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PLAUTUS, TERENCE
AND
MOLIERE

BY

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PLAUTUS, TERENCE, AND MOLIÈRE.

I. INTRODUCTION.

In perusing the numerous writings of La Fontaine, which luckily have been preserved until today, many readers have been struck, perhaps, by the interesting epitaph that this poet wrote in praise of Molière, the great writer of comedies. For those of my readers, who have not had the good fortune to be familiar with this expression of admiration on the part of one of Molière's best friends, it may be well to quote the sonorous verses of the well-known author of the "Fables" and "Contes."

"Sous ce tombeau gisent Plaute et Térence,
Et cependant le seul Moliere y git:
Il les faisoit revivre en son esprit
Par leur bel art réjouissant la France.
Ils sont partis! et j' ai peu d'espérance
De les revoir malgré tous nos efforts.
Pour un long temps, selon toute apparence
Térence, et Plaute, et Molière sont morts." *

Translated into English prose, the panegyric has this purport:

"Beneath this tombstone lie Plautus and Terence and yet Molière alone is there: he made them live again in his mind and by their beautiful art filled France with joy. They are gone and I have little hope to see them again in spite of all our efforts. For

a long time, according to all appearances, Terence and Plautus and Molière are dead."

In a period when Latin had gained such preeminence through the traditional studies in the schools, through the constant praises of its merits, and through imitations in various fields of French literature, this was a striking compliment to be paid to Molière. It could be reasonably expected that, as there had been in the past, so in the future the imitators of these Latin playwriters would be numerous; nevertheless, La Fontaine fears that for a long time there will never again be a dramatist who can revive the wonderful merits of these skillful Latin authors. His prophecy has proven true. The name of no comedy writer except Molière has since so transcended those of all followers of Plautus and Terence that their paltry efforts sink into insignificance in comparison with his unrivaled powers.

Great dramatists of every century have been influenced directly or indirectly by their predecessors, and especially by the ancients. Nevertheless in the case of a really great writer never do we utterly condemn this tendency to plagiarize. No one regrets that Lessing imitated Plautus in "Der Schatz", that Shakespeare took the theme of his "Comedy of Errors" from the "Menaechmi" of Plautus, or that Goethe made a classic heroine live again in his dramas founded on the Greek legends concerning Iphigenia. On the contrary the charms of these works make us laud their authors and also the ancient source from which they received their inspiration.

Molière was not loath to admit that he was willing to borrow wheresoever he saw fit. We hear him remark, "Je prends mon bien où je le trouve," (I take my material wherever I find it). We find
he is influenced not only by the Latin authors which La Fontaine has mentioned but also by Spanish and Italian plays and writings. He rises above mere imitation, however, and attains his exalted position by his originality. A. Henri in his "Auteurs français" exclaims: "Like Aristophanes and Plautus, Molière possessed to the highest degree that comic force which from the beginning to the end animates the stage and causes to circulate through the work of the poet a powerful breath of life."* All that he has imitated, he has rendered more beautiful, more interesting and more perfect from a technical standpoint. All is so dominated by his poetic and dramatic genius that his comedies survive, although those writings which have served as the groundwork for his plays have become buried in the dust of unappreciating ages. True, indeed, is the remark of Richard Mahrenholtz, when he says, "No one of his predecessors or followers in dramatic poetry has been able to combine in such a genial way the ancient and modern elements and to reconcile them so harmoniously as Molière."** The reality of most of Molière's characters and the vividness with which he portrays those, such as Harpagon, which are true to life in so far as they combine the traits of a class of real individuals have made Molière of universal popularity and an author that can be esteemed by all ages, since we shall always find such characters as he portrays.

As in the case of Shakespeare, then, Molière's fame rests so much upon his own potent genius and striking originality that no discovery of partial indebtedness to his predecessors can sully his renown. We shall therefore, not be in danger of detracting from his

** Mahrenholtz, Richard - Molière, page 213.
fame if we ascribe, as his sources in part, the works of two Latin poets of the second and third centuries before Christ, since a dramatist's skill must be recognized equally as much when he moulds and fashions a great work out of scanty, uncouth material as when he evolves it from incidents of real life.
II. THE EXTENT OF MOLIÈRE'S INDEBTEDNESS.

Molière does not hesitate to say that he is willing to take his material wherever he can get it and consequently his works often show the influences of the Spanish, Italian and Roman literatures and of other French authors. He never seems to lose completely from sight the Latin poets. Even when he takes a theme from contemporary French life, they do not utterly escape his mind. This may be shown in a somewhat negative way by the story which recounts that after listening to the applause given to his "Précieuses ridicules" he exclaimed with pride: "I need no longer study Plautus and Terence and cull fragments from Menander; I have only to study the world."

There are four principal means by which we may ascertain how and to what extent Molière was indebted to Plautus and Terence. Let us, then, in turn investigate the facts: (1) regarding his schooling and how his interest in the Latin poets was aroused, (2) as to the extent the Latin poets were in vogue and imitated in France, and how Molière was influenced by the example of his predecessors and contemporaries, (3) as to how frequently we may find partial resemblances in his comedies to those of Plautus and Terence, and (4) as to the extent to which he is indebted to these early writers of comedy for the groundwork of his plays.
III. MOLIERE'S EARLY EDUCATION.

We are led to infer that Moliere gained an acquaintance with the works of the Latin poets early in life. In 1636 at the age of fourteen he was sent to the Collège de Clermont. There he could scarcely have been uninfluenced by these authors of antiquity, for, as in most Jesuit schools, the course of study was devoted mainly to the Latin classics. Latin was learned rapidly, because it was the only language which was spoken to the pupils and the only tongue which they were permitted to use even in the refectory and during recreation hours. The classbooks were also written in Latin.

In the course of study in a Jesuit school we always find that Plautus and Terence were emphasized. They furnished a model for colloquial Latin which, according to the exigencies of the school, it was necessary to know. To cultivate a deeper appreciation of the classics and to render them full of life and animation the boys often acted Latin plays written by Plautus and Terence as well as original comedies written by the professors of the school. Although some people objected that the playing of such comedies might lead to a taste for the theater, it was generally conceded that it was valuable for the pupils to interpret in this way the ancient dramas, especially if somewhat expurgated. In fact the Jesuits not only tolerated them but encouraged them, because they were a sort of rest to the pupils and because they interested the parents in the schools, thus leading to the praise of the Jesuit institutions. Besides, the performing of these plays was instrumental in improving the memory in teaching declamation, and in rendering the boys graceful. There is little doubt that the Collège de Clermont followed the practice of the
other Jesuit schools. In fact there has been found in the Bibliothèque Mazarine the program of a play performed in 1641, the year when Molière left school. These festivals were given at the end of every school year and Molière must have been present at them, even if he did not take part.

We may presume from his great love for poetry and the drama in his later years that he would show an inclination to apply himself to the study of those works which were so greatly in accord with the whole tendencies of his nature. Just as our modern civilization rests on the past, so in boyhood was laid this firm foundation on which was to rise the mighty structure of the universal spirit of this genius.
IV. LATIN INFLUENCES IN FRANCE.

After having left a school where he was nurtured so to speak on the works of the Roman poets, Molière did not escape from their influence even when he had begun his dramatic career. All France, her customs, language, literature, laws and even, to a certain extent, her religion were the products of the Roman civilization. The schools had long been imbued with it, for education had through the Middle Ages been in the hands of clergy who taught in Latin and who caused for a long time the offspring of the mother tongue to be despised. With the Renaissance Latin was exalted and lauded to such an extent that many believed that the classics could never be equaled for purity and beauty. The language of the Romans was a god before which learned men worshipped for centuries and even today in many universities almost apotheosize.

The lords and ladies of the court of Louis XIV had been fed upon the classics, so to speak, from the time when they were little children, and had been taught to look to these works for all perfections. A few of them had even attended the Collège de Clermont at the same time when the young Poquelin was following the courses of this institution. Still later what wonder is it that Molière as he became more intimately associated with the nobles at Versailles and elsewhere should still feel the influence of his Roman predecessors, even when he chose to take his subjects from contemporary life?

Those of the middle class who had the good fortune to get even a rudimentary education had also to study Latin, while the people of the lower strata of French society did not remain entirely in igno-
rance of the language and world of the Romans. In the church, in
the cemetery, in the law-court, in the inn, in the pictures and sta-
tues that they chanced to see, in administering to the wants of their
superiors, everywhere they were reminded of the existence of the civi-
lization from which their own had sprung.

The theater itself had not escaped this influence. In Rome,
too, there had flourished a theater that was not without merits. Al-
though that of the decline of the Roman Empire had caused its obscene
performances to be condemned by the Church and with this ban on the
profane plays a new kind of drama had sprung up, still the ancient
dramatic productions were not forgotten. With the return of inter-
est in the ancient literatures in the fifteenth century, it became
more and more widely known that, when learning was threatened on
every side, there had been preserved by diligent monks dramatic works
of a beauty that caused the mystery, miracle and morality plays of
the Dark Ages to seem the crude and bizarre products of simple bar-
barians, utterly destitute of an aesthetic and artistic sense. The
charms of classic tragedy were easy to recognize so that finally the
heroes and heroines of the ancient Greek and Roman world have been
rendered immortal by the classic dramas of Corneille and Racine.

In the tenth century were being written numerous plays by clerks
in imitation of Terence and Plautus. In fact we find these authors
were so popular that the pious nun, Hrotsvitha, claims she wrote her
plays in order that Christians might not be seduced by the sweetness
of Terence's language to read themes that were not above reproach.
Her preface to her plays reveals the fact that Latin comedy was com-
ing more and more in vogue.*

*Barack, K. A.- Die Wekke der Hrotsvitha, Nurnberg, 1858. page 137.
Two centuries later in France we find a somewhat original play called "Geta" imitating the "Amphitruo" of Plautus and written by Vitalis de Blois. The same author also wrote a play founded on the "Querolus" an imitation of Plautus' "Aulularia," written in about the seventh century. The "Geta" was very popular, spread all over Europe, and was imitated in various countries.*

Perhaps, however, since some writers dispute the fact that these earlier imitations affected comedy in the seventeenth century, it will be better to consider a few of the more noted later imitations of the Latin comedy-writers.

The Pleiad group in the sixteenth century especially brought about the revival of an interest in classical productions. In 1567 was played "Le Brave ou Taillibras" translated somewhat freely by Baïf from the "Miles Gloriosus" of Plautus.

In 1578 appeared "Les Esprits"**imitated after an Italian play Continued from page 9. Plures inveniuntur catholicí, cuius nos penitus expurgare nequimus facti, qui pro cultioris facundia sermonis gentilium vanitatem librorum utilitate praefemunt sacrarum scripturarum. Sunt etiam alii, qui, licet alia gentilium spernant, Terentii, tamen fingmenta frequentius lectitant, et dum dulcedine sermonis delectantur nefandarum notititia rerum masculantur.

*For a criticism of these works of Vitalis de Blois see:
Creizenach, W. - Geschichte des neuren Dramas. Volume I, Book I.

**For the plot see:
by Lorenzine de' Medici and combining two comedies of Plautus, the "Mostellaria" and "Aulularia" with the "Adelphoe" of Terence.* Molière was greatly influenced by this play of Larivey in writing "L'Avare." Another imitation in 1663 of the "Aulularia," "Le riche vilain," by Samuel Chappuzeau shows at times marked resemblances to the same play of Moliere.**

The next important imitator of Plautus was Rotrou. He calls Plautus an incomparable comedy-writer and founds three of his plays, "Les Menechmes,"*** "Les deux Sosies,"**** and "Les Captifs" on the works of this Latin poet. Undoubtedly his "Sosies" suggested many features to Molière in writing his "Amphitryon."

In the seventeenth century the "Miles Gloriosus" of Plautus was in part a model for the "Jodelet"***** of Scarron and the "Pé-dant joué"****** of Cyrano de Bergerac. Moreover, we find La Fontaine directly imitating the "Eunuchus" of Terence and calling his work a mediocre copy of an excellent original.*******

*For the plot see:


***Ronchaud, L. - Theatre choisi de J. de Rotrou. pp. XIII - XV.

****Ibid. pp. XXIX - XXXI.


To justify him and prevent any hesitation in seeking his ideas in the plays of Plautus and Terence, Molière had, therefore, examples set him by both playwrights of early times and his contemporaries. He admitted that he had copied two scenes of his "Fourberies de Scapin" from the "Pédant joué" of Cyrano de Bergerac, who had been a comrade of his at the College de Clermont. Undoubtedly parts of his Amphitryon are based on the "Deux Sosies" of Rotrou, but still there are sufficient differences to show that he was not using Rotrou's drama alone as the basis for his play. La Fontaine was a personal friend of Molière and was one of those who visited him frequently at Auteuil. The lover of classics, Boileau, was another one of the members of the circle. The little group that gathered at Molière's home could scarcely have failed to talk about the plays founded on the Latin poets, especially since the play of one of their number was an avowed imitation of the "Eunuchus." Such discussions would most probably have lead Molière to renew his interest in the originals, and, as his knowledge of Latin could not have been mediocre, because of the emphasis laid on the classics in the College de Clermont, there is every possibility that he may have studied the Latin itself. The French imitations at least do not always show the same resemblances to the Latin texts as do Molière's plays. Sometimes the influence of these Roman authors is indirect only. It must nevertheless be conceded that if it had not been for the survival of these works through their popularity at all times, we might not now find in Molière many fine passages. Often indeed have parts of the French dramatist's play been suggested by these ancient writers and have then been so embellished by this skillful French artist, and phoenix of comedy-writers that their fame will spread wherever French is un-
derstood and their beauty will be appreciated as long as that tongue endures.
IV. EXAMPLES OF THE PARTIAL INFLUENCE OF THE LATIN COMEDY WRITERS.

When we come to examine the plays of Molière we may surmise at once that he did not entirely neglect the study of Latin, since there are but few plays that do not contain at least one phrase from that tongue.

Like the ancient dramatists he occasionally makes use of a prologue as, for example, in "Les Fâcheux." We also recall to mind at once the endings of the plays of Plautus and Terence when we find in "Sganarelle" and in L'École des maris" a character directly addressing the audience.

The parasites of the ancient world are but the prototypes of the paltry nobles and insignificant poets that live on the substance of some simple bourgeois who is blinded by a passion for honor. In the boasting characters of the French drama we see again a sort of miles gloriosus or blustering soldier of antiquity.

RESEMBLANCES IN SPECIFIC PLAYS.

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme.

Perhaps readers of Plautus will recall a scene in the fifth act of the "Asinaria" which closely resembles the first scene in the fourth act of "Le Bourgeois gentilhomme." In the former, Demænetus has served a sumptuous banquet in order to enjoy the caresses of Philenium, and is suddenly surprised in his disgraceful actions by his wife, Artemona. In Molière's play Doronte entices Jourdain to
to give a splendid repast in honor of Dorimène and persuades him that the marchioness will return his expressions of love. While they are at the table, Madame Jourdain returns unexpectedly and breaks up the feast. In the play of Plautus the comic element is brought out by the submissive attitude of Demaenetus towards his wife; in the "Bourgeois gentilhomme" a smile is brought to our lips by seeing how a foolish vanity and inane desire of rising above his station in life blinds an old man to the impostures of Doronte, and causes him to succumb to the flattery of the unscrupulous youth.

L'Amour Médecin.

The scene (V) in the second act of "L'Amour médecin" in which Sganarelle consults with the doctors is not unlike one in the second act of Terence's "Phormio" in which Hegio appeals to some lawyers to help him in his difficulty. In both instances the advice is so indefinite and difficult to comprehend that no solution is obtained. The comments of the two men are almost the same.

Sganarelle says:

"Me voilà justement un peu plus incertain que je n'étais auparavant."

"There I am just a little more uncertain than I was before."

Hegio says in Act II, Scene 3:

"Incertior sum mucho quam dudum."

"I am much more perplexed than before."

Don Juan ou le Festin de Pierre.

From the first scene of Act IV of "Don Juan" we may presume that Molière was influenced by a similar scene (I, 2) of the
"Andria" of Terrence. In both plays the master is threatening to cudgel his servant if he does not fulfil his wishes, and in each instance the servant makes haste to reply that he understands his master fully. The verbal resemblances are as follows:

"DON JUAN. Si tu me dis encore le moindre mot làdessus, je vais appeler quelqu'un, demander un nerf de boeuf, te faire tenir par trois ou quatre, et te rouer de mille coups. M'entends tu bien?

"SGANARELLE. Fort bien, monsieur, le mieux du monde. Vous vous expliquez clairement; c'est ce qu'il y a de bon en vous, que vous n'allez point chercher de détours: vous dites les choses avec une netteté admirable."

"DON JUAN. If you say the least word about this, I will call some one, ask for a strap, have three or four men hold you, and give you a thousand lashes. Do you understand me?

"SGANARELLE. Very well, sir, perfectly. You explain yourself clearly. That is one good thing in you that you do not seek any round-about ways. You say things with wonderful plainness."

The passage in the Latin play is this:

"SIMO. Si sensero * * * * * * te * * * * * *
Velle in ea re ostendi, quam sis callidus:
Verberibus causum te in pistrinum, dedam usque ad necem.
Quid, hoc intellextin? an non dum etiam ne hoc quidem?

"DAVUS. Immo callide:
Ita aperte ipsam rem modo locutu's, nil circumtione usus es."

"SIMO. If I find out that you are desirous that in this matter it should be proved, how knowing you are, I'll hand you over beaten with stripes to the mill, even to your dying day. * * * * Now do
you understand this? Or not yet even this?
"DAVUS. Yes, perfectly: you have now spoken so plainly upon the subject, you have not used the least circumlocution." (Riley). "Circumitio" (a going round) is practically the same work as "détour" (a turning from) in this passage.

**Monsieur de Pourceaugnac.**

There is a striking similarity between the despicable servants of Demaconetus, Libanus, and Leonida, in the "Asinaria" of Plautus and the intriguing characters in Molière's comedy-ballet "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac". One scene (III, 2) of the "Asinaria" is like the fourth scene of the first act of "Monsieur de Pourceaugnac" in that the characters recount their wicked exploits and misdeeds and how in spite of tortures and penalties they have carried out their purposes.

In Act I, scene XI of Molière's play we are again reminded of a scene (V, 3) in one of the comedies of Plautus, the "Menaechmi." In both plays a perfectly well man is thought to be ill or even insane, and a doctor diagnoses his case. He is questioned as to his eating, his drinking, and sleeping and leads the doctor to judge his disease is mania by absolutely denying he is sick. Unfortunately parts of Plautus' play have not been preserved, but enough remains to show us that the French doctors of the seventeenth century were enough like those of the time of Plautus to suggest a theme to Molière and to enable him to usethis play as a model.

**Sganarelle.**

"Sganarelle" resembles in several respects the "Miles Gloriosus"
of Plautus. In the latter Philocomasium is loved by a youth named Pleusicles, but her mother favors Pyrgopolinices until he carries off her daughter against her will. In "Sganarelle" a girl named Célie is enamoured with a youth named Lélie but has a father who insists on marrying her to one of his choice.

There is a slight resemblance in the boastfulness of the captain, Pyrgopolinices, as to his heroic deeds and the expression on the part of Sganarelle of his intentions to avenge himself on Lélie. In both, the feigned bravery little accords with the true pusillanimous character of the men.

At the close of the play the words of Pyrgopolinices, expressing his vexation at having been so much deceived, are not unlike those of Sganarelle which bring Molière's play to an end.

"PYRGOPOLINICES. Vae misero mihi, verba mihi data esse video."

"Alas for me, I see that I have been duped."

"SGANARELLE. A-t-on mieux cru jamais être cocu que moi!"

"Did anyone ever believe with greater reason than I that he was duped?"

A slight similarity to Plautus is found in the seventh scene when Gros-René, Lélie's servant, praises a good meal as the best means of keeping up his spirits. In the "Curculio" (II, 3) the parasite of Ehaedromus also thinks that there is a close relation between the mind and tempting drinks and viands.

Gros-René says:

"Oui, mais un bon repas vous serait nécessaire
Pour s'aller éclaircir, monsieur, de cette affaire.

Croyez-moi, bourrez-vous et sans reserve aucune,
Contre les coups que peut vous porter la fortune;  
Et, pour fermer chez vous l'entrée à la douleur,  
De vingt verres de vin entourez votre coeur."

"Yes, sir, but a good meal would help you to clear up this matter. ** * * * * Believe me, cram yourself, and freely, to protect yourself against the blows which fortune may deal, and to prevent the entrance of grief surround your heart with wine."

Phaedromus says:

"Atque aliquid prius obstrudamus, pernam, sumem, glandium;  
Haec sunt ventris stabilimenta, pane et assa bubula,  
Proculum grande, aula magna, ut satis consilia suppetant."

"But let's cram down something first, the gammon, the udder, and the kernels; these are the foundations for the stomach, with bread and roast-beef, a good-sized cup and a capacious pot, that counsel enough may be forthcoming." (Riley).

Les Femmes Savantes.

"Les Femmes savantes" shows some resemblance to the plays of Plautus and Terence in representing a tyrannical wife and timorous husband comparable to Artemona and Demaenetus in the "Asinaria" and Nausistrata and Chremes in Terence's "Phormio." Like the brother of Chremes, Demipho, Ariste shows the greater strength of character.

There are also a few passages that may have originated from the ancient poets. For example, in Act I, Scene 3, Henriette's description of a lover's behavior reminds us of that of Cleaereta in Act I, Scene III of the "Asinaria."

"Un amant fait sa cour où s'attache son coeur;  
Et, pour n'avoir personne a sa flamme contraire,
Jusqu'au chien du logis il s'efforce de plaire."

"A lover pays court where his heart is attached; there he wishes to gain the favor of everyone; and in order not to have any one opposed to his passion, he tries to please even the house-dog."

Cleaereta says:

"Amator * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *
Volt placere sese amicae, volt mihi, volt pedisequae,
Volt familis, volt etiam ancillis, et quoque catulo meo
Sublanditur novos amator se ut quom videat gaudeat."

"The lover wishes to please his mistress, he wishes to please me, he wishes to please her lady's maid, he wishes to please the men-servants, he wishes to please the maid-servants as well, and even my dog does the new lover caress, that when it sees him, it may be delighted." (Riley).

Later in the play of Molière (Act II, Sc. 9) Chrysale gives expression to his lack of love for a wife who prevents his carrying out his wishes much as Staleno (according to some authorities, Lysidamus) does in the third scene of Act II of the "Casina" of Plautus.

Chrysale says:

"Et ma femme est * terrible avecque son humeur; * * * * * 
Et cependant, avec toute sa diablerie,
Il faut que je l'appelle et mon coeur et m'amie."

"And my wife is terrible with her tempers, * * * * * and yet with all her devilry, I must call her my heart and my love."

Staleno says:

"Sed uxor me excruciatus, quia vivit * * * * * * *
* * * * blandae haec mihi mala res appellanda est."
Uxor mea meaque amoenitas, quid tu agis?"

"But inasmuch as she keeps living on, my wife's a torment. This plaguy baggage must be addressed by me with civility. My own wife and delight, what are you about?" (Riley).

L'École des Femmes.

Between the maxims of the second scene of the third act of "L'École des femmes" and the stipulations of Diabolus regarding Philenium in Scene I of Act IV of the "Asinaria" there is a marked resemblance. Arnolphe and Diabolus both seek to prevent the woman whom they admire from having relations with any man. The following passages, although each is necessarily in accordance with the period of its author, are strikingly similar:

"Hors ceux dont au mari la visite se rend,
La bonne règle défend
De recevoir aucune âme:
Ceux qui de galante humeur
N'ont affaire qu'a madame
N'accompotent pas monsieur."

"Besides those who visit the husband the good rule forbids the receiving of any one. Those gallants who have business only with the wife do not please the husband."

In the Latin play we find the following passage:

"Alienum hominem intro mittat neminem.
Quod illa aut amicum aut patronum nominet,
Aut quod illa amicae amatorem praedicet,
Fores occlusae ommibus sint nisitibi."

"She must not admit any other man whatever, because either her
friend or her patron, or because she may say that he is the lover of a female friend of hers. The door must be closed to all men except to yourself." (Riley).

"Vocet convivam neminem illa."

"She is to invite no guest."

"Dans ses meubles, dut elle en avoir de l'ennui,
   Il ne faut écrivitoire, encor, papier, ni plumes:
   Le mari doit, dans les bonnes coutumes,
   Écrire tout ce qui s'écrit chez lui."

"However much she may not like it, she must not have amongst her furniture either writing-desk, ink, paper or pens. As good customs require, the husband must write all that is written in his household."

"Aut quod illa dicat peregre allatam epistulam,
   Ne epistula quidem ulla sit in aedibus
   Nec cerata adeo tabula."

"Or because she may affirm that the letter has been brought from abroad, there is not to be even any letter in the house, nor so much as a waxed tablet." (Riley).

It seems improbable that Molière should have followed the order of details in the play of Plautus without having had the "Asinaria" before him as a model, for we find him speaking of gambling next, although not in the same words as the Latin author.

"Toute femme qui veut à l'honneur se vouer
   Doit se défendre de jouer,
   Comme d'une chose funeste.
   Car le jeu, fort décevant,
   Pousse une femme souvent
A jouer de tout son reste."

"Every woman who wishes to have honor must avoid gambling as she would a plague; for gambling which is very deceptive often impels a woman to play her last stake."

"Talos ne cuiquam homi—ni admoveat nisi tibi. Cum iaciat, te ne dicat: nomen nominet."

"She is not to present dice to any man whatever except to yourself; when she throws them, she is not to say, 'You I call upon; she is to mention your name.'" (Riley).

L'École des Maris.

The similarity between the "École des maris" of Molière and the "Adelphoe" of Terence can easily be observed.

In the "Adelphoe" there are two brothers named Demea and Micio. Demea has two sons the elder of whom, Aeschinus, has been adopted by his uncle. Micio is very indulgent and believes that youths should have freedom. Demea ridicules such an idea and keeps Ctesipho, his younger son, in restraint. In the end, however, it proves that Ctesipho is the less virtuous of the two.

In the "École des maris" there are also two brothers, one lenient and the other severe. Each is the guardian of one of two sisters whom he expects to marry. Isabelle, the ward of Sganarelle who believes in giving her little liberty, falls in love with a youth named Valère, and through her cleverness makes use of her guardian, who has such trust in his manner of bringing up girls, to consummate her marriage.

In both plays the more tyrannical old man is duped. In the play of Terence one of the youths is made a shield to his brother
with the latter's knowledge; in Molière's play one sister makes use of the other's name to help her intrigue, and, altho it is unknown to the latter at first, her artifice is sanctioned.

Molière's play is superior to that of Terence in that he frankly reveals the fact that he approves of the less tyrannical form of education, whereas Terence does not show which system is preferable. The intrigue in the "École des maris" is more refined, less out of harmony with the requirements of the modern drama, more vivacious, and full of humor. Isabelle, in spite of her foibles is not without charm while the female characters in the play of Terence are rather lacking in higher moral qualities.

Sganarelle does not change as to his character suddenly, whereas Demea, with scarcely any warning, changes from an avaricious and tyrannical old man to one of a liberal and kind disposition.

Terence himself seems to have been aware of this fault, for he makes Micio comment on this transformation. On the whole, Molière's play far excels that of his predecessor in a display of a profound knowledge of the exigencies of the drama and in a manifestation of rare good judgment in the choice of incidents.

L'Étourdi.

Any one who has read the "Curculio" of Plautus will at once be reminded of several features of this comedy on studying Molière's play, "L'Étourdi." In the former the procurer, Cappadox, has in his home a girl whom he treats kindly enough, but whom he is willing to sell to anyone who brings the required amount of money in spite of the fact that she is in love with Phaedromus. In the latter play Trufaldin acts like a procurer in so far as he is
willing to dispose of the supposed gipsy girl, Célie, to anyone who will pay his price, and will let her lover, Lélie, have her only for a financial consideration.

In both plays there is a dream which reveals the future. In the case of Capadox it is a misfortune; in that of Trufaldin, the recovery of his son.

Like Mascarille, a parasite in the "Curculio" tries to help his patron in a love affair by means of a ring that has been obtained through treachery. In both comedies these rascals are successful in getting the girls in their power but are prevented from carrying out their plans by the arrival of the owners of the rings.

In the comedy of Plautus as in that of Molière a happy ending is brought about by the discovery that the rivals of the lovers are the long lost brothers of the maidens whom the heroes love.

Epidicus, in a play by Plautus of the same name, is another Mascarille. At the earnest request of his young master, Stratippocles, he undertakes to help him in his love affairs. Just as Mascarille deceives his young master's father, he induces Periphantes to give him money to buy Stratippocles's sweetheart so as to get her out of the way and uses the sum received to purchase the girl and deliver her to Stratippocles. In the same play there is also the incident of a lost daughter who is finally restored to her father.

Some traits of Mascarille's character may also have been suggested by the parasite in Terence's "Phormio" and Chrysalus in the "Bacchides" of Plautus.
In the latter the young master upsets his servant's plans and brings him under his father's displeasure just as Lelie does by his blunders in Molière's play.
VI PLAYS MORE DIRECTLY INFLUENCED.

Les Fourberies de Scapin.

The greater part of "Les Fourberies de Scapin" is taken directly from Terence's "Phormio." In many places the words are changed simply to be in keeping with a later period and in order thus to avoid anachronisms.

The plot of the Roman play is, in a few words, as follows:

Antipho, the son of Demipho, sees by chance an orphan named Phanium, falls in love with her, and marries her through the instrumentality of the parasite, Phormio. Antipho's cousin, Phaedria, the son of Chremes, desires to possess a music-girl, but has no money. Geta, a slave of Demipho, undertakes to procure the required sum. Since Demipho objects to Antipho's marriage because of a promise to marry his son to Chremes' illegitimate daughter, Geta obtains the requisite amount saying it will be given to Phormio as a portion to marry Phanium. It is discovered finally that Phanium is Chremes' daughter, but they do not recover the money from Phormio because he appeals to Nausistrata, Chremes' wife, and reveals to her her husband's infidelity and misuse of her money in getting rid of Phanium. Finding that the money has been used for her son, Nausistrata permits Phaedria to retain the music-girl.

In the French play Octave, the son of Argante, marries Hyacinthe, a poor orphan, although his father has already chosen a wife for him. His cousin, Léandre, is in love with a gypsy girl named Zerbinette, but cannot gain possession of her until he buys
her. He has no money, and asks the aid of his valet, Scapin. This cunning servant obtains the required sum by pretending to Géronte, Léandre's father, that his son has been captured by Turks and that a ransom must be paid immediately. Léandre is forgiven, when his father discovers the deception, because meanwhile Zerbinette proves to be Argante's daughter. It is also learned that Octave had really married the girl chosen for him by his father, Géronte's daughter, who had been shipwrecked.

In the minor incidents there is also a resemblance. For example, Scapin, knowing how great Argante's anger will be on learning of his son's secret marriage asks Octave to rehearse for the meeting. Scapin pretends to be Argante; only after some difficulty does Octave put on a bold front, because Scapin imitates so well his father. However, when Argante is seen in the distance, his courage fails him, and he flees (1, 4). In Terence's play there is the same situation, and Antipho runs away in spite of Geta's appeals to him (II, 2).

In the following scene of the French play Argante begins to murmur aloud, and his words are overheard and commented upon by Scapin. This scene combines the sixth scene of Act I and the second scene of Act II of the "Phormio" where the parasite tries to persuade Demipho that he must forgive his son.

There are further verbal resemblances in Scene VIII of the second act of Molière's play and Scene VI of Act I of Terence's comedy.

Scapin says:

"Pour peu qu'un père de famille ait été absent de chez lui, il doit promener son esprit sur tous les fâcheux accidents que son
retour peut rencontrer, se figurer sa maison brûlée, son argent dérobé, sa femme morte, son fils estropié, sa fille suborneé, et ce qu'il trouve, qui ne lui est point arrivé, l'imputer à bonne fortune."

"For however short a time a father of a family has been absent from home, he must let his mind think of all the vexatious accidents that he may find on returning, must imagine his house burned, his money stolen, his wife dead, his son maimed, his daughter suborned, and all that he finds has not happened to him, let him impute it to good fortune."

The expression, "J'ai ouï dire, il ya longtemps, une parole d'un ancien que j'ai toujours retenue, (Some time ago I heard a saying by a man of ancient times which I have always remembered) leads us to attribute this to Terence.

"Demipho says:

Quam ob rem omnis, quom secundae res sunt maxume, tum maxume Meditari secum oportet, quo pacto advorsam aerumnam ferant: Pericla, damna, exilia peregre rediens semper cogitet, Aut fili peccatum aut uxoris mortem aut morbum filiae; Communia esse haec, fieri posse, ut ne quid animo sit novom; Quidquid praeter spem eveniat, omne id deputare esse in lucro."

"Therefore it is the duty of all persons, when affairs are the most prosperous, then in especial to reflect within themselves in what way they are to endure adversity. Returning from abroad, let him always picture to himself dangers and losses, either offences committed by a son, or the death of his wife, or the sickness of a daughter, - that these things are the common lot, so that no one of them may evercome as a surprise upon his feelings. Whatever falls
out beyond his hopes, all that he must look upon as so much gain." (Riley).

In the eleventh scene of Act II Molière does not seem to have lost entirely from sight the earlier writer, Plautus, as there is a resemblance to a passage in the "Bacchides". Scapin, in carrying out his scheme, pretends to dislike taking the money which he is getting by his cunning much as does, Chrysalus in the play of Plautus. The passages are these:

"ARGANTE. Tiens donc.

SCAPIN. Non, monsieur, ne me confiez point votre argent. Je serai bien aise que vous vous serviez de quelque autre.

ARGANTE. Mon Dieu; tiens.

SCAPIN. Non vous dis-je; ne vous fiez point à moi."

"ARGANTE. Do take this money.

SCAPIN. No, sir, do not entrust your money to me. I shall be very glad if you would employ some one else.

ARGANTE. Good heavens! Take it.

SCAPIN. No, I tell you, don't trust me."

"NICOBULUS. Cape hoc tibi aurum.

CHRYsalus. Non equidem accipiam, proin tu quaeras qui ferat.

Nolo ego mihi credi.

NICOBULUS. Cape vero, odiose facis.

CHRYsalus. Non equidem capiam.

NICOBULUS. At quaeso.

** CHRYsalus. Nolo, inquam, aurum concredi mihi."

"NICOBULUS. Take this gold."
CHRYSALUS. For my part, I'll not receive it; do you seek somebody at once to take it. I won't have it entrusted to me.

NICOBULUS. But do take it; you're worrying me now.

CHRYSALUS. For my part, I'll not take it.

NICOBULUS. But, prithee do.

CHRYSALUS. I don't want, I say, the gold to be entrusted to me." (Riley).

Molière's play is not at all times superior to that of his predecessor. The fact that the "Phormio" is written in verse and that much can be condensed in a few words in Latin cause this play to seem at times more perfect. Moreover, the death of Scapin at the end of Molière's play is scarcely in keeping with the comic spirit. Molière himself, in fact, does not consider "Les Fourberies de Scapin" as ranking among his best comedies. It has, however, more merits than faults. In it he shows a great ingenuity in overcoming the difficulties of taking a theme from antiquity and in adapting the incidents to the life of his time.

Amphitryon.

As soon as we hear the title "Amphitryon," there is brought to our minds another play of the same name, the "Amphitruo" of Plautus. The greater part of the comedy is, in fact, founded either directly on the work of the ancient writer or indirectly through "Les Deux Sosies" of Jean de Rotrou, and consequently the resemblances are almost too numerous to mention.

For the long and somewhat tedious monologue of one hundred and fifty-two lines which serves as a prologue to the "Amphitruo," Molière has substituted a sprightly dialogue between Mercury and Night.
to serve as an exposition. This prologue seems to have been suggested by the lines in the first scene of Plautus' tragicomedy where Mercury thus addresses Night:

"Perge, Nox, ut occepisti, gere patri morem meo:
Optumo optume optumam operam das, datam pulchre locas."

"Go on, Night as you’ve begun and pay obedienço to my father. In best style, the best of services are you performing for the best of beings; in giving this, you reap a fair return." (Riley).

Both plays begin with soliloquies by Sosia in which are set forth the main incidents of the war. Colloquial expressions, bits of humor, the brevity and conciseness of the servant's speech in Molière's comedy make the French version seem more animated and more in keeping with the nature of comedy than the long serious account of events in the Roman play.

The dialogue between Sosia and Mercury in which the god makes the perplexed servant doubt his identity follows the general lines of that of Plautus, but differs at times in the treatment of details. In general, Molière, has shown the greater skill in handling this humorous situation, and has avoided the prolixity which constitutes the greatest fault of the ancient author.

In Molière's play, the scene between Mercury and Sosia's wife, Cleanthis, is a clever creation. This servant of Alcmène thinks Mercury is her husband and chides him severely for his coldness. The contrast that is thus offered to the warmer affection of Jupiter is a happy conception.

The first two scenes of the second act of the "Amphitryon", especially the conversation between Amphitryon and Alcmène, are modeled closely after the second act of the "Amphitruo." At times, even,
some expressions are almost translations from the Latin play.

In the "Amphitruo" the fourth act begins with a rather unnecessary dialogue by Mercury, and then continues in exactly the same general vein as the "Amphitryon," with a soliloquy by the Theban general followed by a conversation between him and Mercury, who takes pleasure in mocking him.

The endings of the two plays are different. In the play of Plautus Alcmena gives birth to two sons, one the offspring of Amphitruo, the other Hercules. Molière's play is superior in that he observes more nearly the unity of time and does not introduce into his comedy a birth which would place the beginning of the intrigue many months before. In his play, on the contrary, the fortuitous absence of Amphitryon occurs on the very night when the play begins.

To please a French audience Molière has somewhat changed the character of Jupiter from the classical conception of this god. He reminds us of a noble of the court of Louis XIV, who with the subtle phrases can continue his impostures by concealing deception under the form of truth. The god of the French author is, besides, more admirable than the unprincipled debauchee depicted in the play of the time when he was worshipped.

From a purely comic standpoint the scenes in which Cléanthis appears are the most successful in the play. These are the creations of Molière. In fact, the seventeenth century author excels Plautus in writing real comedy. The art of playwriting had developed too far to permit of the crude and unpolished style of the ancient poet. Such jokes the the following would have been greatly condemned by a critical audience of the later time:

"MERCURIUS. Ne tu istic hodie malo tuo compositis mendaciis."
Advenisti, audaciai column, consutis dolis.

SOSIA. Immo equidem tunicis consutis huc advenio, non dolis.
MERCURIUS. At mentiris etiam; certo pedibus, non tunicis venis."

"MERCURY. Assuredly, at your peril have you come here this day, with your trumped-up lies, your patched-up knaveries, you essence of effrontery.

SOSIA. Why no, it's rather with garments patched-up that I'm arrived here, not with knaveries.

MERCURY. Why you are lying again; you come with your feet, surely, and not with your garments." (Riley).

Some of the jests of Molière are not above criticism, yet the charm of his verse makes us overlook such faults. Perhaps the idea of varying the meter was suggested by the practice of the Latin author but Molière has far surpassed this Roman poet of a time when Latin verse was still in its infancy.

L'Avare.

Because of the popularity of "L'Avare" many lovers of Molière have been lead to study the "Aulularia" of Plautus, but usually they have exalted the work of the French genius above the efforts of the Latin playwriter. This comedy, however, does not owe its origin to Plautus alone but derives various incidents from other French plays and Italian comedies and farces.

The plot of the "Aulularia" is as follows:

Phaedra, the daughter of Eucleio, an Athenian, has been seduced by a youth named Lyconides. Her father, unaware of this, has betrothed her to an uncle of Lyconides named Megadorus. He is delight-
ed because no dowry is required. Euchio also shows his miserliness by concealing a pot of gold which he has found instead of spending a single coin. The servant of Lyconides observes him and steals the pot. Lyconides has obtained his uncle's consent to relinquish Phaedra and goes to Euchio to confess what he has done. Buclio thinks he wishes to confess the theft of the gold and misinterprets his statements. A short time afterwards, however, it is discovered that Strobilus is guilty. The pot is recovered and Lyconides receives the treasure as Phaedra's dowry.

The French version varies in many of the details.

Valère, the son of a Neapolitan noble, has been shipwrecked when a mere boy and has been reared by a sea-captain. Later he finds out that his father is not dead, and in his search for him comes to Paris. One day he rescues a fair girl named Élise from the Seine where she has attempted to commit suicide because of the hardheartedness of her father. He falls in love with her, and to meet her oftener becomes the valet of her father, Harpagon.

Élise is soon informed that she must marry Anselme, a man old enough to be her father, because he will accept her without a marriage portion. Harpagon himself wishes to marry a young girl, named Mariane, who is secretly loved by his son, Cléante. Cléante's actions towards his future stepmother are suspicious, and by a ruse Harpagon makes him confess his love.

While Harpagon has been entertaining Mariane, La Flèche, Cléante's valet, has discovered the savings of Harpagon which have been buried in the garden. Harpagon accuses Valère of stealing his treasure, but the youth thinks he means Élise. Anselme appears and discovers that Valère is his son and Mariane, his daughter. Cléante
says Harpagon may recover his casket providing that he may marry Mariane. The miser is willing to consent to anything providing that it will occasion no expenditure of money and that he may recover his gold.

The name of the miser shows the influence of the Latin authors, for the word "harpago" is twice used in the "Aulularia."

The third scene of the first act of "L'Avare" in which Harpagon drives La Flèche out of the house combines parts of the scene in the "Aulularia" where the servant Staphyla is told by Euclio to leave and the third scene of the fourth act where Euclio asks Strobilus to show him his third hand.

"HARPAGON. Montre-moi tes mains.
LA FLECHE. Les voila.
HARPAGON. Les autres.
LA FLECHE. Les autres?"

"HARPAGON. Show me your hands.
LA FLECHE. Here they are.
HARPAGON. The others.
LA FLECHE. The others?"

"EUCLIO. Ostende huc manus.
STROBILUS. Em tibi, ostendi eccas.
EUCLIO. Video, age ostende etiam tertiam."

"EUCLID. Show me your hands here.
STROBILUS. Well, I do show them; see here they are.
EUCLID. I see them. Come show me the third also."

Moliere in taking this passage from Plautus has inserted it in a place where it is less appropriate and less justifiable than the
similar conversation in the play of the Latin author who makes Euclio's odd demand seem more plausible because the Athenian is beside himself because he has found Strobilus in the vicinity at the moment when he has just hidden his gold.

The humorous passage (Act II, Scene 6) in which Harpagon repeats again and again that there should be no dowry is a fortunate imitation from a similar scene (Act II, Scene 2) of the Aulularia in which Euclio is willing to make no promises until he is assured that no marriage-portion will be required. Megadorus tries to console himself for not receiving a dowry much in the same way as Frosine endeavors to persuade Harpagon that economy is often a dowry of greater value than real money.

The lament of Harpagon, when he finds he has been robbed, is closely modeled after the speech of Euclio in a similar dilemma (Act V, Scene 2); the details follow one another in the same order.

The resemblance is no less striking between the misinterpretation of Valere's confession that he has desired Harpagon's treasure (V, 3) and the mistake that takes place between Euclio and Lyconides (V, 3). The comic element is developed to a greater extent by Moliere so that the scene is bubbling over with humor.

Plautus has devoted more of his attention to the pot of gold than to Euclio: hence we do find that the miserly Athenian is not rendered odious. He has been poor, and when he suddenly finds a treasure, he continues to be parsimonious. His fear of the loss of his gold is but an outgrowth of the necessary economy which his station in life has inbred into his nature. Harpagon, on the other hand, is despicable. His monomania has been due to gradual development of the avaricious side of his character so that finally all else
but riches is lost from view. Modern psychiatry is showing that such men really exist and that a monomaniac interprets every act or word with reference to the one object which occupies his mind. Hence some of Molière's most amusing scenes are not altogether improbable. As a character-study and finished comedy "L'Avare" is a play which will always rank high and which seems destined to have an enduring popularity.
VII. CONCLUSION.

In the previous pages there have been cited instances in which the great French genius used the plays of ancient writers as material out of which to mould the structure of his many comedies. Unfortunately Plautus and Terence are so little known today that the ordinary student of Molière does not appreciate the debt of this seventeenth-century writer to these poets of antiquity, except perhaps in the case of "Les Fourberies de Scapin," "Amphitryon" and "L'Avare."

Molière seeks frequently in his predecessors striking situations which are not ephemeral in their interest. Often in one play will be found extracts from several comedies of Plautus and Terence. With great skill he has harmonized the various parts and combined them into one unified whole. He can take a characteristic scene from antiquity, add a few little touches from contemporary life, and produce a masterpiece that promises to endure. Finding an amusing character he remoulds him to please a French audience and makes him so realistic that sometimes Molière receives praise for what, at the core, is the work of another.

Perhaps that which has been overlooked most is Molière's indebtedness to Plautus and Terence for comical expressions and dialogues. Almost every play contains a few significant phrases borrowed from these ancient writers of comedy. Clothed in their French garb they will escape the casual reader, but the student of Plautus and Terence will be struck by the frequency with which they are employed by the French author.

Everywhere through the works of Molière we find interwoven the
threads of the influence of these two writers of antiquity. To them the masterpieces of the later genius owe their charms; yet it is chiefly through the skill of the French dramatist that they withstand the ravages of time and survive in circles where Latin is unknown.
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