

HARRISON

Wit, Witticisms & Humor of Plautus

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WIT WITTICISMS AND HUMOR OF PLAUTUS

BY

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A. B. Knox College, 1908

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

IN LATIN

IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS

1909

1909

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UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

May 31 1909

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

Annabel Ruth Harrison

ENTITLED *Wit Witticism and Humor*
of Plautus

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF *Master of Arts*

H. J. Barton
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Recommendation concurred in:

} Committee
on
Final Examination

In the study of Latin there is a tendency to believe that all its literature dealt with the more serious subjects of war and history, of "arms and the hero". It is true that the best of our Latin classics and those read in our schools are not examples of wit and humor. The character of the Roman people, the warlike State, the serious purpose, the practical mind affected the literature, for writing always reflects the character of the age. For many years the Romans were occupied in establishing their state, in conquering the world, in making laws. These were the things uppermost in their minds, and they influenced all else. Thus it is that there was no permanent theatre at Rome until the First Century B. C. It was not thought best to have a building remain, which was erected merely for amusement. But the fact that such structures were put up at all is an evidence of the Roman love of pleasure. At an early time this love was gratified in different ways, and one method we may surely say was by means of the comedies acted in the temporary theatres. Of these comedies there remain today only the plays of Terence and Plautus. When students are introduced for the first time to either author, they are surprised to find the differences of style and the contrast between the Commentaries of Caesar, the orations of Cicero, the Aeneid of Vergil, and these plays, which reflect to a remarkable degree, the manners, the customs, and even the language of the common people. The Latin of Plautus is that of a man of quick wit, who has a great command of language, and his works reflect the



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colloquial speech, that is the conversational Latin of his time. Twenty of his plays are extant. Of the author himself, Titus Maccius Plautus, but little is known. He was a man of humble birth; it is even considered by some that he was the son of a slave. If so, his life may have been the cause of some of the rudeness displayed in the plays, but this is more likely due to the taste of the people.¹ As to his appearance, he is supposed to give a description of himself in one of his plays, where he speaks of " a certain red-haired fellow, pot-bellied, with thick calves, swarthy, with a big head, sharp eyes, red face, and very large feet".² If this description is true, he was not as handsome as he was skillful in writing. It may be that we have a slight description of him in his name. He would more truly be called Maccius, but he is known only by his sobriquet, Plautus, a name which means "flat-foot". But whatever his appearance or origin, his genius is shown in his writings, which in spite of some rudeness display many admirable characteristics. He depicted life as it was in Rome in the Third Century B. C. Thus while all but one of his plays, *Amphitruo*, were taken from Greek originals, the manner and

1. Collins, *Plautus and Terence*, page 31.

2. *Pseudolus*. Act IV Scene 7, 120-122.

rufus quidam, uentriosus, crassis suris, subniger,
magno capite, acutis oculis, ore rubicundo, admodum
magnis pedibus.

spirit of them is Roman. The language is theirs as illustrated by the puns and coined words and the metaphors which, if translated from the Greek, would be meaningless. Besides this, in the midst of a Greek setting, the characters speak of all the surroundings of the Roman world, the forum, the magistrates, the auspices, the gods as Juppiter and the Lar Familiaris. There are references to the Roman Senate and Roman laws, to the colonies and military tactics. These are distinctly a part not of Greek but of Roman life.¹ As a part of this life, Plautus shows us what the Romans appreciated in the way of wit and humor. We find things represented as humorous, which would not appeal to us as such. Personal characteristics and peculiarities are ridiculed somewhat more broadly than seems necessary to us. But frequently, we find humorous passages which would be enjoyed even by a modern audience.

A discussion of the wit and witticisms in Plautus may well begin with a consideration of his characters, for to certain ones he gives the task of amusing his audience, that is they are primarily the comic elements. These characters we shall take up in the following order: (1) The Parasite, (2) The Slave, (3) The Senex, (4) Women, (5) The Soldier.

(1) The Parasite.² The Parasite appears in eight.

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1. Sellar, The Roman Poets of the Republic, pp. 172-178.

2. C. E. Armeling, The Parasite as Portrayed by Plautus, pp. 1-3.

of the plays. In these he supplies not only the comic element but even much of the wit of the dialogue. He is represented first of all as "grinning and greedy". Even the names given by Plautus to his Parasites are indicative of this characteristic. So Peniculus says that he has a name that means "sponge" given to him because he wipes the tables clean after meals.¹ Gnatho is from the Greek meaning "full-mouth", and Artotrogus also from the Greek meaning "bread-gnawer". The Parasite is always hungry, always searching some one who will satisfy his appetite. Thus Ergasilus in a typical soliloquy says: "Wretched is the man who seeks something to eat and finds it with difficulty; but he is more wretched who seeks with difficulty and finds nothing; he is most wretched, who, when he desires to eat, has nothing to eat. If I could, I would gladly tear the eyes of this day, it has so burdened everyone with hatred toward me. I have not seen any one who has fasted more or who is more filled with hunger ----- so my stomach and my throat are keeping hunger holidays.----- As I went from here just now, I came to some youths in the Forum. 'Hail, said I, 'Where are we going to breakfast together', and they remain silent. 'Who says, "here", or who makes an offer?' I ask. Like dumb men they are silent, nor do they laugh at me.

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1. Menaechmi. Act I, Scene 1, 1-2.

Iuventus nomen fecit Peniculo mihi,
ideo quia mensam quando edo detergeo.

'Where do ^{we} you dine?' I say. And they decline. I say something funny from my best jokes with which I used to obtain feasting for a month: no one laughs; I knew at once that this was arranged beforehand. ----- I went to some others, then to others and still to others, the result was the same. ----- Now I will go to the harbor, there is my only hope of a meal. If that shall fail me, I will return here to the old man, to his unsavory dinner."¹

1. Captivi, Act III, Scene 1.

Miser homo est qui ipse sibi quod edit quaerit et id aegre
inuenit,
sed ille est miserior qui et aegre quaerit et nihil inuenit;
ille miserrumst, qui quom esse cupit, (tum) quod edit non
habet.

Nam hercle ego huic die, si liceat, oculos ecfodiam lubens,
ita malignitate oneravit omnis mortalis mihi;
neque leiuniosioreni neque magis acfertum fame
uidi -----

ita uenter gutturque resident essurialis ferias.

nam uti dudum hinc abii, accessi ad adulescentes in foro.

'saluete' inquam. 'quo imus una?' inquam: (ad prandium)
atque illi tacent.

'quis ait "hoc" aut quis profitetur?' inquam. quasi muti
silent,

His endeavors to obtain a patron are comical indeed and not a little fun is made of his futile attempts as described in Stichus. From his position of dependence upon another he draws some of his witty remarks. Ergasilus says: "Like mice we eat another's food. When business is adjourned and men go to the country, business is adjourned for our teeth."¹ So much does the Parasite eat that the cook in Menaechmi, when commanded to prepare a dinner for three, says: "Of what sort are these guests?"

Erotium. "Myself, Menaechmus, and the Parasite."

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neque me rident. 'ubi cenamus?' inquam. Atque illi abnuont. dico unum ridiculum dictum de dictis melioribus, quibu' solebam menstrualis epulas ante adipiscier: nemo ridet; sciui extemplo rem de compecto geri;

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pergo ad alios, ueni ad alios, deinde ad alios: una res!

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nunc ibo ad portum hinc: est illic mi una spes cenatica; si ea decollabit, redibo huc ad senem ad cenam asperam.

1. Captivi. Act I, Scene 1, 9-11.

quasi mures semper edimus alienum cibum;
ubi res prolatae sunt, quom rus homines eunt,
simul prolatae res sunt nostris dentibus.

Cook. "That is ten -- for the Parasite easily takes the place of eight men."¹

Not only is the Parasite hungry, but he is willing to pay for his food by his jests and raillery. He is armed with stock expressions, with puns, with jokes to amuse his patron during his meals. Often he obtains "perpetual food",² that is, he continually eats with some rich man and amuses him. In this capacity he is somewhat like the court jester -- a privileged character -- it is his business to be funny even in the most serious situation. Also like the jester he is allowed to say many things to the patron in his joking manner which would not be endured from any other rank. Frequently he is represented as intellectually superior to his patron. He always has a plan and is ingenious in getting himself and others out of scrapes. In the *Curculio* it is the Parasite, *Curculio*, who makes the plan by which the plot of the play is developed -- there it is that he shows his crafty nature. Thus we derive a picture of the Parasite -- a man by no means devoid of skill; desirous above all else of obtaining the satisfaction of his appetite;

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1. *Menaechmi*, Act I, Scene 4, 3-5.

Cy. quousmodi hic homines erant?

Er. ego et Menaechmus et parasitus eius. Cy. iam isti sunt
decem;

nam parasitus octo hominum munus facile fungitur.

2. *Captivi*. Act IV, Scene 1, 13.

characterized by an ever ready supply of wit, a man at whom the audiences of Rome laughed and with whom they laughed. The nearest representations of the Parasite in more modern literature are found among the character sketches of Dickens who also depicted for us a hungry, greedy man, as for example, his "fat boy" in Pickwick Papers.

(2) The Slave. Of all the characters which Plautus brings before his audiences, the slave is the most constant source of amusement. We find slaves in all of the plays, of varying characteristics, but always they represent the comic element. It is a noticeable fact that Shakespeare makes a more marked difference between his two sets of characters -- the comic and the non-comic -- than does Plautus. However, in these plays we are given an insight into the life and condition of the Roman slave. Doubtless the fact that many of the slaves were captives taken in war from well educated people, has much to do with the picture we find painted of them. It is interesting to note that frequently, in fact one might say in most of his plays, Plautus has made the slave superior to his master. It is very noticeable that the young men in Plautus are often weak characters who rely upon their slaves in crises, thus giving full reign to one who is mischievous but skillful. It is the slave who plans intrigue, he fools his master, he stands between the Senex and the Adulescens, getting the latter out of difficult situations at the expense of the former whom he usually renders ridiculous to the audience; he gets

himself into trouble but usually manages to squirm out in some manner, but if not he has an ever-ready supply of humorous courage to the end. He is frequently impudent, seeming not to hesitate to say anything he desires to his master. He will lie if it suits his purpose and seems not to feel the least inconvenience at being caught -- he simply continues on his way as formerly. Nevertheless, in all his trickery he shows throughout a wonderful devotion to his master whom he will serve to the limit of his ability even at his own peril. A general description of the slave will not suffice to show his importance as a comic character in Plautus. Some specific instances of his roguery must be considered.

The *Mostellaria* presents to us one of the best examples of the slave at work. Theopropides, the father of Philolaches, is absent in a foreign country. While he is away, the son buys a female slave, Philematium, with borrowed money, and they with two friends are living riotously in the father's house. At this moment the old man returns, and as the friend, Callidametes, is drunk, something must be done to relieve the situation. Here Tranio, the slave, assumes control and becomes the leading character of the comedy. He has the faculty for intrigue, and he plans a way of escape. Philolaches resigns himself to his hands, and obeys his orders. The house is closed, and the revellers are commanded to be silent. Tranio puts it concisely: "Order the Laconian key of this house to be brought to me from within: I will lock it up on the out-

side."¹ He then takes upon himself the task of getting rid of the old man. An amusing scene follows in which Tranio tells Theopropides that the house is haunted; that his son has purchased the house next door belonging to Simo, at a very low price; and finally he succeeds in frightening the old man into flight. He communes with himself as he forms his plans: "I will play a comedy for this old man while he is living, I take it there is no chance of having games at his funeral".² The situation is exceedingly complicated and amusing. Simo has not sold his house, but Theopropides, thinking so, wishes to see the purchase of his son, and it therefore falls upon Tranio to deceive Simo too. He works upon his own theory that "the best lying is dished up hot". His plan is quickly made, and he tells Simo that Theopropides wishes to build an addition to his own house and would like to examine that of his neighbor. When consent is obtained he keeps Theopropides from betraying him by telling him that Simo regrets the sale. In such a manner Tranio hoodwinks Simo and Theopropides. He even goes farther -- he mentions in ambiguous phrases the fact that he has outwitted them. For while the men are looking over the house,

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1. Mostellaria, Act II, Scene 1, 57-58.

clauem mi harunc aedium Laconicam
iam iube efferri intus: hasce ego aedis occludam hinc foris.

2. Mostellaria, Act II, Scene 1, 80-81.

ludos ego hodie uiuo praesenti hic seni
faciam, quod credo mortuo numquam fore.

Tranio asks them if they do not see a picture in which one crow makes fun of two vultures. "But I do", he says, "for the crow stands between two vultures: it nips each one in turn."¹ But such a situation cannot last -- the day of reckoning must come for Tranio. This he himself realizes when he says: "For I know that in no manner can these things be kept secret from the old man."² The slaves of the drunken Callidametes come to take him home, and Theopropides discovers that he has been completely duped by his slave for the sake of his son. He will have revenge and again in the crisis we find the same undaunted Tranio. When his master comes with the lorarii of Simo, he calmly seats himself on the altar and despite the pleas of Theopropides, there he remains where he cannot be harmed, until Callidametes, who has recovered from his drunken stupor, intercedes for both Philolaches and Tranio. It is finally arranged that "by-gones shall be by-gones" and that pardon shall be granted to Tranio, who in a characteristic speech says: "Why should you hesitate to pardon me? I shall be sure to get into some scrape tomorrow and then you can punish me for both

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1. Mostellaria, Act III, Scene 2, 146-148.

uiden pictum, ubi ludificat una cornix uolturios duos?

- - - - - at ego uideo. nam inter uolturios duos
cornix astat, ea uolturios duo uicissim uellicat.

2. Mostellaria, Act V, Scene 1, 13.

nam scio equidem nullo pacto iam esse posse haec clam senem.

at once."¹ Tranio is a typical slave of Plautus -- he is irresistible -- he in reality makes the play.

Of somewhat different type is Tyndarus, the devoted slave in the *Captive*, a play which is not so highly amusing as the *Mostellaria*. The entire plot consists in making Hegio think that of his two captives in war, Tyndarus the slave is Philocrates the master, thus causing the master to be sent home instead of the slave. Here we have the type of the passive slave, that is, one who does not form and carry out the plot himself but one who willingly yields himself to serve his master. His wit is of a milder sort than Tranio's. Not until Aristophontes, another captive in war, stupidly fails to take in the situation and so attempts to prove that Tyndarus is not Philocrates, do we find Tyndarus at his best. In a scene somewhat too long drawn out for modern taste but doubtless very amusing to the Romans, Tyndarus attempts the difficult task of silencing Aristophontes and keeping up the deception of Hegio. He is almost successful when he tells Hegio that he must be careful of Aristophontes because he is insane. Hegio then becomes thoroughly frightened, but Aristophontes is finally able to get a hearing and proves, not without considerable interruption and repartee on the part of Tyndarus, that Hegio

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1. *Mostellaria*, Act V, Scene 2, 56-57.

quid grauaris? quasi non cras iam commeream aliam noxiam:
ibi utrumque, et hoc et illud, poteris ulcisci probe.

has been deceived. The asides of Tyndarus in this scene represent his feelings for the amusement of the spectators. When Aristophontes seems to be succeeding, Tyndarus says to his heart: "Why aren't you quiet? Go and hang yourself: you throb so that I can hardly stand from fear."¹ "Alas for those unfortunate rods which will meet their death on my back today."² When Hegio rages Tyndarus asks why he is angry if as a slave he has only done what Hegio would like his slave to do for him³ and he philosophically remarks when he is sent to the stone quarries for punishment that his life cannot last forever.⁴

We have seen the picture of the slave at work represented by Tranio, and the passive but undaunted slave represented by Tyndarus. Now we will consider the cowardly type portrayed by Sosia in *Amphitruo*. Sosia is not the manager, the slave with a plan, neither is he the faithful slave doing the will of his master; he is the fearing, ~~fault~~^{ban}tering slave. We meet him first on the way home from the harbor at night, carrying on a conversation with himself, considering how brave he

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1. *Captivi*, Act III, Scene 4, 103-104.

quin quiescis diirectum cor meum? ac suspende te.
tu sussultas, ego miser uix asto prae formidine.

2. *Captivi*, Act III, Scene 4, 117.

uae illis uirgis miseris, quae hodie in tergo morientur meo.

3. *Captivi*, Act III, Scene 5, 56-57.

4. *Captivi*, Act III, Scene 5, 84.

is to be out at such an hour -- all the time trembling inwardly for fear some one may attack him. He confesses to himself that when the soldiers in the war from which his master has just returned "were fighting with all their might, he was fleeing with all his might".¹ Upon his arrival at the house Sosia is dreadfully frightened, "numbed all over", by Mercury who is there in disguise in the form of Sosia himself. They enter into conversation. Such jests do they indulge in as we frequently find in Shakespeare. Thus Mercury says: "You come here today at your peril, with your trumped-up lies and your patched-up deceits."

Sosia: "Nay, I come with patched-up clothes, not deceits."

Mercury: "Now, you are lying for you come with your feet, not with your clothes."²

Mercury strikes him for his lie and Sosia cries out: "Perii, I am killed". Compare with this Shakespeare's Hamlet, Act 5, Scene 1:

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1. Amphitruo, Act I, Scene 1, 44.

nam quom pugnabant maxume, ego tum fugiebam maxume.

2. Amphitruo, Act I, Scene 1, 210-213.

Me. ne tu istic hodie malo tuo compositis mandaciis aduenisti --- consutis dolis.

So. immo equidem tunicis consutis huc aduenio, non dolis.

Me. at mentiris etiam. certo pedibus, non tunicis uenis.

Hamlet: "How came he mad?"

Clown: "Faith, e'en with losing his wits."

Hamlet: "Upon what ground?"

Clown: "Why, here in Denmark."

Mercury and Sosia enter into a discussion as to which of the two is the real Sosia, in which Sosia becomes very much muddled and at last through fear of Mercury departs saying: "Immortal gods, I beseech your mercy, where did I leave myself? Where have I been changed? Where have I left my figure?"¹ Thus bewildered he meets Amphitrio declaring that there are two Sosias, and that while he is speaking to his master there is also another Sosia at home. For this he receives only ridicule from Amphitruo, who does not put any great faith in Sosia's word.²

We have considered somewhat at length, three of the slaves of Plautus. There are many others varying somewhat from these, but in a general manner typified by these. In the Miles Gloriosus, Palaestrio is the skillful manager who controls the action of the others. In Pseudolus, Epidicus, and Bacchides, the clever unscrupulous slave, is the leading character.

1. Amphitruo, Act I, Scene 1, 303-304.

di immortales, opsecro vostram fidem,
ubi ego perii? ubi immutatus sum? ubi ego formam perdididi?

2. Palmer, The Amphitruo of Plautus, Act I, Scene 1,
pp. 141-174.

Gripus in the *Rudens* is the humorous, bantering slave, and Stasimus in *Trinummus* is devoted to Lesbonicus his master but ridiculous in his attempts to help him. Plautus paints for us a vivid picture of the slave. Decidedly above all others he is the humorous character -- the one to whom we always look for amusement, and the one who never fails to bring a laugh in some manner. Take the slave out of Plautus and much of the comic and the witty goes at the same time, as well as the leading character in some of the plays.

(3) The Senex. In nearly all of the Comedies we find the character of the Senex -- usually the wealthy father of the *Adulescens*. This is one of the characters of whom Plautus makes fun, and he is often the target for the trickery of the slave. He is represented as an avaricious man, cowardly, and frequently immoral. Euclio in *Aulularia* is the representation of avarice. Ridiculous to the extreme is he rendered by his great anxiety over a pot of gold which he has discovered in his house. All his actions are governed by it -- he thinks the rich old man who asks his daughter in marriage must know about his treasure; he distrusts his wife in the fear that she will reveal his secret; he dislikes to go to the Forum, lest in his absence the pot may be stolen; he objects to having cooks in his house because they may steal it; he finally takes it out of the house and buries it that no one may know where it is. By doing this, he exposes it to view and then it is stolen. He is humorous because of his continual harping on one subject.

Another type that Plautus ridicules is the man who has married for money like Simo in *Mostellaria* or the immoral Demaenetus in *Asinaria*. They are represented as totally dependent upon wealthy wives, weak puppets of men whom no one respects, at whom all laugh. Then there is the Senex who is tricked, and he is the characteristic Senex of Plautus. This type is represented by Hegio in *Captivi*, Theopropides and Simo in *Mostellaria* Nicobulus in *Bacchides*, Simo in *Pseudolus*, Stalmo in *Casina* and Periphanes in *Epidicus*. Theopropides whose position was described under the discussion of the slave Tranio, is probably the best example of this type. Hegio also who bemoans his fate because he has been made the laughing stock of the town, is a good example. Nicobulus is slightly different. He is the father from whom the slave is able to obtain by trickery money for the Adulescens to buy his mistress. The Senex is not a strong character in these plays: he is not the one who creates fun, he is the one at whom fun is directed.

(4) Women. Women are not the principal characters in the comedies of Plautus. They are the characters about whom the action of the plays centers, not the ones who act. The attitude of the husband toward the wife is not shown as ideal. We must not, however, consider that this was the customary attitude for we know the high position of the Roman matron. We must also remember that at the present time our comedies and farces contain irony and sarcasm between husband and wife, while we do not consider that it necessarily follows married

life is uniformly unhappy. As an illustration of this situation let us take the Menaechmi. As Menaechmus comes forth from his home he is speaking at the door to his wife.¹ We find him objecting to any personal questions on her part, for he is not acting in such a manner as to wish his actions revealed. He therefore calls his wife foolish and worthless, and tells her he will divorce her if she does not allow him to do as he desires and cease to ask so many questions. He declares that he has led home a "custom-house officer"² instead of a wife, for she asks all about his business - a thing which he will no longer endure. Later in the plot, the Parasite reveals to the wife of Menaechmus the disgraceful conduct of her husband. When she knows that her mantle has been stolen for another woman, she asks the Parasite what she shall do to her husband. His answer is: "Do what you always do -- scold him"³-- a reply not unlike some of our modern sayings. We also have in this play something similar to our phrase, "going home to father". The wife meets her husband's twin brother who is not known to her, and renders to him the scolding due her husband. As he

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1. Menaechmi, Act I, Scene 2.

2. Menaechmi, Act I, Scene 2, 8.

portitorum domum duxi.

3. Menaechmi, Act IV, Scene 1, 10-11.

Matrona. quid ego nunc cum illoc agam?

Peniculus. idem quod semper: male habeas.

has never seen her before and cannot understand her accusations, a heated controversy ensues. She becomes provoked and says: "I'll certainly send for my father and tell him the disgraceful things you are doing."¹ Another example of the fun made of the wife is given in *Trinummus*. Callices as he leaves the house says: "I desire our household god to be graced with a wreath. Wife, venerate him, that this house may turn out for us prosperous, lucky, happy, and fortunate and (aside) that I may see you dead as soon as possible."²

Seldom do we find the woman herself particularly amusing. The nearest approach to this is Scapha, the attendant of Philematium in *Mostellaria*, who is represented as having some of the characteristics of the humorous slave in her bantering with Philematium. Conversation opens between the maid and her mistress during the toilet of the latter. Philematium has been speaking of her enjoyable bath. Scapha answers: "All things turn out somehow or other, for instance we have a good

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1. *Menaechmi*, Act V, Scene 1, 34-35.

iam patrem accersam meum
atque ei narrabo tua flagitia quae facis.

2. *Trinummus*, Act I, Scene 2, 1-4.

Larem corona nostrum decorari uolo.
uxor, uenerare ut nobis haec habitatio
bona, fausta, felix fortunataque euenat --
teque ut quam primum possim uideam emortuam.

harvest this year." Philematium: "What has that to do with the bath?" Scapha: "Nothing more than your bath has to do with the harvest."¹ Scapha exhibits skill in repartee continually in this scene. For example, Philematium says: "Hand me the ceruse".² Scapha: "What need have you of ceruse?" Philematium. "I will put it on my cheeks." Scapha: "On the same principle you would ask to whiten ivory with ink."³ And later we find this conversation: Phil. "Is this becoming to me, Scapha?" Scapha: "It isn't necessary that that should worry me." Phil. "Whom then, pray?" Scapha: "I'll tell you -- Philolaches."⁴ We see by these few examples that women were

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1. Mostellaria, Act I, Scene 3, 3-5.

eventus rebus omnibus, uelut horno messis magna
fuit. Philem. quid ea messis attinet ad meam lauacionem?
Sc. nihilo plus quam lauatio tua ad messim.

2. Ceruse, white lead was used by women for the purpose of whitening the complexion.

3. Mostellaria, Act I, Scene 3, 101-102.

Philem. cedo cerussam. Sc. quid cerussa opust nam?

Philem. qui malas oblinam.

Sc. una opera ebur atramento candefacere postules.

4. Mostellaria, Act 1, Scene 3, 125-127.

Philem. satin haec (me) deceat, Scapha.

Sc. non me istuc curare oportet. Philem. quem opsecro igitur?

Sc. eloquar:

Philolachem.

not represented as devoid of wit, but as part of the apparatus which Plautus employed to produce effects, they played a relatively unimportant part.

(5) The Soldier. We turn now to the soldier and his part in the Comedies. This man, in the role of a fun-producing character, appears only in two of the plays -- Anthemionides in Poenulus and Pyrgopolinices in Miles Gloriosus. In the first he has a minor part, in the second he is an important character. It is evident that Plautus has at some time become thoroughly disgusted with the braggart soldier or captain, who wearies all with the stories of his exploits; and so the author sets out to make him ridiculous before the people. He shows a man who is big-headed, desirous of honor and attention, susceptible of flattery, a man who in his own eyes carried on great wars and vanquished the enemy quite by his own skill. Thus we have the following conversation between Anthemionides and Lycus, a Procurer:

Anthemionides: "So as I began to tell you, you little pimp, about that Pentethronic battle when in one day I killed with my own hand sixty thousand flying men".¹

Lycus: "Flying men? Is that true?"

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1. Pentetronica. There has been much discussion concerning the meaning of this word, which is probably coined as a high-sounding word, without meaning. H. T. Riley, The Comedies of Plautus, page 374, note 1.

Anthemonides: "I say it is true."

Lycus: "Are there anywhere men who fly?"

Anthemonides. "There were but I killed them."¹

Lycus soon discovers that he is talking to a brag, and varies the conversation. But the untiring Captain enthusiastically wishes to relate the exploits of another battle, even though Lycus does not desire to listen. Anthemonides finally threatens him unless he will listen, while Lycus says he would rather "go and be hanged".²

Anthemonides: "Are you determined?"

Lycus: "Determined."³

In this play we have a miniature picture of the Soldier, but in

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1. Poenulus, Act II, Scene 1, 24-30.

Anthemonides. ita ut cecepi dicere,
lenulle, de illac pugna Pentetronica,
quom sexaginta milia hominum uno die
uolaticorum manibus occidi meis.

Lycus. uolaticorum -- hominum? Anthemonides. ita deico quidem

Lycus. an, opsecro, usquam sunt homines uolatici?

Anthemonides. fuere. uerum ego interfeci.

2. Ire in malam crucem -- to go to the cross, i. e.
to go and be hanged.

3. Poenulus, Act II, Scene 1, 48-49.

Lycus. malam crucem ibo potius. Anthemonides. certumnest tibi?

Lycus. Certum.

Miles Gloriosus we have the finished work. Even the name, The Braggart Captain, gives us an idea of the play. It is built around a plan to gain the freedom of a slave girl at the expense of the Soldier. We are introduced to Pyrgopolinices while he is giving commands that his shield be made very bright. He is speaking with Artotrogus, the Parasite, who brings out very noticeably the characteristics of his patron. The Soldier as usual, is boasting of his achievements, but Artotrogus who at any cost must keep his patron in good humor surpasses him in praising the Soldier's exploits until he says: "Indeed, that is nothing at all in comparison with other things I could mention (aside) which you never did."¹ It is Artotrogus' appetite, however, which leads him to such great flattery, for he realizes that by satisfying Pyrgopolinices' desire for praise he himself will attain satisfaction of his desire for food. He even goes so far as to tell him that all the women are in love with him as soon as they see him, even thinking him to be Achilles on account of his handsome appearance. This, the Captain is foolish enough to believe, becoming very puffed up over the matter, his opinion of himself increasing at every word. Thus we have his characteristics, and on account of them he falls an easy prey to Palaestrio's intrigue. Pyrgopolinices has in

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1. Miles Gloriosus, Act I, Scene 1, 19-20.

nihil hercle hoc quidemst
praeut alia dicam -- quae tu numquam feceris.

his possession a girl, Philocomasium, whom Palaestrio's master loves, and the slave forms a plan by which to obtain her. He tells Pyropolinices that his neighbor's wife is in love with him on account of his magnificent figure and handsome face. The Soldier's vanity is touched at once. Palaestrio advises that Philocomasium be dispatched from the house to make room for the woman. The Soldier consents and then is induced by a maid to enter the house next door to visit the woman who loves him. He is there seized by the slaves and beaten for his disgraceful conduct. He discovers that he has been duped and has lost two slaves besides obtaining a beating for his foolishness. As one would expect he is as much of a coward as he is a brag, and he is released at last when he has promised to do no one any harm for the things they have done to him. His real character is shown to be the opposite, and he is made the more ludicrous by contrast.

We have thus taken up the characters of the comedies. They fall roughly into two classes with reference to the wit of the dialogue -- they are the characters who are witty themselves, and the characters that are made ridiculous as the objects of wit. Almost between the two and forming a connecting link stands the Parasite who belongs to some extent to both classes.

Now that we have seen the part of the character in producing the wit, let us take up some of the author's devices which tend toward that end. Words and their use are worthy of

our attention. We discover such expressions as these: misere miser, madide madeo, dicta dicere, memor meminit, and it is natural to infer that such expressions were pleasing to the Roman ear though to us there does not seem to be much point to them. There is also a tendency toward combining words of the same root in such expressions as: "I am a very kingly king of kings."¹ Sometimes we find continued repetition. In Act IV Scene 6 of Rudens the word "Licet" is used seventeen times in a scene of twenty lines, and in Scene 8 of the same Act "Censeo" or "Non censeo" is used fourteen times in a scene of fifteen lines. Besides this use of words we find Plautus coining words for comic effect. Philocrates tells Hegio that he is of the "Polypusian" family, which in Greek means "very wealthy", and that his father's name is Thensaurochrysonicochrysidēs, a name made up of several Greek words, which seems to mean,² "a son of Croesus abounding in treasuries of gold".³ These names are purely fanciful, told for their effect upon the greedy Hegio. In Miles Gloriosus, Pyrgopolinices says: "Do you mean him whom I guarded on the Curculionian plains where Bumbomachides Clutomestoridysarchides, the grandson of Neptune, was commander-

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1. Captivi, Act IV, Scene 2, 45.

Ergasilus. sum sed regum rex regalior.

2. Riley, The Comedies of Plautus, page 439, note 1.

3. Captivi, Act II, Scene 2, lines 27 and 35.

in-chief?"¹ These names are put into the mouth of the Soldier to make it sound as if he were an unusual captain, whereas no such names existed in reality. In like manner we find in Epidicus "Perenticidam"², meaning a "bag murderer", formed for the occasion by analogy with the word "parenticida" -- a parricide. Such words as these add variety to the conversation and produce that unexpected turn to affairs which so largely goes to make up the humorous. Added to these formations we find numerous puns -- plays upon different senses of the same word, or bringing to gether two different words of similar sound. It is a difficult matter to transfer a pun from one language to another, but where good translations have been found they will be used. To illustrate the first class of puns different senses of the same word -- Pyrgopolinices says he wishes his shield to be polished to such a degree "that it may dazzle the line of sight of the enemy in line of battle". Praestringat oculorum aciem in acie hostibus.³ It has been suggested that a modern playwright would probably say: "That the fool's array he dazzled by its rays".⁴ In Captivi, Act III,

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1. Miles Gloriosus, Act I, Scene 1, 13-15.

quemne ego seruavi in campis Curculionieis,
ubi Bumbomachides Clutomestoridysarchides
erat imperator summus, Neptuni nepos?

2. Miles Gloriosus, Act II, Scene 2, 13.

3. Miles Gloriosus, Act I, Scene 1, 4.

4. Tyrrell, Miles Gloriosus, page 136.

Scene 4, 45-46 we find this:

Aristophontes. tun te gnatum memoras liberum?

Tyndarus. non equidem me Liberum, sed Philocrates^m esse aio.

This is a play upon the word "liber" meaning "free" and "Liber" meaning "Bacchus". Aristophontes asks: "Did you not say that you were born free?" And Tyndarus answers: "No indeed I do not say my name is Freeman but Philocrates". Another example may be taken from Pseudolus.

Ballio. tun es is Harpax? Simia. ego sum atque ipse harpax
quidem.¹

Ballio: "Are you this Harpax?" Simia (who is lying): "Yes I am, and the real harpax too". Here Simia plays upon the name Harpax and its meaning -- "plunderer" -- and what he really says is that he is the real plunderer, which is true.

The second class of puns bringing together two different words of the same sound is illustrated in Amphitruo.

Mercury. Amphitruonis te esse aiebas Sosiam. Sosia. pecca-
eram,
nam Amphitruonis socium ne me esse uolui dicere.²

Mercury: "You said you were Amphitruo's 'Sosiam' ." Sosia:
"I was mistaken for I meant to say that I am Amphitruo's
'socium' (comrade)." We find a rather clever pun of this sort
in Rudens:

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1. Pseudolus, Act IV, Scene 2, 53.

2. Amphitruo, Act I, Scene 1, 231-232.

Trachalio. ecquid condicionis audes ferre? Gripus. iam
dudum fero:

ut abeas

Trachalio. mane dum refero condicionem. Gripus. te, opsecro
hercle, aufer modo.¹

Trachalio. "Do you make some offer?" Gripus. "I make an
offer now that you depart." Trachalio. "Stay while I make a
counter offer." Gripus. "I beseech you 'make off'."² There
is a play on the resemblance of the words "medicus" and "men-
dicus" in Rudens:

Gripus. quid tu? num medicus, quaeso, es?

Labrax. immo edepol una littera plus sum quam medicus. Gripus.
tum tu

mendicus es? Labrax. tetigisti acu.³

This pun may be rendered in English by coining the word "medi-
cant" to mean physician. Thus: Gripus. "What are you, a
medicant?" Labrax. "No indeed, I am more than a medicant by
one letter." Gripus. "Then you are a mendicant." Labrax.
"You have hit it."⁴ More examples could be given but these
will serve to show Plautus' use of the pun. Besides his puns,
Plautus has a great many words he uses as terms of abuse -- as

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1. Rudens, Act IV, Scene 3, 91-93.

2. Sonnenschein, Rudens, page 156.

3. Rudens, Act V, Scene 2, 17-19.

4. Riley, The Comedies of Plautus, page 125, notes
3 and 4.

we say, "he calls people names". At times he will use a long list of them, just as we hear a man who is thoroughly angry call another man all the uncomplimentary names he can command. A passage from Persa will serve as an illustration: Dardalus. "How are you, Toxilus?" Toxilus. "Oh! you dirty, dishonest, unjust, lawless disgrace to the public; you hawk, greedily you seek money, you bold, rapacious, craving fellow: in three hundred lines no one could mention all your indecencies." And in answer, Dardalus: "Let me get my breath to answer you. Fellow, dregs of the populace, liberator of harlots, surface for the lash, you wearer out of fetters, citizen of the tread-mill, you everlasting slave, gluttonous gormandizer, thief, runaway, give me the money, give me the money, impudence."¹

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1. Persa, Act III, Scene 3, 2-18.

Dardalus. Toxile, quid agitur?

Toxilus. impure, inhoneste, iniure, inlex, labes populi,
 pecuniai accipiter auide atque inuide,
 procax, rapax, trahax -- trecentis versibus
 tuas impuritias traloqui nemo potest --

.

Dardalus. sine respirare me, ut tibi respondeam.

uir summe populi,

compedium tritor, pistrinorum ciuitas,
 perenniserue, lurcho, edax, furax, fugax,
 cedo sis mi argumnetum, da mihi argentum, impudens.

Dordalus and Toxilus do not use all the terms of abuse which Plautus has at his command. There are cinaede calimistrate -- curled dancer, verbero -- scoundrel, furcifer -- rascal, car-nufex -- villain, trifurcifex --triple rascal, cana culex -- grey gnat and others. It is very noticeable that here we have the language of the people. The strange combinations, the coined words, the puns, and the terms of abuse are a part of conversational Latin; all these give spice and quickness to the dialogue. The addition of such words and phrases is helpful toward imparting to the plays that lightness and freedom which is characteristic of the comedy.

Aside from his command of words, Plautus has other devices for producing his comic effects. One of these is exaggeration -- the slave wishes to make a good impression, so he makes an exaggerated statement of circumstances, and likewise the master is prone to overstate the facts. When the condition of affairs is deplorable and his master is in need of money, Stasimus talks of calling in a talent which he had lent a short time before.¹ As a talent was more than his master Lesbonicus had received for the house which he had sold, and would have been enough to save them from the calamity of serving as soldiers, this statement would have been understood

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1. Trinummus, Act II, Scene 2, 101-102.

ad forum ibo: nudiu' sextus quoi talentum mutuom
dedi, reposcam, ut habeam mecum quod feram uiaticum.

as the mere nonsense of a slave. A slave would not have such a sum in his possession. Again, we have the exaggeration of the soldier Anthemonides already spoken of, where he said he had slain sixty thousand flying men in one day with his own hand.¹ Such speeches are exaggeration for effect, but they are also very true to life.

We might also call attention to the use of sarcasm or irony. In a crisis Stratippocles advises Epidicus, who is in danger of severe punishment, to be of good courage, and the slave says in answer: "Of course -- I whose freedom is so close at hand."² Chalinus, when, he sees his enemies coming toward him says: "My well wishers and friends are coming out."³ In Miles Gloriosus, Philocomasium ironically asks, "Where is that good slave who accuses me falsely of a crime?"⁴

Personification also has its part in Plautus. In

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1. Poenulus, Act II, Scene 1.

2. Epidicus, Act V, Scene 1, 12.

St. habe bonum animum. Ep. quippe ego quoi libertas in
mundo sitast.

3. Casina, Act II, Scene 7, 12.

mei beneuolentes atque amici prodeunt.

4. Miles Gloriosus, Act II, Scene 4, 11-12.

ubi iste est bonu' seruos qui probri me maxumi innocentem
falso insimulauit?

almost every play we find the doors spoken of as living beings - so much so that it might be called a stock expression. Thus:

Libanus. "Who is breaking down our door in this way?"

Mercator. "Nobody has touched it yet."

Libanus. I don't want my fellow-slave, the door, beaten by you."¹
again

In *Curculio* the door is spoken of as living. *Phaedromus*.

"near by is the door that is as dear to me as my eyes. (To the door) Hail! Have you been well?" *Palinurus*. "Why do you ask, madman, whether the door is well or not?" *Ph*. "I have seen it as a most beautiful and silent door. It never utters a word. When it is opened it is silent. When she (*Planesium*) comes to me secretly at night it is silent."²:

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1. *Asinaria*, Act II, Scene 3, 4-7.

Li. quis nostras sic frangit fores? . . .

Me. nemo etiam tetigit.

. . . . nolo ego fores conseruas

meas a te uerberier.

2. *Curculio*, Act I, Scene 1, 15-23.

Ph. huic proximum illud ostiumst oculissimum.

salue, ualuistin?

.

Pa. quid tu ergo, insane, rogitas ualeatne ostium?

Ph. bellissimum hercle uidi et taciturnissimum,
numquam ullum uerbum mittit: quom aperitur tacet,
quom illa noctu clanculum ad me exit, tacet.

It is the common language of the slaves to speak thus of the gates as if they had feeling and were human beings. Perhaps this is because there was a janitor stationed at the doors, thus giving the idea of a slave being present. The day also is personified as when Ergasilus in *Captivi* says "he could dig the eyes out of this day."¹

It may be interesting here to note Plautus' remarks about customs -- jokes which seem so modern that they might almost be called current topics or present day allusions. One of these is his reference to children in *Trinummus* where Stasimus the slave says: "The customs have brought the laws under their power, and they are more submissive than parents are to their children."² Note that the words which contain the joke -- *parentes liberis*, are kept until the end. It seems from this that even in Rome some difficulty in the matter of the government of children was found, and probably from that day on, it has been heard that children used to be better trained than at the present time. Besides this there is another pointed remark in *Bacchides* where the tutor says: "But now-a-days before a child is seven years old if you touch him with your hand, at once he breaks his tutor's head with his tablet. When you go

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1. *Captivi*, Act III, Scene 1, 4.

2. *Trinummus*, Act IV, Scene 3, 30-31.

*mores leges perduxerunt iam in potestatem suam,
magi'que is sunt obnoxiosae quam parentes liberis.*

complain to the father, the father says to the boy: 'Be my own child since you are able to defend yourself from injury.' Can the teacher hold his authority in this way, if he himself is beaten first?"¹ Does not this sound like our modern complaint that the parents uphold the child against the teacher?

Not only are there allusions to the child which have a modern sound, but also to women. Epidicus carries on a conversation with Periphanes concerning women's clothes. He says: "Just as if women didn't go on the streets clothed in fairs, but when the tax is demanded they say it cannot be paid."² We have heard quite recently of women who went on the streets with "gardens on their hats". We find also in Aulularia, Act III, Scene 10, an enumeration of all the merchants of women's clothes and the expense of their dress, with some remarks as

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1. Bacchides, Act III, Scene 3, 36-44.

at nunc, priu' quam septuennis est, si attingas eum manu,
extemplo puer paedagogo tabula dirrumpit caput.
quom patrem adeas postulatum, puero sic dicit pater:
'noster esto, dum te poteris defensare iniuria.'

.

. hoccine hic pacto potest
inhibere imperium magister, si ipsum^s promus uapulet?

2. Epidicus, Act II, Scene 2, 45-46.

quasi non fundis exornatae multae incedant per uias.
at tributus quom imperatus est, negant pendi potest.^{is}

to the fact that these bills are paid whether other merchants are paid or not.

We shall turn now to a study of the situation in Plautus.¹ Many times it is true that in the actual words there is not so much amusement as in the peculiarity of the situation. Plautus seems to be able to think of most unusual conditions. Consider, as an instance, Poenulus, Act I, Scene 2, where Agorastocles is not succeeding very well with his love affairs and asks his slave Milphio to speak for him. Milphio says he will do so "diligently", (sedulo) but makes his master promise that he will not beat him afterward if he does plead for him. He then proceeds to obey the command, first addressing Adelphasium with all the pleasing names he can summon. Agorastocles is immediately consumed with jealousy that the slave is thus speaking to Adelphasium. But in spite of remonstrance the slave continues, asking next if he may kiss her. At this the master can contain himself no longer but at once attacks Milphio who according to his master is pleading entirely too "diligently". Here we have a situation in which a slave is thoroughly obeying commands but at the same time is thoroughly disturbing his master. The master at the same time is angered although he has promised not to be. With a slight change of name, Adelphasium might have asked her lover. "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

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1. Collins, Plautus and Terence, pp. 35-94.

To the Roman audience there is a humorous situation in *Miles Gloriosus* when a slave enumerates his ancestors. In the Roman State a slave was considered to be without a father -- he had no ancestors but was the property of his master. So when Sceledrus a slave says: "Do not threaten me: I know that the cross will prove my tomb -- there are buried my ancestors, my father, my grandfather, my great grandfather, and my great great grandfather."¹, it would be considered humorous in a slave to make such a statement.

In *Trinummus*, Act II, Scene 4, we find another unusual situation. Lesbonicus is determined to give a field, the last of his possessions, as the dowry of his sister, who is to marry Lysitiles. As this will necessitate his going into the army, Strasilmus the slave wishes to prevent Lysiteles from accepting this dowry. He asks that he may see Lysiteles' father Philto aside for a short conversation. When he has him alone, Strasilmus begins to tell him reasons why this field will not be pleasing to him. He asserts that things planted there will not grow; that animals placed there die; that the field is the entrance to the lower world and therefore very objectionable. Lysiteles does not wish to take the field anyway, so the father with amusement watches the painful efforts of the

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1. *Miles Gloriosus*, Act II, Scene 4, 19-20.

Sc. noli minitari: scio crucem futuram mihi sepulcrum;
ibi mei maiores sunt siti, pater, 'auos, proauos, abauos.

slave. When he announces that he will not take the field Stasimus is overjoyed at the result of his reasoning, considering himself a valuable slave to his master.

One of the most amusing scenes in Plautus is the scene of the rope in the *Rudens* after which the play is named.¹ Here we have something of the relation between two slaves shown in their free and easy bantering of each other. A vidulus or wicker basket has been lost at sea which contains the tokens by which can be proved the identity of the heroine, Palaestra. This basket is fished up by a certain slave Gripus, who thinks he has obtained great treasures and is planning what he will do with them and how great he will be considered on account of them. As he is taking the basket home, he is overtaken by Trachalio, the slave of Plesidippus who is in love with Palaestra. He realizes that this basket contains some of her belongings. There is attached to the vidulus a rope which Gripus is trailing behind him. This Trachalio snatches demanding that the basket be returned to its rightful owner. Gripus says: "I have no fish, -- don't you ask to be my fish."² He thinks because he has fished it out of the sea that the vidulus should belong to him as if it were a fish which he had caught. He says the sea is common to all and Trachalio says if that is

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1. *Rudens*, Act 4, Scene 3.

2. *Rudens*, Act IV, Scene 3, line 4.

nil habeo, adulescens, piscium, ne tu mihi esse postules.

the case then the vidulus taken from the sea ought to be "common"¹ to him.² Trachalio asks if he himself would not be a thief with Gripus should the owner appear. Gripus says he would. The Trachalio wishes to know how he can be as much a thief as Gripus is and not be a sharer. Gripus, however, will find a way in which Trachalio shall be neither a thief nor a sharer i. e. let Trachalio go away and keep silent.³ They decide to leave the matter to Daemones and here follows another amusing situation in which Daemones discovers that Palaestra is his daughter, thus crushing out the hopes of Gripus to get the vidulus in his possession. As we hear the joyful words of the master Daemones, we also hear the contrasted sorrowful words of Gripus. Daemones: Oh! Immortal Gods, where are my hopes?" "Nay," says Gripus, "Where are mine?" Daemones: "The gods desire to aid me." "But to ruin me," wails Gripus. And Trachalio rejoicing in the situation says: "Since this thing turns out badly for you, I congratulate you, Gripus."⁴

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1. Sonnenschein, Rudens, page 151.

2. Rudens, Act IV, Scene 3, 35-36.

Gripus. mare quidem commune certost omnibus.

Trachalio. qui minus hunc communem quaeso mihi esse oportet
vidulum?

3. Rudens, Act IV, Scene 3, 88.

tu abi tacitus tuam uiam.

4. Rudens, Act IV, Scene 4.

Dae. di immortales, ubi loci sunt spes meae? Gr. immo

Plautus has also a special method of bringing about amusing scenes. This is by confusion of characters or circumstances. It is surprising to find how many of his plays are based upon this principle of confusion. We shall take up some examples. In *Miles Gloriosus* we come to this crisis. The Soldier has in his possession a girl *Philocomasium*, loved by *Pleusicles*. In order that they may see each other a secret door is cut into the house next door to that of the Soldier, where *Pleusicles* is living. Everything goes well until *Sceledrus* the slave of *Miles* sees *Pleusicles* and *Philocomasium* together through the impluvium of the house next door. This puts circumstances into a desperate condition. If the Soldier finds it out everything will go wrong. *Pleusicles'* slave *Palaestrio* comes to the rescue. He tells *Sceledrus* that *Philocomasium* has a twin sister; that she is living next door; that she is the mistress of *Pleusicles*. He makes him think he was mistaken in seeing *Philocomasium*. He brings about a meeting between the two in which *Philocomasium* pretends not to know *Sceledrus*. He sees her in the house next door and then is sent home to see if *Philocomasium* is in her room. When he arrives there,

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edepol meae? Line 117.

Daemones. di me seruatum cupiunt. Gripus. at me perditum.

Line 120.

quom istaec res male euenit tibi,

Gripe, gratulor.

Lines 134-135.

she has arrived before him by means of the secret door. Sceledrus is completely duped.

In Trinummus we find a somewhat different confusion. When Charmides leaves his home for a foreign land, he leaves his treasure buried in his house, unknown to his dissolute son Lesbonicus, but known to his friend Callicles whom he trusts with it. While he is away Lesbonicus squanders everything in his possession. Consequently when Lysiteles asks Lesbonicus for his sister in marriage, there is no property for him to give as a dowry. When Callicles hears of this he cannot allow his friend's daughter to be married without a dowry when he knows where his friend's money is. But he does not dare let Lesbonicus know about the treasure. A plot is fixed up by which he hires a man who shall appear as Charmides' slave and shall bring money for the dowry. This man (Sycophanta) is on his way to the house with forged letters when he meets Charmides just returned from abroad and ignorant of the situation. We have here two men unknown to each other -- one the supposed slave of the other -- meeting and taking up conversation.¹ The Sycophanta is peculiarly dressed and attracts the attention of Charmides who overhears him talking to himself about the business at hand as he seeks the house. Charmides discovers by means of much questioning that there is some trick on foot, and that he himself is the supposed master of this fellow. He

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1. Trinummus, Act IV, Scene 2.

asks him how tall his master is and receives this answer: "He is a foot and a half taller than you." Somewhat taken back Charmides says to himself: "Here's a pretty pass if I'm taller when I am absent than when I'm present."¹ When asked his master's name this messenger is unable to think of it for he paid too little heed when it was told to him. He is only able to identify it when Charmides speaks it. He declares, however, that he has been his master's constant companion and tells of many places he has visited with him while they have been absent. His idea of geography is somewhat limited for he sadly confuses the various places. At last he says his master trusted him with a sum of money which he was to bring to Callices. Charmides then demands the money saying that he is Charmides. Yes but the Sycophanta says, "you became Charmides after you found out I had the money."² But when he really finds that he is talking to Charmides, he takes himself off saying he doesn't care if the matter didn't turn out right for he received the money for doing it anyway.

In *Aulularia*, Act IV, Scene 9, we have a confusion of circumstances. The old man Euclio has lost his buried treas-

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1. *Trinummus*, Act IV, Scene 2, 58-59.

Sy. sesquipede quiddamst quam tu longior.

Ch. haeret haec res, si quidem ego absens sum quem praesens
longior.

2. *Trinummus*, Act IV, Scene 2, 133.

postquam ego me aurum ferre dixi, post tu factu's Charmides.

ure and is hunting the thief. The youth Lyconides is trying to confess to Euclio his crime toward the old man's daughter whom he wishes to marry. Neither one mentions his exact topic of conversation -- each thinks the other is talking about the thing that is most on his mind. Euclio thinks Lyconides is saying that he has stolen the treasure. Lyconides thinks Euclio is severely censuring him for what he has done. Thus we find two men each carrying on his own part of different conversations.

Again we have the confusion of characters in *Asinaria*. The master of Libanus and Leonida has need of some money. It is discovered that a Mercator is going to pay to Saurea the steward, money vowed for some asses. This money however does not belong to the master but to his wife. This money must be obtained in some way or other. Therefore Leonida is instructed to act the part of the atriensis. The Master is told of the ^{and} scheme when the Mercator comes he is prepared to tell him that Leonida is Saurea. In this way the Mercator is made to think that he is paying the money to the proper person.

Amphitruo is a famous case of mistaken identity. This play is the only one of the twenty plays of Plautus which has a Roman story as its plot. It is the myth of the birth of Hercules, the son of Juppiter and Alcumena. Juppiter takes the form of Amphitruo and Mercury takes the form of Sosia. Under this guise, they visit Alcumena on the morning that Amphitruo returns from carrying on war in a foreign land. Alcumena

thinks Juppiter is Amphitruo. He tells her all about the war. When Sosia, the slave, arrives in the morning and finds Mercury in his own likeness, he is astonished and bewildered. He goes to Amphitruo and tells him that there is a second Sosia, at which Amphitruo only laughs. When Amphitruo himself arrives, Alcumena does not seem surprised to see him and declares that she has seen him before, that very morning. Amphitruo becomes very angry and accuses his wife of infidelity. After he leaves Juppiter returns, smooths matters over, and tells Alcumena that he did not mean what he had just said to her. Amphitruo then meets Juppiter in his likeness and accuses him of adultery -- a charge which Juppiter returns. Amphitruo goes away and brings Blepharo to distinguish the true Amphitruo -- but Blepharo can not tell which is which. Amphitruo becomes more enraged and is about to break into his own house and kill all his family when he is struck to the ground by a thunder bolt of Juppiter. At this time Alcumena gives birth to twins, one of whom kills a snake in his cradle and then Juppiter appears and explains the deception.

Two of the plays of Plautus are built upon confusion caused by twins -- the Bacchides and the Menaechmi. In the former the principal women characters are twins, in the latter the men are twins. The Bacchides is not particularly amusing only in the fact that Mnesilochus gives Bacchis his mistress into the care of his friend Pistoclerus in his own absence, without knowing that she has a twin sister -- and on his return,

discovering Pistoclerus with Bacchis, he goes off in a pout and almost inflicts upon himself the punishment of losing Bacchis. The Menaechmi, on the other hand is exceedingly amusing, perhaps on the whole the most humorous of Plautus' plays. The Menaechmi have been separated when very young. Menaechmus I is living in Epidamnus. Menaechmus II or Sosicles is searching everywhere for his lost brother. He comes to Epidamnus in his search and then a series of most amusing mistakes takes place. Wherever one has been the other accidentally follows and by this process bewilders people and becomes bewildered himself. Menaechmus I orders a feast for himself and the Parasite with Erotium the Meretrix. This feast is eaten by Menaechmus II whom Erotium calls in instead of Menaechmus I. The latter has stolen a cloak from his wife for Erotium. The Parasite angered because he did not receive the dinner expected at the house of Erotium tells Menaechmus I's wife about the cloak. Accordingly as Menaechmus II comes down the street she attacks him, scolding severely, and finally enraged by his indifferent answers she sends for her father. In order to get away, completely bewildered by circumstances, Menaechmus II feigns madness. The father hastens away for a physician and returns but this time encounters Menaechmus I. They ask him many questions which he resents and finally they send men to take him by force. He resists and Menaechmus II's slave Messenio rescues him thinking he is helping his master. The slave demands his freedom as a return for his service and Menaechmus I, astonished, says he may be free so far as he is concerned. This confusion does

not cease until the two Menaechmi are brought together on the stage and recognition takes place, and everything is explained. Upon the model of this play is built Shakespeare's Comedy of Errors. Antipholus of Ephesus and Antipholus of Syracuse are reproductions of the Menaechmi and Shakespeare has added the two Dromios who after the manner of their masters are also twins thus adding more to the confusion. It may be well to notice that Plautus has had his influence on modern times. Not only did Shakespeare make use of the Menaechmi but Moliere used the Amphitruo as did also Dryden. Other of his plays too have been copied as Aulularia, Mostellaria, and Trinummus, so that his writings must have been studied long after the fall of the Roman Empire.

We have noticed some of the situations found in the comedies. Of these and others, there are many which are unique and are not brought about in accordance with any rule. On the other hand there is a predominance of amusing situations brought about by the confusion of characters as in the Menaechmi, of circumstances as in the Aulularia. As to his plots and stories, we know that almost everything Plautus wrote is modeled after the Greeks.

These, then, as we have seen, are the principal ways in which Plautus produces his results: (1) he uses his characters, some of them as producers of wit, others as targets for wit; (2) he makes use of peculiarities in words, he employs puns, coined words, and terms of abuse; (3) he has certain

rhetorical forms as exaggeration, personification, and irony; (4) he makes reference to some of the customs of the day which might be ridiculed; (5) he brings about certain situations which in themselves are amusing.

Plautus is distinctly a comic poet.¹ He is not troubled about serious things neither does he set before himself the duty of reforming the people. He desires to amuse them and he seems to enjoy the task. Sellar² says: "He takes a good-natured delight in his slaves, courtesans, parasites, and sycophants. He is not shocked at anything they can do or say". His plays are full of good humor and enjoyment. His diction is fluent. He never lacks a word; he is able to coin one for his own use if there is not one in existence. He makes it clear to us that the Roman was not always the dignified statesman or the grim warrior, but that he was in addition, a man who enjoyed the humorous and the witty. Plautus himself, the man of humble birth, who arose from the people, was in ^{his} portrayal of character, his diction, and his wit and humor a poet of the people.

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1. Teuffel, History of Roman Literature, page 125.
2. Roman Poets of the Republic, page 163.

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