Demipho of the Mercator houses his mistress at the home of his friend, Lysimachus, whose wife is temporarily absent on their farm. Since Lysimachus remains in town and does not join her, his wife now becomes suspicious and returns unexpectedly to find the strange woman in her home. She concludes that her worst fears are justified, and laments her folly in having entrusted her ten talents dowry and all her possessions to such an unfaithful creature as Lysimachus.⁶¹ Although she quickly recovers from her jealous anger and "high-strung" nerves when she learns that her husband is innocent,⁶² even so, she displays little patience and understanding throughout the episode. In this play, Demipho is the shrewd, unfaithful type of husband who deceives his wife without compunction, and so far from setting an example of paternal virtue for his son, helps him to sow the same crop of wild oats.

Lysimachus, on the other hand, fears his wife, and to judge from his reluctance to connive at Demipho's intrigue, does not deserve the suspicion which his wife feels about him. He fairly wilts under her sharp and critical tones. Even though her accusation is false, he shows no spirit in his own defence,⁶³ which proves the power which is exercised in this household by his better half. We have here the picture of a wife whose wealth and position has undermined her husband's courage and initiative to such an extent that he is afraid to assert himself and no longer has the courage of his convictions.

In the Stichus, two sisters exhibit a faithful and abiding affection for their husbands who have been trading abroad for three years. Deep as is their sense of filial duty,⁶⁴ the wives will not agree to the urging of their father to marry again, a procedure which we may assume was lawful if the husband had been absent from his wife for three years.⁶⁵ Both sisters, like Penelope, still have as high a regard for their absent husbands as if they were present,⁶⁶ a loyalty which they declare is nothing more than their plighted duty. Both reject another "first-rate match" on the ground that they did not marry money but men.⁶⁷ The devotion of these wives towards their husbands and their ideal of married life affords a noble, almost unique, example of conjugal loyalty and fidelity. They reveal a consciousness of the full import of the marriage tie not often encountered. The play affords little evidence as to whether the faithfulness of the wives was reciprocated by the husbands, but on the other hand, there

is no suggestion that the travellers pray for the deaths of their wives as does Callicles in the Trinummus,⁶⁸ and as we have already noticed Lysidamus does in the Casina. Such desires, however, may be prompted more by a distorted sense of humour than a deep-seated incompatibility between husband and wife.

Among the wedded pairs whose harmony or discord we have studied, we note the customary range of characteristic types in both husbands and wives. Husbands vary in nature from the strictly virtuous to the unfaithful deceiver. As in any society, some descend to the vulgar level of the promiscuous rake, who completely disregards all the obligations of the marriage vow and feels no shame in detection. Others again exemplify now the bullying type who abuses his authority, and now, the weak, yielding and easy-going individual of no spirit. The latter characteristics are sometimes the result of an inferiority complex induced by the bogey of a wife's large dowry. Resenting the loss of authority and being constantly subjected to feminine jealousy and nagging, the husband grows careless of his domestic responsibilities and morally degenerates.

Not one wife in Plautus and Terence is shown unfaithful to her husband. Such unvarying respectability finds explanation in the fact that the women in ancient society led restricted lives and lacked the opportunity of contracting extra-marital friendships such as their husbands so frequently became involved in.

Of the two playwrights, Terence shows himself more con-

cerned with the problem of family solidarity than Plautus, and consequently, he treats it with greater attention and with a more delicate and sympathetic approach, although never at the sacrifice of realism. The Hecyra in particular shows his interest in marital happiness, as the play is almost exclusively concerned with the domestic problems of no less than three couples. His sympathetic treatment of the theme and his happy resolution of all the family difficulties at the end of the play indicate that his interest in the situation he has created is as much social as it is dramatic.

Plautus, on the other hand, is interested more in situations and incidents which provoke laughter and less with social problems. Although in the Amphitryon he has presented an appealing study of an endearing and virtuous woman and a faithful husband, we feel that this feature of the plot was secondary to its humorous potentialities in the eyes of Plautus. The faithful pair of Penelopes in the Stichus are likewise characters seldom met in comedy, but even in the Stichus their domestic fortunes are not fully developed. The other plays of Plautus deal with this relationship quite incidentally and without any special emphasis upon the married state.

The easily-recognized types of husband and wife which we have marshalled and discussed from the Roman plays are not peculiar to ancient society, though the frequency of masculine philandering which Terence and especially Plautus admit may suggest that ancient standards were more lax than our own. This may be true, but it is also true that an intrigue of this

kind provided the comic writers with more convenient plots than the sober austerity of correct married conduct. Except for this aspect of domestic life, the comic standards are not more different from those of any period. On the other hand, the vitality and charm of some of Terence's women are almost modern in romantic interest.

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CHAPTER IV

RELATIONS BETWEEN LOVERS

In both Plautus and Terence, love is the mainspring of much of the intrigue upon which the plot depends. Its quality varies from that of romantic affaires du coeur to fickle, meretricious connections. An unmarried woman belonged definitely either to the reputable or disreputable type in the milieu of Roman Comedy. It was difficult, apparently, for a young man in Comedy to meet a girl of the first class because she was practically withdrawn from society,¹ appearing only at religious ceremonies such as weddings or festivals. However, in order to accentuate the love interest of their plays, the writers of the Fabula Palliata often employ a conventional device for confusing the two categories. They present the object of an ardent lover's affection as a beautiful, chaste and honorable girl, born free, but who has been lost in childhood as a result of theft, shipwreck, or being exposed at birth, and who has been reared amid poverty and in ignorance of her true social status. In her dramatic environment, she can move in public with the freedom of a courtesan and frankly attach herself to a devoted lover. Invariably she finds herself in some precarious situation from which the dramatist must rescue her. She may be already pregnant; her lover's

father may have ordered him to marry someone else; or the girl may be the helpless slave of a pander; but in the denouement, her true identity comes to light. Her happiness complete, she is free to marry her lover, since the recovery of freedom removes all the impediments to marriage.

In the second class, relationships between the roving, young lover and the sly, grasping meretrix, though frowned upon, are taken for granted, until such time as the father decides his son shall marry. This liaison continues as long as the young man has the means of showering gifts and money upon his love. Past favors count for nothing.² Even if his resources do hold out, this is no guarantee that a bold soldier with greater attraction both in gifts and money may not receive greater consideration and attention from the courtesan, should he happen along.³ At such times, the lover bemoans the cruelty of love and his stupidity in wasting his means upon a passing fancy. Occasionally, true affection will exist between a harlot and her lover, giving rise to intrigue upon intrigue, as the young man desperately "gambles" to raise sufficient funds to buy the freedom of the girl. Even when he has accomplished his end and made the meretrix his permanent mistress, in the eyes of his society, he is not legally married.

While both Plautus and Terence treat the subject in a variety of ways, the latter draws the courtesan in a more sympathetic light, representing her as a woman of finer feeling than most would attribute to her class.⁴ Terence likes to discover a new character under the traditional mask. The

character and conduct of Thais in the Eunuchus and of Bacchis in the Hecyra win our praise and admiration. Only the external fact of their profession discredits them;⁵ their actions reveal their true nature. Bacchis, the most noble creation of Terence's characters of this class, when charged with breaking up Pamphilus' marriage,⁶ agrees to face his wife and mother-in-law in order to assert her innocence.⁷ Though ashamed of appearing before these respectable women,⁸ she courageously attempts a thing which no common courtesan would think of doing.⁹ She is building up the home of Pamphilus instead of breaking it down, as most courtesans would strive to do. Because of her enduring love for Pamphilus, Bacchis will do anything to secure his future happiness.¹⁰ Prompted by the most generous motives, she rights the family differences,¹¹ unselfishly pays Pamphilus' wife the highest of compliments,¹² and openly rejoices that she has been the occasion of a complete reconciliation.¹³ In the end, she explicitly avows that she will never let mercenary motives induce her to play a wicked role in any undertaking.¹⁴

Thais, reputed to be the most favorable delineation of the Athenian 'hetaera',¹⁵ possesses a depth and sincerity not usually found in members of her profession. She has a profound and enduring love for Phaedria,¹⁶ but because of the cajolery with which she attempts to rescue a free-born maiden, by the name of Pamphila, from the clutches of a captain who also has paid attentions to herself,¹⁷ she appears insincere and frivolous in the eyes of her lover.¹⁸ In mastering the situation,¹⁹ she shows grace, dignity, and a proud humility,

combined not only with a kindness of nature but a real goodness of heart.²⁰ Unlike the real courtesan, she is enabled by her sympathy and understanding to forgive Chaerea, her lover's brother for molesting the chaste Pamphila in her home.²¹ She herself, she says, knows the power of love.²² Her actions reveal her a courtesan in name only. Chaerea pays her a high and deserved compliment when he tells his brother that "nothing is more deserving of love than this Thais here: she has done so much for all our family."²³

Terence, also, is not without his examples of intrigue on a lower level of the type more common in Plautus, where the courtesan shows no real affection for her lover. Another and a different Bacchis, the courtesan friend of Clitipho in the Heauton Timorumenus, has all the external trappings²⁴ and all the inward baseness and greed of her profession.²⁵ She arrives at Clitipho's home with "more than a dozen maid-servants, laden with dresses and trinkets,"²⁶ "a wild, bold creature full of fine airs and extravagant habits."²⁷ Clitipho complains that her grasping nature knows nothing but "Give me" and "Bring me."²⁸ To him she is a "plague,"²⁹ although possessed of winsome charms.³⁰ If for favors bestowed, her fees are not immediately forthcoming, she meets the situation with realism and self-possession: "If it turns out he has deceived me now, he shall have a lost errand with his repeated prayers to me to come. Or else when I have agreed to come and fixed a time.... I'll deceive him and not come."³¹ Yet her character is not wholly mercenary; she can recognize goodness in another when she commends the honorable Antiphila for matching her morals

with her beauty,³² and for binding herself to a lover "whose turn of mind agrees nearest with your own."³³ She admits that her own is a shameful occupation but a necessary source of livelihood.³⁴

We have illustrated the two contrasting extremes among Terence's courtesans: the girl whose noble nature belies the name which she is forced to bear; and the girl whose conduct amply justifies the designation. More common in Terence, however, is the pseudo-courtesan, born free, but stolen or exposed in infancy, whose temporary social station is the demi-monde, until the recognitio takes place. Glycerium, Antiphila and the two Pamphilas of the Andria, the Heauton Timorumenus, the Eunuchus, and the Adelphoe respectively serve as illustrations. Each girl becomes the object of a young man's deep and abiding affection which culminates in marriage once the girl's true identity is fortuitously discovered. Each case is worthy of closer explanation.

Glycerium, to all intents and purposes, is the wife of Pamphilus, having been betrothed³⁵ to him a few minutes before her guardian, the courtesan Chrysis, passed away. The young couple are expecting a child,³⁶ and with pride, Pamphilus decides to rear it,³⁷ a decision not in any way obligatory since they are not legally married. Pamphilus' father complicates matters for the lovers by commanding immediate marriage for his son with someone else,³⁸ for the father noticed Pamphilus' evident love for Glycerium at the funeral of Chrysis when his son saved her from throwing herself upon the pyre.³⁹ While torn between filial obedience and passionate

love,⁴⁰ the anxious Pamphilus resolves to defy his father and stand by the woman he loves.

I swear by all that's sacred that I will never forsake her, not if I knew that I must face the enmity of the whole world. I wooed her, I won her, our hearts are one: away with those that would part us; death only shall take her away from me.⁴¹

Such love will not be denied. When Glycerium proves to be the daughter of Chremes,⁴² a friend of Pamphilus' father, and not a courtesan, happiness reigns supreme on both sides.

Although Antiphila appears in one scene only⁴³ and speaks no more than thirty-three words, her beauty⁴⁴ and her moral goodness⁴⁵ of character shine through the whole play. The selfish and extravagant Bacchis, in one of the nobler speeches of the play,⁴⁶ praises Antiphila for her steadfastness and for her virtuous qualities, and maintains that a mutual and enduring affection holds greater happiness for a woman than meretricious intrigues. The young Clinia falls violently in love with Antiphila, but as usual, the father detects his son's amour⁴⁷ and, with his upbraiding, causes him to go abroad.⁴⁸ The news of his return causes Antiphila to weep for joy,⁴⁹ so sincere and deep is her affection. Clinia doubts her purity when he sees her approaching with a train of maidservants,⁵⁰ but his slave assures him that this extra baggage is the property of the courtesan, Bacchis.⁵¹ Both lovers show overwhelming feelings of devoted attachment as they fondly embrace upon meeting each other again.⁵² "We are to be as happy as they in heaven," remarks Clinia when it proves that Antiphila is free-born.⁵³

Chaerea of the Eunuchus and Aeschinus of the Adelphoe

are passionate but constant lovers. The former falls in love with his Pamphila at first sight,⁵⁴ and though he incontinently seduces her,⁵⁵ when she proves to be of Athenian parentage,⁵⁶ he eagerly presses to marry her.⁵⁷ When his plea is granted, his rhapsodic joy overflows.⁵⁸ In the Adelphoe, it is the indulgent father, Micio, who on learning that his adopted son, Aeschinus, secretly had a child by Pamphila, his mistress,⁵⁹ brings the matter to a climax by pretending that a relative from Miletus has come to rescue and marry the girl,⁶⁰ and that he ought to have her in spite of the unknown lover to whom the girl has borne a child. Aeschinus criticizes his father for such an unfeeling attitude, saying that he is unfairly disregarding the feelings of the young man whose mistress she has been.⁶¹ He continues:

It may well be that he is filled with a heart-broken passion for her at this moment, unfortunate that he is! Must he see her torn from his presence, ravished from his gaze? Father, it is an outrage!⁶²

Finally, Aeschinus breaks into tears and admits that he is the culprit.⁶³ With quiet assurance, Micio tells him to "be of good courage; you shall marry the woman."⁶⁴

The cousins Phaedria and Antipho of the Phormio both find themselves desperately in love, the latter marrying his friendless Phanium with the connivance of the parasite, Phormio, who pretends to be the next of kin to the orphaned girl.⁶⁵ Antipho fears his father's displeasure but the situation turns out happily since she proves to be the illegitimate daughter of his uncle Chremes.⁶⁶ Phaedria experiences greater difficulty. He must contend with an uncomprising and unsympathetic

leno who threatens to sell his music girl to another lover unless he pays for her immediately.⁶⁷ In utter despair, Phaedria, resolving either to follow her or to commit suicide, breaks down in tears.⁶⁸ Once Antipho, his slave Geta and Phormio get the required funds for him,⁶⁹ all is set on an even keel again. When Chremes objects to his son's amour,⁷⁰ his wife Nausistrata wonders who is more at fault: her son for keeping a mistress, or her husband for having two wives.⁷¹

As in Terence, the young men and women in Plautus seem to taste both the honey and the gall of love, experiencing all the different degrees of the emotion as they pass from ecstasy to despair and back again. Charinus of the Mercator complains of the cares, the sorrows, and the excessive display of love,⁷² and how it has made him an "intemperate, unrestrained, and unprincipled waster."⁷³ Yet he suffers untold agony when he learns that his father wishes to sell the beautiful girl he bought for himself while on a trading trip for his father. "What have I to live for? Why not die?"⁷⁴ wails the love-lorn Charinus, who does not yet know that his father is in love with the girl himself. In the end, the lovers, who had agreed not to have relations with any man or woman,⁷⁵ are happily united as we infer from the father's remark: "Let him have her for all I care."⁷⁶

Philolaches of the Mostellaria blames love for drenching and then drowning all his high moral principles;⁷⁷ for ridding him of all his money, his credit, his reputation, character and good name.⁷⁸ But he is not very remorseful about his complete bankruptcy. He rejoices that he is ruined for the sake

of his mistress, Philematium,⁷⁹ since "you can see she loves me with all her soul."⁸⁰ Moreover, "our books balance perfectly--you love me and I love you,"⁸¹ he remarks to her as he fondly admires her. In the same play, love prompts Callidamates, the bosom friend of Philolaches, to indulge in fond but maudlin terms of endearment addressed to his lady-love: "0--0--ocellus meus, tuos sum alumnus, mel meum."⁸²

Toxilus of the Persa would sooner wrestle with the lion, the hydra, the stag, or the Aetolian boar than with Love, upon whose highway he is setting out with an empty purse.⁸³ Such are the terrors and tribulations to be overcome by the comic lover before he reaches the longed-for goal. At times indeed the difficulties appear insurmountable. In the Asinaria, Argyrippus, complaining of the harsh and brutal treatment he receives at the hands of the lena, Cleareta,⁸⁴ angrily condemns her class as "the destroyers, the wreckers of young men."⁸⁵ His love, Philaenium, forbidden to associate with him,⁸⁶ laments the "cruel fate to be kept away from the man I love" and "the man I want."⁸⁷ After the young man buys the freedom of the girl, the world in which they live will become a brighter and happier one. Stratippocles of the Epidicus has cause for some disappointment when the girl upon whom he has set his heart and freed proves to be his lost sister, Telestis.⁸⁸

One of the major problems commonly confronting the young lover in the plays of Plautus involves the raising of sufficient funds to secure the freedom of his mistress, be she free-born or not, with whom he is madly in love. Phoenicium of the

Pseudolus appeals to her lover, Calidorus, to prevent her from being bought by a soldier.⁸⁹ It is a tender letter recalling all their days of ardent love-making and fond familiarity. "All these delights of yours and mine....will be ended for eternaldom," she continues, "unless I find my salvation in you. Now I shall test the truth or falsehood of your love."⁹⁰ The penniless Calidorus wrings his hands in frantic despair, unequal to the situation, and clueless of any means to meet it,⁹¹ although hopeful that his slave Pseudolus will solve the difficulty with some ingenious scheme. In extreme frustration, he even contemplates suicide.⁹² By his usual tricks, the resourceful Pseudolus outwits both pander⁹³ and the soldier's henchman,⁹⁴ frees Phoenicium and makes the lovers eternally happy.

Phaedromus of the Curculio is another model of the helpless lover capable of devising nothing but opportunities of meeting and embracing his inamorata.⁹⁵ Planesium and he must live on stolen love until he can get funds from Caria to free her from the grip of the pimp Cappadox. The parasite, Curculio, fails to get the money⁹⁶ but steals a ring from Phaedromus' rival⁹⁷ and fraudulently employs the seal to withdraw funds from a banker⁹⁸ to free the chaste Planesium. The story ends happily as the rival proves to be the girl's brother,⁹⁹ and agrees to her marriage to Phaedromus,¹⁰⁰ a consummation which both lovers devoutly desire.

Toxilus and Lemniselenis of the Persa write the final chapter of their love as the young slave secures enough money to free his mistress.¹⁰¹ Theirs is a love of sentimentality

climaxed in the extravaganza of the banquet scene where Toxilus garlands Lemniselenis' head with the sentimental speech "Flowers for a flower, my love! You shall be our dictatress here," then during the toast, passes the goblet "from my hands to yours, as befits two sweethearts."¹⁰² The interesting thing about this play is the romantic conception of slaves enjoying the rights and privileges of love as freely as their masters could. The facts of legal status are not allowed to intrude upon the stage where Cupid reigns.

The sweethearts of the Cistellaria are the pair most romantically in love. Selenium rises above her training and associates to show a constant affection for Alcesimarchus. She aches all over for misery when she does not find herself in his company.¹⁰³ He suffers similar agonies and complains of befogged mental faculties, of being in a thousand moods,¹⁰⁴ and of being dealt with "like the waves of the sea"¹⁰⁵ when he is absent from her side. Each yearns for the other, Selenium confessing the simple and fervent wish to spend her life with her lover.¹⁰⁶ Since she proves to be free-born,¹⁰⁷ nothing can hinder their legal marriage from taking place and making their happiness complete.

In the Rudens, another romantic love story, Plesidippus and Palaestra overcome the obstacles to their union when the slave girl proves to be the daughter of Daemones,¹⁰⁸ an old gentleman of Athens living near Cyrene. Their courting has taken place prior to the opening of the play, but Plesidippus' concern about Palaestra's whereabouts¹⁰⁹ and his prosecution of the pimp who was going to carry her abroad¹¹⁰ is proof

enough of his affection.

In the Aulularia, Lyconides confesses to Euclio that he wronged his daughter, Phaedria, at the festival of Ceres "because of drink and love."¹¹¹ In this significant example, Plautus represents a young lady of unimpeachable birth and station compromised by her lover in the same manner as her less fortunate sisters of the demi-monde in other plays. As in life, so in Plautus, seduction is not confined to the socially outcast or irresponsible. The manipulator of dramatic motifs is no respecter of persons. A different situation appears in the Trinummus where the plot involves a proposal of marriage which is not motivated by sexual passion. Lysiteles seeks to assist his friend's financial position by requesting the hand of his sister without a dowry.¹¹² Since love is not the prompting motive, the relationship is hardly relevant to our survey of dramatic lovers.

The best example in Plautus of the greedy and unscrupulous courtesan, who has not the least intention of devoting herself to any one favourite, appears in the person of Phronesium of the Truculentus. No fewer than three of the dramatis personae are infatuated with her; namely, Diniarchus, a city youth; Stratophanes, a soldier from abroad, and Strabax, a country youth. Each enjoys a share of her favour as long as his money lasts,¹¹³ and to secure it she employs the most ingenious cunning, which contributes to the comic amusement. She has the effrontery to smuggle an infant of undisclosed parentage into her home and to call it her own, asserting that the soldier is its father.¹¹⁴ Him she treats

outrageously,¹¹⁵ in spite of his prodigious generosity and naive good nature.¹¹⁶ When the child proves to be the illegitimate offspring of Diniarchus,¹¹⁷ her most ardent lover, and a free-born girl whose father presses him to marry her,¹¹⁸ Phronesium begs to keep the baby for another few days¹¹⁹ to further exploit her soldier victim. The young men have only themselves to blame but learn too late that "if only we'd submit our youthful wills to (our parent's) reason in time, and learn to pass on past gains to future heirs,....pimps and harlots would be no more."¹²⁰

Similarly, by their wiles and winsome ways, the two Bacchides know how to beguile not only the youths Pistoclerus and Mensilochus, but also their fathers, the "pater attentus" and the "senex lepidus" who have come to reproach their sons for their licentious living.¹²¹ Although basically the sisters are moved by the same mercenary considerations as the average professional courtesan, they possess more charm and personal attraction than Phronesium. Acroteleutium of the Miles Gloriosus needs little instruction in the art of cajoling the vain, conceited and boastful miles, whom everyone in the play seems to detest. "It is all arranged, delightfully and shrewdly, properly and neatly,"¹²² she is happy to report as she anticipates the success of her scheme. The more mischief and suffering she causes, the greater her personal delight.¹²³ Erotium of the Menaechmi is one more example of the purely predatory type. In such cases, love is merely a part of their stock in trade. There is little or no trace of genuine affection.

Love situations in Plautus and Terence adhere largely to a common pattern as might be expected from the highly conventionalized society portrayed in Roman Comedy. The difference between the two playwrights is chiefly a matter of treatment or emphasis. Plautus probes an intrigue to any sordid depth, undeterred by social or moral prejudice in his search for comic possibilities. Terence writes with greater delicacy because his interest lies in the analysis of characters worthy of his study, as well as in the dramatic situation. In Plautus, as in life, irregular love may be coarse and vulgar. Equally the pseudo-courtesan, who proves later to be better-born, is depicted by him in a more favorable light, sometimes even with commendable charm and virtue. But he fails to give us the fine and sympathetic studies which Terence creates in Bacchis and Thais. He does present a few feminine characters as capable of constant affection and possessed with a yearning desire for a single lover, although the motive may seem to be a desire to escape from the pander's stronghold. At least one example of true romantic love appears, inspired by an unfortunate lady who is presently discovered to be an Athenian citizen. But by Plautus, the inter-play of the sexes is apparently used as the source of plot material without an attempt to provoke reflection upon the social implications. As an objective presentation, his work provides us with examples of intrigue which illustrate most of the possible permutations within the social range. But beyond this, he does not follow Terence into an examination of the effect of intrigue and situation upon character.

Both playwrights present us with numerous pictures of unoccupied and impressionable youths tossed about on the sea of love, be it true affection or meretricious intrigue. Some comic lovers show character and determination. Most are aimless and helplessly dependent. Money, which they usually lack, affords the greatest temporary obstacle to the happy possession of the beloved. Without his cunning but loyal slave to rescue him from the inevitable crisis, the lover would fare badly, whom conscience has made a weakling, a coward, and a "bundle of nerves," incapable of any coherent action. Even his threats of suicide seem unconvincing from one who lacks the courage, we feel, to snuff out his "little" life with such resolute purpose.

In Terence, love figures as a more serious and important motive than in Plautus' promiscuous examples of irregular passion. The origin of the sentiment may be nothing deeper than physical desire inspired by outward charms and enhanced by compassion, but we are persuaded that Terence believed in the power of love to develop character and motivate social behavior. Thus it is that he treats his lovers with greater sympathy on the whole than Plautus, and with more tender feeling. The finest example of his eloquent and affecting pictures of the effect of innocent beauty and love at first sight appears in his touching characterization of Glycerium of the Andria¹²⁴ and Phanium of the Phormio.¹²⁵ But both writers, for their own purposes so similar and yet so different, fully explore the dramatic possibilities of this emotion which is common to all mankind, and which seems to be necessary for

almost every comic plot, if we except the Captivi, which is unique in this respect.

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CHAPTER V

RELATIONS BETWEEN MASTER AND SLAVE

The relationship of master and slave is as prominent in Roman Comedy as it was fundamental in ancient society. In almost every play of Plautus and Terence, the slave is never far from the centre of the stage. Usually it is because of the bag of tricks which he unloads whenever a difficult situation confronts his young master that he arrests our attention. Lacking the responsibilities as well as the rights of a freeman, he revels in mischief-making and in unscrupulous impudence and impertinence. No task is too daring for him to tackle, and nothing pleases him more than cheating his old master out of money or matching wits with the grasping pander. In so doing, he often shows a superiority of intellect, which explains his position as tutor in the family and personal household slave, while duller slaves are sent to the manual labor of the fields. In most cases, he voluntarily attaches himself to the interests of his master's son, sometimes because both have wild, carefree natures which plunge them into escapades and exciting adventures. But sometimes, in the case of the weak and floundering young man whose inability to think and act is a reflection of poor upbringing, the slave has a better opportunity of showing his shrewdness and cunning

whereby he helps his young master with a view to furthering his own chances of freedom. Experience has taught him in any case that usually he will receive greater consideration and more sympathy at the hands of his young master than of his old, and that he will be less in danger of a flogging for some trifling misdemeanor. The slaves in comedy who remain respectful and loyal to their old masters are few in comparison and represent thralls who have spent long years in the service of a particular family or who have grown up with their masters, and found this association to be the basis of an intimate and enduring friendship.

The slave, like the parasite, finds a place in Roman Comedy, not only because he was an essential element in contemporary society, but because he is the source of much of the fun. The plot derives no little of its force and interest from the manoeuvres of this restless schemer who keeps the action moving until the climax is reached. In the denouement, when his intrigue and mischief-making can remain no longer concealed, the old master often realizes how completely he has been gulled. Even then, not infrequently, his well-deserved punishment is cunningly avoided either by his own brazen impudence or the intervention of his young master who pleads on his behalf.

Comedy represents the slave's life as neither easy nor enviable. Even when the young master is complacent and satisfied, there is still the wrath of the old master to contend with, when he discovers his slave scheming against him. The culprit must be philosophical, as Hegio's slave tells

Philocrates and Tyndarus in the Captivi:

The thing for you to do is to take it calmly.... it's a good idea to accept the situation and a master's orders gracefully, and make things easy to bear by taking them the proper way. Anything a master does is right, no matter how wrong it is.¹

In the Poenulus, Syncerastus would rather pass his days in a stone quarry or in a mill, "fastened to a big iron brick,"² than slave for his unreasonable master, the pimp Lycus. "A worse liar or worse rascal than that master of mine can't be found on earth, or one so foul and caked with filth,"³ he frankly admits. Serving a young master in love "who hasn't got his girl"⁴ involves painful handicaps also, decides Milphio in the same play. "I just yearn to smash this pimp that's mauling my wretched master, who then proceeds to lay into me with whips and fists and feet,"⁵ he continues as he determines upon some retaliatory action of his own. Epidicus, in the play of the same name, no sooner succeeds in buying the object of his master's first love than that master's eyes suddenly focus on "metal more attractive," blotting out all memories of his former mistress.⁶ On threats of being "flogged till he's irrigated,"⁷ Epidicus again is compelled to raise funds to purchase the "new love." He is only too well-justified in complaining that "it is hard when you do a man a good turn and get no thanks for it."⁸ Sagaristio of the Persa sums up the slave's whole attitude to his position in the reflection:

A slave that wants to slave it to suit his master, by gad, certainly has to stow a lot of things in his chest that he thinks will please his master, present and absent, both. Personally, I don't take to slaving

cheerfully, and master doesn't entirely take to me. But yet, just as if I was a sore eye, he can't keep hands off of me, can't keep from giving me commissions and making me the prop of his affairs.⁹

In this connection, it is important to note the dependence of master on slave for practical advice and helpful action in some trying situation. It is even more obvious when the master himself openly confesses the superior adroitness of his slave. Demaenetus, the old rake and gallant of the Asinaria, pays this tribute to Libanus, to whom he has entrusted the delicate task of stealing money from his thrifty wife: "A more rascally servant can't be found or a wilier one....just your man to commit a matter to, if you want it well managed: he'd prefer to expire in pain and torment rather than fail to fulfil his promise to the latter."¹⁰ When the spendthrift and licentious Philolaches of the Mostellaria learns that his father has arrived from abroad, he entrusts himself and all his hopes to Tranio.¹¹ In the Poenulus, we have a vivid picture of the love-lorn Agorastocles, tremulous and hysterical,¹² as he clings in desperation to the arm of the slave who seems to be his only salvation: "Oh, Milphio, many's the affair I've entrusted to you time and again, when all looked dark and forlorn and counselless, and you, with your wisdom and cleverness and sagacity and shrewdness, have turned them into triumphs for me."¹³ Both young master and old appear ridiculously weak and helpless in the extremity of their dependence upon the slave whom they expect to obtain the fulfilment of their desires. And the self-reliant slave who appreciates his advantage plays upon their helplessness

for the amusement of himself and the spectator. Nothing is funnier than the scene in the Asinaria where Argyrippus agrees to carry his slaves on his back and suffer his mistress to make love to them if they will then immediately surrender to him the money to buy her.¹⁴ It is a most ironical predicament for a lover when, as the slave of love, he is humbled before his own slaves. So Tranio in the Mostellaria makes sport of the old gentlemen, Theopropides and Simo, as he ushers them about Simo's house, without letting either discover that the other imagines himself the owner.¹⁵ With the double-talk typical of his station, he bolsters invention with invention, himself the crafty "crow" making game of a couple of vultures. When Theopropides looks for the pretended picture of the "crow" in the house, Tranio keeps up the ironic parable: "Why the crow is planted between the pair of vultures and he is pecking at the pair of them in turn. For mercy's sake, sir, look this way, toward me, so as to see the crow!"¹⁶

Typically callous and calculating is the remark of his slave when Calidorus of the Pseudolus, in the urgency of love, tries to borrow a shilling from him to make himself "a swinging shape": "Is this why you want to be so smart and hang yourself, so as to swindle me, once you get my shilling?"¹⁷ The disappointed or love-sick lover may seldom expect much greater sympathy from his hard-boiled slave than that. But the senex is often treated to ridicule and abuse. Euclio, the miser of the Aulularia, is described by his slave as going to bed at night with a bag tied over his jaws in order not to lose any breath while asleep. The description continues with many

picturesque and absurd details.¹⁸

A favorite and amusing trick by which the slave increases the suspense of an anxious master is to pretend to be all out of breath with the import of great news. Acanthio of the Mercator puffs and pants, then alternatively sulks and rants, for almost a hundred lines before he offers any explanation of his haste to his young master, who by this time is lifeless with fear.¹⁹ As Charinus pleads for mercy and cries out in desperate impatience: "Oh lord! My poor heart! It's melting away speck by speck, just as when you put salt in water,"²⁰ the slave unfeelingly rejoins: "There! that's the truest thing you've said."²¹ He knows his importance and takes advantage of it--he is the real master. Similarly, Pinacium of the Stichus, after nearly rattling the door off its hinges in his post haste to gain admittance, takes time off to describe his feelings: "I am dead, dead! the marrow of my bones is all sucked out by weariness."²² Characteristic, too, of his self-importance, is the gusto with which the slave majestically proceeds on his mission: "On, now, Pinacium, as thou dost please, run as thou likest! Care not a straw for any men alive! Elbow them all from thy path! Clean them out and clear the road! Be it a monarch that blocks thy course, up and land that monarch on his neck!"²³

In Periphanes of the Miles Gloriosus, we have a vivid picture-study, not to say caricature, of the slave with extravagant ostentation concentrating on his next move.²⁴ There he sits cogitating, brow bent, tapping his chest with his fingers. Then, constantly changing his position, he

rests his left hand on his left thigh and reckons on the fingers of his right hand. Gives his right thigh a lusty whack. Snaps his fingers! He's in distress;he's shaking his head....Look, he's building-- supporting his chin with a pillar. Never will he rest this day till what he wants is all worked out.²⁵

These dramatics are not all due to perplexity. The exaggerated showmanship is calculated also to impress the master with the slave's zeal and exertion on his behalf.

With all his self-assurance, however, the wily slave is not always entirely free from superstition. When omens are unfavorable, even his thick skin may be penetrated by misgivings as to the outcome of his plotting. Libanus, charged by his master, Argyrippus in the Asinaria to secure money for him, looks heavenwards; then jubilantly exclaims: "I've got my auspices, my auguries: the birds let me steer it where I please! Woodpecker and crow on the left, raven and barn owl on the right....What's this, though, the woodpecker tapping an elm?"²⁶ The latter was considered a bad omen, foreboding corporal punishment. Olympio, in the Casina, is somewhat more skeptical. He advises his master not to trust his hopes to heaven when the lots are being cast for the maiden, for "every living soul trusts to Heaven, but just the same I've seen plenty of your Trust-to-Heaven folks fooled times enough!"²⁷

The slaves of comedy take a frank and professional pride in their rascality, their sharp wit and cunning plots. Questionable, nay reprehensible, as their deeds may be, slaves like Leonida and Libanus of the Asinaria delight in vying with one another for guilty honors.²⁸ When the one asks whether he has acknowledged the other's villainy adequately, the second

replies: "Yes, pretty much what you and I and our characters deserved."²⁹ Sometimes their knavish schemes arise out of a genuine desire to gain freedom from a lot which is anything but a happy one. Epidicus, in the play of that name, plots and schemes for his young master against his old, until the latter, aware of being gulled, first vows vengeance, and then is dumbfounded when the slave voluntarily offers himself to be bound and jokes at his own expense.³⁰ The old man's change of heart becomes complete when the slave's plotting ends in the discovery of the master's daughter,³¹ and he begs forgiveness of the slave and sets him free.³² Sometimes, of his own accord, and to further his own interests, the master offers the slave his freedom as a bribe, albeit a precarious and insincere one, it might be supposed from the slave's refusal. In the Casina, Chalinus employs his ingenuity to advance his own love affair against the rival whom his old master is backing,³³ and though he is tempted by the enticing offer of freedom if he remain single,³⁴ he refuses,³⁵ much to the chagrin of the master.³⁶ So Charinus of the Mercator promises his slave his freedom if he will only divulge the secret that brought him in such post haste,³⁷ but his slave is obviously unimpressed and retorts: "Huh! Patting my back!"³⁸ Messenio, on the other hand, the faithful slave in the Menaechmi, believes that "the day's near when my master will reward me for my services."³⁹ Ironically enough he receives his freedom sooner than he expects. Saving his master's twin from the fury of his father-in-law's slaves,⁴⁰ and mistaking him for his master,⁴¹ he requests his freedom⁴² which the supposed master

grants, though the gift is not his to give!⁴³ Fisherman Gripus of the Rudens, more dreamer than schemer, dreams of his freedom upon finding a trunk of treasure in his net.⁴⁴ He builds castles in Spain: "I'll get me a house and land and slaves, and have big ships and be a merchant, and known as a king of kings."⁴⁵ But the trunk becomes an object of dispute for it contains tokens which reveal the identity of the daughter of Gripus' master.⁴⁶ Gripus loses the trunk but gains his freedom,⁴⁷ although his master, until the very end of the play, warns him "to have no hopes."⁴⁸ Trachalio, another slave in the same play, who indirectly helped to restore the same girl to her father,⁴⁹ successfully begs the happy parent "to remember your promise that I'd be freed today."⁵⁰ Palaestrio of the Miles Gloriosus likewise wins his freedom⁵¹ for recovering his master's sweetheart⁵² from the boastful and pompous captain who had stolen her.⁵³

It occasionally adds to the fun of a comedy to find the clever, crafty slave overreached in his plotting by another slave still more clever and crafty, or it may be by a pseudo-slave who assumes the servile role like Mercury in the Amphitryon. Thus Sceledrus of the Miles Gloriosus is hoodwinked by Palaestrio, who succeeds in convincing him that the soldier's sweetheart has a twin sister who has just arrived in Ephesus,⁵⁴ and that it was she whom Sceledrus noticed kissing Palaestrio's master.⁵⁵ Palaestrio chuckles at his success: "The skilful way she did get off the lines of both parts! And my fellow servant, that wary watchman--the ass she made of him!"⁵⁶ Likewise Olympio of the Casina is out-schemed by his

rival Chalinus in competition for the hand of the girl upon whom the senex dotes.⁵⁷ When it appears after the mock marriage that Chalinus had cheated him by assuming the role of bride,⁵⁸ the embarrassed Olympio admits that this is "something new for me, ass as I am--I am ashamed and I was never ashamed before."⁵⁹ Similarly Sosia of the Amphitryon is deceived and impersonated by the god, Mercury, who disguises himself as Sosia's double.⁶⁰ Protesting that "one drop of milk is no more like another than that I is like me"⁶¹ and "I'm the same man I always was,"⁶² he wonders where he lost himself, where he was transformed.⁶³ But these cases are not common. Seldom indeed does the slave of comedy find himself in a predicament where he is at a loss about what to do in order to triumph. Plautus rings the changes on the possible. In his plots the unusual often happens.

A rara avis is the consistently loyal slave, who is notable by contrast with the more normal and tricky type with whom he has little in common except his status. The most striking example is Tyndarus in the Captivi whose speech and bearing distinguish him as a man of fine feeling and upright character.⁶⁴ It would be difficult to find a figure in comedy to excel him in nobility. When Hegio discovers that he has released Philocrates instead of Tyndarus, because the latter pretended to be Philocrates,⁶⁵ Tyndarus makes no excuses:

I admit it: it is all as you say--yes, you were swindled out of him and it was my support and my scheming that did it....Provided it is not for wrong-doing, let me die--it matters little....what I have done, at least, will be remembered when I am gone--men will tell

how I saved my captured master from slavery and from his enemies, restored him a free man, to his home and father, and how I chose to put my own life in peril rather than let him die....Why should I ask for mercy when you refuse it? My life is risked at risk to you. After death, there is no evil in death for me to fear:Farewell, sir, and God bless you, no matter if you do deserve to have me wish you something else.⁶⁶

Messenio of the Menaechmi has his master's good in mind as he warns him to beware of the swindlers, the sharpers, the drinkers, and the harlot mistresses in Epidamnus.⁶⁷ This is in conformity with his conception of the good servant "who looks after his master's business, sees to it, gives it his care and consideration, (and) watches over it in his master's absence just as diligently as if he was present, or even more so."⁶⁸ Again, in the Trinummus, the sterling fidelity of the slave, Stasimus, to the old farm is a quality not often encountered in Plautine slaves.⁶⁹ At heart, he is the philosophizing moralist who longs for the old-time standards and the old-time thrift "instead of this cursed custom of ours....to be a rotter and then....stand for office."⁷⁰ When old Charmides almost collapses at the news of his son's doings,⁷¹ it is touching to see him lean for support⁷² upon the faithful Stasimus who solicitously offers to bring him water.⁷³ Menedemus in Terence's Heauton Timorumenus receives the same tender care at the hands of his slaves when he needs it most: "I sank into a chair: up run my servants and pull off my shoes. I see others bustling about, arranging the cushions and laying for dinner, every one zealously doing his best to ease my unhappiness."⁷⁴ Again in Plautus' Mostellaria, Grumio worries about the condition of his master's farm: "Oh, good

Lord, save us, for mercy's sake, and get our old master back from his three year's absence at once, before everything goes to smash--house and farm and all!"⁷⁵ He warns and upbraids the rascally Tranio, whom he holds largely responsible: "you'll be swelling our numbers on the farm and joining our ball-and-chain club! So now you've got the chance, and choose to do so, drink away, wreck the property, demoralize that fine young son of master's. Get fuddled night and day, live like Greeks...."⁷⁶ Such faithful decent and kind slaves as these are the exceptions in Roman Comedy and the reason is not far to seek.

Intrigue forms the basis of the comic plot; the scheming slave is the inevitable instrument of intrigue; in action, the initiative is always with him rather than with the slave who is obedient and loyal and who promotes cooperation instead of precipitating a crisis. For this very reason, however, it would be misleading to suppose that good and faithful slaves were as few in real life as they are in Plautus and Terence. We may assume that both kinds were well-represented.

Loyal or disloyal, all slaves exhibit the same natural dread of physical punishment. Many instruments of chastisement are in use, such as rods or switches,⁷⁷ leather whips⁷⁸ or whips of knotted cords weighted with metal strips.⁷⁹ Even the altar is poor protection against the irate pimp for Palaestra and Ampelisca in the Rudens,⁸⁰ or in the Mostellaria for Tranio whose wrathful old master threatens soon to have him "in a circle of firewood and flames, you gallowsbird!"⁸¹ Work in the mills,⁸² the quarries,⁸³ or on the country farm⁸⁴ is a very common threat of punishment. The wearing of fetters,

shackles⁸⁵ or the "furca"⁸⁶ come as no surprise to the slave in comedy. We see the severe effects of two instances of such treatment, as meted out to Davus in Terence's Andria⁸⁷ and to Tyndarus in Plautus' Captivi.⁸⁸ No compunction for the victim seems to have restrained the vehemence of the brutal agent who inflicted it. Ballio, the pimp of the Pseudolus, callously remarks as he cracks the whip: "When you beat them, it's yourself you hurt most."⁸⁹ Female slaves seem to come in for their share of beating and hard labour.⁹⁰ Reference to such barbarities as cutting off hands,⁹¹ breaking legs and ankle bones,⁹² gouging out eyes,⁹³ finds place in the Captivi, the Rudens, and the Miles Gloriosus respectively. Death by crucifixion⁹⁴ is mentioned in the Mostellaria. And yet, in spite of threat and actual infliction of punishment, the slaves continue to deride their suffering. The back of Epidicus is scarred with stripes but to an inquiry about his health, his reply is casual: "Oh, checkered."⁹⁵ Sagaristio of the Persa passes his punishment off lightly: "For more than a year I have been Minister Extraordinary and Plentyblowtentiary at the--mills."⁹⁶ To Leonida and Libanus, those Falstaffian rogues of the Asinaria the subject is an inexhaustible source of wit and jesting:

Libanus: "Good day to you--as loud as my lungs allow!"

Leonida: "Ah there, you whip developer!"

Libanus: "How goes it, gaol guard?"

Leonida: "Oh you fetter farmer."

Libanus: "Oh you rod tickler!"

Leonida: "How much do you think you weigh, stripped?"

Libanus: "Lord! I don't know.

Leonida: "I knew you didn't know; but, by the Lord, I know for I weighed you. Stripped and tied you weigh a hundred pounds--when you're hanging by the heels."

Libanus: "What is your proof of that?"

Leonida: "I'll tell you my proof and method. When a fair hundredweight is fastened to your feet, with the handcuffs hugging your hands lashed to a beam, you're not a bit under or over the weight of--a good-for-nothing rascal."

Libanus: "You be damned!"

Leonida: "Precisely what you are down for yourself in Slavery's will."⁹⁷

It is significant, too, that the characteristic comment of a slave who is hurrying across the stage bent on some pressing business in hand, when he is hailed with peremptory insistence, reveals the habitual expectation of punishment: "He seems to be very much of the family, he threatens punishment."⁹⁸ The thought of punishment seems to prey upon the slave's mind constantly and constitutes his great source of fear. However, punishment which is richly deserved is sometimes averted by the intercession of an influential precator⁹⁹ who pleads with his master on his behalf. Often the young master of the slave gladly acts in this capacity¹⁰⁰ when the penalty has been incurred on his account. Yet, living as they do under the continual threat of punishment, most slaves, as we meet them in the plays, persist in their scheming and plotting with real or assumed nonchalance.

Separate mention should be made of certain special groups of slaves which are differentiated only by their occupation, such as the nurses, tutors, cooks, overseers, and

ladies' maids of the plays. These characters do not, as a rule, affect the main action of the drama to any extent, although the nurse is sometimes employed to prove positively the identity of a long-lost son or daughter of the household which she serves. This is done by the Sophronas of the Phormio¹⁰¹ and the Eunuchus.¹⁰² The nurse is a loyal, affectionate creature who shows concern for her work and devotion to those in her care.¹⁰³ Thus Giddenis of the Poenulus who had been kidnapped along with her master's two daughters,¹⁰⁴ rejoices heartily when finally her master finds them,¹⁰⁵ since, as she reflects, "today those girls were to have their names changed and disgrace their family by prostitution."¹⁰⁶ The tutor, like the nurse, seeks to promote moral standards, is a conscientious guardian and believes in strict discipline.¹⁰⁷ Thus Lydus of the Bacchides bemoans the moral degradation of his pupil¹⁰⁸ and the father's careless indifference.¹⁰⁹ He complains of the greater laxity in discipline and control of the young shown by his own generation as compared with the good old days.¹¹⁰ Now, he mourns, a teacher cannot assert his authority¹¹¹ without suffering violence from the pupils and abuse from the parents who spoil and encourage their sons:

Why, in the old days a young man would be holding office, by popular vote, before he had ceased to hearken to his teacher's precepts. But nowadays, before a youngster is seven years old, if you lay a finger on him, he promptly takes his writing tablet and smashes his tutor's head with it. When you go to his father with a protest, he talks to the youngster in this strain: "You're father's own boy so long as you can defend yourself against abuse." Then the tutor is summoned: "Hey, you worthless old baggage, don't you touch my boy merely for acting like a lad of spirit!" Judgment pronounced, the court adjourns. Can a teacher exert authority here under such conditions, if he is beaten first himself?¹¹²

Cooks appear in the pursuit of their professional activities which are in frequent demand in Roman Comedy where eating, or the preparation for it, is considered an interest of no small importance. Thus they engage in a kind of gastronomic banter crowded with crude wit¹¹³ and vulgar repartee. Aside from the chatter of their trade, they exhibit no distinguishing characteristics and are like all other slaves in their fear of punishment¹¹⁴ and craving for emancipation.¹¹⁵ Congrio and Anthrax of the Aulularia illustrate the loquacity and petty pilfering¹¹⁶ of the type.

Overseers act as personal guards for their masters, and as his foremen and agents in directing the work of his slaves. They reinforce his commands with force and brutality upon the unfortunate inferiors under their authority.¹¹⁷ In the plays, they are usually impersonal and often inhuman. One of the less revolting and more human specimens is introduced early in the Captivi,¹¹⁸ where he admits that he, too, would like to fly the cage of captivity and confesses that he does not blame others for harbouring the same wish.¹¹⁹

Ladies' maids, with greater variety of personality, follow a pattern ranging from sedateness to impertinence and moral levity. They enjoy mischief-making and saucy repartee, usually with their fellow-slaves.¹²⁰ The frivolous and flippant Stephanium of the Stichus makes the most of both her boy friends, whom she entertains on the same couch, at the same time.¹²¹ Astaphasium of the Truculentus seems no less accomplished in her trickery than her courtesan mistress,¹²² while Scapha of the Mostellaria preaches cynicism and oppor-

tunism to her mistress, Philematium,¹²³ whose love and gratitude is lavished upon one lover who has given her freedom. In sharp contrast to the behavior of these bad and bold maids is the solicitude of Mysis in Terence's Andria for her mistress' welfare,¹²⁴ and that of Dorias and Pythias for Thais in his Eunuchus.¹²⁵ Bromia of the Amphitryon plays a slightly different role from the others. Plautus employs her like a messenger in a Greek tragedy to relate the strange happenings in the household of Amphitryon and the reasons behind them.¹²⁶ On the whole, then, it appears that these special groups of slaves differ from the others only in their particular occupational interests and in the fact that they find themselves in special situations to which they are led by their special duties. But ethically, they do not add any new types, and they are subject to the same temptations and aspirations as their fellow servants of the familia.

The slaves of Terence, while not differing fundamentally from those of Plautus are less crude and boisterous, and more urbane and respectful to their masters. Consequently, they receive fairer treatment and their cynical defiance of torture is not ridden to death.¹²⁷ In the Andria, Sosia, the ex-slave, is his patron's confidant, but Davus is distrusted, threatened and finally punished as a mischief-maker and the evil genius of Pamphilus, his master's son. So also, in the Heauton Timorumenus, Syrus contrives all the tricky schemes which keep Clitipho at odds with his father,¹²⁸ and allow him to continue his amours under the latter's very nose¹²⁹ until the whole nasty business comes to light.¹³⁰ Then he proudly boasts

that he has "such force and power of cunning in me as by telling the truth to take in the pair of them."¹³¹ (i.e. the old men, Menedemus and Chremes) Syrus of the Adelphoe we remember for his clever parody of Demea's description of how to "bring up" his fellow slaves in cooking fish,¹³² as well as for the false directions by which he sends his old master off on a wild goose chase.¹³³ Yet, though the rascals of Terence keep up the servile tradition of deceit and cunning, they are neither as amusing nor as daring as Plautus' Tranio and Epidicus. In fact, Parmeno of the Eunuchus recognizes limits to the unconventional behaviour of his master and vainly advises him not to transgress them. When the young man leaps at the idea of visiting his sweetheart in the disguise of a eunuch,¹³⁴ the slave who had made the suggestion in jest, recoils in dismay: "Are you sure this isn't a bit too hot?"¹³⁵ Geta of the Phormio is an able accomplice of the parasite who hatches the plot of the play. But the weakwilled Antipho gives up in despair and dashes away at his father's approach, Geta merely remarks: "This cock won't fight, Sir; the game is up, no use wasting time here, I'm off."¹³⁶ To him discretion seems the better part of valour and his audacity falls below the standard set by the more reckless rascals of Plautus.

Pharmeno in the Hecyra is the exact opposite of the usual comic slave. Instead of fooling others, he is fooled, and sent off by his master on a bootless errand to prevent him from learning too much about that master's business. "He is funny when he is prevented from being funny."¹³⁷ In drawing him differently, perhaps we should credit Terence with more

realism than originality. Though most slaves in comedy are preternaturally clever, it is too much to believe that they were always so in real life.

The dominant qualities and characteristics of the slave in Roman Comedy may be somewhat misleading. His prevailing cunning and deceit, his lack of loyalty and principle may be partly exaggerated in the interest of dramatic complication. Nevertheless, in real life, his necessity was the mother of invention. The arbitrary and brutal treatment to which he was commonly subjected were a constant incentive to evasion and resentment. If he was a plotter and a liar and a cheat, he became so in the struggle for survival. When he outsmarted his oppressor, he may be pardoned for boastfulness and braggadocio. In order to succeed, he found it necessary to cultivate the subtle art of flattery. Constant irritation and bullying made him saucy and impertinent. And yet, for all this, let us not forget that even in comedy, we have some fine examples of loyalty and devotion; and this is a tribute to the inherent nobility of human nature, and a proof that slaves were not naturally worse than other people. The stock character of slaves in comedy does reflect their actual conduct and condition in contemporary society with some allowances for comic exaggeration, but their servile character was the product of the institution of slavery and that, no one will deny, was wholly bad.

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CHAPTER VI

RELATIONS BETWEEN PATRON AND PARASITE

The relationship of client and patron in Roman Comedy is by no means a travesty of social facts whether the society we have in mind be Greek or Roman. Freed slaves both in Athens and Rome continued in a state of semi-dependence upon their former masters. But there is some reason to believe that the picture of the client-parasite in Plautus, at least, is more Roman than Greek. Ergasilus in the Captivi is thought by some to have been an original addition of Plautus,¹ and Menaechmus in the Menaechmi² discusses his clients in unmistakeably Roman terms. To the choragus in the Curculio, parasites are inseparably associated with a habitat that is so specifically Roman that he violates dramatic consistency to give it Roman names.³

From earliest times at Rome, free retainers had been attached to the familia⁴ and in return for their quasi-feudal services they received legal and economic protection from their patrician patrons.⁵ Later as a result of hostile invasions and devastations of Italian farm lands by war-mongering tribes, hordes of homeless people, some freeborn, flocked from the ruined districts to the Roman metropolis for refuge and a hope of livelihood. However, since they could not be accepted

as "full" citizens of Rome with all civic privileges, they attached themselves, by ties of mutual obligation, to some worthy patron for greater assurance of political and social freedom and security.⁶ There they enjoyed a relatively happy and carefree life of dependence upon their patrons. As economic conditions improved, and capitalism flourished, most of the patrons grew wealthier and wealthier, while their many clients grew poorer and poorer in comparison. In short order, the clients were reduced to the mean and humiliating social status of the time-serving flatterer and chronically-hungry parasite,⁷ largely because of their patrons' neglect and greed. It was not unusual for clients of this type to attach themselves to several patrons or to change patrons for hopes of better material returns.⁸ Both Juvenal⁹ and Martial¹⁰ condemned their own society for allowing such deplorable conditions to exist and flourish, especially because unworthy persons took advantage of the meting out of the dole and abused its function. Perhaps Horace had the parasite in mind when he describes the mad poet catching hold of a poor victim and reading him to death as "a very leech that will not let go the skin until sated with blood."¹¹ In Plautus and Terence, the parasite has been introduced to create laughter and hilarity, by exploiting his characteristic obsession with his appetite, his desperate efforts to win favour with his wit, and by displaying his ingenuity at plotting and trickery when these methods seem to serve his end.¹²

Closely akin to the slave in social position and moral character, the parasite is a natural outgrowth of the society

in which he finds himself. He is also a living reproach to the social order which is selfish and hard-hearted enough to regard as amusing the lot of a man forced by sheer hunger to dependence upon a patron, whose patronage is precarious and sometimes denied. Not only is his predicament amusing in itself, but he is expected to exert himself actively to provide amusement as the price of the free meal which he is perennially seeking. So Gelasimus of the Stichus, who suspects that he is the son of Old Mother Hunger,¹³ always remains jolly, poverty making him a professional humorist of necessity.¹⁴ He realizes that if his anecdotes and witticisms make an impression upon his patron, it may mean the difference between a meal and no meal at all. But the meal is often a forlorn hope: times are changing. Now wits are held at naught and the patrons themselves turned parasitical,¹⁵ grumbles Gelasimus, as he vainly angles for a dinner invitation from two wealthy brothers just home from a prolonged trading trip abroad. His superstitions belief in the weasel as a good omen now bursts like a bubble.¹⁶ The grim humour of the situation is vividly brought home as Gelasimus resolves in desperation "to summon my friends and consider the legal steps I must take to starve to death."¹⁷ Plautus seems here to deal not unsympathetically with the pitiful lot of the parasite. In this play, as much attention is devoted to the ludicrous mishaps of Gelasimus as to the varying fortunes of his patrons.

Like Gelasimus, Artotrogus of the Miles Gloriosus has an eye to the filling of his stomach before all other considerations. "It's my belly brings all these afflictions

upon me," he moans when exhausted with the boring boastings of the vainglorious miles, "I must tear him through with my ears or my teeth will have nothing to teethe on."¹⁸

Peniculus of the Memaechmi, like another Jack Sprat, boasts that when he eats, he "sweeps the table clean."¹⁹ While such a boast emphasizes the fact that the parasite is a great lover of food, it is also a reminder of the wide gap in the social order between client and patron. Presumably the latter at dinner would pick at only the choicest tidbits of each course offered him, whereas his less fortunate client gladly seizes upon and devours every morsel of food he can find, doing "the duty of eight men"²⁰ whenever the none-too-frequent opportunity of eating his fill presents itself. Although Peniculus contributes to the comic confusion of the whole play, he is by no means a likeable fellow. He turns informer against his patron when piqued by the conduct of the latter's double, hoping to be generously rewarded for telling his patron's wife of her husband's intrigues.²¹ Both husband and wife fail him, however, and he leaves the stage much more depressed than when he entered, but just as hungry.

Ergasilus of the Captivi adds his voice to the pathetic, wretched choir of his class, which, like the furry mouse, must be content to nibble at someone else's food for survival. If the parasite objects to "being banged about and having crockery smashed on his cranium, he can betake himself to the far side of Three Arch Gate and a porter's bag."²² Nowadays, too, the young fellows frown whenever he narrates a funny story that used to net him "free board for a month."²³ So unsociable and

independent have these youths become that they even do their own marketing, formerly a province of the parasite. Little wonder that Ergasilus prays the devil take the parasitical profession,²⁴ although he should derive some consolation from the generous treatment afforded him by Hegio, the kindly father of his former patron. It is laughable to note that when this parasite receives orders to prepare a sumptuous feast in honor of the return of Hegio's kidnapped son,²⁵ he loses no time in interpreting the command "Attend to everything the best you can"²⁶ as literally as possible. His raid on his patron's pantry provides a good farce,²⁷ and reminds one of a ravenous giant greedily devouring all the food set before him. Plautus may be reflecting some criticism of actual contemporary living conditions if Ergasilus' invective against the sale of spoiled foods and tough meats at high prices²⁸ is intended to have any significance.

Saturio, of the Persa, takes a sorry ironical pride in the claim that his profession has become a family tradition: "The ancient and venerable vocation of my ancestors I continue, follow and cultivate with constant care. For never a one of my ancestors was there who didn't provide for his belly as a professional parasite."²⁹ Opposed to the role of professional informer,³⁰ he impresses one as a fellow of some moral scruples until he agrees to sell his daughter to a pimp for the sake of his master, Toxilus, who requires funds to set his sweetheart free. Hunger forces the deal between the two, if we may judge from the parasite's final, difficult and desperate decision: "Oh well, for God's sake, sell me too even, if you like, so be

you sell me full."³¹ The girl pleads with her father not to carry out his plan, but his groaning stomach makes him a very cold and unsympathetic listener.³² Just as Ergasilus sings his praises to Jove for preserving him and prospering him "with fatness,"³³ so Saturio prays that Heaven may bless his undertaking and bring his stomach "food forever and ever, amen, to surpass its needs, supply and surfeit it."³⁴ Hunger narrows the world of the parasite to such limits that he can think of nothing else.

The massive and exacting love contract³⁵ which the parasite of the Asinaria draws up for his young master at the latter's request, and which lists the obligations that his mistress must fulfil in return for the twenty minas her lover has paid to her keeper reveals him as a man thoroughly familiar with the ways of lovers and their cunning but innocent-seeming tricks. His young patron praises him highly for his fine work as "The one and only artist at this business."³⁶ This special picture of the parasite shows that he is capable of earning his living and in a more active fashion than by begging. Social conditions have reduced him to the wretched creature that he is, a piece of floating driftwood content with his subservient existence. Independence and material wealth seem to know no place in his philosophy of worldly values, if we may take seriously the remark of Saturio in the Persa that "a parasite with money of his own is a ruined man."³⁷ Like the rest of his fellows, the parasite of the Asinaria will perform all the menial tasks that his master sets before him, including that of informer,³⁸ provided the reward is a full stomach.³⁹

The exaggerated and headlong haste of Ergasilus to inform his patron that the latter's kidnapped son has just landed at the harbor is a common device of comic entertainment. The fellow who a few minutes before was moaning from hunger now suddenly has discovered in his emaciated frame the Herculean strength of Superman, and warns all "to keep where they belong, and don't anyone bring his business into the street....my fist is a siege gun, and this forearm my catapult, and my shoulder is a battering ram, yes, and every man I lay into will bite the earth."⁴⁰ Curculio of the Curculio enters the stage in much the same burlesque fashion,⁴¹ and with his appetite as the same compelling motive. He threatens to upset everyone he meets: "I don't care how grand he is--down he'll go, down he'll drop from the sidewalk and stand on his head in the street!"⁴² Many of Plautus' slaves exhibit the same antics when they are bustling along on some mission of great importance. A feature of the burlesque is the comic pretense by which, at times, both parasite and slave ignore the insignificance of their position and assume the role of a person of authority. Thus Ergasilus, on his way from the harbour, feels that he is "no parasite now, not I! I'm a precious potent potentate of potentates,"⁴³ and issues edicts as he goes along "like a Comptroller of Victualling." He also threatens to summon and fine all the young men who refuse to give a parasite a meal,⁴⁴ calling the whole thing a conspiracy.

Though the part played by the parasite in Roman Comedy is normally a minor one, a vehicle for the most extravagant

absurdities and a stimulus to the most boisterous laughter, neither Plautus nor Terence is blind to his greater possibilities and each playwright has assigned a leading role to him in at least one play, and named it in his honor. The Curculio of Plautus and the Phormio of Terence depend for their action very largely upon the initiative and the cunning of the parasites Curculio and Phormio in successfully furthering the love affairs of the young men whom they befriend whether by their cheating, their lying, or by their bold bluster. Curculio, sent to Caria to borrow money for his love-sick young patron, Phaedromus,⁴⁵ steals from his drunken host, a captain, and Phaedromus' rival,⁴⁶ a ring which he uses with the help of a forged letter⁴⁷ to obtain sufficient funds from the banker, Lyco, to purchase his master's sweetheart from the pimp, Cappadox.⁴⁸ Things end happily for the enraged captain, too, as the ring proves the identity of this girl as his sister, and since she is free-born, the pimp must renounce his claims and refund the captain's money.⁴⁹ Curculio's attitude towards both bankers and pimps is noteworthy. After asserting that Cappadox and the other members of his profession occupy "the social position of flies, gnats, bugs, lice, and fleas,"⁵⁰ and condemning him as "a pest, a plague, a general nuisance, of no good to anybody,"⁵¹ he lunges into a similar attack upon the banker, Lyco, and his lot. He does not mince words either: "I put you people in the same class and category: you match them (i.e. the pimps) perfectly....you mangle men with usury, they with vile solicitation and dens of vice....To you laws are like boiling water that soon grows cold."⁵² In view of the

humble position of the parasite, the social judgments may indicate a growing class consciousness, and their forceful expression may suggest that the playwright was not aware of, nor averse to, exposing some phases of social injustice. In other respects, Curculio is the typical parasite: cunning, clever, but essentially hungry.

Phormio is no less a crafty contriver of successful schemes than the shrewd Curculio, displaying an even greater sense of power and savoir faire.⁵³ On behalf of the weak but amorous Antipho, he exploits a legal technicality whereby the young man is obliged to marry a pretty girl with whom he has fallen in love.⁵⁴ When Antipho's father violently objects to this unexpected turn of events, Phormio at first brazenly defies the indignant parent, Demipho,⁵⁵ but later, to promote a second scheme, to buy a music girl⁵⁶ for Antipho's cousin and companion in disgrace, he promises to relieve Demipho of his daughter-in-law for a consideration of a talent.⁵⁷ After the slave, Geta, has been sent with this money to Phormio, Demipho and his brother, Chremes, learn too late that the undesired daughter-in-law is Chremes' illegitimate daughter, whom they had actually planned to marry to Antipho with the object of keeping her parentage secret.⁵⁸ They naturally wish to recover the money which they have spent to get rid of her. Phormio, having learned in his turn from eavesdropper Geta the true identity of the girl,⁵⁹ threatens to inform Chremes' wife of the secret,⁶⁰ if they insist upon the repayment of the money (which he has already spent). Although the old brother-parents try to beat and intimidate Phormio,⁶¹ he succeeds in arousing

the attention of Chremes' wife and revealing her husband's infidelity.⁶² Thus Phormio dominates every development in the action, inventing and initiating many of the moves with sagacity, self-reliance and audacity. The slave Geta renders him able support but definitely takes second place. Unlike the Plautine parasite, Phormio does not constantly harp on the subject of food. He is more natural and self-contained,⁶³ dominates others instead of depending upon them, and is thoroughly master of every situation in which he appears.

In the Eunuchus, Gnatho, Terence's only other parasite, acts the dandy--well dressed, self-satisfied, and puffed up with vanity and proud of his "great wit." "What a difference between a fool and a man of brains,"⁶⁴ he muses, as he gloats over his superiority to his penniless friend who refuses to become "a butt for ridicule and blows."⁶⁵ Haughtily scornful of his friend's outmoded ideas,⁶⁶ Gnatho informs him that he has a "new method of bird catching....There is a class of men set up for being the head in everything and aren't. It's them I track: I don't aim at making them laugh at me; no, no, I smile on them and stand agape at their intellects. Whatever they say I praise....If one says no, I say no; if one says yes, I say yes."⁶⁷ This is the pattern which Gnatho consistently follows as he serves the tiresome and boastful captain, Thraso. But neither patron nor parasite command our respect or admiration; especially offensive to modern taste is the scene in which Gnatho successfully arranges with Phaedria, the lover of Thais, to admit the spendthrift Thraso as his rival "to have your love supplied with all it wants at no extra cost to

you."⁶⁸ Gnatho differs from the general run of shiftless parasites in that he has devised a system for parasites to follow in their changing world. Studied flattery now offers the best security.

Dramatically, the parasite reminds us strongly of the medieval court jester or of the Shakespearian Falstaff. For he is not only witty in himself, but the cause that wit is found in other men. But legally and economically, he reminds us of one form of ancient social inequality which may even be described as social injustice, and his social handicap largely accounts for his moral defects. Representative of a depressed class which is forced to live by its wits, he quickly discards ethical principle in favour of material advantage. It is from these causes and this class that the comic stage derives its rogues and tricksters, its clowns and jesters. Among them, cleverness is honored, virtue is not. The intellectual standard is fairly high, the moral standard degenerates. Some parasites are not even exceptionally clever, but think only in terms of appetite; these usually smack more of Rome than of Athens. Phormio seems to have the Attic wit, but Ergasilus, as we have already suggested, has acquired both a Roman accent and a Roman taste.⁶⁹ He swears by Roman gods⁷⁰ of his own invention. The same national identity can be detected in Curculio and Peniculus. Parasitism is a comic convenience, but a mark of moral degradation. In allotting the responsibility for the dark tones in this picture, though we cannot acquit Athens, we must assign the blacker marks to Rome.

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11. Horace, Ars Poetica, 475-476.
12. Dunkin 228, 245; Duff 185, 212.
13. Stich. 155.
14. Stich. 174-178.
15. Stich. 634.
16. Stich. 499-502.
17. Stich. 503-504.
18. M.G. 33-34.
19. Men. 77.
20. Men. 223.
21. Men. 562-566.
22. Capt. 88-90.
23. Capt. 482-483.
24. Capt. 469.
25. Capt. 894-895.
26. Capt. 900.
27. Capt. 768-780, 900-921.
28. Capt. 813-822.
29. Persa 53-56.
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33. Men. 768-780.
34. Persa 329-331.
35. Asin. 751-807.
36. Asin. 748.
37. Persa 120.
38. Asin. 824-826.
39. Asin. 913-914.
40. Capt. 795-797.
41. Curc. 280-298.
42. Curc. 286-287.
43. Capt. 825.
44. Capt. 492-495.
45. Curc. 328-334.
46. Curc. 337-363.
47. Curc. 423-427.
48. Curc. 454-457.
49. Curc. 709-710.

50. Curc. 500.
51. Curc. 501.
52. Curc. 506-511.
53. Norwood 76.
54. Phorm. 122-135.
55. Phorm. 421-434.
56. Phorm. 596-598.
57. Phorm. 634-644, 650-658.
58. Phorm. 816-817.
59. Phorm. 870-872.
60. Phorm. 968-975.
61. Phorm. 983-989.
62. Phorm. 1007-1013.
63. Duff 212.
64. Eun. 232.
65. Eun. 244.
66. Eun. 246.
67. Eun. 347-352.
68. Eun. 1076-1077.
69. Capt. 474; Curc. 462-484;
Men. 213, 446-461.
70. Capt. 882.

CHAPTER VII

RELATIONS BETWEEN FRIENDS

Friends have always been and always will be an integral part of all society and community life. Without them and their cooperative efforts, whether working as a pair or in a group, an enterprise would seldom continue to function smoothly and properly, if at all. There must be that teamwork: that sharing of burdens. So graphic an impression has friendship made upon the world in general that it has found a large place in the realms of great literature. Few need an introduction to the fine friendship exemplified in the story of Damon and Pythias, or of Orestes and Pylades, or of David and Jonathan in the Bible. All three are familiar classics. It is therefore not surprising that in the Roman Comedies of Plautus and Terence, one of the first things which impress a reader is the great number of friendships encountered there. As in real society, so in comedy, friendships vary in their integrity, their frankness, and their purity. Some are fleeting, forged only for personal gain or expediency; others are of that fine, lasting quality which endures, formed not from selfish motives but from a mutual and genuine desire for companionship.

The friendship of Tyndarus and Philocrates of the Captivi is the finest of its kind in Roman Comedy. The fact that

Tyndarus is a slave, through the misfortune of being kidnapped as a child,¹ and his master Philocrates is free-born, makes no difference at all to the depth and sincerity of their regard one for the other. They grew up from boyhood together, seemingly oblivious of the social distinction between them. Now both are war prisoners of Hegio,² whose second son is held captive in the enemy camp.³ By mutual consent, the two young prisoners change roles,⁴ then urge the agreeable Hegio to send Philocrates, disguised as Tyndarus, to Elis,⁵ his native town, to bargain for the return of Hegio's captive son. Tyndarus risks his own life in this attempt to save his master,⁶ knowing only too well that the penalty may be death if their trickery is discovered. Yet his last word to the departing Philocrates is a pledge of continued obedience and loyalty, although he permits himself in his loneliness to wonder whether his master will remember this good turn when he himself is safe:

For generally speaking, men have a habit of being fine fellows so long as they are seeking some favor, but when they have obtained it, there's a change, and your fine fellows turn into villainous cheats of the worst description.⁷

Philocrates banishes such morbid thoughts from the mind of his friend by assuring him that "next to my real father, you are the best one I have."⁸ These are true friends, who express unswerving faith in each other in the face of a common peril. No faltering doubt or disloyal thought mars their unanimity. Tyndarus' parting instructions to his friend, and the latter's reply, enigmatically expressed because the listening Hegio must not discover their exchange of roles, breathe the essence

of devotion and sincerity.⁹ Hegio is touched by their emotion and exclaims:

Bless my soul, what noble natures! Dear, dear, it brings tears to my eyes! You can see they are simply devoted to each other. The way that splendid slave praised his own master.¹⁰

But when Hegio discovers that he has been deceived and seeks to drown his disappointment in revenge,¹¹ Tyndarus rises to real heroism in his resignation to fate:

Provided it is not for wrong-doing, let me die--- it matters little. If I myself do die here, and if he does fail to return, as he said he would, what I have done, at least, will be remembered when I am gone.¹²

True to his promise, Philocrates returns, having successfully accomplished his mission and prepared to redeem the sacrifice of his friend.¹³ He grieves that the "splendid fellow" Tyndarus has had to suffer such cruel treatment "all for my sake."¹⁴ Friendship has its reward and virtue its recompense. Tyndarus is not only released from the quarries, but revealed as Hegio's long lost and kidnapped elder son. The story is unique for lofty idealism and purity of motive. One feels that there were redeeming features to a society in which such a friendship was possible or even imaginable.

A friendship equally strong, but tested in a different manner, exists between the more mature Callicles and Megaronides in the Trinummus. Alarmed by the rumor that Callicles has "turned juvenile in his old age and been such a castigable scamp,"¹⁵ Megaronides feels that it is his bounden duty to reprimand his friend severely, although it is a thankless and difficult job.¹⁶ Although it turns out that the "talk about town" had no foundation, this conscientious attitude of

Megaronides clearly reveals how seriously he concerns himself about his friend's reputation. It indicates too, that their friendship is so firmly knit and securely-founded that frankness and personal criticism can only add to the respect the one already has for the other.¹⁷ To clear himself in the eyes of Megaronides, Callicles feels it necessary to explain how another friend, Charmides, on going abroad, had entrusted to him alone "in the name of friendship and loyalty"¹⁸ the secret treasure hidden in his house, since his spendthrift son must not hear of it under any circumstances;¹⁹ how the son had offered the house for sale to obtain funds for revelry,²⁰ and how he himself, to keep the treasure intact, had paid 40 minas to the young scamp for the house and thus had incurred public criticism.²¹ Megaronides can find no words of apology,²² so complete is his embarrassment. He readily promises his help in fulfilling this great responsibility upon Callicles' request. When the latter experiences difficulty in arranging the dowry for the coming marriage of Charmides' daughter, he goes to "that castigator of mine"²³ for advice. This is another convincing proof of their close friendship: of that implicit trust and faith that a friend will share a friend's burdens and help him to work out their solution mutually and happily. When Charmides returns, he lavishes praise upon Callicles for the faithful discharge of his duty²⁴ but Callicles receives it modestly. Like a true friend, he finds praise a little embarrassing, as it makes him feel that he cannot be censured.²⁵

In the same play, the friendship of Lysiteles and Lesbonicus seems to hang precariously by a slender thread.

The upright and wealthy Lysiteles wishes to marry the sister of his spendthrift friend without a dowry in order to save that friend expense.²⁶ Lesbonicus, although he has squandered his father's substance on amours, objects to the humiliation of an alliance between his penniless sister and his wealthy friend.²⁷ He is an extravagant wastrel, but he is too proud to accept charity and favors, even from a friend, and he refuses them no less if they are disguised: "I don't call a thing a favor unless it pleases the man you do it for. My duty's clear and I'm competent to see it."²⁸ A certain sense of shame at sullyng the good family name is partly responsible for his attitude, causing him to "feel on edge."²⁹ Lysiteles, familiar with the latent nobility of his friend's nature,³⁰ reasons quietly and patiently with him in an attempt to get him "out of his rut": "Open your mind to these worthwhile things, I beg you, and shake off that idling spirit."³¹ He finally challenges the recalcitrance of Lesbonicus with an ultimatum; unless his friend accepts his proposition, their friendship will be off.³² This is not the usual course which friendship takes. The benevolence of Lysiteles seems unnatural and forced. His threat to terminate their association would put a strain upon the friendship, however right he may be in his moral position. Companionship of such a nature can never become deep and enduring.

The love-lorn Charinus of the Mercator does not deserve the friendship of the quiet and kindly Eutychus. But the latter, when he hears that Charinus' father plans to sell his music girl,³³ offers to buy her for him regardless of the

price.³⁴ And when Eutychus returns to tell him that the girl had been sold before he reached the harbor and that he can give no particulars of the sale,³⁵ Charinus behaves like a madman.³⁶ Instead of acknowledging his friend's generosity and efforts on his behalf, he scolds him roundly and most unfairly:

You're ready enough in repartee, but in carrying out commissions you're a lame, blind, mute, maimed remnant of a man! You promised to bamboozle my father--- and I, I believed I had left the matter to an intelligent human being, only to find I left it to a great big block of stone!³⁷

This is the measure of Charinus' ingratitude. Eutychus cannot reason with him either on the folly of going into exile or on the perils of love, its flightiness, and its inconstancy.³⁸ Charinus rudely flouts his friend's good intentions by asking him whether he has finished talking.³⁹ Selfish and self-centred as he is, he takes advantage of the goodwill and complaisance of Eutychus, but remains unappreciative of his earnest unflinching efforts to help him. It is a very one-sided picture of an ingrate who is the undeserved and fortunate beneficiary of a staunch and loyal friend.

Another victim of love, Stratippocles in the Epidicus confides his troubles to his friend Chaeribulus, who tries to console him by assuring him that he need feel no sense of shame at bringing home a captive lass as part of the booty of war.⁴⁰ Besides, he has controlled his love by not sullyng or outraging the girl's innocence.⁴¹ Stratippocles, who badly needs 40 minas in cash for the moneylender,⁴² grows impatient at these soothing words of his friend:

It does no good to offer a fellow in distress consoling words; his real friend in a pinch is a friend indeed, when deeds are needed.⁴³

"What was the use of being bountiful in talk, if all real help was dead in you?",⁴⁴ he complains, when Chaeribulus feigns troubles of his own and lack of funds. It would seem that Chaeribulus' friendship is only skin-deep. It does not honor the proverb "A friend in need is a friend indeed," but spends itself in soft words while doing nothing. Apparently he has money and to spare, as Stratippocles bitterly reminds him:

"You, a man with all your money, and yet you haven't a penny for your friends and won't aid your own chum."⁴⁵ The ungenerous Chaeribulus⁴⁶ tries desperately to devise some alternative substitute for financial aid, but like himself, his words are hollow and ineffectual: "...but something, somehow, some way, from somewhere, from some one, there's some hope of your having better luck."⁴⁷ Little wonder Stratippocles feels that his friend is of no more use to him than a man who was never born at all.⁴⁸

Apoecides of this play is a sincere friend of Periphanes and advises him to get his son married immediately in view of the fact that he has become attached to a mistress.⁴⁹ But the good advice of the well-meaning friend is a poor match for the clever scheming of the slave, Epidicus, who, learning of the plan,⁵⁰ appears to second it and wins the approval of the old gentlemen,⁵¹ while really promoting the interests of Periphanes' son.⁵² The friendship of Apoecides and Periphanes is of that simple, guileless type which is no less charming because it is ineffective. The two friends are deceived but their friendship is no less sincere for all that. The desire to help is not to be condemned for lack of success.

Charinus and Calidorus of the Pseudolus afford a pleasant contrast in friendship as compared with the two young friends of the Epidicus. Like Stratippocles, Charinus confides his love problems to his friend,⁵³ who is a sympathetic listener, and unlike Chaeribulus, is eager to help in any way he can.⁵⁴ When the slave, Pseudolus, informs Charinus that his scheme on his behalf calls for a strange man,⁵⁵ 5 minas in cash,⁵⁶ a sword, a military cloak and a hat,⁵⁷ Charinus offers to oblige in every respect without hesitation and without solicitation. His response exhibits the qualities of a genuine, unselfish friend, ready and willing to help his boon companion in need at a moment's notice. This is the true brand of friendship which concerns itself with the happiness and well-being of each of the friendly pair as much as of the other.

In the same play, Callipho shows the easy tolerance of a man of the world⁵⁸ towards the loose living of Simo's son when his friend informs him of his concern for the young man's conduct. He contends that anger alone serves no useful purpose;⁵⁹ that leniency on Simo's part is more commendable than censure. Callipho's advice is prompted by a genuine desire to help his friend adjust himself to a more up-to-date scale of values calculated to reduce his present anxiety over his son's licentiousness. According to the moral standards usually recognized in contemporary society, a young man's conduct should not be too strictly scrutinized until he enters upon the threshold of marriage. Simo refuses to grant his son this freedom although he himself indulged in loose practices in his youth.⁶⁰ For his friend's peace of mind, Callipho tries to persuade him to admit

the more lenient standard and judge his son by that.

In the Bacchides, two courtesans, who are identical twins,⁶¹ almost break up the true friendship of Pistoclerus and Mnesilochus. Pistoclerus had undertaken to locate a former lady acquaintance of his friend who requested the favor while still abroad.⁶² After his return, Mnesilochus is informed at once that Pistoclerus is making ardent love to a young woman and in need of the restraining influence of his friend to save him from excessive indulgence.⁶³ Mnesilochus at first believes that his friend has incurred this unfavorable criticism by acceding to his request, but when he learns that the name of the lady in question is Bacchis, he dashes out wildly to find Pistoclerus and accuse him of stealing his love.⁶⁴ This apparent betrayal shakes his faith in the loyalty of friends and he does not know whom to trust.⁶⁵ Greeting Pistoclerus coldly and gruffly, much to the latter's surprise,⁶⁶ he openly accuses him of alienating the affections of his mistress.⁶⁷ When Mnesilochus learns that it is another lady of the same name whom Pistoclerus loves,⁶⁸ he upbraids himself for entertaining such outrageous suspicions of his friend.⁶⁹ In his discouragement at this incident⁷⁰ and because of the fear that a certain soldier may buy his mistress before he himself can amass sufficient funds to secure her,⁷¹ Pistoclerus attempts to comfort him and renew his courage and faith. Their friendship has not suffered permanent injury through this misunderstanding. Though the patience of Pistoclerus, unfairly accused, is sorely tried, he is just as eager to promote his friend's interests and happiness as in the past. It is no less certain

that had the report of Pistoclerus' misbehavior and betrayal of his friend been true, Mnesilochus would still be prepared to steer him upon a righteous path of life again.

Callidamates and Philolaches of the Mostellaria show a strong liking for each other, and are boon companions in their drunken revels. They seem inseparable, if we may judge from Callidamates' desire,⁷² even in a state of intoxication and in the company of a mistress, to pay a visit to Philolaches, the best friend he has in the world.⁷³ When Theopropides, the father of Philolaches returns from abroad to discover how his son has squandered his property in his absence,⁷⁴ it is significant that Callidamates is the one to bring about a reconciliation between father and son. His initiative, suavity and clever handling of a very delicate situation in a sober moment clearly shows his real calibre. Says our diplomat:

Whatever he did, he did along with the rest of us.
We're all at fault. As for your interest, principal, and
all the expense of buying the girl, we'll club together
and settle for it all at our own expense, not at yours.⁷⁵

After such an appeal, Theopropides can only feel a warm regard towards Callidamates and forgive his son. The efficacy of Callidamates' appeal depends upon its honest sincerity and his voluntary and frank admission of his own responsibility and share of the guilt. This admission is a proof of the quality of his friendship. He makes no excuse nor any attempt to shift the blame to the shoulders of any other member of their group. Than Callidamates, Philolaches could not have a better pleader nor more helpful friend.

On a lower social level, we have an interesting example

of friendship, or at least friendly cooperation, between Sagaristio and Toxilus in the Persa, even though their friendship is cloaked under the boisterous horse-play common to their class.⁷⁶ Since Toxilus requires 600 nummi to purchase his mistress,⁷⁷ Sagaristio resolves to give him the money entrusted to him for the purchase of plough oxen,⁷⁸ even though his master will play "tic-tac" on his back.⁷⁹ Assisting a friend is more important to him than any fear of punishment.⁸⁰ Toxilus also requires a foreign-looking man⁸¹ to connive with him at cheating the pimp out of money; Sagaristio willingly assumes the role for the sake of his friend.⁸² He will receive no pecuniary reward for his assistance nor does he expect it. His actions are prompted solely from friendship for Toxilus who presumably will repay the generosity of Sagaristio when he in turn needs assistance. Thus we see that friendship and loyalty may be found even among slaves.

Pimps, too, such as Labrax of the Rudens, enjoy temporary friendships, but it need not surprise us to learn that they are fleeting, since gain is the main motive involved. Exhilarated over the report of lucrative trade in slave girls in Sicily as related by his guest and friend, Charmides,⁸³ Labrax decides to move all his establishment there but gets shipwrecked on the way. Naturally he blames his loss upon his friend⁸⁴ and wishes he had never met him.⁸⁵ As Charmides reciprocates these sentiments,⁸⁶ the feeling is mutual. Theirs is simply a business friendship prompted by selfish motives and wrecked by financial reverses. Charmides deserts and turns upon his friend without compunction when Labrax is ruined and arrested and inclined to

vent his spleen upon him. Their conduct corroborates the view that there is no honor among thieves. Their connection hardly deserves the name of friendship, and illustrates the merely nominal use of the word.

In the Miles Gloriosus, Periplectomenus entertains the same regard and true friendship for Pleusicles, the son of his friend,⁸⁷ as he does towards that son's father. When the young man goes abroad, attempting to recover his sweetheart from the clutches of the braggart soldier who kidnapped her, Periplectomenus sees to it that the frustrated lover lives comfortably at his own home.⁸⁸ Pleusicles feels diffident about accepting such generous hospitality,⁸⁹ but receives the answer that all guests tend to flattery. His father's friend aids him in his search for the girl with every encouragement in word and deed.⁹⁰ Few friends are more generous and sincere in their help than Periplectomenus, who enters into the spirit of the undertaking like a man of younger years.⁹¹ He would leave no stone unturned to advance the interest of a friend or relative. He is magnanimous, sympathetic and likable, the ideal example of a disinterested benefactor.

In Alcesimus of the Casina, we behold an interesting example of the conflict between principle and friendship. Alcesimus criticizes Lysidamus for his infatuation with a maid at his age and he "a married man."⁹² Yet he consents to empty his house of wife and servants⁹³ in order that his friend may enjoy the first fruits of the marriage he has arranged between his bailiff and his maid. When, on the other hand, there comes a brief hitch in the plans of Lysidamus,⁹⁴ his friend loses his

patience momentarily,⁹⁵ and threatens to cause the old reprobate trouble.⁹⁶ Alcesimus feels amused contempt for his crony and is really ashamed to do him the favour which is repugnant to his sense of decency and self-respect. But the demands of friendship prevail over the weaker moral sense and he keeps his promise.⁹⁷ This concession might rather be called compliance than friendship.

In Terence's Andria, Simo and Chremes have been life-long friends,⁹⁸ and have agreed to unite their families by the marriage of Simo's son, Pamphilus, to Chremes' daughter.⁹⁹ Chremes has consented with some reluctance on Simo's assurance that Pamphilus has given up his mistress. He cautions Simo to consider the issues involved in "a mutual spirit", "as though the girl were yours and I were the father of Pamphilus,"¹⁰⁰ Chremes thus proves himself a wise and sagacious friend with a practical understanding and good common sense. He has a keener awareness of the effect of marriage upon future happiness than Simo who proposes this step mainly to curb his son's loose-living and to relieve the worry which this conduct causes him. When Chremes discovers that a child has been born to Pamphilus¹⁰¹ and that its mother may be a native of Athens, he loses no time in cancelling his daughter's betrothal.¹⁰² Simo still believes that the report is a hoax,¹⁰³ until he catches his son again emerging from the home of his mistress, the mother of the child.¹⁰⁴ Chremes sums up neatly on this occasion the character of Simo's friendship: "If only you can accomplish your desire, you never reflect either that kindness has a limit or what you're asking of me."¹⁰⁵ However, everything turns out happily

in the end, as the young mother happens to be a long-lost daughter of Chremes.

In the Heauton Timorumenus, we see Menedemus and Chremes in the very early stages of their friendship. Chremes finds himself irresistibly drawn to his neighbor,¹⁰⁶ perhaps from sympathy and a desire to admonish him "with the boldness of an intimate friend"¹⁰⁷ for working long and hard hours every day at his age. Menedemus' first response is a hint that Chremes should mind his own business, but the latter replies with the now famous line: "I am a man: I hold that what affects another man affects me."¹⁰⁸ Chremes wishes to know the cause of his friend's strange and melancholy behavior, asking him to trust his good intentions for "you'll find I can help you either by consolation or by advice, possibly by direct assistance."¹⁰⁹ Menedemus then proceeds to relate how he is now punishing himself for his unfair criticism of his son's amour,¹¹⁰ which led the young man to leave home secretly for army service abroad. Chremes is touched by the pathetic story;¹¹¹ he surmises that both are at fault;¹¹² he is convinced that Menedemus is potentially an indulgent father and Clinia, a compliant son, were he handled with tact and fairness.¹¹³ Menedemus continues to work as persistently as ever,¹¹⁴ but the next day when Chremes brings word that Clinia has returned from abroad and is a guest at his house, the remorseful father wishes to wipe out the memory of the past by treating his son as royally as possible at once. Chremes again criticizes him for being "too impetuous both ways."¹¹⁵ He suggests that his friend could send supplies "through another's hand" and thus prevent the son from exploit-

ing the father's new and changed attitude of indulgence. Menedemus thanks his self-appointed mentor, but wonders how it is that "everyone of us sees and decides another man's business better than his own....My friend has twice the head for my business that I have...."¹¹⁶ Chremes in fact has not attended too well to his own affairs. He thinks that his son, Clitipho, is the model of innocence and righteousness. But Clitipho is really involved with a courtesan whom he passes off as Clinia's mistress.¹¹⁷ Chremes is ironically worried about the havoc which she will wreak upon the property of poor Menedemus,¹¹⁸ unaware of the danger in which he stands himself. But when he discovers the truth,¹¹⁹ and comes to Menedemus for help,¹²⁰ the latter turns the tables upon him and advises him to "do what you charged me with failing to do."¹²¹ When, however, Menedemus feels that his friend is dealing too harshly with his son, he intervenes to plead on Clitipho's behalf.¹²² The mistress of his own son, and the object of his original disapproval turns out to be a long-lost daughter of Chremes,¹²³ and the match which is now acceptable to both sides is destined to knit in a firmer tie the friendship of these elderly gentlemen, each of whom is so concerned about the welfare of the other. It is a good instance of dramatic irony that Chremes, who esteems himself as the model father, should be more in need of his own advice than Menedemus, but the irony of his position teaches him a lesson which puts their friendship on a sounder footing, and Menedemus is broadminded enough to see the humor of the situation, and not unduly press his advantage over his friend.

The young lovers of this play, Clinia and Clitipho, close

comrades since boyhood,¹²⁴ are mainly concerned with helping each other in their love affairs. When Clinia returns from abroad,¹²⁵ whither he had gone soldiering, driven from home by his father's stern objections to his amour, Clitipho invites him to stay at his home until such time as father and son come to some agreement.¹²⁶ His hospitality even includes Clinia's girl friend who has been invited to "move" over. When Clinia shows apprehension because of Antiphila's tardy arrival,¹²⁷ and questions her fidelity during his absence,¹²⁸ Clitipho re-assures him at once by declaring that he has "no cause for fear."¹²⁹ But Clitipho in his turn is embarrassed and disconcerted when his own mistress, Bacchis, accompanies Antiphila,¹³⁰ having been secretly summoned by his slave. Now it is Clinia's turn to comfort Clitipho,¹³¹ by agreeing with the slave Syrus to pass Bacchis off as his own girl friend.¹³² Antiphila is to be placed in the care of Clitipho's mother¹³³ to quiet any undue suspicion on the part of old Chremes. But when Clitipho's love seems imperilled because his father notices how familiar his son has become with Bacchis,¹³⁴ Syrus requests Clinia to move both Bacchis and Antiphila to the house of Menedemus, and tell him the truth of the whole matter.¹³⁵ Clinia agrees with some reluctance,¹³⁶ failing to see how the plan will benefit his friend or himself. These true friends show genuine concern for each other's welfare and consistently practise the principle that one good turn deserves another. Neither is truly happy unless his friend is too.

Chaerea and Antipho of the Eunuchus are fellow members of a set or club or adolescents who dine together.¹³⁷ Theirs is a

comradeship in youthful adventure, an association in which each aids and abets the escapades of the other. Chaerea has been nominated by his group to arrange a dinner for them at an appointed hour,¹³⁸ but because his attention is diverted by the sight of a beautiful young woman who fires him with love,¹³⁹ he forgets to meet his friends on time to tell them where they are dining.¹⁴⁰ In his excited attempt to follow this woman, he loses her,¹⁴¹ but presently learns from his family slave that the girl is being sent as a present to Thais,¹⁴² his brother's fiancée, from another admirer. The infatuated Chaerea gains admission to Thais' house by changing clothes with a eunuch, whom his brother has just presented to her.¹⁴³ He takes full and unscrupulous advantage of his disguise as he later ecstatically and ingenuously informs Antipho.¹⁴⁴ He has gone to his friend's house to change back into his own clothes,¹⁴⁵ both because it will enable them to keep the dinner date sooner¹⁴⁶ and because Chaerea fears detection at home.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, the passionate lover wishes to consult with Antipho as to the most practicable means of securing the girl for the future,¹⁴⁸ which is his prime interest at the moment. The friendly assistance which Antipho lends to Chaerea, and Chaerea's confiding trust in him, are evidence of friendship and loyalty, but friendship which requires no other standard but loyalty. They are friends in folly and put their friendship to unworthy uses.

No better example of a sham friendship can be found in Roman Comedy than in the Phormio of Terence. Demipho, troubled about his son's marriage¹⁴⁹ contracted and contrived¹⁵⁰ during his absence with the semblance of legal sanction, consults his

three friends as to the course of action he should take.¹⁵¹ They show no genuine desire to help him in his difficulty but seek to take evasive action.¹⁵² One advances one opinion,¹⁵³ another a contrary theory,¹⁵⁴ while the third suggests a more protracted deliberation.¹⁵⁵ As Demipho wearily admits after their departure, "I'm in a much thicker fog than I was to start with."¹⁵⁶

The friendships which we have surveyed in this chapter range all the way from the lofty idealism and selfless devotion which unite Tyndarus and Philocrates to the vulgar connivance by which the complaisant Alcesimus covers up the misdeeds of the lewd old rake, Lysidamus. The test of Tyndarus' friendship is the will to risk his life for his friend. Lysiteles' desire to relieve the financial embarrassment of Lesbonicus is a much inferior motive. The financial motive and the love motive, sometimes separate, sometimes inseparable, are the fundamental bases also of the friendships of Charinus and Eutychus, Stratippocles and Chaeribulus, Charinus and Calidorus. The different cases are distinguished by variations of character. Lesbonicus is reluctant to accept the help of Lysiteles. Eutychus tries to help Charinus and his failure to do so is rewarded only by Charinus' ingratitude. Stratippocles appeals for help to Chaeribulus and receives nothing but excuses and evasions. Charinus gladly accepts the generous help of Calidorus. A somewhat similar example of friendly assistance rendered to a desperate lover is that of Antipho in Terence's Eunuchus, though the object of Chaerea's intrigue is notably more unscrupulous. The friendly service of Pistoclerus in

recovering Mnesilochus' sweetheart at first entails misunderstanding and jealousy but eventually the reward of well-deserved gratitude. Precisely the same motive of friendship coming to the rescue of love, dramatized on the slave level between Toxilus and Sagaristio, produces more trivial and more amusing comedy. The association of Philolaches and Callidamates is merely one of common participation in revelry and common sharing of the blame. These variations of similar motives illustrate the dramatic versatility of Plautus. Terence does not play so much upon the difficulties of youthful companionship, although Clinia and Clitipho in the Heauton Timorumenus and Antipho and Phaedria in the Phormio face similar problems and find similar solutions, one of each pair of friends usually taking the initiative to help the other to success.

The studies of friendship in Terence chiefly revolve about the endeavors of gentlemen of more mature years to advise or admonish familiar acquaintances of their own age. The missionary zeal with which Chremes tries to convert Menedemus in the Heauton Timorumenus to a better method of dealing with his son is repeated in Demea's querulous criticism of his brother Micio's training of his son, Aeschinus, in the Adelphoe.¹⁵⁷ Simo's persistent attempt to seal his friendship with Chremes in the Andria by a marriage between their houses, is likewise paralleled by the scheme of the brothers, Demipho and Chremes, in the Phormio, to conceal the latter's marital infidelity by marrying his illegitimate daughter to Demipho's son. In these cases of older friendships, the object of concern or dispute is parental responsibility for the education or the

marriage establishment of the young. This is a matter in which Terence shows great interest. Plautus provides us with one example of the problem but Callipho's solution is perhaps not intended as seriously as those offered by Terence. At any rate, it is rather more cynical. On the other hand, the spirit of friendship is seldom shown as fine and frank as in the anxious concern which Megaronides shows over the reputation of Callicles in the Trinummus of Plautus. Apocides in the Epidicus takes an interest in the career of the son of Periphanes, but his friendly endeavors prove ineffectual. In the Miles Gloriosus, Periplectomenus shows his goodwill for the happiness of his friend's son by actions rather than words. In all of these associations, the motive is altruistic. The two remaining cases are not properly friendships at all. In the Phormio, Demipho's three friends scarcely deserve the name. They shirk the obligation of friendship. In the Rudens, Charmides and Labrax are associated in business of a decidedly unsavory character. The relationship is quickly dissolved.

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CHAPTER VIII

RELATIONS BETWEEN GODS AND MEN

A close reading of Roman Comedy shows that the text is plentifully sprinkled with numerous references to various aspects of religious belief and practice, but the effect which religion seems to have exercised upon the thought and conduct of the characters is very superficial. Some of the references are definitely Roman in origin and refer to Roman ritual or practice, and others might equally well reflect either Greek or Roman religious habits and thoughts, or perhaps even more commonly, Greek or Roman superstition. The references which are definitely not Greek are of course anachronistic and have been interpolated in the Latin imitation of the Greek model. These are generally to be found in Plautus; rarely, if ever, in Terence.

Conventional expressions which imply or grow out of religious feeling or religious fear or superstition which either exists still, or at any rate once existed in the society whose life is reflected in Roman Comedy, are exceedingly common in the plays. Such expressions may take the form of a wish, a blessing, a curse, or a mere exclamation indicative of joy, surprise, or dismay. Expressions such as Ita di bene ament,¹ pro di immortales,² di omnes deaeque perdant³...., hercle,⁴

pol,⁵ and ecastor⁶ serve as a few illustrations of these characteristic asseverations and ejaculations. Pol and edepol, adjurations by Pollux, one of the "Great Twin Brethen," are freely used by women and often by men; hercle, "by Hercules," only by men, and ecastor, "by Castor," chiefly by women. It seems that these words and phrases become so much a matter of habit that they may not indicate any intensity of emotion whatsoever, other than the slightest emphasis. These expressions do not necessarily imply any real religious consciousness on the part of the person who uses them. They are nothing but mannerisms and affectations in the general speech. But they are sometimes employed in a spirit of humor for exaggerated emphasis, as in Ergasilus' oaths by the names of Italian towns in the Captivi⁷ or Alcesimarchus' oaths in the Cistellaria when in his excitement he totally confuses the family relationships of the gods by whom he swears:

So may Juno the queen and the daughter of almighty Jove,
so may Saturn, his uncle.....so may Ops the opulent, his
grandmother.....so may Juno, his daughter, and Saturn,
his uncle, and Jupiter on high....May all the gods,
great gods, small gods, and platter gods, too,
prevent my kissing Selenium....unless I butcher you
and your daughter and my own self this very day.⁸

That the stories of the gods are familiar to the characters in the plays is sometimes shown by playful metaphors.⁹ These playful witticisms show at the same time that the folk of comedy do not regard the gods with the same awe and reverence which once must have prevailed. Thus Lysidamus of the Casina, when his wife refuses his sudden and unwonted (and unwanted) affection, mildly rebukes her behavior in a somewhat frivolous manner: "Oh now, now, Juno mine, it's not nice for you to be

so cross with your Jove!"¹⁰ A similar example appears in the Mercator where the maid tells her mistress of a strange woman in the house: "Just you come this way to see your rival Alcmena for yourself, Juno mine."¹¹ Both references betray a kind of patronizing criticism of the king and queen of Olympus. The first characterizes Juno as a cross and scolding wife; the second implies that Jupiter's interest in women was not limited to his wife. Both imply that the gods exhibit human foibles and do not command devotion or respect.

Other casual instances of taking in vain the names of gods occur frequently in the speeches of the less-responsible slaves, such as Chrysalus in the Bacchides, who affirms a lie by a fulsome oath in which he appeals to seventeen gods by name.¹² Olympio in the Casina ridicules the simple faith of his master, Lysidamus, who puts his hopes in heaven:

I wouldn't give a stiver for talk like that. Why every living soul trusts to Heaven, but just the same, I've seen plenty of your trust-to-Heaven folks fooled times enough.¹³

Sosia in the Amphitryon accounts for the unaccountable prolongation of the night with the guess that the stars must be drunk and the sun asleep.¹⁴ The cook in the Pseudolus repeats the well-worn joke that Jupiter, who lives by the savor of sacrifice and particularly of his good cooking, will surely go to bed without his dinner if no one employs him to cook a dinner.¹⁵ Sagaristio in the Persa unburdens his feelings with an elegant burst of cynical gratitude to Jupiter for having allowed him to misuse his master's money to help a fellow slave.¹⁶ The fellow slave later thanks Jupiter with equal

sincerity for the success with which they have carried out their intrigue.¹⁷

One of the commonest habits of ancient thought and speech which has its origin in religion is the persistent tendency to regard any chance or unusual occurrence as having prophetic import. Such phenomena are conveniently described as omens, whether they are lucky or unlucky. If human actions either please or displease the gods, and human beings desire to please them or avoid their displeasure, it is natural and inevitable that they should seek in every way to discover the will of those powers whose goodwill and help they wish to cultivate. Many of the phenomena which are taken to indicate supernatural direction seem quite trivial to the modern sophisticated critic. Examples of unfavorable omens are: a strange black dog entering a house, a snake falling from the roof into the impluvium, and a hen crowing;¹⁸ all of which induce a man to postpone his marriage. Movements of the various parts of the body, as the twitching of the eyebrow,¹⁹ or the itching of the shoulders²⁰ and back,²¹ or shivering when in a sweat²² are prognostic of evil. The evil eye which always has been considered a bad omen in both ancient and modern times is not overlooked by Phaedromus in the Curculio.²³ Equally dreadful to Amphitruo is the mala manus.²⁴ A raven croaking on the left is bad luck.²⁵ A woodpecker tapping on an elm awakens the fear of corporal punishment in a slave.²⁶ A more complicated, if less credible, augury is regarded as favorable by the slave, Libanus, in the Asinaria, when, by an unusual coincidence he reports "woodpecker and crow on the left, raven and barn owl on the right."²⁷ The behavior

of birds is regarded as so significant of the future that the study of it is recognized by two of the commonest words of Roman ritual--augury and auspices. In order to avoid conflict with the divine will and consequent failure, it is customary to consult the auspices before an important action. "I go out with clear auspices with a bird on my left," says Epidicus in the play of the same name.²⁸ To the hungry parasite, Gelasimus, of the Stichus, a weasel grabbing off a mouse foretells prosperity²⁹ until his dinner prospects fail,³⁰ whereupon he loses faith in weasels forevermore. Slightly more rational seems the ever-recurring fear of stumbling over a threshold or bumping one's head against a lintel. These are omens against which a bride should especially guard on first entering her new home.³¹

A more specialized and more elaborate type of omen, requiring greater skill of interpretation, is the dream. On the other hand, it seems to be a more direct and specific message to mortals from the occult powers, though one cannot anticipate when the dream may occur, and the message be conveyed. One means of overcoming this difficulty is to seek environment favorable to the occurrence of dreams, such as the temple of Aesculapius. When Cappadox, the pimp in the Curculio dreams that he saw Aesculapius keeping at a distance from him, and indifferent to his presence, and when he consults the cook about this alarming apparition, he is advised that it portends that all the gods will forsake him, unless he sues the deity for grace at once.³² This he proceeds to do with precipitate haste, attesting his complete belief in the presentiments of dreams. The dream which Demipho of the Mercator has and finds difficult

to analyze, materializes the next day with rather unpleasant repercussions.³³ His dream about rival she-goats, herded by a monkey, is a zoological parable reflecting his domestic difficulties. A cynical exploitation of the popular faith in dreams is used by Philocomasium in the Miles Gloriosus³⁴ to deceive the slave who has been set to watch her and who has actually observed her clandestine love-making.³⁵ She convinces the slave that it was not herself whom he saw but a twin sister, who, she alleges, must have suddenly arrived, as she claims from her dream.

The most direct method of appealing to the gods is prayer, and the formulae of the invocation by which prayers are introduced seem unduly wordy and elaborate to a modern reader. "Ye Penates of my parents, father Lar of this abode" prays Charinus in the Mercator addressing his household gods.³⁶ "Oh, Neptune, brother of Jove and Nereus, Lord of the saltful, souseful main" declaims Charmides in the Trinummus in gratitude to the powers of the sea who have wafted him safely home.³⁷ "O Jupiter, thou opulent, glorious son of Ops, deity supreme" says Sagaristio of the Persa in his gratitude for the success of his search for money.³⁸ The elaborate nature of these modes of address may be attributed both to a desire to be complimentary to the deity in question but also to an effort to give him his precise and formal title which, to the ancients, was of rather great importance. If there is any uncertainty either about the exact identity or the proper designation of the power to whom the appeal is made, the invocation becomes still more elaborate and indefinite in the attempt to avoid offence. So Palaestra in the

Rudens, having reached terra firma after her struggle with the sea, praises "quisquis est deus."³⁹ She resorts to this formula as she wanders with her shipwrecked girl friend near the shrine of Venus. The priestess, hearing her prayer, receives her in her sorry attire, although cautioning her that "it had been more fitting for you to come dressed in white and bring offerings. It is not customary to visit this temple in such a state."⁴⁰

This passage clearly indicates how a suppliant should approach the shrine of Venus. The local fishermen offer a prayer there on their way out to the day's fishing.⁴¹ Offerings are almost indispensable if favors are to be expected in answer to prayers. Anterastilis of the Poenulus believes that the worshipper who brings the first fire of the day to Venus' shrine receives more consideration than any other.⁴² Perhaps the commonest and simplest form of offering is the libation, a few drops of wine spilled from a cup which one is about to drink. This lovers naturally always pour to Venus.⁴³ But the parasite in the Asinaria expresses some skepticism with regard to the real destination of the wreaths and perfumes which his patron's mistress bids her maid carry to Venus and speculates upon the possibility of their being bestowed rather upon a man.⁴⁴ Pimps, also, because they derive their profit from Venus, whose votaries they exploit, sacrifice at her shrine, but from motives so completely mercenary that Lycus in the Poenulus, after sacrificing six lambs without a sign of favor refuses to leave the sacrificial meat, withdraws in anger, and warns others not to offer even a pinch of incense upon her altar.⁴⁵ Labrax, the pimp in the Rudens, attempts to drag away from Venus' shrine

where they have taken asylum, two of his slave girls who have saved themselves from the shipwreck of the vessel in which he was conveying them to Sicily: "They're my girls and I'll haul them away from the altar by the hair this minute, despite you and Venus and Jupiter on high."⁴⁶ This is an act of sacrilege which shows that the profit motive with Labrax is more powerful than his respect for the gods. Ampelisca corroborates this view by the remark that "if he has cheated gods and men, it's all in a day's work for a pimp."⁴⁷ In fact, Labrax confirms it himself a little later in the play when he claims the treasure trunk which Gripus has caught in his net, saying: "Lord, man, no matter if it even belonged to Jove, it's mine."⁴⁸ Philolaches in the Mostellaria has doubts as to the benefits to be expected in return for offerings to Jove and suggests that he could invest his gifts better by exchanging them for a beautiful mistress. "If I had made an offering of an ox to Jove Almighty with the money I paid out for her, it would never have been so well invested."⁴⁹ The same cynicism with regard to the gods is expressed by Ballio in the Pseudolus in the admission: "Why, if I was sacrificing to Jove Supreme, ay with the organs in my hands to put on the altar, and a chance of profits suddenly appeared, my offering would be all off."⁵⁰ The slave Pseudolus states that the gods are mocked by Ballio,⁵¹ and another slave calls him "godless."⁵² The sickly Cappadox, on the other hand, acts in the faith that Aesculapius can cure his illness if he resorts to his temple as admonished by his dream. At any rate, he seems to credit the gods with the success of a profitable deal. "When the gods are propitious to a man, they throw money

in his way, they certainly do."⁵³

The right of asylum does prove effective and is recognized by Theopropides in the Mostellaria when his slave, Tranio, seeks the safety of the altar from the consequences of the trickery which he has played upon his master.⁵⁴ Euclio, the miser in the Aulularia, in keeping with his character and on the occasion of his daughter's wedding, places a cheap and miserly offering of a very small pinch of incense and some half-wilted flowers upon the altar of his household Lar.⁵⁵ But though the offering is cheap, the religious significance of the act is apparently genuine. A highly imaginative and rhetorical picture of the miserly devotions of the father of Philocrates is drawn by Philocrates himself for the benefit of Hegio in the Captivi lest Hegio demand too large a ransom for him. "Whenever he sacrifices to his own Guardian Spirit, he won't use any dishes needed in the service except ones made of Samian earthenware, for fear his very Guardian Spirit may steal them."⁵⁶ The fictitious tale of the Bacchantes making away with his cloak, told by Lysidamus of the Casina to his wife to account for the loss, is received with angry incredulity by the lady: "That's nonsense and he knows it. Why, goodness me, there are no Bacchante revels now."⁵⁷ In most of the examples just cited of sacrifice or offering, the religious act seems more a matter of habit and convention than the proof of religious feeling or sincere worship. In Greek and Roman religion, sacrifice and offerings were after all the worshipper's part of a bargain between himself and the deity much more than an expression of devotion. The bargains involved in our examples here seem to

be regarded by those who pay the offering as highly speculative if not actually unprofitable and poor bargains indeed. This accounts for the skeptical note in which they are referred to. There is little indication in any of them of religious vitality.

Another conventional religious formula which however does seem to express certain genuine attachment to the home occurs a number of times in the plays when a character is taking his farewell or has freshly arrived at his home after a considerable absence. Thus Pamphilippus of the Stichus, returning from a trading expedition, remarks: "I'll just stop in at my own house to do homage to gods and wife."⁵⁸ The remark of Demipho in Terence's Phormio on returning to Athens is almost identical, except that the gods he greets on his return are specified as the Penates.⁵⁹ The slave Chrysalus in the Bacchides rejoices: "Greetings, land of my master! Land that I behold with joy after departing hence to Ephesus two years ago! Thee I greet, neighbor Apollo, who dost dwell adjacent to our house."⁶⁰ in the Miles Gloriosus, Palaestrio, on taking his leave of the soldier's home where he has been domiciled, addresses the Lar familiaris: "And now once more, God of this household, I salute thee before I go."⁶¹ Callicles in the Trinummus, issuing from his front door, calls back directions to his wife to honor the Lar of their home with a chaplet.⁶² The examples quoted, by their recurring frequency, attest the ancient householder's love of home which found expression in prayers to his Household Gods, the Lares and the Penates. The most forceful example is that of Charinus in the Mercator who is taking final leave of his home because he has become estranged from his father. He

prays not only to the Lar, whom he calls "father of this abode,"⁶³ and to the Penates, but even to the lintel and threshold of the house.⁶⁴ To the Lares and the Penates, he commits the fortunes of his parents, praying that they will guard them well.⁶⁵ As for himself, he commits his own safety to the Lares of the roadsides: "Invoco vos, Lares viales, ut me bene tutetis."⁶⁶ To these verbal expressions of reverence for the household gods, we may add the more concrete thank-offering of a pig or a lamb which Daemones of the Rudens plans to sacrifice to his Lares familiares for the discovery of his long-lost daughter.⁶⁷

The Lar familiaris, to which we see such attention paid, is a vital element of Roman religion, and here we seem able to distinguish a distinctly Roman flavor in the Fabula Palliata. It is generally supposed that the cult of the Lares is a kind of ancestor worship and that the Lar represents, perhaps, the spirit of the founder of a family. Plausibility seems lent to this theory by the very interesting and unique prologue of the Aulularia, spoken by the Lar of Euclio's household:

I am the household God of that family from whose house you saw me come. For many years now, I have possessed this dwelling, and preserved it for the sire and grandsire of its present occupant.⁶⁸

The same sincerity of sentiment and reverent gratitude is implied in several addresses to Neptune by wayfarers newly landed from the sea. So Philocomasium of the Miles Gloriosus directs that praise and thanks be rendered to Diana of Ephesus and incense burnt for saving her "from Neptune's realm" and from buffeting of angry billows.⁶⁹ Epignomus in the Stichus thanks Neptune for bringing him safely home and Mercury, too,

for prospering his trading venture.⁷⁰ But the most eloquent and earnest tribute of "hearty happy homage" is paid to Neptune by Charmides of the Trinummus for a placid voyage in which, contrary to the general report of his "savage, severe, rapacious, abhorrent, unendurable, maniacal ways,"⁷¹ Neptune has saved him from the salty waves:

Aye, Neptune, to thee above all other gods do I offer and accord profoundest gratitude....Aye, and long since, had I heard how this was to thy glory....a creed much bruited among men....that thou wert wont to spare the poor, to ravage and reduce the rich. Not so! I give thee praise. Thou knowest how to treat men duly, as is just; this befits the gods. I found thee faithful.⁷²

Quite a different tone and attitude may be detected in the speech of Theopropides in the Mostellaria who also addresses Neptune on his return to Athens from, we infer, a stormy and dangerous voyage. His gratitude at reaching land is tempered with resentment at the dangers to which he was exposed:

Theop: "I am deeply grateful to you, Neptune, for letting me get away home with a bit of life left in me. But if you ever hear of my going one foot's-breadth on the billows after this, I give you leave to go straight ahead and do what you wished to do with me this time. Avaunt! Avaunt, now, and forevermore! I've trusted you with all I mean to trust you."

Tran: "Gad, Neptune, you made a big mistake in letting go such a fine chance."⁷³

Intensely sincere and earnest are the prayers of Hanno in the Poenulus and Hegio in the Captivi. Hanno prays that Jupiter may restore his kidnapped daughters to him:

Oh, Jupiter, who dost cherish and nurture the human race, through whom we live and draw the breath of being, in whom rest the hopes and lives of all mankind, I beg thee grant that this day may prosper that which I have in hand, and those lost to me for many years, those daughters taken from their home as tiny girls, restore them to

liberty, and show me that unfaltering affection is rewarded.⁷⁴

His prayer was answered, for as Daemones says in the Rudens:

"It does somehow come about that the prayers of the pious are answered."⁷⁵ Hegio in the Captivi thanks Jupiter for restoring his captured son:

I thank God with all my heart, as I ought, for bringing you back to your father, and for relieving me of the dreadful anguish I've been enduring as day after day went by, and I still here without you.⁷⁶

In the last two cases, the speakers express what may fairly be described as real religious feeling and faith. This religious reverence and conviction which is comparatively rare in Roman Comedy, perhaps finds the most explicit statement in a speech of Tyndarus of the Captivi who, in his earnest plea to Hegio, argues:

There surely is a God who hears and sees what we do: and according to your treatment of me here, so will he look after your son there. He will reward the deserving and requite the undeserving.⁷⁷

In the speeches quoted from Hanno and Tyndarus, we find a conception of Jupiter different from that merely of a god of power. Hanno's words imply that the Omnipotent is also Providence, and that he "cherishes and nurtures mankind." Tyndarus says he is omniscient and a god of justice who "rewards the deserving and requites the undeserving." All this is corroborated by Arcturus, the servant of Jupiter, in the prologue to the Rudens:

'Tis Jupiter, the lord of gods and men, that doth assign us each our different posts among the peoples, that we may learn of the deeds and ways of men, their reverence and loyalty, and how well each doth fare.... Day by day He knows who they be that do seek evil here on earth. When the wicked here expect to win their

suits by perjury, or press false claims before the judge, the case adjudged is judged again by Him. And the fine He fines them far exceeds their gains in courts of law.

The good are enrolled by Him on other tablets. Yet scoundrels think to placate Jove by gifts and offerings. Their time and money both are wasted; for he takes not tribute from a guilty hand. The righteous man will find God's grace by prayer more readily than will the knave. This do I therefore urge upon you, who are good men and lead lives of righteousness and honour; hold fast to your course, that so ye may abide in joy.⁷⁸

In Arcturus' speech, we find an unusually lofty conception of the deity--a god of justice who "takes not tribute from a guilty hand." It is a conception not held by many of our dramatic characters who regard sacrifice and offering sometimes as a bribe, or who, at least, expect the divine help or bounty for value received. But the dramatis personae represent a cross-section of society and the different members of a society entertain different views and conceptions of deity. It is important to note the nobler view even when it is held by the minority, the yeast which may leaven the whole.

Among the finer characters is occasionally found one, who in affliction that is undeserved, questions the faith which is due to God with what Duff describes as an echo of Greek philosophizing.⁷⁹ The innocent Palaestra in the Rudens wonders:

Is it really the will of God that I should be cast on a strange shore in this pitiable plight and frightened so? Is this my reward for trying my best to do right? Why, I can suffer this and not think it suffering, if I have sinned against a parent or against the gods. But if I have been careful as could be not to do so, then, gods, you are treating me unfittingly, unfairly, unjustly. For how will the guilty be marked out by you now, if this is the way you honor the innocent?⁸⁰

It is the eternal question of Job and there is no ready answer, but the asking of the question implies serious religious thought.

We have noted that Hanno and Arcturus speak of Jupiter as an almighty, supreme deity, not just as one who presides over a number of gods, which was the old mythological conception. In these speeches, the personages of mythology seem to be forgotten or ignored, and one god, Jupiter, emerges as the personification of divinity, the embodiment of justice and goodness. This is not far from the conception of monotheism, which finally supplanted the polytheistic Pantheon. But such expressions as these are sporadic in comedy. The comic religious picture is a cross-section of different views, reflecting current beliefs. One of the most interesting of these seems to be a vestige of the characteristically Roman point of view; namely, the deification of abstract qualities. A number of them are mentioned as deities in the various plays, such as Fides,⁸¹ Concordia,⁸² Salus,⁸³ Fors Fortuna,⁸⁴ Spes⁸⁵ and even Opportunitas.⁸⁶ In the prologue to the Trinummus,⁸⁷ Luxuria and Inopia are personified, and Luxuria tells us that she is sending her daughter, Inopia, into the house of Lesbonicus to complete its ruin. We are told that the use of such allegorical persons in prologues was common in Menander and was taken by him from the tragic stage.⁸⁸ There is no suggestion in the speech of Luxuria that she is a deity. But in the postponed prologue of the Cistellaria, Auxilium says that he is a god and concludes his speech with political injunctions about the proper treatment of allies and enemies in the Punic Wars.⁸⁹ Thus, not only does Auxilium take a Roman interest in Roman affairs, but he represents a traditional phase of Roman religion.

One last question remains in this brief survey of the religious content of Roman Comedy; namely, what religious import, if any, is to be attributed to the mythological farce of the Amphitryon? It is mostly burlesque, but Plautus calls it a tragi-comedy.⁹⁰

Jupiter, masquerading as the sham Amphitruo, is an unclean trickster. Mercury, masquerading as the slave, Sosia, is a practical joker, who befools and thrashes the real Sosia, and gets his human counterpart into a scrape by pretending to be in liquor and by insulting the real Amphitruo with a douche of water from his own house-top.⁹¹

Obviously, the Jupiter and Mercury of the drama are neither worshipped nor deserving of worship. Warde Fowler cites the play as evidence that the old religion was losing its hold upon the Roman people.⁹² That is perhaps taking it too seriously. The comic burlesque of gods is completely in the tradition of Greek Comedy from the time of Aristophanes, without any necessary implication of atheism, and countless myths about Jupiter represent his conduct as anything but moral. The simple explanation is a peculiar differentiation in the ancient mind between the persons of mythology and the persons of worship. It is not surprising that Plautus should have represented Jupiter as an unscrupulous rake so much as it is shocking that he should have portrayed him as deceiving the sweetest and purest woman in his plays.

Alcmena's character is apparent in her unaffected grief over parting from her husband (Amph. 635 ff.), her love of virtue and conscious freedom from wilful guilther vexation at the suggestion of unchastity giving way to the confidence of innocence, and her proclamation of the ideal of wifehood; (Amph. 839 ff.) she will leave

her home, unless her name is cleared. This one character is serious in the play. The rest,....is burlesque. The blend then justifies the classification as tragi-comedy.⁹³

For our purposes in this essay on religion in Roman Comedy, the play has practically no significance. The gods in the play have no relation to ancient religion, Greek or Roman, but are the products of folk-lore or the poet's imagination.

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32. Curc. 259-262.
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36. Merc. 834.
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CHAPTER IX

BUSINESS STANDARDS

Expanding trade was a notable feature of the Rome of Plautus' day, and Menander's Athens had long been one of the leading commercial cities of the ancient world. Whether the situations presented in Roman Comedy, then, are wholly Greek or contaminated in part by reference to Roman conditions, the organization and practices of the business world are bound to be reflected in them. Across the stage of Plautus and Terence marches a varied procession of farmers, bankers, money-lenders, slave-dealers, and other business men, whose occupational motive was financial profit, and whose business ethics were, therefore, not much better or worse than those of any other age. The plots of comedy are often concerned with the borrowing or repayment of sums of money, confronting us at every turn with the man of wealth and the man of poverty, grudging a loan or begging for it, demanding back his own or pleading inability to pay as the case may be. In Comedy the expensive tastes of undisciplined youths commonly produce an abnormal condition of debt which outrages the business sense of practical men of affairs and brings out their less charitable emotions. In fact the needs of the plot not infrequently exhibit the worst side of the character of both lender and borrower. To some extent

then we may blame the comic situation for the prominence of business men, business dealings, and business parlance in the lines of our plays.

In matters pertaining to money, the business man's attitude was strict and realistic. Since he feared or found it inconvenient to keep large sums at home,¹ he deposited his money in a bank² or in a temple³ according to his faith in either. Euclio of the Aulularia confidently entrusted his treasure to the Temple of Faith⁴ until a crow led him to believe that the omens were unfavorable.⁵ The bank furnished each individual with an account, his rationcula,⁶ which kept him informed of his deposits and withdrawals. It follows without saying that the bankers kept records of deposits, withdrawals, transfers, and interest due in a manner not very different from our own.⁷ A depositor could use a scriptum,⁸ similar to our cheque, whenever he wanted to discharge some expedient obligation. In some transactions, the man would simply leave instructions with his banker, together with his seal as a token,⁹ to pay over the money to the other party upon presentation of the necessary credentials by the latter's slave or messenger. This system of financial transfer was not free from abuse at the hands of persons, who, acting under false pretences, intercepted the slave or messenger, discovered the exact nature of the business, and then proceeded to further their own interests by bluffing the banker. Thus Curculio of the Curculio, stealing a ring from his master's rival,¹⁰ uses it to obtain funds from the banker in order to set free his master's sweetheart.¹¹ Pseudolus of the Pseudolus employs a

similar device to trick a pimp out of the girl whom his master dotes on.¹² In the former case, the banker would enter the transfer on the rival's records. He could not be held responsible nor did he have to make amends since the necessary tokens had been produced.

Debtors in the plays seldom show any inclination to pay their debts until the very day they fall due. To demand more than was due invalidated a claim for debt at Rome.¹³ Influenced by this Roman regulation, Plautus, in another anachronism in the Mostellaria, represents Tranio wishing that the moneylender would claim "one penny more" when he comes to collect his debt.¹⁴ It is characteristic of the moneylender to demand the payment of the interest first,¹⁵ since if he accepted the principal without interest, he feared the interest might never be paid. At times, moneylenders found it difficult to invest their capital owing to a scarcity of borrowers as Misargyrides of the same play woefully admits.¹⁶ This is not surprising when one considers the exorbitant rates of interest which they charged. In the Epidicus, the usurious rate was no less than two percent per day.¹⁷ Nothing but dire necessity would induce a man to borrow on such terms. This is the only definite mention of a specific rate in the comedies, but whether it is an exaggeration or not, other general references corroborate the impression of usury and avarice on the part of the moneylenders.

Lending money at interest was an important activity of the ancient banker. Like the banker of today, he would consider the application of the would-be borrower with deliber-

ation and caution, endeavoring to determine how great a financial risk was involved.¹⁸ In case a person had proved a bad risk, a warning was circulated throughout the city advising people not to trust him if he applied for a loan.¹⁹ This is the plight of the love-lorn Charinus of the Mercator whose father resorted to this safeguard after his son had squandered most of his property on a pimp and his establishment. Callipho of the Pseudolus bemoans the fact that the days of "friendly loans" have passed,²⁰ and that everyone is afraid of giving credit.²¹ Pimp Ballio tells his young client that he could buy oil on credit and sell it for cash,²² but Callipho replies that the Lex Plaetoria protects all minors under twenty-five years of age from being fleeced in such a fashion.²³

Because of their sharp practices, bankers were often held in low esteem.²⁴ In the Persa we are told that once they are entrusted with money, they "scurry away from the forum faster than a hare from its cage door at the games."²⁵ Curculio criticizes them for "mangling men with usury"²⁶ openly in the forum,²⁷ and for evading all the laws and restrictions which have been passed to control them. "To you laws are like boiling water that soon grows cold."²⁸ Banker Lyco of the Curculio frankly admits "it's a plutocrat I am if I don't pay my creditors. If they press me too hard, I'll just let the court do the settling."²⁹ Lyco uses this procedure in an attempt to bamboozle pimp Cappadox out of his forty pounds credit, but "his friends coerced him," forcing him to pay.³⁰ By superior knowledge of the law, a banker could sometimes defraud his creditor on a technicality even when the case was taken to court

or so it would appear.

The publicani were distinctively a Roman institution and appear as one of the anachronisms which Plautus does not scruple to introduce into the Fabula Palliata. They were looked upon with even less favor than the bankers and were equally unpopular.³¹ To them was entrusted the collection of various revenues, the one from public lands offering them the largest field of activity. Invariably they employed their powers oppressively, bleeding the tax-payer a little whiter than he deserved or could afford. Their profits surpassed any moderate estimation for they fleeced the subject peoples without mercy in the certainty of not being resisted or hampered by the governors, who were at their beck and call, and whose career they could ruin by a word. In the Truculentus, Plautus satirizes their collection of the scriptura, the grazing tax paid by the cattle ranchers on their herds. If the farmer could not meet the tax imposed by these "no good perjurers,"³² the publicani could take their live-stock as alternate payment. True to human nature, the occupants of the land, if they mismanaged their affairs so badly that they could not meet their taxes, blamed the public officials.³³

Another class of tax collector not many steps removed from the publicani were the portitores who collected the harbour dues. They closely inspected everything that was brought in, opened sealed letters in case these were of the sort to create suspicion, and subjected travellers to a searching examination.³⁴ So significant of pertinacious questioning was the very name portitor, that in the Menaechmi the husband compares his wife

to a custom officer when she persists in prying into his most trifling actions: "Why, whenever I want to go out, you catch hold of me, call me back, cross-question me as to where I'm going, what I'm doing, what business I have in hand, what I'm after, what I've got, what I did when I went out. I've married a custom-house officer from the way everything--all I've done and am doing--must be declared."³⁵

In the Phormio we have a very good example of business mismanagement by a husband in the matter of his wife's property. Instead of faithfully collecting the income and depositing the whole amount in his wife's name, Chremes uses part of the money to support a second wife, whom he had married secretly abroad during a business trip. Immediately his first wife learns of her husband's infidelity, she divines the meaning "of those frequent voyages, those lengthened visits to Lemnos. These are the low prices that brought down our rents."³⁶

Speculation in foreign trade was a profitable source of wealth for the merchants or mercatores, dealers in special commodities. Ownership of the vessel in which they traded is not always indicated in Roman Comedy, although in the Mercator, Charinus speaks of his father selling the farm he inherited at his grandfather's death and buying a ship of fifteen tons burden for the money.³⁷ From isolated references, we may discover some of the principal trade routes these merchants followed. Charinus' father trades extensively with profitable results, but only Rhodes, one of the most thriving commercial centres in the Mediterranean receives mention.³⁸ A common trade route to the east might begin at Athens, touching the

Aegean islands of Melos,³⁹ Samos,⁴⁰ and Rhodes,⁴¹ and continuing on to the island of Cyprus,⁴² famous for its boat-building,⁴³ or to Alexandria,⁴⁴ and branching from there either to Seleucia,⁴⁵ or to Sidon, Tyre, and other ports in the Levant. Alexandria served as a major port of distribution for most of the goods coming from the Orient, including such precious cargoes as rugs, perfumes, Babylonian draperies and clipped tapestries, Arabian incense, and slave girls. The two brothers of the Stichus, after a three years' trading trip to Asia, return to Athens laden with fabulous treasures of gold and silver, couches of ivory and gold, wool and cloth of purple, perfumes, slave girls,⁴⁶ goods which indicate extended trips along the coastline of Asia Minor to Alexandria. Westward, ships might sail to the island of Zacynthus, associated with fig-growing,⁴⁷ or to Sicyon,⁴⁸ Naupactus,⁴⁹ Calydon,⁵⁰ and on to Anactorium,⁵¹ Ambracia⁵² and Epidamnus.⁵³ Beyond these western ports of Greece, well travelled routes led to Italian Tarentum or to the Sicilian cities of Syracuse and Agrigentum, and hence to Carthage⁵⁴ or Capua.⁵⁵ Daemones of the Rudens who lives at Cyrene on the African coast, sells his supply of silphium and silphium juice to the latter named city at a profitable price.⁵⁶ References to fairs at Tarentum⁵⁷ and at Eretria⁵⁸ indicate interest and keen competition in trade and commerce. In their zest for business, merchants thronged these fairs although they might be many sailing miles away.

References to the textile, the leather, and the metal industries afford ample proof of the great growth and expansion of trade. In the Aulularia, a long catalogue of different

tradesmen is given,⁵⁹ including the cleanser, the tailor, the jeweller, the woollen maker, the shoe-maker, the cobbler, cabinet-makers, weavers, and others. The products of these specialized and skilled workmen not only made the fairs centres of great commercial activity but added greatly to the comforts and complexities of private economy.

The high cost of living, a common cause of complaint in Roman Comedy, has a direct bearing upon the business standards of the time. A parasite's charges are not the most reliable evidence for abnormal prices nor poor quality of food, but the parasite's insatiable appetite did inflate many a food bill for his host. Masquerading in the capacity of a market-inspector,⁶⁰ parasite Ergasilus of the Captivi condemns the tough meats and the stale fish which are for sale at the market place although wholly unfit for human consumption. Pleusicles of the Miles Gloriosus defines a good market inspector as one who "fixes the price of merchandise--fixing such a price on the good merchandise as to make it sell according to its merits, and paring down the owner's price on the bad according to its demerits."⁶¹ There seems here to be some suggestion that the market inspector was not accepting the full responsibility of his position, failing as he was to discharge his duties properly and satisfactorily, by controlling prices⁶² in the interests of the people. Perhaps he was working in collaboration with the merchant guilds who conspired together "like oil dealers in Velabrum"⁶³ to keep up the prices to the disadvantage of the people. The merchants might contend that these had to be high to compensate for the hazards of trading across the seas, both

from storms and pirates.⁶⁴ While these factors undoubtedly had to be taken into account in setting prices, the profit motive constantly tended to raise them higher, and made some form of public control essential.

As Roman Comedy concerns itself chiefly with personal family relationships and their emotional situations, business affairs receive but brief and casual mention. The fact that business transactions claim the interest they do clearly indicates the extent to which the business world was making its influence felt in ancient life of the period with which the plays are concerned.

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37. Merc. 73-76.
38. Merc. 93.
39. Most. 264.
40. Men. 178; Capt. 291.
41. Merc. 93, 390; Asin. 499.
42. Merc. 940.
43. Stich. 368.
44. Merc. 139, 415; Most. 440.
45. Trin. 112, 845.

46. Stich. 375-381.
47. Merc. 940.
48. Pseud. 1170.
49. M.G. 102.
50. Poen. 72, 86.
51. Poen. 86.
52. Stich. 490.
53. Men. 258.
54. Poen. 72.
55. Rud. 630.
56. Rud. 630.
57. Men. 29.
58. Persa 322.
59. Aul. 508-518.
60. Capt. 823-824.
61. M.G. 727-729.
62. Ramsay 192.
63. Capt. 489.
64. Bacc. 279-282.

CHAPTER X

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The content of the present chapter is very similar to that of the preceding, and the division between the two is perhaps arbitrary and artificial because the characters described in this chapter, like those in the former, are largely motivated by the business instinct and desire for gain. The activities, however, by which they make a living are sufficiently distinct and well-recognized by long custom that they fall naturally into separate groups with attributes and characteristics of their own, marked by corresponding differences in the popular terms or designations applied to each in the language of the people. It is merely a matter of convenience, then, in this discussion to reflect the attitude of their contemporaries, and single out those who followed certain time-honoured occupations, such as cooking, procuring, warfare, midwifery and medicine, for separate treatment; but though we accord them the title of "profession," we do not mean to concede them the social dignity and superiority which that name has acquired in more recent times. Many of the practitioners of these callings were in fact slaves, and socially inferior, and if they were not slaves in law, they were usually servile in character, and seldom displayed the nobler qualities necessary

to the evolution of respectable professional standards.

Eating, not to mention over-eating, is an inevitable feature of living, and one of the commonest occasions for the exhibition of social amenities and vulgarities. It is to be expected therefore that comedy, which is a presentation and criticism of manners, will frequently employ this occasion as a dramatic situation and exploit its comic possibilities. This accounts for the frequent appearance of cooks upon the comic stage. Although the plain, everyday cooking of the average family was always attended to by the matrona and her daughters or her slaves, there were occasions such as dinners,¹ banquets, wedding feasts² and birthday parties³ which required greater skill in the art of preparing special dishes than the cooks of the household possessed.⁴ Therefore professional cooks were hired from the forum⁵ or the macellum⁶ to add that sumptuary touch to the celebration of the event. The macellum, or provision market, was the natural place for cooks in search of employment to congregate with their pots and pans, since patrons would shop there for food and hire a cook at the same time when the occasion demanded. To expedite preparations, especially if they were cooking for an elaborate meal, these professional cooks brought with them assistants,⁷ who were apprentices learning the trade. Wherever these "brothers of Vulcan" appear, they boast freely of their culinary skill,⁸ even disputing amongst themselves in selfish rivalry over their respective claims to excellence. Like their fellow slaves, who have learned the value of wit in warding off punishment, cooks seem to have a natural propensity for rough and ready wit,⁹ and are often

given to punning.¹⁰ Thus when Cario of the Miles Gloriosus is called in with his knife to settle the fate of the boastful soldier, he enters heartily into the grim humour of the situation,¹¹ contributing his share of the noise and confusion which usually accompanies the cooks' prating train.¹² Like slaves too, they fear corporal punishment whenever they have been guilty of tardiness, impertinence, or theft.¹³ Olympio of the Casina in allusion to the pilfering habits of cooks' assistants reminds cook Citrio to "march your briars well under your banners,"¹⁴ while pimp Ballio of the Pseudolus, oblivious to his own shortcomings, feels that "Cook's Square" would have a happier name were it called "Crook's Square."¹⁵ Pythias of the Aulularia suggests the treatment that delinquent cooks might receive as he voices the sort of accusation which a fellow servant might make: "The cooks got away with it! Collar 'em! Tie 'em up! Thrash 'em! Throw 'em into the dungeon!"¹⁶ Regardless of such risk, the cook of the Mercator dares to contrive that his apprentice and he carry away food from their employer's pantry to their own larder.¹⁷ Petty thievery of this sort ought not to have been necessary, since the usual fee paid a professional cook for the preparation of a meal was a drachma.¹⁸ Special artists in the culinary profession, such as the cook in the Pseudolus, who brags that Jupiter "goes to bed without dining" if he cannot feed on the odors from his cooking,¹⁹ charges a didrachm.²⁰ Congrio of the Aulularia charges a like amount, and after the suspicious Euclio has beaten him, he feels his charge has been very reasonable.²¹ Such are the cooks of Roman Comedy; noisy, impertinent, and

thieving fellows, covered with smut and grease.

Of all professions represented in the comedies of Plautus and Terence, that of the courtesan receives most prominence. This is not surprising when one considers that the scarlet woman has played a part, and often a dramatic part, in the society of all ages. Accepting her as an actual part of contemporary society, Plautus portrays her as she really is, a courtesan at heart, with few exceptions pursuing her parasitic career without the compelling motives of hunger and poverty forcing her to moral degradation. He does not try to redeem her in the eyes of the audience as Terence invariably succeeds in doing. With the younger playwright, the courtesan forms a more essential part of the plot, which usually culminates with her revealed as Athenian citizen. In his portrayal of her, she is generally a young woman of beauty and charm, endowed with more good qualities than bad, because she finds herself following the profession often against her will. Even Bacchis of the Heauton Timorumenus, who exhibits all the characteristic arts of her class,²² and who has given herself up body and soul to her career, warms our hearts as she advises her friend Antiphila to marry the one she loves and avoid thereby the many pitfalls of harlotry that age and time will bring.²³ This is a romantic conception unknown to Plautus. Similarly, Bacchis of the Hecyra, suspected of undermining the marriage of Pamphilus, whom she still loves,²⁴ succeeds in clearing her former lover and proving her own innocence in the eyes of his wife and mother-in-law.²⁵ Although it is not in the interests of courtesans to promote happy marriages, Bacchis has done so,

and done it in a spirit of remarkable unselfishness, as she herself declares:

There isn't another woman of my profession that would, I'm sure of that; I mean show herself before a married woman for such a purpose. But I don't like your son to be under suspicion because of a baseless story, or to appear to his parents, the last persons to whom he should so appear, to be deficient in principle. He has deserved at my hands anything I can do for his convenience.²⁶

So far from scorning her after this noble assertion, the audience cannot help but sympathize with her lot. Thais of the Eunuchus²⁷ and Chrysis of the Andria²⁸ possess characters no less admirable than Bacchis of the Hecyra. It is obvious that the courtesan in Terence is for the most part no real courtesan at all, but a victim of circumstances, more sinned against than sinning. Her temporary sojourn beyond the pale of respectability serves to lend Terence's plot greater complexity, and to reveal the poet's romantic sympathy, both of which are justified in the happy denouement in which the social stigma disappears.

In Plautus, the lady of easy virtue more rarely rises above her conventional status, though even he recognizes the single heart and loyal affection among the socially disqualified. Phronesium, of the Truculentus, best illustrates the characteristic traits of the true courtesan. She has no fewer than three lovers at one time,²⁹ each of whom fails to realize how badly he is being shorn and that she is nothing but cajolery as long as she has something to seize upon. "Guile and gain" serves as her motto, as soldier Stratophanes woefully discovers. Falsely telling him that she is the mother of his son,³⁰ she

strips him bare of gifts and money while feigning a cold indifference for him.³¹ To exasperate him further, she accepts gifts under his very nose from two other admirers who then receive all her care and attention in turn.³² She boasts of being a natural, adept at wickedness,³³ never wearying of evil schemes.³⁴ She blames her mother for her bad training, her boldness, wantonness and vice, although admitting that she is at heart "somewhat baddish" herself.³⁵ Few courtesans are as deliberately calculating and grasping in so charming a way as Phronesium.

Cleareta, the procuress of the Asinaria, has a thorough knowledge of her profession too, comparing it aptly to bird-catching.³⁶ To her, the biggest presents seem the best passports to the favours of her daughter Philaenium,³⁷ although the girl refuses to have dealings with any man but Argyrippus. Selenium of the Cistellaria, who loathes the very name of courtesan,³⁸ is intimate with one man only. Like Philaenium, she has been driven into the trade by her mother's poverty.³⁹ Philematium of the Mostellaria likewise dotes on one man, refusing to accept the wicked advice of her maid Scapha.⁴⁰ These three girls seem to deserve a better fate or status than society has allotted them.

The two sisters of the Bacchides know all the tricks of the trade. With their charm and winsome ways, they succeed in luring the young and innocent Pistoclerus into their net by the promise of a dinner and wine.⁴¹ They will not always be so generous. His friend Mnesilochus has already succumbed.⁴² The sisters achieve their crowning victory as they succeed in

breaking down the moral character of the strict and proper Nicobulus, who has come to retrieve his son from the den of vice.⁴³ Assuredly the ladies are neither virtuous nor amateurs in vice.

Erotium of the Menaechmi, Pasicompsa of the Mercator, Delphium of the Mostellaria, and Lemniselenis of the Persa are skilled in the same sly methods and enticing ways of snaring men as their sister courtesans. They fully merit the name of their profession.

So prevalent and widespread was the practice of prostitution indicated in the plays, that, as in all fields where there is steady demand, a profit-seeking class of middlemen grew up to prey upon the vice of their fellows, and to supply the "white slave" victims which satisfied it. Such is the loathesome pimp or procurer, who pandered to the irregular sexual demands of the undisciplined youth of Roman Comedy. He is invariably a slave dealer, the owner of attractive girls, whose object is to exact the highest price for their favours or persons from the unfortunate youth who has become infatuated with them. As profit and gain dictate his every act, he is completely devoid of moral scruples and oblivious of ethical standards. Greed for money colors all his transactions and sometimes even blinds him to the guiles and traps of cunning slaves or swindlers hired for the specific purpose of effecting his ruin.⁴⁴ No one speaks with approval of a pimp. He is described as a "fount of iniquity,"⁴⁵ or "as dirty as dirt,"⁴⁶ or "a bad one, a law breaker, foul faithless, godless."⁴⁷ Toxilus of the Persa calls Dorio "a putrified pimp, you mixture of mire and public dung-

pit, you indecent, infamous, iniquitous lump of illegality, you blot on the community, you hungry, hateful money-hawk, you nasty, greedy, grabby miscreant--no one can phrasify your filthiness in three hundred lines!"⁴⁸ These are harsh terms but undoubtedly Cappadox of the Curculio, Lycus of the Poenulus, Ballio of the Pseudolus and Labrax of the Rudens deserve them all. Even in their perfunctory religious practices, they are faithless, and sacrifice to Venus without any evidence of reverence or sincerity. The godless Ballio callously asserts that if a chance of profit appeared while he was sacrificing, he would not carry on with the rite.⁴⁹ Lycus tells how he avenges himself upon Venus for not favoring him after all the sacrifices he has made.⁵⁰ Similarly Cappadox gives up all hope that his health will improve by sleeping in the shrine of Aesculapius.⁵¹ Pimps show no respect for or faith in man or god. They have only an avid and unprincipled desire for self-aggrandizement. As Ballio admits, "no pimp gives good counsel."⁵²

Two other professions, of which we catch a passing glimpse in the comedies, are both concerned with medicine and must not be passed over. The midwife appears to know her duties but she does not seem prepared to accept the responsibility for her own actions. In the Andria, Lesbia is portrayed as a drunken, reckless creature in whom little confidence can be placed.⁵³ Maid Mysis prays that if the midwife "must bungle, let it be with others."⁵⁴ This seems to indicate that her career has been anything but successful.

The doctor in the Menaechmi does not respond with alacrity

and promptness when he is summoned by the father-in-law of Menaechmus,⁵⁵ but when he does arrive, he launches upon a routine series of diagnostic questions about the symptoms of the patient's attack, flourishing a few high-sounding medical terms⁵⁶ in order to impress the old gentleman with his knowledge. He follows this up with a lengthy, thorough, and rather exasperating cross-examination of the son-in-law, who then becomes so violently angry at his questions that he shouts: "Why don't you inquire whether the bread I generally eat is blood red, rose red, or saffron yellow? Whether I generally eat birds with scales, fish with feathers?"⁵⁷ Such ironic replies, uttered in excitement and anger, the doctor interprets as the first symptoms of insanity.⁵⁸ He believes a treatment of hellebore continuously taken for twenty days may effect a cure,⁵⁹ but recommends that the patient be moved over to his own house where he can better attend to him.⁶⁰ If this doctor is representative of his group, we may infer that there was a well-recognized science or system of medical diagnosis and treatment practised in the time when New Greek Comedy flourished, and also in Plautus' time, and that the sick were accustomed to medical attendance when illness occurred, but we may also infer that the practitioners who represented the profession were not always a credit to it, and did not always deserve the respect and gratitude of their clients. The father-in-law in this case remarks: "I'm wondering whether to say I'm bringing a sawbones or a stonecutter."⁶¹

No picture of ancient society, whether in the time of Menander or that of Plautus or Terence, would be complete with-

out the professional soldier. This type was greatly increased by the wars of Alexander in Greece and of Hannibal in Italy. He finds a natural place both in the New Greek Comedy and in the Roman Fabula Palliata. Like the courtesan and the pander, he is a parasite on the social body and his manners are not pleasing although they may be amusing. He struts vaingloriously about the streets of Roman Comedy, boasting ad nauseam about his conquests and campaigns. Artotrogus of the Miles Gloriosus does not hesitate to admit that he has never seen "a bigger liar and a more colossal braggart" than his master.⁶² If he confined himself to an exaggerated account of his military prowess, he would not be unlike most soldiers in the profession, but he boasts that every woman regards him as the most perfect male specimen on earth.⁶³ Yet he becomes anything but bold and bellicose when cook Cario grimly sets about to remove his testes.⁶⁴ At heart he is a "cow'rin tim'rous beastie"⁶⁵ and as "stupid as stone."⁶⁶ Similarly, the captain of the Epidicus,⁶⁷ Therapontigonus of the Curculio,⁶⁸ Antamonides of the Poenulus,⁶⁹ and Thraso of the Eunuchus⁷⁰ pride themselves upon their soldierly bearing and great military achievements. In almost every case, they are unmitigated bullies, liars and stupid asses.⁷¹ All spend their time and money, however futilely, on pimps and their bevvies of mistresses. Even when they pay cash down on deposit for an especially attractive courtesan, some civilian usually succeeds by fair means or foul in securing the girl before the soldier arrives on the scene.⁷² Sometimes the courtesan herself, like Phronesium of the Truculentus, cheats the soldier out of gifts and money with her

wiles and guile while giving him "the cold shoulder."⁷³

Antamonides, by way of exception, while resembling his fellow soldiers in other respects, still has the decency and courtesy to apologize to Hanno and his daughter for his uncouth treatment of the old gentleman after mistaking the girl's father for a rival of his.⁷⁴

In contrast to other representatives of the military class, Amphytryon, the commander-in-chief of the Theban army, impresses one as a just general and a good soldier. Before entering the conflict with the Teleboians who had transgressed their boundary rights and thus brought war upon themselves,⁷⁵ he offers them the opportunity of withdrawing without a battle,⁷⁶ but they refuse. After their king is killed,⁷⁷ Amphytryon is presented with a golden cup, property of the dead king, in token of his valor and courage.⁷⁸ Upon his return from battle, the general thinks first and foremost of his dear wife.⁷⁹ If his slave did not relate his master's heroic acts to the audience, we would have no knowledge of them. It is a relief to find one soldier who is unassuming, unaffected, and entirely unselfish.

From the few examples noted, it is apparent that the society depicted in Roman Comedy was so well developed and highly civilized that certain well-known vocations or professions had emerged and claimed separate status in the eyes of the community. They had not however reached the level of class consciousness or organization where they either imposed upon themselves, or the public demanded from them, much in the way of moral or professional standards. Even the medical pro-

fession, as it is exemplified in Comedy, reflects little of the lofty principle that is associated with the name of Hippocrates, who lived not long before Menander. This may be due to the need of Comedy for comic characters to excite ridicule, and we may see in the plays none but the inferior representatives of the profession. Of the other so-called professions discussed in this chapter, little could be expected in the way of moral standards in any case, because they are recruited from the ranks of slaves, and they pander to the lower tastes of their fellow men. If war may be regarded as a social disease, soldiers too must be expected to reflect a character and state of mind that can hardly be described as healthy or normal, though unfortunately all too common. With these classes predominant, the picture of society presented in Roman Comedy is instructive but not a pretty one.

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CHAPTER XI

STANDARDS OF CITIZENSHIP

Good or bad citizenship often shows itself in the patriotism or the reverse of a member of society. His love of country invariably harks back to the time when he was born, increasing as he grows older. In the time of war or a similar emergency, this feeling becomes accentuated, but it is sometimes manifest if he leaves his country only for a brief period of time. If he meets a fellow-compatriot abroad, there stirs within him a satisfying feeling of importance and pride. If perfect strangers before, they become now congenial friends, often lauding their country to the detriment of any other. This attitude is common to most people, including the characters in Roman Comedy, for no true patriot likes to hear a belittling criticism of his country.

It is because of his strong regard for Carthage "that gave me birth"¹ that Agorastocles of the Poenulus sternly reproves² his slave for insulting the Carthaginian Hanno upon the latter's arrival in Calydon by calling him "a migsture (hybrid monster) with a two forked tongue like a snake's,"³ because he had spoken in the Carthaginian language before addressing them in Latin. "I won't hear you abusing men of my own blood,"⁴ he tells him. Even before he learns that Hanno

is his uncle,⁵ he urges him "as a friend"⁶ and "in the name of our common country"⁷ to make any request he may like and he would do his best to gratify it. This was a fine patriotic gesture on the part of Agorastocles.

The slave in this instance only voices the universal prejudice of any people or locality against anything foreign. But it may suggest a special enquiry that is relevant to the plays of Plautus. Plautus lived during the Punic Wars out of which grew a deep-seated and wide-spread Roman hatred of all things Carthaginian. It is natural therefore to ask whether any expression of anti-Punic sentiment put in the mouth of any of his characters may not have been introduced by Plautus himself as one of the anachronisms of which he is so often guilty, rather than have been an exact translation of the Greek original of his play. Or if some anti-Punic feeling was already present in the original, Plautus may have given the slave's insulting remark a sharper point by making it more venomous still. While we cannot give a positive answer, it is tempting to imagine that we have here a slight reflection of real Italian prejudice.

Upon his return to Athens after an absence of two years, slave Chrysalus of the Bacchides heartily greets the land of his master and an altar of Apollo standing in front of the house.⁸ Slave Sangarinus of the Stichus breaks into a similar rhapsody upon his return from a three year's trading trip in the Levant with his master.⁹ Both slaves do so sincerely, remembering Athens for a more settled way of life and happier times than they have experienced on their trading trips abroad. Slave Messenio of the Menaechmi, wearied by his master's six

year search¹⁰ from country to country for his kidnapped twin brother, would certainly entertain a similar sentiment towards Syracuse. His nostalgic longing for home breaks forth as he tells his master upon arriving at Epidamnus that it would be a greater thrill coming there if the land happened to be their own.¹¹ Besides, Messenio's characterization of the people of Epidamnus as "the very worst of rakes and drinkers,"¹² sharpers and swindlers, seems to be just one more of the common expressions of prejudice against foreigners.

In the Rudens, the elderly Daemones becomes enthusiastic¹³ when he hears that Palaestra, the captive of the shipwrecked pimp Labrax, is Athenian-born.¹⁴ He himself is a citizen of Athens who has tender recollections of his own daughter stolen in childhood.¹⁵ Slave Trachalio reminds him that as a compatriot of this girl, it is his duty to protect his own fellow citizen¹⁶ from abusive treatment at the hands of the pimp. Little does Daemones dream at the time that he is rescuing his long lost child from sin and shame.

Pimps seem to have no regard for or feelings of patriotism. Labrax remarks that it makes no difference to him whether his girls come from Athens or not, "so long as they're duly slaving it as slaves of mine."¹⁷ "Your laws mean nothing to me at all" he further retorts to Daemones.¹⁸ It is because of this sullen and callous attitude of pimps that Pseudolus of the Pseudolus wonders why the young men tolerate such a loathesome chap and allow him to flourish.¹⁹ He feels that they ought all to combine and get rid of "this public pest."²⁰ Whether Pseudolus realizes it or not, he is assuming the role of a citizen

interested in the general welfare of his country and its patriots.

Patriotism asserts itself, too, when the inhabitants of a country boast of its customs or belittle those of an enemy or an adjoining country. Thus slave Stichus of the Stichus, about to celebrate the Feast of Freedom in grand style with his fellows, gaily informs the audience that "you people needn't be surprised that we slavelings have our liquor and love affairs and dinner engagements: all that's permitted us in Athens."²¹ As the evening wears on, his friend Sangarinus wonders what Ionian artist or bawdy dancer can outdo their capers.²² To them no city can compare with good old Athens, "the nurse of Greece"²³ as Sangarinus affectionately styles it.

In the Mostellaria, the upright and faithful Granio warns his rascally fellow slave Tranio that "now you've got the chance, and choose to do so, drink away, wreck the property, demoralize that fine young son of master's! Get fuddled night and day, live like Greeks, buy girls and set them free...."²⁴ The speech doesn't sound very complimentary to the Greeks whom he seems to be holding up as paragons of a superior or more civilized way of life, and the Greeks were well known for their drinking and wild revelry, a carefree sort of life. But Granio's point is that though they did frequently go to excess and abuse their liberty, they enjoyed a freedom at Athens that could be enjoyed nowhere else in the ancient world. In the same play, Tranio gives his estimate of foreigners when he remarks that "it wasn't any slopswilling foreigner did this job"²⁵ in describing one of the pillars of the house that his master and he

were surveying.

More Hellenic pride is exhibited by Periplectomenus of the Miles Gloriosus who shows no love for the Apulians when he explains to his friend's son: "I'm none of your spitting, hawking, sniffing fellows either, not I. In short, sir, I was born in Ephesus, not in Apulia; I'm no Animulian."²⁶ The old gentleman feels very proud of Ephesus, and wishes to make it perfectly clear that in spite of his grey hairs, he has plenty of vitality left in his frame to abet his young friend in his love affair. Otherwise he would not be living up to the reputation of an Ephesian!

Parasite Curculio of the Curculio on the other hand shows contempt for the Greeks as he hurries along the streets of Epidaurus. He despises the very sight of their "muffled heads" and their clothes "bulged out by books and provision baskets," and brands them as "renegades that stand about together, palaver together, block your road,....fellows you can see in a tavern when they've stolen something...."²⁷ Whether he can boast love of any country seems doubtful, being a parasite as he is, but at least he has no admiration for the Greeks.

In the Menaechmi the married twin discharges his civic duties with an indifference not worthy of a Roman patron who had definite social obligations to his less privileged clients. He has no patience with the many dependents who hound him and worry him by showing "no regard for law or for what is just and fair."²⁸ "A chafing custom"²⁹ he terms it, indignant that he cannot spend more time at leisure with his mistress and her alluring charms.

Lysidamus of the Casina expresses sentiments similar to Menaechmus. He detests wasting his time in defence of his clients at the forum, be they relatives or not, especially when he has an opportunity of playing the gallant. He expresses joy that his relative lost his case for now he can devote his spare time to his mistress. In both these instances, Plautus has definitely taken liberties with his Greek original to bring in one of his many anachronisms, this time a direct reference to the Roman Forum. And the picture of the Forum which he presents does not enhance our admiration for contemporary notions of civic responsibility in Rome.

Patriotism seems to have reached such a low ebb in the times represented by Roman Comedy that there was a general tendency for young men to hire themselves as mercenaries to foreign countries. Thus Lesbonicus of the Trinummus, despondent over the way he has mismanaged his family affairs, threatens to go into exile and serve as a soldier in Asia or Cilicia.³⁰ Similarly, Charinus of the Mercator, jealous that his father should rival him in love, resolves on fleeing from his native land or settling "upon some (other) plan."³¹ Clinia of the Heauton Timorumenus did enlist as a mercenary in Asia³² when his father objected to his loose living and suggested a more useful way of life.³³ Patriotic feeling seems to be lacking to the character of lads such as these. Nor are they the only ones who betray this deficiency. The vain Pyrgopolynices of the Miles Gloriosus boasts that he has just sent hired mercenaries to protect King Seleucus and his kingdom while he himself takes a rest in Ephesus³⁴ which is certainly not his native

city. He merely recruited troops there.

On the other hand, Amphytryon of the Amphytryon is a fine example of the patriotic general who successfully defended his native Thebes and completely conquered hundreds of Teloboians who provoked the war upon themselves by their repeated raids upon the Theban people.³⁵ Wishing to avoid conflict for the sake of both sides, Amphytryon offered to withdraw his forces if the Teloboians gave up "pillage and pillagers" but they declined.³⁶ In Sosia's report of the battle and the valor of his master³⁷ and his fellow Thebans, one cannot fail to detect great patriotic pride and elation: "Our legion came back victorious, our foes (were) vanquished, a mighty contest (was) concluded and our enemies (were) massacred to a man."³⁸ Amphytryon's gallantry on his country's behalf is a more orthodox rôle than that played by the swashbuckling mercenary without allegiance. His is also a finer character than that of the foolish braggart Pyrgopolynices. Fighting a battle for one's own country represents a higher civic standard than service as a mercenary in a foreign land.

We find in Roman Comedy reference to a law of Athens which indicates a high standard of community conscience as it affected orphaned and unprotected maidens. By virtue of this law, the nearest male relative was obliged to provide a suitable marriage for the girl or to marry her himself.³⁹ Presumably the application of the law was restricted to free-born maidens and failed to cover the case of illegitimate children. The plot of the Phormio of Terence turns upon this law,⁴⁰ involving an ardent young lover, who, with the connivance of a

clever parasite, poses as the next-of-kin of the destitute,⁴¹ orphaned⁴² but beautiful⁴³ Phanium, admits that he is subject to the law and becomes the husband of his sweetheart, much to the chagrin of his father who had other plans for him. Micio of the Adelphoe uses the law as a threat to wring a confession from his son about his secret love affair. He pretends that as his friend from Miletus is the nearest male relative of this girl, he can justly ask her to marry him instead of his son by reason of the Attic law.⁴⁴ This law is mentioned again in the Andria when Davus uses it as an argument to help protect his young master from another marriage which the boy's father is trying to force upon him.⁴⁵

Ancient society had not attained quite such a high standard in its provision for the protection of infants. It allowed the father of a new-born infant to decide whether it should be reared or exposed to death. If he formally raised the child from the ground or other place where it had been laid for the purpose, it meant that he acknowledged the child as his own and would rear it.⁴⁶ Hoping that his elderly master may unwittingly acknowledge Pamphilus' illegitimate child, the scheming Davus of the Andria places the infant upon the doorstep of the young man's father.⁴⁷ Should the slave's trick succeed, he would prevent his young master from marrying a woman whom he does not love, but whom the father would compel him to accept as his bride. As it happens, the woman that Pamphilus loves proves to be a sister to the very girl that his father wishes him to marry, so that the family difficulty disappears.

In the Hecyra, Pamphilus refuses to rear the child his

wife bore him,⁴⁸ believing it to be another's offspring.⁴⁹ His father, Laches, can see no reason for his son's strange behavior,⁵⁰ but then he is ignorant of his son's motive. Neither he nor the father-in-law will hear of the child being exposed.⁵¹ Laches offers to take it himself.⁵² Not until a ring proves that Pamphilus is the father beyond a doubt does the situation resolve itself.⁵³ But the fact that the plot of the Hecyra revolves upon the true parentage of a child, and its disposition, to be reared or to be exposed, shows the importance of the place which the child held in the life of the family. It seems strange that such a practice as exposure was ever sanctioned at all, but economic pressure and long habit may be held responsible for a custom, which was not very common though it was legal and a useful situation for exploitation in the plot of a Roman Comedy.

In direct contrast to the inhumanity of the exposure of infants was the kind treatment sometimes accorded to war prisoners. Hegio of the Captivi treats his two Elean prisoners kindly and justly, sincerely admiring their noble natures and their true friendship one for the other.⁵⁴ His overseer, too, treats them kindly, encouraging them to bear their lot with patience and perseverance.⁵⁵ When Tyndarus requests of him a word in private with his fellow captive, Philocrates, he gives his consent.⁵⁶ Later, Hegio offers to set both his captives at liberty, if, with their help and cooperation, he can succeed in arranging for his own son's release from captivity in their country.⁵⁷ Only when he discovers that his two captives have changed rôles to trick him, does he become harsh and unrelent-

ing,⁵⁸ a mood which rapidly changes to his former good nature once his son does return from the Elean camp.⁵⁹ Since the latter complains of "bitter suffering" in the enemy camp, we may infer that, although the treatment of war prisoners might be humane at times, it varied from camp to camp, and from country to country.

We are unable to discover in the plays of Plautus and Terence much evidence that would serve to complete our picture of ancient civic standards whether patriotic or otherwise. But the few references cited indicate that the comic scene does occasionally reflect the two common levels of mere patriotic pride on the one hand and a greater sense of civic duty and responsibility on the other.

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CHAPTER XII

PERSONAL HABITS AND ETHICS

It might be inferred from certain aspects of private life forming part of the social picture of Roman Comedy which we have already examined, such as marital relationships and relationships between servants and masters, or from the practices of certain occupational groups, that the moral standards which prevailed in the contemporary background of the drama leave much to be desired. Young husbands in the plays usually do seem to be in love with their wives, though, before marriage, they are allowed the greatest latitude of sexual behavior. Married men of some years' standing, in Plautus perhaps, seem to have lost "the first fine careless rapture" of devotion to their wives and frequently go philandering, often to be recalled to the path of rectitude before the play ends. In Terence, on the other hand, marital fidelity is almost the rule, though some lapses occur. Chremes, in Terence's Phormio, is a shame-faced and repentant culprit,¹ but Menaechmus in the Menaechmi of Plautus is unashamed, and bluntly informs his wife that he will go wenching and even divorce her if she persists in her tiresome nagging.² The standard by which the husband's conduct is measured is not, as we have pointed out, the same as that by which the wife is judged. Syra, the slave in the Mercator, in

a very pointed soliloquy criticizes the injustice of this double standard:

Women do live under hard conditions, so much more unfair, poor things, than the men's. Why, if a husband has brought home some strumpet, unbeknown to his wife, and she finds it out, the husband goes scot free. But once a wife steps out of the house unbeknown to her husband, he has his grounds and she's divorced. Oh, I wish there was the same rule for the husband as for the wife!³

We have pointed out also that the large dowry, which some wives bring to their husbands and which gives such rich wives a ground for self-assertion, often proves an irritant to the husband, undermines his self-respect, and produces unhappiness between the pair. The conventional requirement of a dowry even tends to prevent a desirable marriage in bankruptcy like that of Lesbonicus in the Trinummus.⁴ But its absence does not deter the marrying man like Megadorus in the Aulularia who believes that a girl "who is good" is sufficient dowry.⁵ The best attitude to the problem is that of Alcmena in the Amphitryon who maintains that her dowry is not "that which people call a dowry, but purity and honor and self-control, fear of God, love of parents, and affection for my family, and being a dutiful wife....lavish of loving-kindness and helpful through honest service."⁶

The impression may have been left that slaves disobey, cheat and lie to their masters oftener than not. So Geta in the Phormio disobeys Demipho's strict instructions to keep his son under restraint and assists the boy in his wilful conduct.⁷ So Epidicus, in the play of that name, deceives Periphanes into giving him the purchase price of his supposed daughter, who is

really a music girl playing the part.⁸ So Tranio of the Mostellaria invents a perfect web of falsehoods to keep his master from discovering the truth.⁹ But let us not forget always to set over against these irresponsible rascals, the gruff old Grumio with his jealous loyalty to Theopropides¹⁰ and the heroic Tyndarus who risks his life for Philocrates.¹¹

An equally good brief can hardly be made out for the virtues of the few representatives of the professions who appear incidentally upon the comic stage. Pimps are vicious by hypothesis. Cooks are garrulous gossips. Overseers are almost invariably brutal. Our only doctor is described with some disparagement in the Menaechmi.¹² The midwife in the Andria is certainly fond of her cups.¹³ Courtesans, however selfish and mercenary in Plautus, do rise in Terence to the tender solicitude of Chrysis in the Andria,¹³ or the understanding forgiveness of Thais in the Eunuchus,¹⁴ or the noble selflessness of Bacchis in the Hecyra.¹⁵ The humanity of Terence reveals the virtues of fine character unrecognized by society.

From this brief recapitulation, it is clear that it would be unfair to reach a hasty condemnation of the groups which we have already passed under review. Nevertheless it is perhaps surprising that unfavorable environment or social conditions have not prevented the appearance of some of our finest characters. Our previous chapters, dealing specifically with family relationships or occupational practices, have left untouched a few incidental questions of personal ethics which are not peculiar to any group limited by sex, age or occupation. One of the most interesting of these which we must now consider

is the problem of the importance of veracity.

We have just remarked that Tranio is an accomplished liar. So are Chrysalus¹⁶ and Pseudolus¹⁷ and Syrus.¹⁸ The latter is amusing in the skill with which he keeps his serious-minded master tramping on futile errands, in search now of his son,¹⁹ now of his brother.²⁰ Amusing, too, is the irony of the false picture of virtue which Syrus attributes to Ctesipho for the benefit of his credulous father.²¹ Slaves have little compunction in comedy at trifling with the truth. Little wonder that their masters hesitate to trust them. A special kind of comic irony is shown by Terence, in the single instance in which the tables are turned, in the Hecyra, when Pamphilus plays upon the credulity of his slave Parmeno, and sends him upon a purely fictitious errand.²² From these examples, it seems expected almost as a matter of course for slaves to lie and little concern is felt in regard to it. Perhaps because the slaves are farcical characters, their statements are judged more by their ingenuity than their veracity.

Similarly, swash-buckling braggarts of the type of Pyrgopolynices in the Miles Gloriosus regularly exaggerate the details of their battles to sound important and appear great. Pyrgopolynices claims that he slew seven thousand men in a single day.²³ Antamonides in the Poenulus boasts that he slew sixty thousand "flying" men with bird-lime and slings.²⁴ Even the pimps recognize him as "a grand liar."²⁵ These characters are also farcical and their exaggeration is in character. But when the dramatic level rises from farce to the verge of tragedy in the Captivi, the truth even of the statement of a slave is

treated so seriously as to become the point of philosophic argument. Tyndarus, on being caught, frankly admits that he lied and when asked why he dared to do so, replies:

Because the truth would have harmed the person I was trying to help: as it is, deceit has served his turn....I saved my master, at any rate, and I'm happy in having saved the man that my older master put in my care. Really now, do you think this was a wrong act?²⁶

His master is forced to admit that he would have approved if the lie had been told to save his own son. Here we have an example of what is sometimes called "the noble lie" which brings no sense of guilt, but, on the contrary, fills the liar with an ecstatic sense of exultation. In the same scene, Tyndarus makes clear his state of mind:

After death, there is no evil in death for me to fear.²⁷ Provided it is not for wrong-doing, let me die--it matters little. If I myself do die here, and if he does fail to return, as he said he would, what I have done, at least, will be remembered when I am gone.... The man that dies in a worthy cause, does not perish utterly.²⁸

Tyndarus is punished severely by Hegio for deceiving him,²⁹ but subsequently Hegio regrets doing so.³⁰ The noble lie seems to have been justified and perhaps we may conclude that, in this single instance, the ethical standard of Roman Comedy permits a departure from strict veracity. The other numerous lies, to which we have referred, are of course regarded as wrong but amusing.

Lying is only one of numerous bad habits to be found in the repertoire of the comic slaves. Another is a kind of forgery or use of tokens to obtain money on false pretences. The ingenuity with which the act is performed is highly amusing, but the act itself is wholly wrong. The most elaborate example is that

of Pseudolus, who by an impersonation, obtains the tokens of a soldier-lover,³¹ hires a henchman to present them to the pimp³² with whom the soldier has left money on credit and obtains the girl. This case is made still funnier by the fact that Pseudolus had made a wager with his master that he would do so.³³ The pimp, hearing of the wager, had himself wagered that Pseudolus could not succeed.³⁴ Master and pimp both lose their bets, but only the pimp loses money. A similar forgery is committed in the Curculio where the parasite obtains from a banker money belonging to his patron's rival by presenting to the banker a ring-token stolen from that rival.³⁵ The money is used to buy the girl beloved by patron and rival. Similar, too, is the clever swindle by which Phormio in Terence's play keeps the money of Chremes which he has been paid to marry a girl whom Chremes no longer wishes him to marry. He blackmails Chremes to escape from repaying the money.³⁶

Pimps, as we have had every occasion to see, are both heartless and unscrupulous. They frequently accept down payments on slave girls from lovers and, when further payments are not forthcoming, sell the girl to another lover. So does Dorio in the Phormio.³⁷ Labrax in the Rudens simply takes French leave without waiting for further payments.³⁸ This confiscation of money on deposit is not much different from theft and kidnapping, crimes of which pimps are also guilty. Lycus in the Poenulus kidnapped the daughters of Hanno in infancy.³⁹ He is also accused of holding in his possession a bailiff and money belonging to Agorastocles, and for this theft the penalty is

alleged to be double repayment. The allegation of seizing the bailiff and money is a "frame-up," and the daughters are finally restored. And yet, the charges are probably in accord with the true character of the pimp. The parasite Curculio likewise obtains the ring which we have mentioned by theft and the owner declares that he "will have the money four times over"⁴⁰ by way of penalty. Cooks, who are not always permanent members of a family but sometimes hired to prepare a banquet, were closely watched by their employers as their reputation for honesty was none too good and they were known to appropriate valuables which came under their purview, such as cooking utensils and surplus food.⁴¹ In apprehension of such propensities, the miserly Euclio in the Aulularia treats his cooks to one of the worst trouncings on record, all because they did not seem to be paying strict enough attention to their kitchen duties.⁴² Stealing may not be out of keeping with our conception of the character of pander and cook, but our sense of moral standards receives a distinct jolt when we find husbands stealing clothes from their wives' wardrobes to give them to their mistresses. Menaechmus immediately drops in our estimation when he struts upon the stage, exposes his wife's mantle beneath his own clothing and informs the audience that he is conveying it to Erotium.⁴³ The theft is soon betrayed to his wife by his parasite and forms the topic of protracted quarreling in the play. The similar theft in the Asinaria by Demea from his wife Artemona to provide a gift for his mistress is discovered by the wife who takes immediate action and drags the offending husband home, regretting, at the same time, that she

tortured her poor innocent maids for his offence,⁴⁴ when her husband was the thief all the time.

Occasional reference is made in the plays to another bad habit of extravagant "ne'er-do-wells" which also was a crime in the eyes of the law. It is well known that dicing was prohibited by statute and Periplectomenus reminds us of the fact in the Miles Gloriosus where he issues instructions to prevent contravention of the law.⁴⁵ A glaring example of excess in this transgression is described in the Curculio,⁴⁶ where the parasite engages in a gambling bout with Therapontigus, a soldier of fortune, who loses one stake after another to the sharper Curculio, who gets him intoxicated and finally steals his ring. We may infer from Argyrippus' letter in the Asinaria that courtesans spend some of their idle moments in dicing, too,⁴⁷ and that it is customary on making a throw to call upon the name of the beloved for luck.⁴⁸ Even Micio in the Adelphoe compares life to a game of dice where, "if you don't get the throw you most want, you must show your skill in making the best of the throw which you do get."⁴⁹ It can easily be seen from these references that, in spite of legal prohibition, dicing was quite a common practice in more than one rank of society; and indeed this is known to be a fact from many other authorities.

Another deplorable habit of which much is made for humor's sake in Roman Comedy, but which falls into the field of bad manners, as much as into that of bad ethics, is the excessive indulgence of the appetite. And this, we are inclined to believe, owes its emphasis in the plays to Roman taste more than Greek. It is stressed more in Plautus than in Terence,

and it is not altogether unlikely that in these passages, Plautus has improved upon his originals or the reverse. We have elsewhere suggested that Ergasilus in the Captivi may be an interpolation by Plautus. At any rate, he gives us the best descriptions of a lunatic raid upon a larder and a good appetite gone wild, when Hegio gives him the freedom of his kitchen:

Ye immortal gods! How I'll knock necks off backs now! Ah, ham's case is hopeless, and bacon's in a bad, bad way! And sow's udder done for utterly! Oh, how pork rind will go to pot! I must off this minute to pass judgment on bacon and help out hams that are still untried and in suspense.⁵⁰

The helpless kitchen boy watches his raid with consternation and describes it as "a devastation of a tornado."⁵¹ Saturio, the parasite of the Persa, is prepared to sell his own daughter in order to satisfy the demands of his own stomach.⁵² The parasite, wherever he appears, is obsessed by one idea, his appetite, and most of his activities and intrigues are framed in the effort to secure invitations to free meals. Female parasites, in the person of some courtesans, possess considerable capacity to consume food and wine, if we may believe Chremes in the Heauton Timorumenus, who sorely complains that to give Bacchis and her maids a second dinner would ruin him. "To say nothing of other things, the amount of wine she has wasted in mere tasting!....I've opened every pipe and tierce in my cellar. She has kept us all on the move, and all this was a single evening."⁵³ It is a natural criticism for one disgruntled slave to make of another that he eats more than he does himself, or to complain of hired servants that they also fare better. So the

faithful and grumbling Grumio in the Mostellaria complains that Tranio is eating his master out of house and home.⁵⁴ The maid Pardalisca in the Casina makes the same charge against her master's cooks: "I know them, the gluttonesses. They can consume a whole cargo of food."⁵⁵ There were occasions upon which greater indulgence was permitted to slaves by their masters, such as the Day of Freedom mentioned in the Stichus in which the two slaves gloat over their banquet in their anticipation.⁵⁶ Although their resources are limited, they declare: "We drink just the same, we perform our functions, just the same, as our means allow."⁵⁷

The miscellaneous habits or propensities which we have just discussed still further heighten the unfavorable opinion which the reader might form from his perusal of Roman Comedy. No one would wish to defend the practice of gluttony or gambling or stealing or lying--yes, we have cited a notable defence of lying in special circumstances. But we must remind ourselves once again that it is not news when a dog bites a man, but only when the man bites the dog. And though the picture here presented is decidedly one-sided, sight must not be lost of the exemplary characters whom we have passed in our journey through the slums. Roman Comedy, undoubtedly for dramatic reasons, emphasizes the seamy side of society and suggests a decided decadence from worthwhile standards of morality. And yet, everywhere the inference is left that worthwhile standards do exist and are exemplified in the lives of characters like Tyndarus and Lysiteles and Megaronides and Alcmena.

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CHAPTER XIII

CONCLUSION: BALANCE OF GOOD AND BAD

As previously stated, the purpose of this thesis has been to analyse and synopsise the standards of ethical conduct and social behavior in Roman Comedy as they actually appear in the plays, regardless of whether Greek or Roman life is therein reflected. There is no question but that the society represented is more Greek than Roman. The intruding details of Roman life are not always easy to identify, but they are admittedly more prevalent in Plautus, although not completely confined to him. Terence, with his more exacting literary standards, translated the Greek comedies of Menander, Philemon and Apollodorus with greater care and precision. Plautus, while employing the same models, modified and adapted the details to suit the taste of his audience. Having a more realistic sense of theatre, he obtained greater success through interpolation and adaptation than his younger colleague, who set more value upon consistency and style. Terence's Hecyra was a repeated failure. Because of this difference of principle and objective, the picture of society shown by the older playwright is often not as sensitive and refined as that of his younger successor. But though this distinction does exist and Plautus permits himself greater vulgarity and coarseness than Terence, the two writers draw

their settings from a society which is essentially the same. We have discussed its characteristics at some length. We may now summarize its salient points.

The parental-filial relationship, one sees clearly from the numerous examples in Plautus and Terence, affects the whole conduct of young men profoundly. It appears that too great sternness makes the son perverse and wilful through alienation, whereas too great complaisance only encourages a tendency to dissipation. In either case, the evidence of comedy suggests that the father's authority, since it so seldom produced a worthy son capable of self-respect and self-control, was inadequately or unwisely exercised. This conclusion depends, of course, upon the assumption that there is a reasonably close correspondence between the dramatic situation depicted in the plays and the actual family relationship as it existed between real fathers and sons. In spite, however, of his constant inability to find a successful via media between severity and laxity in the rearing of his youthful charge, the father usually shows serious concern over his son's welfare; the exceptional parent is sometimes rogue enough to contribute to his son's delinquency or even to compete for the favors of the same mistress. This more disreputable kind of father is confined to Plautus who does not disdain vulgarity if it makes fun. Terence apparently regards only the more serious-minded father as worthy of his art.

The critical test of the relationship between father and son, as we have shown, comes with the son's approaching marriage. The relationship is badly strained when the son's romantic

inclination conflicts with the marriage settlement which the father arranges in virtue of his patria potestas. Sometimes the father's will prevails, sometimes his face is saved when the object of the son's affection proves to be more acceptable and of higher rank than she appeared at first. Occasionally the father is made to yield if he has compromised himself. On the whole, while the son resists the arbitrary exercise of authority and dictatorial control, he usually admits the wisdom of his father's motives and admonitions, and reconciliation or compromise brings agreement finally between the two. The thoughtless and wilful adolescent commonly sobers up at the end of the play. His brief moment of laxity gives place to a more serious realization of the sterner side of life itself, and he becomes a more steadfast and upright individual than when first he appeared upon the boards.

It is clear that in the society on which ancient comedy is based, the standard required in the field of parental authority and filial obedience was high, perhaps too high to do justice to the natural inclinations of the young. It is equally clear that actual practice often lagged behind the ideal standard. But even laggards usually strove to overtake the objective and conform to the standard.

The standard of married life in Roman Comedy diverges little from the universal norm. It is to be expected that dramatic plots should grow out of crisis in domestic relationships, and so it is not surprising that in Plautus particularly, conjugal infidelity and dissension between husband and wife should be exploited. And yet, even in Plautus, we have seen

notable examples of fidelity and affection as in the Amphitryon and the Stichus. It is remarkable, however, that in Terence, the emphasis seems to lean towards family solidarity, and some of his finest characters are those mainly interested in preserving it. On the whole, husbands are represented as inclined to philander and to complain of the recriminations of their wives, but usually become reconciled in the end. The female member of the partnership is usually the stabilizing factor and it is she who works for the maintenance of the conventional standards.

In Roman Comedy, the relationships between lovers fall into a variety of patterns ranging from steadfast and true affection to meretricious intrigues. The latter type prevails more predominantly throughout the plays of Plautus than of Terence. We must not conclude that this emphasis upon promiscuity and immorality necessarily reflects a true picture of the period. As love situations provide many of the complications upon which the plot and its success depend, and the more complicated are the more interesting, the comic playwright tends to choose the more irregular pattern. And yet, on the other hand, the fact that reputable women, in Athens at least, were largely withdrawn from society, except on certain special occasions, explains why young men all too frequently formed connections with grasping courtesans to whose winsome ways and personal charms they succumbed. Terence shows the courtesan almost invariably a victim of circumstance who is capable of more tender and devoted affection than her profession would normally allow, while in Plautus, only one such case appears, namely in the Cistellaria. Not even all the girls with whom

young lovers are enamoured in Terence are courtesans or slaves. Phanium in the Phormio is a free-born girl in distress. The social conditions reflected in the plays, nevertheless, do limit the young man's opportunities of contracting emotional relationships with the opposite sex, largely to the demi-monde. The fact that this dramatic relationship so often ends by reflecting honor upon both parties may be attributed both to the romantic bias of the author and to the naturally-wholesome nature of the young people who provided his models. And so we may conclude that though contemporary society condoned the courtesan and her profession and the patronage of it, in which young men indulged (perhaps somewhat more freely than in modern times), the comedies afford ample evidence of genuine love and a wholesome relationship between the sexes.

When all allowances have been made for comic exaggeration, the typical conduct of the slave in Roman Comedy reveals a character and condition that condemns him both socially and morally in the eyes of his critics. He is addicted to tricky cunning, clever plotting, and even lying and cheating to achieve his ends, and usually fails to show signs of responsibility and common decency. However, his lot is not an easy one. The product of an age which endorses slavery, he must resort to these unethical means for survival, be the penalty verbal blasts, bullying, blows, or worse. Yet, in spite of his common shortcomings, it is necessary to remember that we have encountered some very fine examples of loyalty and abiding affection of slave for master, like Tyndarus in the Captivi. This is a tribute to the inherent goodness of human nature, and

an indication that slaves are not naturally more decadent than other people.

The parasite, like the slave, as we have pointed out, is the inevitable outgrowth of the society in which he moves. Representing a class which is forced to live by its wits, he discards ethical principles in favour of material advantage. His social handicap accounts for his moral defects. While parasitism may be a dramatic convenience for the inventors of comic plots, it reflects no credit upon contemporary social standards but constitutes rather a mark of moral degradation.

The quality of friendship in Roman Comedy varies in depth and integrity, ranging from a lofty and selfless devotion to a vulgar association for personal gain. Tyndarus and Philocrates illustrate the very incarnation of friendship. On a distinctly lower level, the friendships of the other young men whom we have noticed, are exercised over the problems of love and its attendant financial difficulties, and show that the regard of one youth for the other is sometimes not reciprocated, and not infrequently marred by jealousy, misunderstanding, ingratitude or greed. Such associations may be one-sided in loyalty. On the other hand, the friendships which we have observed upon the stage between elderly gentlemen tend to be more disinterested. One friend advises or admonishes another on his duty as a responsible parent. He tries to prevent him falling from grace or seeming so to do. In most cases, this results in closer friendship, adding to the respect which one already feels for the other. Fewer are the examples of strictly business friendships, contracted from motives of personal profit

alone. Terence gives a more studied and refined picture of the mature type of friendship, while Plautus, concerned more with plot and dramatic situations, shows less apparent interest in the more permanent motives of friendly relationship. It is rather clear that friendships between men were a prominent feature of ancient society. They play a much larger part in the social picture of Roman Comedy than any common interests shared between men and women, not excepting the common interests of husbands and wives. The standard of moral motives exhibited by these male friendships is not conspicuously higher or lower than in other societies, but it is higher than that which characterizes the dramatic relationships between the sexes.

The religious consciousness of our dramatic puppets fluctuates from an attitude of cynical indifference to a feeling of genuine devotion and sincere worship. The many conventional expressions of apparent religious content incidentally occurring throughout the plays, whether in the form of a wish, a blessing or a curse or merely as elaborate invocation, imply no great emotional feeling for "the powers that be" on the part of the person who uses them. The habitual faith in omens, dreams, offerings and sacrifices is concerned more with the motive of personal aggrandizement than with any deep-seated reverence and affection for the divinities. However the unflinching obeisance paid to the Household Gods is an indication of a more genuine attachment to religion. The same sincerity of sentiment and grateful worship is implied in prayers to Neptune after a safe sea journey. The attitude involved in these prayers may be described as the result of traditional discipline.

Far more significant are those passages which imply conscious thought or rational beliefs about the gods in their relationships to human fortunes, such as Palaestra's complaints or Hegio's thanks or Hanno's appeal. The creed of Arcturus or Tyndarus expresses the faith that is more than tradition and justifies the conclusion that there is evidence in comedy that the playwrights and the people, for whom the plays were written, recognized at times a rather fine religious standard. Interwoven into the whole complicated picture is the interesting vestigial strand of deified abstraction represented by Auxilium in the Cistellaria.

Since the occupational motives of the bankers, the money-lenders, the tax-collectors and the slave dealers in Roman Comedy are those purely of financial profit, aggravated by rather rudimentary and ineffective legal control, the picture of business standards which we obtain from the plays is neither a pretty nor a satisfying one. Bankers are exacting; portitores, meddlesome; publicani, "fleecers"; and the market inspectors slack in their duties. Many of their transactions and much of their administration, their clients regard as dishonest and sharp. The extent of foreign trade, however, and the banking machinery developed to facilitate it, show quite impressive proportions. It had grown quickly and expanded tremendously and proper social controls were much slower in developing. Under such conditions, clever and unscrupulous business men and officials always serve their own advantage at the expense of the less clever with whom they deal, and the literature of the day reflects the dissatisfaction and complaints of the

latter. This accounts for the criticism of business standards expressed or implied in Roman Comedy.

The representatives of such professions as we meet in Plautus and Terence are not impressive for either their personal or professional standards. The courtesan, the procuress, the pimp, and slave dealer could not be expected to be so, since they naturally prey upon the worst side of human nature. Their very presence on the stage constitutes a reproach to the society in which they flourish. For this reason, any account of social standards in Roman Comedy must necessarily open with such a large debit balance that one might suppose it was almost bankrupt from the start. The rare appearance of the few other professions which we meet, such as cook, midwife or doctor, appear so seldom and are characterized by such mediocrity that they fail to counterbalance the handicap of the demi-monde. In fact, the doctors and midwives in Comedy are more inclined to be ignorant than expert in their own technical fields and are not infrequently ridiculed for this incompetence. The professional soldier, far from being brave or patriotic, is a conceited, vainglorious swash-buckler, who campaigns almost wholly in the service of Venus and knows little of Mars.

A nostalgic longing for home and a real indication of patriotic pride is shown by many of the characters whom we have studied. We except, of course, the grasping pimp and the greedy courtesan whose desire of gain makes them at home in any country in which they prosper. The young mercenary, who hires himself for service in foreign lands, temporarily at least, puts aside his allegiance to his own country. A less attractive aspect of patriotism is the prejudice and hatred

exhibited towards all foreigners and all things foreign. In the field of civic responsibility, patrons seem to shirk their obligations rather too easily and vociferate a genuine weariness of having to accommodate their clients when it interferes with their own plans. General satisfaction is shown at the restoration of free civic status to maidens who were exposed as infants at birth, a social custom occasioned by economic pressure and probably more frequent in drama than in real life. The law provides for the welfare of orphaned and unprotected maidens, as Phormio makes very clear. Perhaps the general impression conveyed by the plays is that citizenship was prized and that it entailed duties and obligations of a fairly high order, but that these were often honoured more in the breach than in the observance.

Our brief scrutiny of certain miscellaneous personal habits exemplified by the characters whom we have passed in review does little to improve our opinion of the generally low level of the ethical standards recognized in the social background of Roman Comedy. The ignoble indulgence in gluttony or gambling or stealing or lying, so prevalent in the plays, appeals to no one except the offenders. But we must not be too sweeping in our condemnation. We must neither forget nor ignore the noble characters of Alcmena, Megaronides, Tyndarus and Philocrates, each of whom reveals a principle of action distinctly in advance of the general average exploited in the theatre. It seems then not unlikely that the plays over-emphasize the seamy side of society for dramatic purposes and that much worthier standards actually did exist.

Too cursory an appraisal of the social and moral standards which we have discovered in the Fabula Palliata might lead the impressionable reader to agree with Theodor Mommsen who sees in Roman Comedy "the dreadful aspect of life as a desert in which the only oases are love-making and intoxication."¹ But Mommsen ignores the possibility that the comic writer has exploited and exaggerated for his own purposes the vulgar and the obscene, until the perspective of contemporary life is quite out of focus. Judging from the success of Plautus' plays, it would indeed seem that the taste of Roman popular audiences had a marked predilection for the vulgar. But a more discerning examination of the plays reveals redeeming features suggestive of ideals and interests which transcend the dalliance of love-making and the indulgence of intoxication. Alcmena of the Amphitryon is a pillar of purity, fidelity and steadfast affection. Tyndarus and Philocrates of the Captivi exemplify the finer essence of friendship. The sisters in The Stichus afford a rather touching example of sincere and faithful devotion to their absent husbands. Sostrata of the Hecyra is a woman who would sooner bear the false and unjust accusations of her husband than see their son's marital bliss shattered. Bacchis and Chrysis, whose natures are superior to their profession, sacrifice their interests to their ideals. Mommsen has much evidence for his adverse criticism, but it is too one-sided to be wholly fair. There is much to deprecate in the society of Roman Comedy. There are also items to admire. This study has attempted to draw attention to the latter while not denying the former.

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