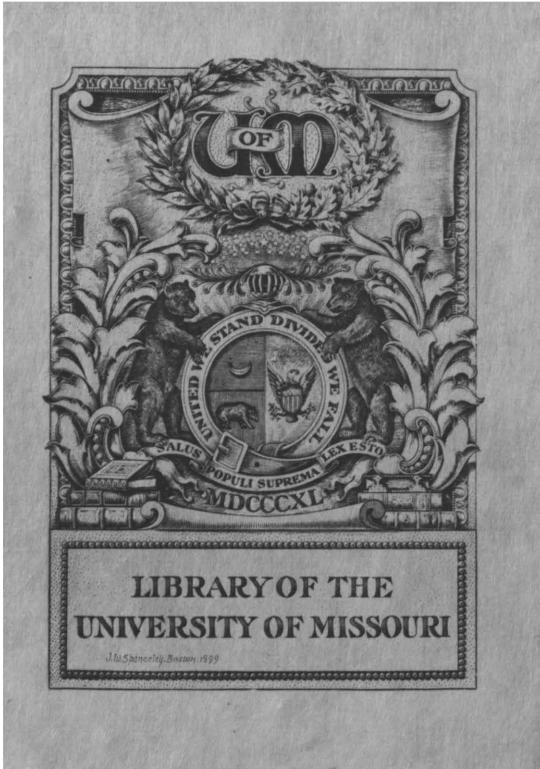


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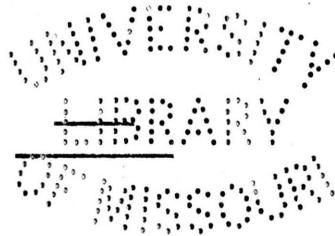
THE SENEX IN PLAUTUS

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by

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1879



SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in the

GRADUATE DIVISION
(COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCE)

of the

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI

1911.

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THE SENEX IN PLAUTUS.

The presentation of characters that would reflect human nature seems to have been the ideal of the Roman stage.

Cicero declares:

Rosc. Am. 16.

Etenim haec conflictata arbitror esse a poetis ut effictos nostros mores in alienis personis expressamque imaginem (nostram vitae cotidianae videremus.

The famous line of Terence might also be quoted here:

H. T. 77.

homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto.

While the author probably had no intention of its use in such a connection, it might well serve as a motto for this desire toward a realistic portrayal of human nature, which appears to have been a characteristic of these early dramatists. At any rate, it serves as a summary of the dramatic efforts of Plautus, the first writer of Roman comedy whose work has come down to us. But after all, this close fidelity to nature is not so strange when we consider that Plautus was confessedly a close imitator of that Greek Menander of whom Aristophanes of Byzantium said:

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Syriani in Hermogenem Commentaria, 134-4:

ὁ μέγαν σπε καὶ Βίε, πότερος ἀρ³
ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμνήσατο:

This Menander was the ruling spirit of the New Attic Comedy on which Roman comedy was based. Upon the relation which existed between Roman comedy and its Attic prototype, much light is given by the prologues of the Latin plays of Plautus and Terence. These give the name and often the author of the Greek play, adding the new name under which the Roman writer has made his adaptation- *Vortit barbare*. This feature occurs with such unflinching regularity that we are impressed with the fact that the audience expected this borrowing of material from Greek sources. If, as occasionally happened, the novelty of a piece was disputed, the question was merely whether it had been previously translated. This is the thought in the mind of Terence, as he says in *Eun. Prologue*, 31-34:

eas se hic non negat
 personas transtulisse in Eunuchum suam
 ex Graeca: sed ea exfabula factas prius
 Latinas scisse sese, id vero pernegat.

All this goes to show that Roman comedy stood to the New Attic Comedy in the same general relation that Roman literature stood to that of Greece. (Here we find the well-known tendency of the Roman mind to reproduce the Greek originals in Roman dress; here the later development appears, as it were, in embryo.)

The authors of comedy in Rome merely try to give their

countrymen, in their own tongue, the drama as it was acted in Athens. To this end, we find not only Greek plots, but Greek people, Greek names, Greek backgrounds, Greek customs and even Greek money borrowed from these Greek originals. (The resultant differences are those due to the factors of racial and individual temperament and culture.)

Thus while we might have expected that a dramatist possessed of such power as Plautus, would have preferred to give to his countrymen a humorous picture of themselves in their daily life rather than one of their Greek neighbors, we can see why such a course was not adopted by him. (However, this choice was due not alone to the fact that Roman genius was not so much creative as imitative, but another cause also worked to this end.) The fate of Naevius, who paid the penalty for having outraged the sense of Roman public and private dignity, deterred a poet from dealing with Roman political, social and family life. Roman comedy laid its scene abroad by the stress of necessity. As Mommsen says, ("We form a strange idea of men of so great and so versatile talents, as Naevius and Plautus, if we refer such things entirely to their free choice; this strange, clumsy 'exterritorial' character of Roman comedy was undoubtedly due, in large measure, to causes very different from aesthetic considerations.") (Mommsen's History of Rome, Vol. III, P. 146). Thus originality of conception and treatment of Roman subject-matter were excluded not so much by the lack of inventive genius as by the poets' subjection to civic control.) Plautus wisely accepts the situation, and while we see his vigorous creative power in rhythm, meter, diction and rapidity of action, we must also realize that for the plan of

his plots, his background and his characters, he is dependent on his Greek models.

The characters which he borrowed, he moulded anew to fill not only the demands of his own nature and his social instincts, due to low origin and training, but to satisfy the demands of his audience. Here it must be remembered that Plautus was of a people accustomed to the coarse buffoonery of the Mimes and the Saturae indigenous to the soil of Italy, and in adapting these Greek comedies, he must, of necessity, conform to the innate Roman disposition. Hence the conventional Greek characters became Romanized to that extent to which they lost the whitened refinement of the cultured Hellenistic world and took on the boisterous license of the cruder Roman life. (Just as under the hands of the Roman copyists, Greek sculpture lost its ideal and subtle quality, so here under the hands of the mill-drudge Plautus, these Greek characters of comedy became farcical in humor and coarser and more bestial in nature.

In the adaptation of Greek originals, Plautus had the choice of recurring to the older type of comedy as seen in Aristophanes, or to that found in the New Attic Comedy. But an adapted Aristophanes, with his polemic satire against individuals as well as the political life of Athens, would have afforded little entertainment and would have found even opposition from a Roman audience; while the drama of love and intrigue in the New Comedy presented a picture of human nature which must appeal to its hearers because of its universality of interest. In some points, we might also believe that Plautus was influenced by Euripides, in his philosophic attitude toward certain phases of

life and in his treatment of women; but it is not improbable that here he reflects Euripides as felt in the New Attic Comedy and not Euripides as seen in his own tragedies. (Such were the considerations, the elements, the foundations that shaped the growth of Plautine comedy and produced the stock-characters of Plautine life.)

The Senex

Among the principal characters that crowd the busy stage of Plautus, none are more vital to the action than the old gentlemen. But while the women of Plautus have received lengthy treatment at the hands of Le Benoist in "de personis muliebribus apud Plautum," yet the senex type, save for brief attention given it in Ribbeck's "Geschichte der Römischen Dichtung" and Schanz, "Römische Litteraturgeschichte," has received little detailed discussion. The senex is the most common of the stock characters which we learn to expect in the old Roman comedies; and although Plautus lived over twenty-one hundred years ago, his old men are wonderfully interesting to us. The more we look at them, the more we are impressed with their modernity. (His old men have much in common with all men the world over; and while they are influenced to some degree by Roman and Greek conventionalities and standards of morals, yet we feel a sympathetic familiarity with them because they are real people.)

This senex type occurs again and again with some little variation in detail. At first sight, there might seem a great

deal of sameness in them; but if we look more closely, we observe that the author has produced a wide differentiation in the type. They are, with few exceptions, men of leisure, with no particular business, save client's cases at the Forum and trips to the farm. In general, we may designate them as old men who are fathers and those who are not. The fathers of sons are either indulgent or niggardly. The indulgent sires are mild and easy with their wayward sons and empty their purses with no compunction. They are genial, wise in counsel, and rather attractive. They have frequently gained their wealth in foreign trade and after a dangerous voyage, come home to settle down to a quiet and dignified old age. On account of their liberality and affability, they are their sons' confidants instead of enemies.

On the other hand, we have the stern fathers, who with less grace, perform the function of their existence in the drama- which is to furnish money for the wanton desires of the youthful lover. In the comedy of love and intrigue, it is this class of old men who are most often the objects of the plots of the clever slave. They are regarded as his legitimate prey; in fact, they seem to exist only in the passive voice- i. e.- to be acted upon. The inclination of age makes them hold fast what they have gained; and experience persuades them to be especially parsimonious with their dissolute sons. Nevertheless, even against their wills, their pockets must be emptied to liquidate the extravagances or satisfy the licentious desires of the young heirs. However, the heartless reader might say that it served these fathers right, for most of them were dissipated in their youth and by their own misdeeds, they were an example to the growing generation; but now

having put away childish things, they expect everyone else to do likewise; and have no sympathy with their sons when they follow the devices and desires of their own hearts; and the sons are not allowed to do what the fathers once allowed themselves. (For the old Roman gentlemen in Plautus are like people of today, in that foibles to be tolerated in themselves are heinous sins in others.)

These old gentlemen have often married for money. As a result, their attitude toward their wives is one of scorn and aversion. They enjoy deceiving with intrigues, till they are found out. Reluctantly have they entered into marriage, which they consider a necessary evil. The foundations and relations of a family are regarded by them as a galling chain; the honored wife as a domestic affliction. Perhaps the view taken of marriage in *Trinummus* was a common one; quite consistently the wild young spendthrift, at the end in return for his escapades, is sentenced to be married, a punishment which even his stern father considers quite enough for the crime. He says: vs. 1184-85- (According to Lindsay's text- which will be used throughout this thesis.)

quamquam tibi suscensui,

miseria (una) uni quidem hominist adfatim.

The son has obediently accepted the sentence, saying in vs. 1183-4:

ego ducam, pater,

et eam et si quam aliam iubebis.

So the father forgives him. He is different from the *adulescens* in *Heauton* of Terence, who, when his parents propose to marry him to a young woman ill-favored in looks, refuses to obey and selects his own wife, since he must marry. (H. T. vs. 1060-1065).

As the husband often has married the wife for the sake of her dowry, the marriage is loveless and purely external. The attraction born of a dowry soon dies. The husband gives the wife sufficient for her station in life; but she has no right to ask his affections. The less her charms, the more sharply does her husband feel her short-comings and the harsher her voice grows to him. Then she, relying on her financial power, puts no restraint on her whims, and provides good reason for his charges against her of garrulousness and jealousy. This tendency to garrulousness gives rise to such complaints as that heard in the words of Lysidamus to his wife in *Casina*, 249-250:

comprime te; nimium tinnis,
relinque aliquantum orationis, cras quod mecum
litiges.

and in the words of the father-in-law in *Menaechmi*, 765-67:

credo cum viro litigium natum esse aliquod
ita istaec solent, quae viros superservire
sibi postulant, dote fretae, feroces.

For her jealousy, the husband not seldom gives ample cause when he gratifies his amorous desires elsewhere, and even crowned with white hairs, becomes subject to the darts of love, with no feeling of remorse save when the wife learns his secret.

When men are together, even the best of them speak in disparaging terms of their wives. The good Megaronides and Callicles in *Trinummus*, worthy old gentlemen though they are, with every other claim to our admiration, are woefully lacking in the proper respect for their women folk. Megaronides suggests

an exchange of wives, saying that he could not possibly get the worst of the bargain- vs. 59-60:

vin commutemus, tuam ego ducam et tu meam ?

faxo hau tantillum dederis verborum mihi.

Following the general custom, he regrets to say that his wife is in good health- v. 51:

plus (valet) quam ego volo.

As a matter of fact, the earlier a wife dies, the better it is; an attitude seen in the words and actions not only of Megaronides but of other old Plautine husbands.

Trin. 42:

ut quam primum possim videam emortuam.

Cas. 227:

Sed uxor me exeruciat, quia vivit.

Cist. 175:

Ea diem suum obiit, facta morigera est viro.

Trin. 55-6:

Vivit victuraque est.

If a man wishes ill to another, he expresses the desire that his wife may outlive him, as in

Asin. 21-22:

Ut tibi superstes uxor aetatem siet

Atque illa viva vivos ut pestem oppetas.

and

Trin. 57:

Deosque oro ut vitae tuae superstes suppetat.

Even the slaves, by the pattern of their masters and knowing it is music to their masters' ears, jest about it, as the

slave in Menaechmi 1160 says:

Venebit- uxor quoque etiam, si quis emptor venerit.

while Olympis, the slave, in Casina vs. 319-20, echoes the disrespectful manner of his master, saying,

quasi venator tu quidem es dies atque noctes cum cane
aetatem exiges.

The widower looks back on his married life as a Herculean labor- Epid. 175:

Hercules ego fui, dum illa mecum fuit.

This same lack of respect toward women is shown too in the attitude adopted by Megaronides when he warns Callicles to conceal a certain important matter from his wife, since there is never any subject which women can keep still about. (nam pol tacere numquam quicquamst quod queat. Trin. 801). It is possible that such merry jests on womankind and wedded misery were only added to bring down the house, and were as much stock material, and as little meant as our mother-in-law jokes. Such jibes at the frailties of women naturally obtained favor with an audience, composed, for the most part of men, and moreover it was perfectly safe, since women were generally absent.

But, the conviction remains that to the majority of these old fellows, love even when it did once exist, was a bestial attack of youth, which when it came upon them, like too much wine, made them reel for a time; and then departing, left them in their older years, sobered and thoroughly indifferent to its influence and the object which had provoked it. The glamor of passion soon passed, and left an unattractive reality. That on such ground no high family life grew, that the sons had a very small

measure of filial love and respect is not at all surprising. Plautus has given those fathers exactly the kind of sons that one would logically expect, but the fathers are not logicians enough to realize this.

While these foregoing elements are the characteristics of the genus *senex* in Plautine comedy, by mixing different combinations of these elements, we get the individual *senex*, in widely different types. Therefore, a more detailed view of these old men may be obtained from a consideration of the individual characters. Among the reputable fathers, no one stands higher than Philto, the father of the young suitor in *Trinummus*. We have no better proof of this than the fact that his own son calls him a good father (*lepidus vivis*, v. 390). Moreover, he is the only father, with the exception of Hegio in *Captivi*, who has a son to be proud of. He stands in distinct contrast to the hard fathers and the disreputably genial old fellows of Plautus; and in his company, we feel an unusual sensation of virtue. His pious humility and sense of the final equality of man are illustrated by such passages as the following. v. 490-4:

di divites sunt, deos decent opulentiae et
factiones, verum nos homunculi, salillum animai
qui quom extemplo emisimus, aequo mendicus atque
ille opulentissimus censentur censu ad Accheruntem
mortuos.

(These are not the words of a mere moralizer, but of a good man who has kept his life in line with piety. His old-fashioned severity is refreshing when he deploras the dissolute grossness of the day which is defiling the ways of the good old times, when vicious manners were odious and not conventionalized by practice.)

He says:

vs. 283-85:

Novi ego hoc saeculum moribus quibus siet;
Malus bonum malum esse volt, ut sit sui similis;
turbant miscent mores mali:

vs. 298:

Nil ego istos moror faeceos mores, turbides,
quibus boni dedecorant se.

(Yet withal his austere goodness, he is a big-souled
sympathetic man.)

Then, too, he is wise in the management of his son; for though he thinks his son's marriage with a dowerless maiden is not for the best, yet he counsels himself that the man who plans nothing for his son save what pleases himself, only plays the fool and is arousing an unseasonable storm for himself, as we may see in his own words-

vs. 392-99:

non optuma haec sunt neque ut ego aequom censeo;
verum meliora sunt quam quae deterruma,
sed hoc unum consolatur me atque animum meum,
quia qui nihil aliud nisi quod sibi soli placet
consulit advorsum filium, nugas agit:
suae senectuti is acriorem hiemem parat,
quom illam inportunam tempestatem conciet.

Therefore, while Professor Sellar said that Plautus, with difficulty, drew a gentleman (Roman Poets of the Republic, page 162), we feel that Philto, at least, would merit the designation.

Another father drawn true to nature and agreeable to meet is Charmides, the parent of the wayward young son in Trinummus. If his friend, Philto, is fortunate in his good son, Charmides is equally unfortunate in his bad one, and that through no fault of his; for he too is a good father. Again and again, does he give as a reason for his perilous work as a merchant, the instinct common to all fathers in all times, a desire to gather riches for his child- as in

v. 838:

Satis partum habeo;

Quibus aerumnis deluctavi, filio dum divitias
quaero.

v. 1090:

Nunc hic desperii miser

propter eosdem quorum caussa fui hoc aetate
exercitus.

When the revelation comes of the reprobate's insufferable deeds, we hear in his words, "adimit animam mi aegritudo" (1091), the heart-broken cry of a father disappointed in the child in whom his hopes are placed. Yet he knows how to make the best of a bad state of affairs, and pardons his son, although he is such as he would that he were not.

Plautus again shows us the spirit of sacrifice inherent in a father's nature when he presents Hegio, the senex in Captivi. A cruel fate has deprived him of both his sons, the one lost as a boy through kidnapping, the other captured by the fortunes of war. While he is rich (virtute deum et maiorum nostrum, v. 324)

yet he detests money for its evil effects on the minds of men as we see in

v. 328:

odi ego aurum: multa multis- saepe suasit perperam.

and seems to use his great possessions mainly to regain his children. With this end in mind, he buys great numbers of captives to find one who may be exchanged for his own son. In spite of his sorrow over the loss of both his sons, he is not soured by affliction and self-centered by grief, but he has pity even tears for his prisoners, as he says:

v. 419.

ut lacrimas excutiunt mihi.

But having been deceived by them, he knows no pity more, and says:

v. 765-6:

neminis miserere certum est, quia mei miseret
neminem.

This cruelty toward the prisoner who had deceived him is a natural result of the pain over the lost hope which he had cherished of recovering at least one of his sons. Since he is human, we must expect, at times, such manifestations of human nature. In fact, there are times when he displays a trait of human nature- the dread of ridicule- that we shall learn to associate with that class of fathers who exist only to be duped by wayward sons and intriguing slaves. Like them, his sense of pride is deeply hurt by the fact that he has fallen a victim to deception.

This feeling is shown in

vs. 783-4:

ad illum modum sublitum os esse mi hodie !

quod quom scibitur, per urbem inridebar.

But, apart from this dread of ridicule because he has suffered from deception, there is little in Hegio of the stereotyped father of comedy. It is a pathetic picture of a lonely old man which we see, craving for the affections of his lost children, and mourning the unkind whim of some fate that made him a father only to make him childless. (quod hoc est scelus? quasi in orbitatem liberos produxerim. vs. 763-4). No modern literature contains a finer illustration of the depth and yearning of parental love.

Then there is that second class of fathers who seemingly exist only to be cheated and imposed upon by clever slaves and wild sons. Here belongs Periphanes in Epidicus, who however has wit enough to realize that his son is a mirror of himself, and so is not tortured in mind about the wild-oats of the child who is now repeating the indulgences of his father's youth. His words are as follows: (vs. 382-93)

non oris caussa modo homines aequom fuit
sibi habere speculum ubi os contemplarent suom,
sed qui perspicere possent cor sapientiae
igitur perspicere ut possint cordis copiam;
Ubi id inspexissent, cogitarent postea
vitam ut vixissent olim in adolescentia.
fuit conducibile hoc quidem mea sententia
vel quasi ego, qui dudum fili caussa coeperam
ego me excruciare animi, quasi quid filius
meus deliquissent med erga aut non pluruma



malefacta mea essent solida in adulescentia.

profecto deliramus interdum senes.

Strangely enough, this pillar of the Senate, who is deeply versed in the counsels of state, believes the intriguing slave on his word alone, and demands no further proof of his veracity; thus making himself such an easy mark for imposition that the reader really pities him for his stupidity. And when the trick is discovered, he is not so angry at the loss of the money as he is humiliated at the idea of being duped. (Satine illic homo ludibrio nos vetulos decrepitos duos habet. v. 666). (Quot illic homo hodie me exemplis ludificatust atque te, ut illic autem exenteravit mihi opes argentarias. vs. 671-2) (seic data esse verba praesenti palam ! ac me minoris facio prae illo qui omnium legum atque iurum fictor, conditor cluet. vs. 520-24).

This same Periphanes was another of the men who had married for money, and thus with a feeling born of experience, does he speak of money as a handsome dowry if it isn't encumbered with a wife. (Ap.- pulchra edepol dos pecuniast. Pe.- quae quidem pol non maritast. vs. 180). He also is the gentleman who says of his dead wife,

vs. 175-6:

Hercules ego fui, dum illa mecum fuit;
neque sexta aerumna acerbior Herculi quam
illa mihi obiectat.

Simo in Pseudolus is another old man who must be outwitted and cheated to pay the debts of his love-sick son; but he swallows defeat gracefully, and dines with the clever slave who has duped him. Perhaps his attitude of easy tolerance in thus being

cheated arises from the reminder of his own youth given him by his amiable friend Callipho.- vs. 436-442:

At enim nequiquam nevis;
vel tu ne faceres tale in adulescentia,
probum patrem esse oportet qui gnatum suum
esse probiorem quam ipse fuerit postulet.
nam tu quod damni et quod fecisti flagiti
populo viritim potuit dispertiri.
idne tu mirare, si patrissat filius ?

A good example of the comicus stultus senex is in Theopropides in *Mostellaria*. Having been absent for three years on business in Egypt, he returns to find his son dissipated and entirely changed, due to the influence of his slave Tranio. His ready belief in the story of the haunted house and the newly purchased home is almost incredible in a shrewd man of affairs; yet it is characteristic of his type. His joy over the prudence of his son who takes after his sire (Philolaches patrissat: iam homo in mercatura vortitur. v.639) is in marked contrast to his later shame over his misdeeds. (We feel the lack of true moral depth in his nature; it is apparent that he is not so much opposed to the extravagance and wild ways of his son on account of their evil nature as on account of their financial effects on himself; for he no longer objects to wanton deeds when he does not have to pay for them. As soon as Callidamates declares that he will stand good for such outlays, Theopropides is entirely complaisant, as we see from the following: vs. 1160-65:

Ca.-

faenus, sortem, sumptumque omnem qui amica est

omnia.

nos dabimus, nos conferemus, nostro sumptu, non

tuo.

Th.-

non potuit venire orator magis ad me impetrabilis,

quam tu; neque sum illic iratus neque quicquam

suscenses.

inmo me praesente amato, bibite, facito quod lubet:

si hoc pudet, fecisse sumptum, supplici habeo satis.

However we are already prepared for this spirit by the greed and selfishness manifested by him when he believes he is about to get the best of the neighbor Simo in the purchase of the house. vs. 799-802:

sibi quisque ruri metit, si male emptae

forent, nobis istas redhibere hau liceret.

lucri quidquid est, id domum trahere oportet.

He too is afraid of what people will say of him, and is distressed at being duped; we hear the familiar words. vs. 1146-7:

minoris facio praequam quibus modis me ludificatust.

We have Simo introduced as the friend of Theopropides.

We find him a man of rather frivolous nature who enjoys the results of the efforts made by his wife to gratify his appetite, but who dislikes to grant any favor in return. We see such a disposition manifested in his words- vs. 692-98:

prandium uxor mihi perbonum dedit,

nunc dormitum iubet me ire: minime.
non mihi forte visum ilico fuit,
melius quom prandium quam solet dedit
voluit in cubiculum abducere me anus.
tota turget mihi uxor, scio, domi.

He also has married for money as we see by his further remarks.-
vs. 703-707.

quom magis cogito eum meo animo
si qui dotatam uxorem atque anum habet
neminem sollicitat sopor: in omnibus
ire dormitum odio est, velut nunc mihi
exsequi certa res ut abeam.

Besides the group of really excellent fathers victimized by roguish scamps, we have some stern fathers; but we feel little sympathy for them; for in almost every case, they fall into the same immorality which they censure in their sons. We shall see this proved later, when we deal with them under the head of dissolute old men. The common trait of all these victims, cheated out of money, is supposed to be stupidity and credulity, associated with self-complacency and an assurance of their own shrewdness.

Then there are other nice old men who are not fathers of sons, but who display the Plautine versatility of character. In the ranks of such old gentlemen belongs the worthy old Daemones in Rudens, whose very generosity keeps him poor. When his slave reproachfully tells him he is poor owing to his piety and

liberality, (how beautiful is his reply on the blessings that come from a good conscience and the evils that arise from greed- vs. 1235-1241:

O, Gripe, Gripe, in aetate hominum plurumae
fiunt trasennae, ubi decipiuntur dolis .
Atque edepol in eas plerumque esco imponitur
quam si quis avidus poscit escam avariter,
decipitur in trasenna avaritia sua.
ill' qui consulte, docte, atque astute cavet,
diutine uti bene licet partum bene.

But greedy avarice is a trap that Daemones, in his big-heartedness, will never have to fear for himself. In fact, liberal hospitality is so ingrained in his nature that he almost forfeits a claim to our esteem by inviting the infamous slave-dealer, Labrax, to take a place at his table, but perhaps this is due to the expansive exhilarating happiness in the recovery of his lost daughter which makes him overlook the vice of the monster, even the injury that he has done him, and inclines him, for the moment, to be good-natured to all the world.

Antipho in Stichus is a wealthy and jovial old widower of Athens who severely tests the filial devotion of his two daughters by asking them to marry again, since their husbands have been absent three years. However, although he considers that his wishes are for their best interests, yet he resolves that he will yield to their inclinations in order that he may keep their affections; and he reasons thus- vs. 81-3:

quid mihi opust decurso aetatis spatio cum eis
gerere bellum, quom nilquam ob rem id faciam meruisse
arbitror ?

minime, nolo turbas.

Although formerly angry with his sons-in-law, on account of their extravagant ways, he is now reconciled to them since they have succeeded in their business ventures. (He believes that in this world nothing succeeds like success for he says-)

Stichus 518-22:

quando ita rem gessistis uti vos velle amicosque addecet,
pax commersque est vobis mecum. Nam hoc tu facito ut
cogites:

ut quoique homini res paratast, perinde amicis utitur:
si res firma, firmi amici sunt: sin res laxe labat,
itidem amici conlabascunt: res amicos invenit.

Even this respectable and pleasing old father is moved to the tender passion for a beautiful flute-player; and as his son-in-law says,- v. 571:

etiam nunc scelestus sese ducit pro adolescentulo.

It is the same inclination to wantonness which we find in less likeable old men.

Hanno, the old Carthaginian in Poenulus with his pious words and prayers is somewhat different from the Athenian senex. In his entreaty to Juppiter as the arbiter of human life, he rises to a high plane of morality- Poen. 1187-1190:

Juppiter, qui genu' colis alisque hominum,
per quem vivimus vitalem aevom,

quem penes spes vitae sunt hominum
omnium, da diem hunc sospitem, quaeso,
rebus mis agundis, ut quibus annos multos
carui quasque e patria
perdidi parvas redde is libertatem, invictae
praemium ut esse sciam pietati.

In accord with his reverential disposition that he displays a shocked manner at the impious flippancy of young Agorastocles and says, 1191- "tace, quaeso." But he is rather disappointing and untrue to real human nature, when after having travelled the known world over to track his long-lost daughters, he proceeds in violation of paternal instincts, to tease them before he reveals himself to them. Like many other tactless mortals, he means well; but he lacks a sense of the eternal fitness of things.

Plautus also gives us some very interesting old bachelors. Megadorus in *Aulularia* is a model man, but he is too conscious of it; consequently he has a didactic tendency which is a bit wearisome. However, in comparison with some of the Plautine characters, we feel, after all, a sense of relief in finding ourselves in such respectable company. Having decided to marry, we can see him patting himself on the back at his virtuous and exceptional generosity in taking a wife without a dowry, even though he has a selfish reason for preferring such a one. In his opinion, it would be a good example, and a practice which, if extended, would be better both for the men and the state; inasmuch as the wives, since they would have no money, would fear

punishment more and be less courageous; and the men would be at less expense to supply their endless wants; he expresses his opinions thus; vs. 478-484:

nam meo quidem animo si idem faciant ceteri
opulentiores, pauperiorum filias
ut indotatas ducunt uxores domum,
et multo fiat civitas concordior,
et invidia nos minore utamur quam utimur,
et illae malam rem metuant quam metuont magis,
et nos minore sumptu simus quam sumus.

In some strange way, although a bachelor, he understands the ways of women, as Euclio says, (v. 503- Ut matronarum hic facta pernovit probe), and hence knows the advantage of a penniless bride, which condition he believes would do away with the intolerable expense of life; he sums it all up in these words- vs. 532-5:

haec sunt atque aliae multae in magnis dotibus
incommoditates sumptusque intolerabiles.
nam quae indotata est, ea in potestate est viri;
dotatae mactant et malo et damno viros.

Much different in character is the other Plautine old bachelor, Periplecomenus in Miles Gloriosus. Plautus has drawn him with great fondness; and with his jovial affability, one has to like him, even though he is not a paragon in all respects. He has no high ideals, consequently he has no troublesome anxiety about fulfilling them; a sociable being is

he who knows how to live and let live. At the thresh-hold of old age, he has a great and unconcealed satisfaction in sharing the love affairs of the youthful sweet-hearts; nor is this ready sympathy due entirely to the proverbial fact that all the world loves a lover, but it comes largely from his own kindred tastes, for as he says; v. 638:

nam nisi qui ipse amavit aegre amantis
ingenium inspicit.

He does not flee from ladies' company and with such great delight does he speak of his pleasure in love that the slave says- v. 650. plane educatum in nutricatu Venerio.

Like old men of today, he has a pride about appearing young and doing the things of young men (tute me ut fateare faciam esse adulescentem moribus, 661); he resents the slightest insinuation of age or of being near his grave, vigorously refuting such a charge as we see in vs. 627-8:

Quid ais tu ? itane tibi ego videor oppido
Accherunticus ?
tam capularis ? tamne tibi diu videor vitam
vivere ?

vs. 639-40:

et ego amoris aliquantum habeo umorisque etiam
in corpore.

Nequedum exarui ex amoenis rebus et voluptariis.

He flatters himself that he is a universal favorite; although he shrewdly hints the suspicion that since he is a rich

old bachelor, the love of his relatives and friends is not quite disinterested. (illi inter se certant donis, egomet mecum mussito: bona mea inhiant, me certatim metricant et munerant. M. G. 714-15). Although he shuns the responsibility of fatherhood of children, he says these relatives stand to him as children, (eos pro liberis habebo qui mihi mittunt munera- M. G. 710), and by this convenient arrangement, he is freed from the pressure of an everlasting female beggar in his house, always after money. (nolo mi oblatricem in aedis intro mittere. v. 681). It is interesting to note that even in those early days, woman's extravagance had begun to frighten men from matrimony. Whether his low ideal of woman is the cause or the result of his single blessedness, we cannot say; but certain it is that he speaks of the sex in a most uncomplimentary manner. After discussing the endless expenditures which wives cause their husbands, he concludes by assigning this as his reason for not marrying, vs. 699-700:

haec atque huius similia alia damna multa
mulierum
me uxore prohibent, mihi quae huius similis
sermone serant.

But while he himself shuns marriage and its consequent financial loss, he is quick and eager to aid any friend who would secure for himself the life-long possession of one of these extravagant beings. So we have to forgive him his very tiresome diatribe on the blessings of celibacy.

His creed is easy to see, a man is as young as he feels;

he devotes himself to pleasure, love and mirth (Venerem, amorem, amaenitatemque accubans exerceo. v. 656) and as he says of himself in fond self-admiration, he displays in one person, the most jovial boon-companion, the first-rate trencher-man, the best of caterers, and does not think that any ballet-dancer lives as supple as he.

(vel hilarissemum convivam hinc indidem expromam tibi vel parasitum atque opsonatorem optimum; tum ad saltandum non cinaedus malacus aequat atque ego. vs. 665-8)

Thus in every way, this nice old man or "lepidus senex" as the slave calls him (v. 155), shows himself the easily recognized prototype of the modern sporty old bachelor, But Plautus draws him so gently, skillfully eliminating any distasteful excess, that we are not vexed with him because he has a good time.

But besides these good old men who satisfy the demands of virtue, are others whose standards of morals enrage both their wives and the modern reader. Probably here, Plautus reflects a custom common not only in Greece but in Rome, the affront to the dignity of a wife by the sensuality of a husband. That would explain their frequency in his plays and the lightness with which their offense is treated. The way in which old fathers fall before the allurements of courtesans or even become rivals of their own sons as lovers, displays a surprising degree of human corruptness. Plautus, however, does not sympathize with such actions, for he almost becomes a stern moralist at the end of Bacchides as he says. Bacch. 1207-10:

Hi senes nisi fuissent nihilo iam inde ab
 adolescentia,
 non hodie hoc tantum flagitium facerent
 canis capitibus;
 neque adeo haec faceremus, ni antehac
 vidissemus fieri
 ut apud leones rivaies filiis fierent patres.

(In such cases conjugal love either never was born or died
 an early death. Naturally, then, the interest inherent in illicit
 love is easily felt even by these heads of families. Yet we
 can hardly call it love, but rather a mad infatuation. In fact,
 the derivation of this word infatuation exactly fits their case.
 They are fatui, foolish, silly; they are being made fools of by
 the objects of their emotion. And yet, they have but a faint
 suspicion of the odious form which their manners assume in the
 eyes of others; since the luxurious torpor of self-gratification
 has clouded the energy and clearness of their perceptions. The
 ideal of character which is inherent in most of these old men is
 not unlike that description given of himself by Stalagmus, the
 slave, in Captivi 956-7:

Fui ego bellus, lepidus; bonu' vir numquam,
 neque frugi bonae,
 neque ero imquam: ne spem ponas me bonae
 frugi fore.

At times, Plautus seems to take delight in exposing the
 shortcomings of sinful humanity by making a strong type-character
 for the sin; and then- having shown him up in all his hideousness,

to say as in *Asinaria*. 943:

Hic senex si quid clam uxorem suo animo
fecit volup,
Neque novom neque mirum fecit nec secus
quam alii solent.

It is this lack of the proper realizing sense of their conjugal duty that makes these husbands such intolerable beasts.

One of the most disgusting of these amorous old men is Demaenetus in *Asinaria*. He is a most disappointing father. On first acquaintance, he is rather attractive; and one is prone to compare him to Philto in *Trinummus* in his desire to keep his son's love by moderation in control. He says, "Ego me id facere studeo, volo amari a meis," *Asin.* 67; "id ego percupio obsequi gnato meo." *Asin.* 76. He wishes his son to remember him as lovingly as he recalls his own father and therefore he says, "Volo me patris mei similem." *Asin.* 68. These sentiments are quite pleasing; but we soon lose our pleasure in his company when we discover his real nature, and find that the desire for unchaste pleasures has not left him even in his dotage. We must feel great contempt for one who cloaks his scandalous designs by affecting a sense of sentimental duty toward his son. That he married for money, we learn from v. 87: "argentum accepi, dote imperium vendidi;" but he probably had never loved his wife, nor had respected the marriage relation; the parasite's words substantiate the last statement: "Censene tu illum hodie primum ire adsuetum esse in ganeum?" *Asin.* 886. However, he had concealed his misdeeds from his wife till now, so that she had believed him a

model husband, as she says, vs. 856-7:

Scelesta ego praeter alios meum virum frugi
rata,
siccum, frugi, continentem, amantem uxoris
maxime.

It is this sudden discovery that provokes his angry and scornful spouse to drive him home with reiterated commands:

Surge, amator, i domum. v. 921, 23, 27, 25.

True, he lives in fear of his dowried wife, dependant on her bounty; and Ribbeck's remarks, "er steht unter dem Pantoffel seiner gestrengen Hausfrau die er fürchtet und hasst".

(Geschichte der Romischen Dichtung, Vol. I) exactly sums up the situation; but even this disagreeable condition does not palliate his offense.

Demipho, the senex in Mercator has spent his best years in the pursuit of financial gain; he says that "amori neque desidiae in otio operam dedisse neque potestatem sibi fuisse." vs. 62-63. Now finally nature is asserting itself; what he neglected in his youth, his heart is now craving.

Alternate waves of pity and disgust at his senile weakness overcome us as we look at him. A beautiful creature has met his eyes and he falls a victim to her charms without a chance to call in judgment as a mentor. He realizes the absurdity of his actions, but asks pardon by pleading human nature, as we see in this passage; v. 317-9:

Nihil est iam quod tu mihi suscenseas:
fecere tale ante alii spectati viri.

humanum amarest, humanum autem ignoscere est.

He loves against his will (id vi optingit deum hoc non voluntas me impulit, v. 320-21) and pleads that Lysimachus will not esteem him less because of his fault (at ne deteriorem tamen hoc facto ducas, v. 322). We really have have pity for the old dotard when he says: "puer sum, septuennis", v. 292.

"hodie ire cecepi in ludum litterarium ternas scio iam
a - m - o." v. 303-5.

His sense of propriety is here overcome without hesitation. True, there has possibly been a preparation for this sudden collapse of will and sense of conjugal duty by the slow but cumulative influence of years. He dreads his scolding wife; that is evident from v. 556-7

Uxor me expectat iam dudum essuriens domi;
iam iurgio enicabit si intro rediero.

Such domestic infelicity makes it easy for him to fall a victim, when the right stimulus comes to arouse a sensation of love. At first, he loves with a deprecatory, an apologetic manner; but as the idea persists and grows in attractiveness, he persuades himself that old age is the proper season for a man to enjoy the pleasures of life. He speaks thus: vs. 547-53:

Breve iam relicuom vitae spatiumst: quin ego
voluptate, vino et amore delectavero.
nam hanc se habere bene aetatem nimioſt aequius.
Adulescens quom sis, tum quom est sanguis integer,
rei tuae quaerundae convenit operam dare;
demum igitur quom sis iam senex, tum in otium

te conloces, dum potest ames, id iam lucrumst
quod vivis.

Despite the fact that these words would seem to suggest that this is his first offense, we are not quite certain that he has not been acquainted with such amours in his later years. Certain passages would tend to point to the fact that he knew such desires and pleasures. (First, we have his own words, v. 546:

certumst, antiqua recolam et servibo mihi.

Then we have the words of his friend, vs. 1001-02, when Demipho says he will henceforth be done with such things:

nihil agis:

consuetudine animus rursus te huc inducet.

In Bacchides, we find two old men who come under this type of fathers, the friends Philoxenus and Nicobulus, both of whom fall under the allurements of the wicked sisters. In their youth, both have been dissipated like their sons; but now those same errors in their children vex them. They are very different in temperament and hence respond to temptation in different ways. Let us look at each separately.

Philoxenus really prepares us in a measure for his later immorality by his easy attitude toward the sin of his son, considered so heinous by the pedagogue. He says, vs. 408-10:

Leniter qui saeviunt sapiunt magis.

Minus mirandumst illaec aetas si quid illorum

facit

quam si non faciat. feci ego istaec itidem in

adulescentia.

Thus we are not surprised at the son practicing the same follies. He believes in toleration toward the errors of youth since the time for such pleasures is short, and the satiety of sin will be its own cure. (paullisper, est lubido homini suo animo obsequi: iam aderit tempus quom sese etiam ipse oderit. morem geras; dūm caveatur praeter aequom ne quid delinguat, sine. vs. 416-18).

In fact, he is not nearly as oppressed with grief and chagrin over his son's unchastity as is the slave who rebukes him thus, vs. 411-413:

istaec illum perdidit adsentatio,
nam abs te esset, ego illum haberem rectum
ad ingenium bonum:
Nunc propter te tuamque pravos factus est
fiduciam.

While he is thus trying to shun the methods which parents in general employ toward their sons, he grants that his son is more depraved than he himself was. He compares their youths thus, vs. 1079-1083:

scio, fui ego illa aetate et feci illa
omnia, sed more modesto;
dixi, habui scortum, potavi, dedi, donavi,
sed enim id raro.
Neque placitant mores quibus video volgo
in gnatos esse parentes:
ego dare me meo gnato institui, ut animo
obsequium sumere possit;
aequom esse puto, sed nimis nolo desidiae
ei dare ludum.

Later, we see it was not so much sympathy with a desire for wanton pleasures which he once possessed as with one which he still possesses that leads him to this leniency of view.

(It is not surprising then that he falls an easy prey to the courtesans' wiles and beauty, even before they begin deliberate siege on his heart. He confesses that he is caught in love's snare, and says, vs. 1158-9: "Tactus sum vehementer visco. cor stimulo foditur." Moreover, he reproves his friend for abusing such handsome women, "non homo tuquidem es, qui istoc pacto tam lepidam inlepede appelles", v. 1169. He acknowledges he is a very debased man but it does not seem to affect him with shame. (Nic-vidi ego nequam homines, verum te neminem deteriorem. Phil. ita sum. v. 1181). Nor is he longer angry with his son, now that he himself loves the same women, saying. vs. 1164-5: "Non sum iratus meo filio, neque te tuost aequom esse iratum: si amant, sapienter faciunt." In fact he urges his comrade to join him in the affair with the argument; vs. 1187-1189:

Quod di dant bone cave culpa tua amissas:
dimidium auri datur: accipias potesque et
scortum accumbas.

Better to him than to Nicobalus does the parting speech of Grex- already quoted- (vs. 1206-1211), apply. He sins because it suits his disposition and views of life. He seems to live in accordance with the theory of life preached by Bacchis, that in the shortness of life one must seize the fleeting pleasures. (non tibi venit in mentem, si dum vivas tibi bene facias tam id quidem esse hau perlonginquom, neque, si hoc hodie amiseris, post

in morte id eventurum esse umquam ? vs. 1193-95).

Now with him we may compare Nicobolus. He is an aggressive opponent of that wanton lust which is destroying the virtue of youth. By reason of this spirit, he is the harder to subdue and to lure into evil. He considers the amorous tendencies of his friend as disgraceful in a white-haired man (tunc, homo putide amator istac fieri aetate audes ? : : qui non ? : : quia flagitium est.

vs. 1163-4) Finally he too succumbs to the temptation, partly through desire and partly through the promises of regaining half his money. We see him really wishing to yield, but he fears to do so lest he lose his son's respect, as we see from the following, vs. 1196-97:

Nic.- lubet et metuo. Bac.- quid metuis ?

Nic.- ne obnoxius filio sim et servo.

It is the same old story of an innate desire for abandoned conduct that continually asserts itself in these comedies. He apparently abhors such deeds as they deserve; but his aggressiveness is only superficial, based on a desire for people's respect, and not on an innate idea of purity. (Probably this is his first indulgence since the sobriety of manhood has brought a sense of dignity; his hesitation would show as much.) He is distressed too much by his disgraceful conduct to be a customary offender. He says, v. 1191:

Id ut ut est, etsi est dedecori, patiar, facere
inducam animum.

and v. 1201:

tua sum opera, et propter te improbior ?

The clue to his surrender is the character of his conception of uprightness. He has not been chaste and virtuous for the sake of doing right; but the wish to appear right in people's eyes has been his ethical guide. Since his ethical guide is spurious coin, he is eventually won over by the flattering words and allurements of vice.

One of the most morally degenerate men whom we have met is Lysidamus the senex in Casina, a most disgusting old fellow in his love for Casina. Professor Sellar's criticism certainly is not misdirected here. The animalism in him is disgusting, and we have little patience with him as he speaks of the great charm, love exercises upon him, vs. 217-221:

Omnibus rebus ego amorem credo et nitoribus
nitidis antevenire nec potis
quicquam commemorarier quod plus salis plusque
leporis hodie
habet; coquos equidem nimis demiror, qui
utuntur condimentis,
eos eo condimento uno non utier, omnibus
quod praestat,
nam ubi amor condimentum inerit, quoivis
placituram escam credo.

We are equally annoyed at his pains to make himself attractive to his lady-love. He says, vs. 225-6:

Magis niteo, munditiis munditiam antideo:
myropolas omnis sollicito, ubiquomque est
lepidum unguentum, unguor,

ut illi placent.

He is as extravagant as a callow youth in his love, and when he is threatened with her loss, he says, vs. 307-8:

si sors decollasset, gladium faciam culcitam
eumque incumbam.

Even his old friend, Alcesimus is disgusted with him and calls him a "hirquus improbus edentulus", in v. 550. Moreover Lysidamus does not take honorable means to obtain the object of his desire, for when he finds his son is his rival, he sends him abroad. As might be inferred, he detests his wife and manifests this at various times.

v. 227: sed uxor excruciat me quia vivit.

vs. 234-5: Clus. enicas. Lys. - - - vera dicam velim.

v. 326: ego illam mediam dirruptam velim.

(As an individual, Lysidamus may be dismissed with scant ceremony after one has expressed the nausea inevitably experienced in contemplating the course of any erotic degenerate.) (But as the exponent of great ethical principles, he and all his ilk must be reckoned with, as individuals who defy with impunity the moral and sacred laws of society. He recognizes no such ideas of sanctity, and his ribald license is a travesty on the marriage relation. Plautus here paints a telling portrait of a sensual bestial being whose divine spark seems irrevocably lost.)

Possibly the Menaechmi twins might be included, by a technicality, in this discussion of the senex, because they have possibly reached the age of forty, the lowest age limit included by the word, - but also the upper age limit for the term- adolescens.



We can infer their age from the fact that the old father-in-law of one is weak and trembling with age, which would logically make his daughter's husband in the neighborhood of forty years. However, it seems better to exclude them from this senex class, since they possess characteristics which are more in harmony with the "adulescens" character than the "senex". Moreover, they are called "adulescens" throughout the play. The parasite speaks of his patron as adulescens, v. 100; he greets him as adulescens, v. 135; the slave addresses him as adulescens, v. 1066; and this same Menaechmus uses the same term to his brother v. 1079. We may conclude then that Plautus confines his use of this term "senex" to those who are fathers of youths, or to those who are of corresponding age.

(So much then for these unchaste old men and their unattractive characters. Nothing can be more immoral than this type of social offenders; but by the law of public opinion, these recreant husbands are not gross offenders since Plautus says of such men "all followed their examples." (Nec quisquam est tam ingenio duro nec firmo pectore quin ubi quidque occasionis sit sibi faciat bene. Asin. vs. 944-5). Thus, if his characters violate the sacred law of marriage relations, it is because just such cases of infidelity do frequently occur. Therefore it is not the immorality of Plautus, but the immorality of his age that makes this unattractive senex.)

Of a type essentially different from all the foregoing is the character of Euclio, the miser, in Aulularia. This miser type is certainly presented with wonderful fidelity to realism and

truth. His career is the finest Plautine illustration of the supreme power of the so-called momentum of character as a force of life, as a limiting power over will. Nothing can be more complete than the morbid possession which his one idea of hoarding his gold has obtained over his imagination. Yet miser though he be, he is presented to us with such human-hearted sympathy that we do not hate him or despise him, but rather pity; a rare exception to the usual treatment and the usual attitude toward the miser character both in Roman satire and modern fiction.

Let us now watch the character so outlined, gathering momentum as it goes through life. We see it in Plautus but a short time owing to the classic unity of time obligatory on the poet. But we have the statement of his household Lar which may be used as a basis for determining the present only as a result of past tendencies and choices. His exaggerated sense of the value of the smallest sum of money is not strange; for a life of poverty which preceded the discovery of the gold, has made pinching a second nature to him and saving a real necessity. The development has been a very natural one. Then too, he not only reflects the limitation of his own past but that of his ancestors as a factor in making his present character. He is the result of inherited tendencies. The Lar tells us that his father and his grandfather before him had the same pot of gold and the same dread of losing it, seen in vs. 21-22: "qui hic nunc habitat filium pariter moratum ut pater avosque huius fuit." It is not strange then that to him this instinct has grown to be a ruling passion, that he thinks and dreams of nothing else. Now,

the malady lies deep. (It lies in the vitiation of the will, in an inability or paralysis of inhibition.) So firmly fixed are the association paths of years fixed in him that the bare idea of miserly actions is followly almost automatically by the doing of them. We have a good instance of this in the way in which he argues down his desire to buy something nice for the wedding of his daughter. His own words tell the story, vs. 379-84:

deinde egomet mecum cogitare intervias
 occepi; festo die si quid prodegeris,
 profesto egere liceat, nisi pepercis,
 postquam hanc rationem ventri cordique edidi,
 accessit animus ad meam sententiam,
 quam minimo sumptu filiam ut nuptum darem.

He has no free will in the matter, for he has been morally disenfranchised, in this direction, by long years of habit in thought and action. His penurious habits are illustrated in the extravagant language of the observant slave who says, vs. 311-313:

famem utendam, si roges, numquam dabit.
 quin ipsi pridem tonsor unquis dempserat:
 conlegit, omnia obstuit praesegmina.

On account of his pot, he suffers constant anxiety. He is afraid of everyone alike; he dreads the wretched old woman who attends him and makes her leave the house till his return; he suspects Megadrus who proposes to marry his daughter, (credo ego illum iam indudisse mi esse thesaurum domi, v. 266); he suspects the cooks, (vs. 390; 437-8); he suspects Lyconides the young lover, (vs. 755-766). His fright at the sound of digging in the

garden (v. 242); his vengeance on the poor rooster who scratches the ground too near the hiding place of the precious pot, (vs. 465-470), all this shows the characteristic Euclio. Rather to be pitied than censured is he, with his soul warped by the one idea of years, whose ruling passion completely dominates his life, destroys his confidence in his friends and hampers his every action.

One of the most ridiculous situations created for him and one which illustrates this ever present anxiety for the pot, is the dilemma in which he finds himself placed when at a certain time, a dole of public money is to be presented to the poor of the city- the whole story being told, vs. 105-115. If he does not attend as usual and ask for his share, his neighbors will know that he has become a rich man and proceed to hunt out his treasure. If he does go after this money, what will happen to the beloved pot in his absence ?

The only feeling that he combines with this thought and love of his pot of gold, is a certain scanty sneaking regard for the gods. He goes to the market to purchase something for the marriage-feast but finds everything too dear, and brings home only a garland and frankincense for the Lar. He trusts his pot to the protection of the gods Fides and Silvanus; but, to be sure, his trust in these gods is born only through fear of harm to his pot- a spiritual attitude, by the way, not unbecoming modern ways; for mortal man is still prone to be only aroused to the efficacy of prayers and piety and flee to their refuge when his dearest possessions are endangered.

In this miser is the prototype of many misers in literature

but perhaps none of them is so good as Euclio. He is unforgettable in his character. Here we have the real miser who has no desire to increase his money; no conception of its potential power; but is only subject to the tyranny of its possession. He wants to see it and feel it. By the force of its power, he has lost the sane balance of living, and is helplessly carried along in the whirl-pool of a fixed idea. So in this man, Plautus shows us not merely the miser-type, but a type of all men who, either consciously or unconsciously, make their one idea a god, and yield to its merciless unyielding domination.

Such is the treatment of the *genus senex* in Plautus. As we see, his characters are not ideal pictures ungoverned by naturalism, but even as we, do they combine in themselves the noble and the base. We see good men and bad. (We see men living up to the highest standards of morality, honor and duty. We see men falling in moral defeat because the intensely human will prompts them to secure their materialistic cravings by any means possible.) (All reflect the realism of human nature, whether this be seen in Greece or Rome.) The inspiration of the poet has come from his originals found in the well-known stock-character of the old man in the New Greek Comedy; but many a cleverly-drawn detail is supplied from a broad observation of life which arose from his many-sided contact with humanity.

These characters whom we have been reviewing as they strut past, are not mere puppets on a dress parade. We have no temptation to pinch their arms to feel the saw-dust, for we can

see the pulses leap and the red blood flow. They are monuments of the power of Plautus to show human nature. If the successive steps of their action seem to be too rapid to be natural in slow-going life, we must consider that Plautus is not the last dramatist to avail himself of this prerogative. The characters still remain true to life. In his humorous reflection of the faults and foibles of universal humanity, with a free disregard for pleasing or ugly effects in the resultant picture, he was a precursor of Dickens; in his sympathetic knowledge of the intents and purposes of the human heart, he was an early Shakespeare. With this power of insight and interpretation of mankind as he saw it, he has so colored the material bequeathed to him from his Greek masters that we have a most interesting and individual gallery of Plautine men.

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