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Author: Lawrence Echard

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LAWRENCE ECHARD

P R E F A C E S

TO TERENCE'S
C O M E D I E S

AND PLAUTUS'S
C O M E D I E S

(1694)

Introduction by
JOHN BARNARD

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no higher praise can be paid a translator than posterity's acceptance of his work. Laurence Echard's *Terence's Comedies*, first printed in 1694 in the dress and phraseology of Restoration comedy, has received this accolade through the mediation of no less a modern translator than Robert Graves. In 1963 Graves edited a translation of three of Terence's plays. His Foreword points to the extreme difficulty of translating Terence, and admits his own failure—"It is regrettable that the very terseness of his Latin makes an accurate English rendering read drily and flatly; as I have found to my disappointment." Graves's answer was typically idiosyncratic. "A revival of Terence in English, must, I believe, be based on the translation made . . . with fascinating vigour, by a young Cambridge student Laurence Echard . . ."¹

The Prefaces to Echard's *Terence's Comedies: Made English* . . . (1694) and to his *Plautus's Comedies, Amphitryon, Epidicus, and Rudens* (1694) are of interest for several reasons. Both of them outline the intentions and rationale which lie behind the translations. They also throw light upon the sense of literary rivalry with French achievements which existed in some quarters in late seventeenth-century England, make comments on the contemporary stage, and are valuable both as examples of seventeenth-century attitudes to two Classical dramatists, and as statements of neoclassical dramatic theory. Finally, they are, to some extent, polemical pieces, aiming at the instruction of contemporary dramatists.

Laurence Echard, or Eachard (1670?-1730), was a minor cleric, a prolific hack, and an historian, a typical enough confusion of functions for the time. It suggests that Echard had energy, ability, and political commitment, but lacked a generous patron or good fortune to take the place of private means. Within the Church his success was modest: he was installed prebendary of Louth in 1697, but had to wait until 1712 before becoming Archdeacon of Stow. Echard achieved the little fame by which he is remembered as an historical writer. Perhaps he is more accurately described as a compiler rather than as an historian. His major works were *The Roman History, from the Building of the City, to the Perfect Settlement of the Empire by Augustus Caesar* . . . (1695-98), the equally comprehensive *A General Ecclesiastical History from the Nativity of Our Blessed Saviour to the First Establishment of Christianity* . . . (1702), his all-inclusive *The History of England from the first Entrance of Julius Caesar* . . . to the Conclusion of the Reign of King James the Second . . . (1707-18), and the more detailed but equally long work, *The History of the Revolution, and the Establishment of England in* . . . 1688 (1725).

Echard's career as a publisher's jack-of-all-trades ran concurrently with his life's work on history, and showed a similar taste for the voluminously encyclopedic. In 1691 he graduated B.A. at Christ's College, Cambridge, and published four works under the imprint of Thomas Salusbury: *A Most Complete Compendium of Geography; General and Special; Describing all the Empires, Kingdoms, and Dominions in the Whole World, An Exact Description of Ireland* . . ., *A Description of Flanders* . . ., and the *Duke of Savoy's Dominions most accurately described*.² These were followed in 1692 by *The Gazetteer's or Newsman's Interpreter: being a Geographical Index* Two years later the translations of Plautus and Terence were published.

All of this work was clearly irrelevant to his main interests: in 1695 he had been urged to undertake his *General Ecclesiastical History*, and by that time he was already at work upon his *Roman History* (1695-98).³ Into the bargain, he was in residence at Cambridge until 1695, for he did not gain his

M.A. until that year. Despite the apparent success of his publisher's enterprises (*A Most Complete Compendium* was in its eighth edition by 1713, and *The Gazetteer's or Newsmen's Interpreter* reached a twelfth in 1724), little of the profit reached the penurious Echard. In 1717 Archbishop Wake wrote to Addison that "His circumstances are so much worse than I thought, that if we cannot get somewhat pretty considerable for Him, I doubt He will sink under the weight of his debts" ⁴

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The sheer quantity of work which Echard accomplished in these early years is astonishing: it is no wonder that in the Preface to the *Plautus* he explained that "business" had prevented him from translating more than three of the comedies, remarking, ". . . I have taken somewhat less time than was necessary for the translating such an extraordinary difficult Author; for this requires more than double the time of an *Historian* or the like, which was as much as I cou'd allow my self" (sig. b3).

In all of his work Echard sought and acknowledged the help of a whole series of unnamed encouragers and authorities. For the *Plautus* he "had the Advantage of another's doing their [i.e., "these?"] Plays before me; from whose Translation I had very considerable Helps . . ." (sig. b4). Apart from that aid, the *Plautus*, on the evidence offered by the title-page and the Preface, was all Echard's own. This is not the case with the *Terence*, which was translated by a symposium, with the Preface being written by Echard on the group's behalf. As a result, its Preface uses "we" throughout where the *Plautus* uses "I." When the first edition of the *Terence* appeared it gave the authorship as "By Several Hands," but later editions are more detailed, and specify that the work was done "By Mr. Laurence Echard, and others. Revis'd and Corrected by Dr. Echard and Sir R. L'Estrange." The fourth edition also stated firmly in 1716, "The PREFACE, Written by Mr. Laurence Echard" (p. i).

The only discrepancy which might seem to deny Echard's authorship of the Preface to the *Terence* is the fact that the two Prefaces contradict one another over the way in which scenes should be marked. The Preface to the *Terence* simply says that exits and entrances within the acts are a sufficient indication that the scene has changed without numbering them, "for the *Ancients* never had any other [method] that we know of" (p. xxii). The *Plautus* on the other hand, numbers the scenes, and the Preface comments, "I have all the way divided the *Acts* and *Scenes* according to the true Rules of the Stage . . ." (sig. b2^v). Since this was an open question, however, in neoclassical dramatic theory, the simplest explanation is that Echard was free to do as he believed in the *Plautus*, which was all his own, but was, in the Preface to the *Terence*, expressing the views of the whole group of translators.

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The two volumes are a testimony to Echard's remarkable industry and abilities. They were published the year before he took his M.A., when he was only twenty-four. In the years between coming up to Cambridge in 1687 and 1695, he found time not only to satisfy his university, and to do the very considerable amount of hack work which appeared in 1691 and 1692, as well as embarking upon his large historical works, but also translated two difficult Roman authors with great verve.

It would be interesting to know why, in the years between 1691 and 1694, Echard turned his attentions to the art of translation. The venture is a curious deviation from his otherwise single-minded devotion to history and to journalistic enterprises (the only other translation he is known to have done is the brief "Auction of the Philosophers" in *The Works of Lucian* [1710-11]). The connection of Dr. John Eachard and Sir Roger L'Estrange may offer a slight clue. Echard was closely related to Dr. Eachard (1636?-1697), Master of Catharine Hall, Cambridge, and author of the lively dialogue, *Mr. Hobbs's State of Nature Consider'd* (1672). ⁵ With a family connection such as this, Echard might well have hoped for a successful career centered on his stay at Cambridge. The dedication of his *A Most Complete Compendium* in 1691 to the Master of his own college, Dr. John Covel, suggests that he was looking in this direction. L'Estrange is important not only for his intimate knowledge of the publishing trade, but also because he was a translator in his own right. His *Æsop* appeared in 1692, and he had early put out translations of Quevedo (1673), Cicero (1680), and Erasmus (1680), and was to go on to translate Flavius Josephus (1702). Since L'Estrange had also been a student at Cambridge, there is some possibility that the translation of Terence was carried out at the instigation of a Cambridge based group. The translation might also be connected with the resurgence of interest in translation and in "correctness" which can be discerned in the 1690's. ⁶

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The two Prefaces differ somewhat in character. It seems clear from remarks made in the Preface to the *Plautus* that it was written after the *Terence* had already reached the public and after Echard's copy for the text of Plautus's three comedies was in the printer's hands. Not surprisingly the later Preface is hurried, and at times almost casual. The Preface to the *Terence* is more ambitious, more carefully written, and more wide-ranging, though giving fewer examples of the kinds of translations made by Echard. Both Prefaces lay claim to substantially the same audience. That to the *Terence* explains that the translation was undertaken in the first place because of the literary value of Terence's comedy. In consequence, its benefits would apply to "most sorts of People, but especially for the Service it may do our *Dramatick Poets*." Secondly, the work was undertaken for "the Honour of our own *Language*, into which all good Books ought to be Translated, since 'tis now become so *Elegant, Sweet and Copious* . . ." Thirdly, it might rival the translations done in other countries, particularly those in France. The audience envisaged ranged from schoolboys, who would find the translation less Latinate and the notes more pointed than those of Bernard or Hoole, to "Men of Sense and Learning," who ought to be pleased to see Terence in "modern Dress." As for the dramatists, Terence might serve as an exemplar, especially since the translation could "be read with less Trouble than the Original . . ." (pp. xvii-xix). The *Plautus* Preface is far less detailed, but refers back to these reasons, while stressing the function of the translation for the schoolboy. Judging by the number of editions, the *Terence* found its market, for where the *Plautus* ran to only two editions, the first and that of 1716, the *Terence* appeared in a seventh edition in 1729. Nor was Echard's audience merely made up of students. If one of his main targets was contemporary dramatists, he would have been elated to learn that William Congreve owned a copy of the first edition of both translations. ⁷

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The Prefaces are perhaps a little disingenuous in acknowledging Echard's and his collaborators' debt to the contemporary French classical scholar and translator, Anne Dacier. On both occasions Echard paid her some tribute. What he does not mention is that the two volumes seem to be modelled on her example. The *Terence* translates the plays which had appeared in her *Les comédies de Térence* (Paris, 1688), and it is significant that despite his claims that he wished to translate more than three of Plautus' comedies, he in fact translated only those three which Mme. Dacier had already done in her *Les comédies de Plaute* (Paris, 1683). Moreover, the notes and to some extent the Prefaces, are modelled on the French scholar's work: Echard's notes are often directly dependent upon Mme. Dacier's and are exactly described by her account of her own volume as being "avec de remarques et un examen de chaque comédie selon les règles du theatre."

The views on translation put forward by the Prefaces are an intelligent exposition of progressive contemporary notions of the art. The belief in literal translation which characterizes Jonson and Marvell in the earlier years of the century had been displaced by the more liberal concept of "imitation." Roscommon is a representative of this freer attitude, while Dryden's more severe theory of "paraphrase," whatever his practice may have been, stands somewhere between the two positions. Like Ozell and Gildon, and later Pope, Echard's aim, whether translating by himself or collectively, was to imitate the spirit of his author in English. "A meer *Verbal Translation* is not to be expected, that would sound so horribly, and be more obscure than the Original We couldn't have kept closer . . . without too much treading upon the Author's Heels, and destroying our Design of giving it an

easie, *Comick Style*, most agreeable to our present Times" (*Terence's Comedies*, p. xx). To this end it was necessary to tone down the "familiarity and bluntness in [Terence's] Discourse" which were "not so agreeable with the Manners and Gallantry of our Times." This was intended to bring Terence up to the level of gentility for which he was credited by compensating for the barbarity of Roman social manners. But the translation was willing to go further than this: it added to the Roman comedy what Echard thought English comedy excelled in, "humour"—"In some places we have had somewhat more of *Humour* than the Original, to make it still more agreeable to our Age . . ." (*ibid.*, p. xxii). When speaking for himself alone in the Preface to the *Plautus*, Echard's claims were less grandiose. Here the translation seems much more specifically aimed at schoolboys, and Echard made firm claims for his literalness (sig. b1-2^v). On the other hand, he went out of his way to praise Dryden's *Amphitryon* (1690) for the freedom it had taken with the original, which, said Echard, "may serve for one Instance of what Improvements our Modern Poets have made on the Ancients, when they built upon their Foundations" (sig. b3^v-4).

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The praise of Dryden is to some extent double-edged since it is an implicit assertion of the point made in both Prefaces, that English writers had much to learn from the Roman dramatists. Echard uses the Prefaces to assess and compare Plautus and Terence, but he also uses them as a springboard for a critique of the state of English comedy. Like much neoclassical criticism it is, of course, derivative. The stock comparison of Plautus and Terence comes from Anne Dacier,⁸ and Echard's footprints can be tracked in the snows of Cicero, Scaliger, Rapin, André Dacier, the Abbé D'Aubignac, and Dryden. Having set the Ancients against the Moderns, Echard is able to attack the looseness of English double plots by pointing to Terence's success within a similar structure. He is also able to praise Terence's genteel style. Against this, Echard admits, along with his precursors, Plautus' superiority in point of *vis comica*, which he defines, interestingly, as "*Liveliness of Intreague*" (sig. a8). Echard is thus able to claim, with considerable conviction, the superiority of English comedy in several areas, especially in its variety, its humour, "in some Delicacies of *Conversation*," and "above all in *Repartée*" (*Terence's Comedies*, p. xi).

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What the English had to learn, in Echard's view, was "regularity," that is, the discipline imposed upon a dramatist by observing the Unities, and obeying the other "rules of the drama" (such as the *liaisons*), in pursuit of verisimilitude and tautness of structure. Echard's main hope was that his translation and notes would correct his contemporaries' habit of ignoring the Roman dramatists' "*essential Beauties*," and "contenting themselves with considering the *superficial* ones, such as the *Stile, Language, Expression*, and the like, without taking much notice of the *Contrivance and Management*, of the *Plots, Characters, etc.*" (*Plautus*, sig. a1). The remarkable fact about Echard's discussion of these matters, despite his dependence at times upon that arch-pedant, the Abbé D'Aubignac,⁹ is the critical intelligence with which he puts forward his argument. Unlike many neoclassical critics, Echard keeps his eyes fixed firmly on the strengths and weaknesses of Restoration comedy within the context of previous English comedy and the Restoration stage itself. A sign of this is his attention to practical details, which take the form of one or two valuable notes on the theatre of his day. We learn, for instance, that actors were in the "custom of looking . . . full upon the Spectators," and that some members of the Restoration audience took printed copies into the playhouse in order to be able to follow the play on the stage.¹⁰ It is a real loss to the historian of drama and to the critic that these two volumes were Laurence Echard's solitary adventure into the criticism and translation of drama.

University of Leeds

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NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. *The Comedies of Terence: Echard's Translations Edited with a Foreword by Robert Graves* (London, 1963), pp. viii-ix. Graves (p. ix) says that Echard's translation of Terence was made in 1689, when he was only nineteen. I have been unable to find any evidence in support of this statement.

2. No copy of the *Duke of Savoy's Dominions* appears to be extant. It is not recorded in Wing, but appears in *The Term Catalogues, 1688-1709 . . .*, ed. Edward Arber (1903-1906), II, 380. This must have been much smaller than Echard's other publications in this year: it cost only 3d. against the first two's 1s. 6d.

3. *A General Ecclesiastical History . . .* (London, 1702), sig. b1.

4. *The Letters of Joseph Addison*, ed. Walter Graham (Oxford, 1941), p. 504.

5. Recently republished with an introduction by Peter Ure as No. XIV (1958) in the University of Liverpool Reprints.

6. "Dryden, Tonson, and Subscriptions for the 1697 *Virgil*," *PBSA*, LVII (1963), 147-48. Raymond Havens makes a rather different emphasis in his "Changing Taste in the Eighteenth Century," *PMLA*, XLIV (1929), 501-18.

7. Items 450 and 595 in *The Library of William Congreve*, ed. John C. Hodges (New York, 1955).

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8. *Les comédies de Plaute*, ed. and trans. Anne Dacier (Paris, 1683). For a further statement of her views, see *Les comédies de Térénce* (Paris, 1688).

9. In particular, see his discussion of the *liaisons* which is derived from François Hédelin, Abbé D'Aubignac, *La pratique du théâtre . . .* (Paris, 1669), pp. 117-19, 315-20. D'Aubignac's work was translated into English as *The Whole Art of the Stage . . .* (1684).

10. *Plautus's Comedies*, sig. a8^v; *Terence's Comedies*, p. xiii.

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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The texts of this edition are reproduced from copies in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

TERENCE'S COMEDIES:

Made *ENGLISH*.
WITH HIS
L I F E ;
AND SOME
REMARKS at the End.

By Several HANDS.

LONDON:

Printed for *A. Swall* and *T. Childe*, at the
Unicorn, at the West-End of *St. Paul's*
Church-yard. 1694.

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THE
P R E F A C E.

Since long Prefaces are lately much in Fashion upon this and the like Occasions, why may not we be allow'd some tolerable Liberty in this kind; provided we keep close to our Author, and our own Translation of him. As for our Author, wherever Learning, Wit or Judgment have flourish'd, this Poet has always had an extraordinary Reputation. To mention all his Excellencies and Perfections were a Task too difficult for us, and perhaps for the greatest Criticks alive; so very few there are that perfectly understand all of 'em; yet we shall venture at some of the most Remarkable.

To begin with him in general. He was certainly the most Exact, the most Elaborate, and withal the most Natural of all Dramatick Poets; His Stile so neat and pure, his Characters so true and perfect, his Plots so regular and probable, and almost every thing so absolutely just and agreeable, that he may well seem to merit that Praise which several have given him, That he was the most correct Author in the World. To compare him with Plautus, the other great Latin Comedian, we may observe that Plautus had more Wit and Spirit, but Terence more Sense and Judgment; the former's Stile was rich and glaring, the latter's more close and even: Plautus had the most dazelling out-side, and the most lively Colours, but Terence drew the finest Figures and Postures, and had the best Design; the one pleas'd the Vulgar, but our Author the Better sort of people; the former wou'd usually set his Spectators into a loud Laughter, but the latter steal 'em into a sweet Smile that shou'd continue from the beginning to the end of the Representation: in short, Plautus was more lively and vigorous, and so fitter for Action; and Terence more grave and serious, and so fitter for Reading. Tho' Plautus's Beauties were very extraordinary, yet he had his Faults and Indecorums very frequent; but Terence's Excellencies (tho' possibly inferior to some of the others) were more general, better dispers'd, and closer continu'd; and his Faults so inconsiderable, and so very few, that Scaliger said, There were not three to be found throughout the Six Plays. So that our Author seems to want nothing to make him absolutely compleat, but only that same *Vis Comica* that Cæsar wishes he had, and which Plautus was Master of in such a high degree. We shall determine nothing between 'em, but leave 'em good Friends as we found 'em.

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This may be sufficient for our Author's Excellencies in general; for his particular ones, we shall begin with his Stile, a thing he has been admir'd for in all Ages, and truly he deserves it; for certainly no one was ever more accurate, natural, and clear in his Expressions than he. But to be a little more particular in this Matter, we shall give you some few of our Author's Excellencies in this kind under three or four different Heads.

And first, We may observe of his Words, that they are generally nicely chosen, extremely proper and significant; and many of 'em carry so much Life and Force in 'em, that they can hardly be express'd in any other Language without great disadvantage to the Original. To instance in these following. *Qui cum ingeniis conflictatur ejusmodi. Ut animus in spe atque in timore usque ante hac attentus fuit. Nisi me lactasses amantem, & falsa spe produceres. Pam. Mi Pater. Si. Quid mi Pater? Quasi tu hujus indigeas Patris. Tandem ego non illâ caream, si sit opus, vel totum triduum. Par. Hui? Universum triduum. Quam elegans formarum spectator siem. Hunc comedendum & deridendum vobis propino.*

A3

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We shall next take notice of one or two Instances of the Shortness and Clearness of his Narrations; as that which Tully mentions. *Funus interim procedit sequimur, ad Sepulchrum venimus, in ignem posita est, Fletur.* Another may be that in *Phormio*. *Persuasum est homini, factum est, ventum est, vincimur, duxit.*

Another remarkable Beauty of his *Stile* appears in his *Climaxes*; where every Word is Emphatical, heightens the Sense, and adds considerably to what went before. As, *Hæc verba Mehercule una falsa Lachrymula, quam oculos terendo miserè vix vi expresserit, restinguet. Quod ille unciatim vix de demenso suo, suum defraudans genium, comparisit miser.*

The last thing we shall give any instance of, is the Softness and Delicacy of his Turns; of which many might be produced; but we think these few may be sufficient for our purpose. *Eheu me miseram! Cur non aut isthæc mihi ætas & forma est, aut tibi hæc sententia. Nam si ego digna hac contumelia sum maxime, at tu indignus qui faceres tamen. Nam dum abs te absum, omnes mihi labores fuere, quos cepi, leves, præterquam tui carendum quod erat. Palam beatus, ni unum desit, animus qui modeste isthæc ferat. Aliis, quia deficit quod amant, ægre est, tibi, quod super est, dolet.* And as for the Purity of his Language in general; we find it very much commended even by Tully himself. And One of the Moderns is not at all out of the way when he tells us: That the Latin Tongue will never be lost, as long as Terence may be had.

Our Author's Excellent Latin is now the greatest Cause of his Esteem, and makes him so much read in the World; but for certain, he that reads him purely for his Latin sake, does but a quarter read him; for 'tis his Characters and Plots have so far rais'd him up above the rest of the Poets, and have gain'd him so much Honour among the Criticks in all Ages. His *Stile*, tho' so very extraordinary, in a great measure may be learnt by Industry, long Custom, and continual Usage, and has been imitated to a high degree by several; and indeed this was but as rich Attire, and outward Ornaments to set off a more beautiful Body. But in his Characters and Manners there it is that he triumphs without a Rival; and not only Dramatick, but all other Poets must yield to him in that Point. For these are drawn exactly to the Life, perfectly just, truly proportionably, and fully kept up to the last; and as for their being natural, *Rapin* says, That no Man living had a greater insight into Nature than he. The more a Man looks into 'em, the more he must admire 'em; he'll find there not only such Beauty in his Images, but also such excellent Precepts of Morality, such solid Sense in each Line, such depth of Reasoning in each Period, and such close arguing between each Party, that he must needs perceive him to be a Person of strong Sense and Judgment. His Deliberations are most compleat, where all the several Accidents, Events, Dangers, Casualties, good and bad Consequences are fully summed up and clearly urg'd; so are the Answers of each Person as perfect, where every thing is so well fitted, so home, and so natural, that if one shou'd study upon 'em never so long, he cou'd scarce find any thing more to the purpose. He had a peculiar Happiness at pleasing and amusing an Audience, perpetually keeping 'em in a most even, pleasant, smiling Temper; and this is the most distinguishing part of his Character from the rest of the World; his Pleasantries were somewhat Manly, and such as reach'd beyond the Fancy and Imagination, even to the Heart and Soul of the Audience; and what is more remarkable yet, one single Scene shall please a whole day together; a Secret which few or no other Poet ever found out.

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v

And as we have scarce found one Man in the World that equals him in his Characters, so we find but very few that cou'd come up to him in the Management (we mean his Art and Contrivance) of his Plots. We are sensible that many have been so foolish as to count his Plays a bare Bundle of Dialogues dress'd up in a neat *Stile*, and there all his Excellency to consist, or at least that they are very ordinary and mean; but such senseless Suppositions will soon vanish upon giving an Account of the Nature and Perfection of 'em. He well understood the Rules of the Stage, or rather those of Nature; was perfectly Regular, wonderful exact and careful in ordering each Protasis or Entrance, Epitasis or working up, Catastasis or heighth, and Catastrophe or unravelling the Plot; which last he was famous for making it spring necessarily from the Incidents, and neatly and dextrously untying the Knot, whilst others of a grosser make, would either tear, or cut it in pieces. In short (setting aside some few things which we shall mention by and by) Terence may serve for the best and most perfect Model for our Dramatick Poets to imitate, provided they exactly observe the different Customs and Manners of the Roman and English People; and upon the same account we beg leave to be a little more particular in this Matter, which dispos'd us very much to this Translation.

The Nature of his Plots was for the most part grave and solid, and sometimes passionate a little, resembling our Modern Tragy-Comedies; only the Comical parts were seldom so merry; the Thinness and clearness of 'em somewhat resembling our Modern Tragedies, only more perfect in the latter, and not crowd'd with too many Incidents. They were all double except the *Hecyra*, or Mother-in-Law, yet so contriv'd that one was always an Under-plot to the other: So that he still kept perfectly to the first great Rule of the Stage, the Unity of Action. As for the second great Rule the Unity of Time (that is, for the whole Action to be perform'd in the compass of a Day) he was as exact in that as possible, for the longest Action of any of his Plays reaches not Eleven hours. He was no less careful in the third Rule, The Unity of Place, for 'tis plain he never shifts his Scene in any one of his Plays, but keeps constantly to the same place from the beginning to the end. Then for the Continuance in the Action, he never fails in any one place, but every Instrument is perpetually at work in carrying on their several Designs, and in them the design of the whole; so that the Stage never grows cold till all is finish'd: And to do this the more handsomely and dextrously, he scarce ever brings an Actor upon the Stage, but you presently know his Name and Quality, what part of the Intrigue he's to promote, why he came there, from whence he came, why just at that time, why he goes off, where he's a going, and also what he is

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or ought to be doing or contriving all the time he's away. His Scenes are always unbroken, so that the Stage is never perfectly clear but between the Acts; but are continually joyn'd by one of the four Unions. Which according to Mon. Hedelin are these; Presence, Seeking, Noise, or Time; and when the Action ceaseth (that is, upon the Stage) and the Stage is clear'd, an Act is then finish'd. Then for Incidents, and the due Preparation of 'em, Terence was admirable: And the true and exact Management of these is one of the most difficult parts of Dramatick Poetry. He contrives every thing in such a manner so as to fall out most probably and naturally, and when they are over they seem almost necessary; yet by his excellent Skill he so cunningly conceals the Events of things from his Audience, till due time, that they can never foresee 'em; by this means they are so amus'd with the Actors Designs, that the Poets is unknown to 'em, till at last, being all along in the dark, they are surpriz'd most agreeably by something they never look'd for: And this is the most taking and the most delightful part of a Play. We might insist much more largely upon each of these Particulars, and upon several others, but at present we shall content our selves with saying that these Plots are all so very clear, and natural, that they might very well go for a Representation of a thing that had really happen'd; and not the meer Invention of the Poet.

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There are two or three remarkable Objections against our Author which we can't but take notice of. First, 'tis said, That he has not kept to the Unity of Time in his *Heautontimorumenos*, or *Self-Tormenter*; which contains the space of two days. Then, between the second and third Acts, there's an absolute failure of the Continuance of the Action. These are generally believ'd by several Men, and such as are famous too; and some to vindicate Terence the better have added another Mistake, That the Play was always acted two several times, the two first Acts one, and the three last another. But 'tis plain from all Circumstances, that the Action began very late in the Evening, and ended betimes in the Morning (of which we have said something in our Remarks at the end) so that the whole cou'dn't contain above Eleven hours; but as for that of the Cessation of the Action, 'tis answer'd two ways, either by the necessity of Sleep at that Interval, and consequently no Cessation, or (which is more probable) by the Persons being busie at the Treat at *Chremes's* House, that being a necessary part of the main Action. The two following are Mr. Dryden's Exceptions; where first he lays an Error to our Author's Charge in matter of Time. In the *Eunuch* (says he) when *Laches* enters *Thais's* House by mistake, between his *Exit* and the Entrance of *Pythias*, who comes to give ample Relation of the Disorder he has rais'd within, *Parmeno* who is left upon the Stage has not above five Lines to speak. In answer to this, *Pythias* makes no such ample Relation, but rather tells him what Disorders such a foolish Act of his was like to raise; and in truth it is not probable she shou'd stay above five or six Lines speaking, since after she saw her Cheat had taken, she cou'dn't keep her countenance within Doors, and was so eager to revenge her self by laughing at the Fool without. Besides here's an excellent Artifice of the Poets, for had she tarry'd longer, *Parmeno* might ha' been gone, and her Mirth qualified when she saw the good Fortune *Chærea* had met withal. His other Exception is, that our Author's Scenes are several times broken. He instances in the same Play, That *Antipho* enters singly in the midst of the third Act, after *Chremes* and *Pythias* were gone off. As for this, 'tis to be consider'd that Scenes are united by Time as well as Presence; and this is a perfect Union of Time, apparent to all who understand the Art of the Stage. A little farther he says, That *Dorias* begins the fourth Act alone;— She quits the Stage, and *Phedria* enters next. Here *Dorias* does not quit the Stage till three Scenes after, as appears by *Pythias*, bidding her carry in such things as she had brought with her from the Captain's Entertainment; but if she did, there wou'd be an Union of Time nevertheless, as there is in all other places, where the Scenes seem broken. Some make this Objection; that in the beginning of many Scenes, two Actors enter upon the Stage, and talk to themselves a considerable time before they see or know one another; Which (they say) is neither probable nor natural. Those that object this don't consider the great Difference between our little scanty Stage, and the large magnificent Roman Theatres. Their Stage was sixty Yards wide in the Front, their Scenes so many Streets meeting together, with all By-Lanes, Rows and Allies; so two Actors coming down two different Streets or Lanes cou'dn't be seen by each other, tho' the Spectators might see both, and sometimes if they did see each other they cou'dn't well distinguish Faces at sixty Yards distances. Besides upon several accounts it might well be suppos'd when an Actor enters upon the Stage out of some House, he might take a turn or two under the Portico's, Cloysters, or the like (that were usual at that time) about his Door, and take no notice of an Actor's being on the other side the Stage.

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But since we propose our Master as the best Model for Dramatick Poets to follow, we ought in Justice to mention such things wherein he was any ways faulty, or at least where he ought not to be imitated. The first is, He makes his Actors in some places speak directly, and immediately to the Audience (of which that Monologue of *Mysis* in the first Act of the first Play is an instance) which is contrary to the Rules of Dramatick Poetry, or rather indeed of Nature; and this is the only real Fault that Terence was guilty of, as his want of *Vis Comica* was the only real Defect. His Plots were not always the best for Story, tho' for Contrivance, and wanted somewhat of Length and Variety, fully and compleatly to satisfie an Audience. Take 'em all together, they were too much alike to have always their deserv'd Effect of surprizing; which also gave a mighty Limitation to the Variety of his Characters; a great pity for a Man that had such an admirable Knack of drawing them to the Life. It were also to be wish'd that his Monologues or Discourses by single Persons, were less frequent, and sometimes shorter too; for tho' they are all of 'em full of excellent Sence, sound Reasoning, ingenious Deliberations, and serv'd truly to carry on the main Design; yet several parts of 'em, especially all Narrations, wou'd ha' been more natural as well as Artificial, if told by Persons of the Drama to one another. Then his *Aparts* or *Asides* (that is when one Actor speaks something which another that is present is suppos'd to not hear, tho' the Audience do) are sometimes too long to be perfectly natural. Whether he has not sometimes too much Elevation of Passion, or Borders too nigh upon Tragedy for such inferior Persons, we

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leave to others. These are the main things to be taken notice of by all that make use of him for a Model, besides all such as belong purely to the various Customs of Countries, and to the difference of Theatres; but those are obvious enough to all.

But there's still one great Objection against these Plays in general; that is, If *Terence's* Plays are so good as is pretended, why doesn't some Poet or other translate one or more of 'em for the Stage, so save himself the trouble of racking his Brain for new Matter. We own they wouldn't take upon our Stage; but to clear all, we shall give these two Reasons: First, The Difference between the Romans and our selves in Customs, Humors, Manners and Theatres is such, that it is impossible to adapt their Plays to our Stages. The Roman Plots were often founded upon the exposing of Children, and their unexpected Delivery, on buying of Misses and Musick-Girls; they were chiefly pleas'd to see a covetous old Father neatly bubbled by his Slave of a round Sum of Money; to find the young Spark his Son (miserably in want of Cash) joyn with the Slave in the Intrigue, that he may get somewhat to stop his Mistress's Mouth, whom he keeps unknown to his Father; to see a bragging Coxcomb wheedled and abus'd by some cunning Parasite; to hear a Glutton talk of nothing but his Belly, and the like. Our Plots go chiefly upon variety of Love-Intrigues, Ladies Cuckolding their Husbands most dextrously; Gallants danger upon the same account, with their escape either by witty Fetches, or hiding themselves in dark Holes, Closets, Beds, &c. We are all for Humour, Gallantry, Conversation, and Courtship, and shou'dn't endure the chief Lady in the Play a Mute, or to say very little, as 'twas agreeable to them: Our amorous Sparks love to hear the pretty Rogues prate, snap up their Gallants, and Repartée upon 'em on all sides. We shou'dn't like to have a Lady marry'd without knowing whether she gives her consent or no, (a Custom among the Romans) but wou'd be for hearing all the Courtship, all the rare and fine things that Lovers can say to each other. The second Reason of their not taking upon the Stage is this, tho' *Terence's* Plays are far more exact, natural, regular, and clear than ours, and his Persons speak more like themselves than generally ours do; yet (to speak impartially) our Plays do plainly excel his in some Particulars. First, in the great Variety of the Matter and Incidents of our Plots; the Intrigues thicker and finer; the Stories better, longer, and more curious for the most part than his: And tho' there's much confusion, huddle and precipitation in the generality of 'em; yet the great variety and number of Incidents tho' ill manag'd, will have several Charms, and be mighty diverting, especially to a vulgar Audience, like the Sight of a large City at a distance, where there is little of Regularity or Uniformity to be discern'd just by. Next, we do much excel *Terence* in that which we call Humour, that is in our Comical Characters, in which we have shewn and expos'd the several Humours, Dispositions, Natures, Inclinations, Fancies, Irregularities, Maggots, Passions, Whims, Follies, Extravagancies, &c. of Men under all sorts of Circumstances, of all sorts of Ranks and Qualities, of all Professions and Trades, and of all Nations and Countries, so admirably, and so lively, that in this no Nation among the Ancients or Moderns were ever comparable to us. Lastly, Our Comedies excel his in some Delicacies of Conversation; particularly in the Refinedness of our Railery and Satyr, and above all in Repartée. Some of these things (especially when mix'd with Humour) have made many an ordinary Plot take and come off well; and without a pretty quantity of some of 'em, our Plays wou'd go down very heavily.

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Since we are accidentally fall'n into the Excellencies of our Comedies, we hope it may be pardonable if we mention also some principal Faults in 'em, which seem to need a Regulation. And first, Our Poets seldom or never observe any of the three great Unities of Action, Time and Place, which are great Errors; For what breeds more Confusion than to have five or six main Plots in a Play, when the Audience can never attend to 'em? What more extravagant than to fancy the Actions of Weeks, Months, and Years represented in the Space of three or four Hours? Or what more unnatural than for the Spectators to suppose themselves now in a Street, then in a Garden, by and by in a Chamber, immediately in the Fields, then in a Street again, and never move out of their place? Wou'dn't one swear there was Conjuratation in the Case; that the Theatres were a sort of Fairy Land where all is Inchantment, Juggle and Delusion? Next, our Plays are too often over-power'd with Incidents and Under-plots, and our Stage as much crowded with such Actors, as there's little or no occasion for; especially at one time. Then the Matter, and Discourse of our Plays is very often incoherent and impertinent as to the main Design; nothing being more common than to meet with two or three whole Scenes in a Play, which wou'd have fitted any other part of the Play ev'n as well as that; and perhaps any Play else. Thus some appear to swear out a Scene or two, others to talk bawdy a little, without any manner of dependance upon the rest of the Action. But besides this (which is another great Error) when the Matter and Discourse do serve to carry on the main Design, commonly Persons are brought on to the Stage without any sort of Art, Probability, Reason or Necessity for their coming there; and when they have no such Business as one that comes in to give you a Song or a Jigg. They come there to serve the Poets Design a little, then off they go with as little Reason as they came on; and that only to make way for other Actors, who (as they did) come only to tell the Audience something the Poet has a mind to have 'em know; and that's all their business: And truly that's little enough. This we see frequently in the chief Actor of the Play, who comes on and goes off, and the Spectators all the time stand staring and wondring at what they know not what. Another great Fault common to many of our Plays is, that an Actor's Name, Quality or Business is scarce ever known till a good while after his appearance; which must needs make the Audience at a great Loss, and the Play hard to be understood, forcing 'em to carry Books with 'em to the Play-house to know who comes in, and who goes out.

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The Ancients were guilty of none of these Absurdities, and more especially our Author; and indeed the Non-observance of Rules has occasion'd the great Miscarriages of so many excellent Genius's of ours, particularly that of the immortal Shakespear. Since these are such apparent

Faults and Absurdities, and still our Beauties are so admirable as to cover, and almost to outweigh our Errors (else our Plays were not to be endur'd) undoubtedly our Dramatick Poets by the Observance of this Author's Ways and Rules might out-do all the Ancients and Moderns too, both at Tragedy and at Comedy; for no Nation ever had greater Genius's than ours for Dramatick Poetry. These ha' been but little observ'd as yet, so that all our fine Imitations of Nature may often be call'd Lucky hits, and more by Accident than by Art. We very much need a Reformation in this Case, and our Plays can never arrive to any great Perfection without it; therefore the nigher they come up to this Standard, the more they will be admir'd and lov'd by all Judicious Persons, provided they still keep to those Excellencies before-mention'd. Besides, these are as easily practicable upon ours as upon the Greek and Roman Theatres; and by a strict Observance of the Unity of Place, the Stage may be made far more handsome and magnificent with less Charge; and by that of the Unity of Action (especially by the help of an Under-plot or so) the Story may be made far more fine and clear with less trouble.

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But our Nation by long Custom, and the Success of Irregular Pieces, seems naturally averse to all Rules; and take it very ill to have their Thoughts confin'd and shackled, and tied to the Observance of such Niceties: Therefore in the first place they tell us, That Poets of all Men in the World are perfectly freely, and by no means ought to confine their Noble Fancies to dull pedantick Rules; For this (say they) is like taking of Bees, cutting off their Wings, and laying such Flowers before 'em to make Honey as they please. A Poet indeed shou'd be free, and unconfin'd as Air, as to his Thought, Fancy and Contrivance, but then his Poetica Licentia shou'dn't transport him to Madness and Extravagancy, making him phrensically transgress the Rules of Reason and Nature, as well as Poetry. These that we mention are not any Man's Arbitrary Rules, but pure Nature only Methodiz'd: They never hamper a Poet's Fancy or clip his Wings, but adorn their Thoughts, and regulate their Flights so as to give 'em a clearer insight into Nature, Probability and Decency, without something of which it is impossible to please. And these are no more a Confinement to a Poet's Fancy, than the true Proportion of Pillars, the Regularity and Uniformity of Windows are to an Architect; or the exact Imitation of Nature to a Painter: As if there could be half so much Beauty in Grotesque and irregular Whims, as in the due Observation of the Rules of Prospect, Shadows and Proportion.

Another Objection is, That our Nation will never bear Rules, but are much better pleas'd with the ways now in practice. 'Tis true, several of our most irregular Plays have come off with a great deal of Applause, but certainly never the more for their Irregularity; but because most of the Audience knew no better, being often dazzled by the Greatness of the Author's Genius, and the Actor's Performances; and those that did, were willing to pardon the Faults for the sake of some choice Master-strokes they had; and upon the same account a couple of good Scenes have many times carry'd off a very indifferent Play: 'Tis plain that want of Use and Knowledge have been the only Cause of these ways seeming so unpracticable; and if the middle sort of Persons were once truly brought to a Sight of the Excellencies of this, and the Deformities of the other way (as the well reading of these Plays wou'd in a great measure do, being chiefly design'd for them) they wou'd esteem of it far more than now; and certainly they cou'd never pardon those many Indecencies, Improbabilities, Absurdities that are so frequent in our Plays. 'Tis true, there has been a considerable Regulation among many of 'em since the Days of Shakespear, but not to bring things half to perfection. And thus Regulation has made hope for a further, as the Age will be brought to bear it.

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The last Objection is more particular: They say, That the Unities of Action, Time and Place must needs take off from the great Variety of the Plot, and a fine Story by this means will be quite murder'd. 'Tis true, all Stories whatsoever are not fit for a Dramatick Poem; yet there may be an excellent Plot without crowding together Intrigues (little depending upon one another) of half a dozen couple, suppose, in one Play; without hurrying over the Business of three Months in three Hours time, or perhaps without skipping from Gardens to Mountains, from thence to Groves, and then to Town in an Act or two: But our prying, curious Sparks can't rest here, but must be for peeping into Chambers, Closets, and Withdrawing-Rooms, ay, and into Beds too (sometimes with the Ladies in 'em) and have all things brought openly upon the Stage, tho' never so improper, and indecent. But this Objection may yet be better answer'd by Instances; and first for the Unity of Time, we may mention the Play call'd, The Adventures of Five Hours, the whole Action lasting no longer (much less a day, the extent allow'd for a Dramatick Poem) yet this is one of the pleasantest Stories that ever appear'd upon our Stage, and has as much Variety of Plots and Intrigues, without any thing being precipitated, improbable or unnatural as to the main Action; so by this it appears that this Rule is no Spoiler or Murderer of a finer Story. Then for the Unity of Time and Action too, Ben. Johnson's Silent Woman is a remarkable Instance; an excellent Comedy indeed, where the Action is perfectly single, and the utmost extent of the Time exceeds not three Hours and a half (the shortest we ever find) yet still the Plot, Intrigues, and above all the Incidents are very fine, and no ways unnatural. Lastly, For all three Unities, Mr. Dryden's All for Love (tho' a Tragedy, and somewhat foreign to our business) is worthy to be taken notice of, that being perfectly Regular according to the Rules of the Stage, the Scenes unbroken, the Incidents exactly and duly prepar'd, and all things noble and beautiful, just and proportionable. This we reckon one of the best Tragedies of our Nation. Now can any Man justly think that these Plays we now mention'd were ever the worse for that Regularity they had; or indeed have we many better in the Nation for Plot; or many that have better pleas'd the generality of Persons than these; If so this sufficiently shows the Truth of what we offered; and withal commends our Master's great Judgment in this Point: Who, in our Opinion (besides the Excellency of his Characters) plainly deserves a greater Name for his Plots, than he does for his Language.

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Come we next then to our own Vindication, in which we shall briefly shew the Reasons why we

did it, and likewise what our Performances have been in this Version.

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The main Reasons why we undertook it were these. First, For the Excellency and Usefulness of this Author in general: And consequently for the benefit (as we shall shew by and by) of most sorts of People, but especially for the Service it may do our Dramatick Poets. Next, for the Honour of our own Language, into which all good Books ought to be Translated, since 'tis now become so Elegant, Sweet and Copious: And indeed nothing refines, or gives Foreigners a greater Opinion of any Language than its number of good Translations; of which the French is a great Instance. Thirdly, Because most of our Neighbours have got it in their Language, particularly the French, who have done it with good Success; and we have no reason for our being out-done by any of our Neighbours, since we have a Language we dare set against any in the World. Lastly, Since the Author is so excellent, we undertook it because no other Persons wou'd. 'Tis strange that none of our great Wits wou'd undertake it before, but let us Persons of Obscurity, take their Works out of their Hands; when we can perceive by our little Performances that our Language will do it to a very high degree, undoubtedly better than the French.

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The most considerable Objections that have been made against our Translation are these. First, What real Use or Advantage can this Translation be to the Publick? As for school-Boys and Learners, *Bernard's* and *Hool's* Translations, the great number of Notes, a School-Master, or their own Industry will well enough teach 'em to construe it. Men of Sense and Learning, they read it wholly for the Latin sake; therefore a Translation is of no use to them. Lastly, They won't fit our Stage; and consequently they are impertinent at best. To these we answer; First, As to School-Boys and Learners; *Bernard's* and *Hool's* Translations are very often false, mostly so obsolete, flat and unpleasant, that a Man can scarce read half a Page without sleeping; the latter is full of Latinisms, and both are often more obscure than the Original. The Notes sometimes don't express the Author's Sense; and often very obscurely: In some things they are too short, in others too long and tedious: And most of them have the slight of running very nimbly over those Places which they are afraid they shou'd stick in. School-Masters often want time, and now and then Judgment and Learning to explain things as they ought; then to leave Boys by themselves to pick out the Sense of such a difficult Author as this, is very inconvenient; which besides the Discouragement sometimes of not being able to do it, will often lead 'em into such Errors and Mistakes, as perhaps they'll ne're get clear of. So that this will be of great use even to School-Boys and Learners: Beside the great Advantage of teaching 'em, perhaps not the worst English; and something of the Idiom of our Tongue.

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As for the second part of the Objection, That Men of Sense and Learning read it only for the Latin sake; This is or ought to be look'd upon as a great Mistake: Since Terence has other and greater Excellencies than his Style, as we have before shewn. But however ingenious Persons must needs receive some pleasure in seeing such excellent Latin now speak tolerable good English; and likewise in seeing somewhat of the Conversation, Humour and Customs of the old Greeks and Romans put into a modern Dress; and perhaps not quite out of the Fashion. Besides, since many of these do sometimes upon an occasion make use of Notes, 'twill be of equal use (in that respect) to them as to all Learners. And that they have often need of such, will appear from the several difficult places (especially as to the Plot) and some obscure dubious Passages in this Author, which the utmost Skill in the Latin Tongue will not teach to explain; since there is as great a necessity for the understanding of the Roman Customs and Theatres in this Case, and of the Art of the Stage, as of the Latin Tongue. How extraordinary useful a Translation can be in perfectly clearing an Author, Roscommon's Translation of Horace's Art of Poetry is an apparent Instance; which shews the Sense, Meaning, Design, &c. of Horace better and easier than all the Paraphrases and Notes in the World.

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Thirdly, Tho' our Translation will never fit our Stage, yet it may be of considerable use to some of the Dramatick Poets; which we had some respect to, when we did it; they will serve 'em (as was said before) for Models; and tho' many of our Poets do very well understand the Original, yet 'tis plain that some of 'em do not understand it over much. But however, it may not be wholly useless to those that do, and more proper for their business, being ready explain'd to their hands: And upon some accounts to be read with less trouble than the Original: For that is in many places very obscure by reason of corrupted Copies, wrong Points, false Division of whole Acts as well as Scenes and the like: Further, if these Plays come to be frequently read by the more ordinary sort of People, they will by little and little grow more in love with, and more clearly see the true Excellencies of these Rules, and these lively Imitations of Nature, which will be the greatest Encouragement our Poets can have to follow 'em. And besides, the common People by these Plays may plainly perceive that Obscenities and Debaucheries are no ways necessary to make a good Comedy; and the Poets themselves will be the more ready to blush when they see Heathens so plainly out-do us Christians in their Morals; for their principal Vices in their Plays, were chiefly from the Ignorance of the Times, but we have no such pretence. This alone might ha' been a sufficient reason for our undertaking this Design.

But to come now to what we have done; 'tis not to be expected we shou'd wholly reach the Air of the Original; that being so peculiar, and the Language so different; We have imitated our Author as well and as nigh as the English Tongue and our small Abilities wou'd permit; each of us joyning and consulting about every Line, not only for the doing of it better, but also for the making of it all of a piece. We follow'd no one Latin Copy by it self, because of the great Disagreements among 'em, but have taken any that seem'd truest. We look'd over all the Notes, sometimes they would help us a little, and often not; some hints we had from the French, but not very many; besides we had considerable helps from other Persons far above our selves, for whose Care and Pains we shall ever acknowledge our Gratitude. A meer Verbal Translation is not to be

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expected, that wou'd sound so horribly, and be more obscure than the Original; but we have been faithful Observers of his Sence, and even of his Words too, not slipping any of consequence without something to answer it; nay farther, where two Words seem to be much the same, and perhaps not intended to be very different by the Author, we were commonly so nice as to do them too; such as Segnitia and Socordia, Scire and Noscere, and the like, which is more exact than most, if not all, our modern Versions. We cou'dn't have kept closer (especially in this Author, which several ingenious Persons told us, Is the hardest in the World to translate;) without too much treading upon the Author's Heels, and destroying our Design of giving it an easie, Comick Style, most agreeable to our present Times. If we have been guilty of any Fault of this nature, it seems to be that of keeping too close.

But still to be more particular; we did all we cou'd to prevent any of the Meaning and Grace of the best Words to be lost; so that we were often forc'd to search and study some time for those most proper, and oftentimes to express 'em by two, and sometimes by a Circumlocution: Which Madam Dacier her self, as accurate as she is accompted, has often neglected: And thereby has wholly lost the Force and Beauty of many Emphatical Words. Terence had some Words taken in a great many several Sences, such as Contumelia and Injuria, Odiosus, Tristis, &c. these we have been very careful about; but where he plays upon Words (tho' never so prettily) he ought not in some places to be imitated at all, because the Fineness is more lost that way, than the other; yet we try'd at several when they were Natural and tolerable in English. As for his Allusions and the like, many of them perhaps are quite lost to us. However they are commonly lost in our Language. On such places (as well as some others) we made Remarks or Notes at the latter end; some of which we are oblig'd to the French Lady for; these serving to shew our Author's fine Stroaks, as well as to vindicate our Translation. For his Sense and Meaning, we have taken more than ordinary care about, and weigh'd all Circumstances before we fix'd. Several of the Passages are done contrary to the general Opinion, and some few differently from all, both as to the Person that speaks as well as the Meaning, but not without good Grounds; and if any be so nice in censuring, we desire that Person to shew us three Terences that exactly agree with one another, either in Points or Words, for two Acts together. Of those Passages that were absolutely doubtful, we always took the best, and that, which seem'd to us, the most probable Way and Meaning; and all such as were difficult, knotty or obscure in the Original, we made as plain and clear as we cou'd; and we presume to phansie there are very few Passages in ours, unintelligible to the meanest Capacity. In his Jest and Repartees (except they were Allusions or the like) we hope that the force of 'em is seldom lost. For making every Person speak so exactly like themselves (a thing that our Author was so famous for) is much more difficult in English by reason of its greater variety of Idioms and Phrases than in the Latin; and to suit these always right, requires a greater Genius than we can pretend to. Terence, tho' reckon'd very genteel in his Days, seems in some place to have a sort of familiarity and bluntness in his Discourse, not so agreeable with the Manners and Gallantry of our Times; which we have mollify'd as well as we cou'd, still making the Servants sawcy enough upon occasion. In some places we have had somewhat more of Humour than the Original, to make it still more agreeable to our Age; but all the while have kept so nigh our Author's Sence and Design, that we hope it can never be justly call'd a Fault. We can't certainly tell whither William the Conqueror, the Grand Seignior (and the like) may pass with some: They may possibly take 'em for Blunders in time: which are now become Proverbial Expressions; the first signifying only a great while ago, and t'other a great Man.

As for the Division of the Acts and Scenes, all the common Terences are most notoriously false: The Acts are often wrong, but the Scenes oftener; and these have bred some obscurity in our Author's Rules. Madam Dacier has been more exact in this than all others before her; yet, still she's once mistaken in her Acts, and very often in her Scenes. We have follow'd her as to her Acts, except one in the Phormio; but we have not divided the Scenes at all by Figures, because they are of no such use; only the Reader may take notice that whenever any particular Actor enters upon the Stage, or goes off, that makes a different Scene; for the Ancients never had any other that we know of. The Prologues, by the Advice of several Judicious Persons, are left out, as being the Meanest, the fullest of Quibbles, and the least Intelligible of any thing he wrote: They relating chiefly to private Squabbles between our Author and the Poets of his time: The Particulars of which 'tis impossible for us to understand now, and we need not be much concern'd that we don't. Besides, in the main, they are so much beneath the Author, that 'tis much question'd whether they are his or no, especially the Third. The Arguments are certainly none of his, and so far from being useful, that they only serve to forestall the Plots, and take away the Pleasure of surprizing.

Lastly, That there might be nothing wanting that might make this Translation as intire and clear as possible; we've all the way intermix'd Notes of Explanation, such as, Enter, Exit, Asides, and all other things of Action, necessary to be known, and constantly practis'd among our Modern Dramatick Poets. These serve extremely to the clearing of the Plots which wou'd be obscure without 'em; especially since their Theatres were so different from ours. And as this sort of Notes are the shortest, that are generally us'd, so they are most compleat, useful and clear, by the help of which any Child almost may apprehend every thing. Perhaps we might have omitted some of 'em, but we have better offend this way than the other.

Thus have we said as much as we thought requisite in Vindication of our Master's Honour, and of our own Undertaking. And if we had said ten times as much; and ne're so much to the purpose, People will still think, and talk what they please, and we can't help it.

PLAUTUS'S
COMEDIES,
AMPHITRYON,
EPIDICUS, and
RUDENS,
Made English:
With
Critical Remarks
Upon Each PLAY.

— *Non ego paucis
Offendar maculis: quas aut incuria fudit
Aut humana parum cavit natura:—*
Horat. Art. Poet.

LONDON:
Printed for *Abel Swalle* and *T. Child* at the *Unicorn*
at the West-End of *S. Paul's Churchyard*, 1694.

THE
PREFACE.

THis Nations Excellencies in Dramatick Poetry have been so extraordinary, and our Performance both in Tragedy and Comedy have discover'd such strange Genius's, that we have some reason to believe, that we have not only surpass'd our Neighbours the Moderns, but likewise have excell'd our Masters the Ancients. But the want of Knowledge of the Ancients has been one great Reason for our setting our selves so very much above 'em; for tho' we have many Beauties which they wanted, yet it must be own'd, that they have more which we have not, except that it may be some very few of our Pieces. But then their Excellencies are far less known to us than ours; for the Common People are unacquainted with their Languages, and the more Learned sort, for want of due Observance and Penetration, have been ignorant enough of their essential Beauties; they, for the most part, contenting themselves with considering the superficial ones, such as the Stile, Language, Expression, and the like, without taking much notice of the Contrivance and Management, of the Plots, Characters, &c.

But a considerable Discovery of these Excellencies has been made by means of a late Version of Terence, especially by the help of the Preface and Remarks: And this has made me hope, that two or three Plays of Plautus's cou'd not be very unacceptable after them; and since the principal Fault of the Remarks in that Version was their being too short, I have made these somewhat longer and clearer, hoping they will prove the principal means of recommending this Book to the World, even tho' the Translation had been brought to the utmost Perfection it was capable of: a Thing which I dare never pretend to. I made Choice of the same three which Madam Dacier had done before me; those being, in many respects, fitter for my purpose. But before I come to Particulars in those Things, I shall give some Character and Account of my Author.

Plautus, if consider'd as a Dramatick Poet, may justly enough be stil'd the Prince of the Latin Comedians, for tho' most of 'em are lost, and consequently little capable of being judg'd of, yet, from all Circumstances, we have good reason to presume that they never came up to Plautus; so that there is no one to stand in competition with him but Terence: But if Comedy consists more in Action than Discourse, then Terence himself must be oblig'd to give place to our Author; and as Terence ought to be esteem'd as a Man who spoke admirably, Plautus is to be admir'd as a Comick-Poet. The principal Differences of these two Poets have been touch'd upon in the Preface

to the English Terence; and from thence it will appear, that Plautus had the vaster Genius, and Terence the more exquisite Judgment; and, considering what Persons they copied, as the later was call'd the Half Menander, so the former may be stil'd the Half Aristophanes.

Terence's Stile was generally more refin'd and pure, and withal more elaborate than this Poet's; yet undoubtedly, Plautus was a most absolute Master of his Tongue, and in many Places there appear such a Sharpness and Liveliness of Expression, nay and such a Neatness and Politeness too, that is scarce to be found in Terence; and this, perhaps, may have occasion'd Varro to say, That if the Muses were to speak Latin, they wou'd certainly make use of his very Stile; and Tanaquill Faber to call Plautus, The very Fountain of pure Latin. As to Wit and Raillery, Terence might by no means be compared to him; then he is not always so happy, but often degenerates to a Meanness that Terence wou'd never have been guilty of; and tho' his Jests and Repartees were sometimes admirable, and often far above Terence's, yet they were many times as much below him, and by their Trifling and Quibbling, appear to have been calculated for the Mob. This, probably, made Rapin observe, That he says the best Things in the World, and yet very often he says the most wretched. A little before he says, *Plautus* is ingenious in his Designs, happy in his Imaginations, fruitful in his Invention; yet, that there are some insipid Jests that escape from him in the Taste of *Horace*; and his good Sayings that make the People laugh, make sometimes the honestest sort to pity him. The most remarkable Thing in his Stile, is the natural and unaffected Easiness of it, I mean in opposition to Stiffness, which with the true Elegance and Propriety of the Latin Tongue in Common Discourse, seems almost its distinguishing Character, and sets him above any other Roman Author in that respect. 'Tis true, Terence has all these Excellencies, and perhaps is more exact in Propriety of Terms, and in his Choice of Words, yet his extream Closeness and great Elaborateness, I presume, has made it somewhat less Free and Familiar, or at least it wou'd be so if any other Man of less Judgment had managed it. So that what I mean is, that Plautus's Stile ought rather to be imitated for Common Discourse than Terence's. Plautus had the Misfortune of living in a worsed Age than Terence, therefore there must be a larger Allowance for his Obsolete Words, his Puns, and Quibbles, as well as those Words that were peculiar to the Theatre and his Subjects, which, if once transplanted, wou'd never thrive elsewhere.

Next, may be consider'd our Authors Characters; and in that point indeed, Terence triumphs without a Rival, as was observ'd in the Preface to that Author; and for a just and close Observance of Nature, perhaps no Man living ever excell'd him. It ought to be observ'd, that Plautus was somewhat poor, and made it his principal Aim to please and tickle the Common People; and since they were almost always delighted with something new, strange, and unusual, the better to humour them, he was not only frequently extravagant in his Expressions, but likewise in his Characters too, and drew Men often more Vicious, more Covetous, more Foolish, &c. than generally they were; and this to set the People a gazing and wondering. With these sort of Characters many of our modern Comedies abound, which makes 'em too much degenerate into Farce, which seldom fail of pleasing the Mob. But our Author had not many of these; for a great part of 'em were very true and natural, and such as may stand the Test of the severest Judges. His two most remarkable Characters, are his Miser, and his Bragadocio; and that the Reader may the more clearly understand the nature of these Characters, their Resemblance to some of ours, and their Unlikeness to those of Terence, I shall give a Translation of some part of 'em. First then, take the First Act of his Third Comedy call'd *Aulularia*, which begins with the Old Covetous Fellow and his Maid.

Euclio and Staphila.

Euc. Out-a-doors, I say: Come out. I'll fetch ye out with a Horse-pox, for a damnable, prying, nine-ey'd Witch.

Sta. Why do you misuse a poor Rogue at this rate?

Euc. To make ye a poor Rogue as long as you live, like a Jade as you are.

Sta. But why, Sir, am I thrust out-a-doors now?

Euc. Must I give you an account, you hempen Bitch?— Get you from the Door:— that way:— See how the Jade moves.— Observe what you'll meet with. If I take a good Cudgel or a Whip, 'sbud, I shall soon put you out o' your Snails pace.

Sta. softly:] Wou'd I were hang'd out o' the way, rather than be bound to serve such an old Rogue.

Euc. How the Jipsey mutters to her self!— Faith, I shall spoil those damn'd eyes, then look what I'm doing if you can.— Huzzy, go further off:— Further still:— Further still:— Still, I say.— So! stand there.— Now, you Baggage, stir one step, move a hairs breadth, or look back i' the least till I speak, and by Cocks-nowns, I'll hang y' up in an instant.— [*To himself, going off.*] I ne're met with a more subtle old Hag than this i' my days: I'm cursedly afraid this Witch shou'd trap me in my discourse, and discover the place where I've hid my Gold: Troth, I believe the consuming Jade has Eyes in her Breech.— Now for my Gold, that has cost me such a woful deal of trouble, I'll go see whether that be safe as I hid it. [*Exit Euclio.*

Staphila alone.

As I live, I can't devise or imagine what Evil Genius or Madness has possess'd my Master; he uses me so inhumanely; and kicks me out a doors ten times a day. Troth, it puzzles me strangely to find out the meaning of his crazy Whims: He watches whole Nights together; and sits all day long within doors, like a lame Cobler upon his Stall.— Well, considering these Plagues, and the

difficulty of concealing my young Mistresses Labour, now at hand, I find no way but making a short cut, and hanging my self.

Re-enter Euclio.

Euc. Now I've found all well within doors, my mind's a little at ease.— Now come in, and keep House.

Sta. What, for fear it shou'd be stolen away? There's no Plunder for Thieves; there's nothing but Emptiness and Cobwebs.

Euc. I'll warrant ye, I must keep a House like an Emperor for your sake, you old Sorceress? Huzzy, I'll have every Cobweb taken care of, and preserv'd.

a4

I'm very poor, I confess; but I patiently bear what the Gods lay upon me.— Get ye in, and make fast the door; I'll be back presently. Take a special care you don't let e're a Soul come within the doors; and that they mightn't pretend an Excuse to borrow Fire, I'll ha' ye put it all out: If there be any now, out with't in an instant. If they want Water, tell 'em the Pump is dry; if they wou'd borrow a Knife, an Axe, a Mortar, or a Pestil, as Neighbours us'd to do, tell 'em the House was robb'd, and they're all stolen. 'Sbud, I'll ha' no body set a step within my House when I'm gone; therefore if *Good-luck* her self shou'd come, I charge ye keep her out.

Sta. Troth, you needn't fear her coming; for were she at the Threshold, she'd ne're come in.

Euc. Hold your prating Tongue, and get ye in.

Sta. To please you, I'll do both.

Euc. And besure you secure the Door with two great Bolts: I'll be here instantly.

[*Exit* Staphila.

Euclio alone.

O, I'm wretchedly perplex'd that I'm forc'd to go out a doors now; and troth, it goes sore against my mind; however, 'tis upon sure grounds. For now's the time for our Officer to distribute the Money to the Poor: Now if I shou'd be negligent, and not be among the Beggars, I'm afraid the World wou'd presently conclude, that I had got Gold at home. For 'tis n't likely such a poor Fellow as I pretend to be, shou'd so little value Money, as not to be there. Notwithstanding my restless care of concealing this Gold, it strangely runs in my Head, that all the World knows of it, and every body seems to be more obliging, and to complement me more than ever. They meet me, stay me, embrace me, enquire after my Health, my Welfare, and every thing.— Well, I'll go, and be back again as soon as possibly. [*Exit.*

Here we see a considerable deal of the strange Nature of this old miserable Fellow; and this Character he has carry'd through the whole Play: But to see his Humour a little more perfectly, take part of the fourth Scene of the second Act; where the Servant Strobulus and the two Cooks are discoursing about this Miser.

Strobulus and Congrio.

Stro. A Pumice-stone is not half so dry as that old Huncks.

Con. Say ye so, introth?

Stro. Take this from me. If the least Smoke shou'd chance to fly out of his House, he strait allarms the Town, exclaims against Heaven and Earth, that he's undone, and ruin'd for ever!— I'll tell ye: whene're he goes to Bed he tyes a Bladder at his Nose.

Con. What for?

Stro. For fear of losing part of his Soul when he's asleep.

Con. And doesn't he plug up his lower Bung-hole too, lest any shou'd steal out that way?

Stro. 'Tis civil to believe me, since I do you.

Con. Why, truly, I do believe ye.

Stro. Did you never hear, how it goes to the Soul of him to pour out the Water he has once wash'd his hands in?

Con. Do'st think, Boy, we shall be able to squeeze out a swinging sum of Money of this old Gripes, to purchase our Freedom with?

Stro. Troth, shou'd ye beg Hunger it self of him, the Wretch wou'd deny ye. Nay more; whenever he gets his Nails to be cut, he carefully scrapes up all the Parings, and saves 'em.

Con. Why, faith, this is the most miserable Cur upon the face of the Earth.— But is he really such a pinching Wretch as you say?

Stro. Why t'other day a Kite chanc'd to steal a bit of something from him; this poor Devil goes strait to my *Lord Chief Justice's*, crying, roaring, and houling for his Warrant to apprehend it.— O, I cou'd tell ye a thousand of these Stories, if I had leisure.

This is stretching of a Character a degree above Nature and Probability; yet these sort, at first sight, will glare and dazle a common Audience, and sometimes give a superficial Pleasure to a more judicious one; but are carefully to be avoided by any correct Writer.

His Miles Gloriosus, or Braggadocio, is as remarkable a Character as this, and there you may see another too in the same place, one who wheadles as much as the other boasts, and plays the

Knave as much as the other does the Fool. For the Reader's Satisfaction, here follows a Translation of the first Act of the Miles Gloriosus, which begins between that Blockhead and his Buffoon.

Pyrgopolinices, with his Servant Artotrogus, and his Soldiers.

Pyr. to his Soldiers.] Take care to have my Buckler out-shine the resplendent Sun, when the Heavens are serene; so that in the midst o' the Battel, I may dazle the Eyes of my Enemies, and confound every man of 'em.— In the mean time, I'll comfort my bold *Bilbo*, that he might n't be dull and melancholly for want of use this long time; for the poor Rogue is damnably eager to slice all my Foes, and make a Hash of 'em.— But where's *Artotrogus*?

Art. Here, an't like your Honour, ready to wait upon a Man o' the greatest Fortitude and Fortune i' th' Universe, and o' the most majestick Air; then for personal Valour, Lord, *Mars* himself dare n't pretend to measure Swords with you.

Pyr. You mean him in the spacious *Gurgustidonian* Plains, the mighty Generalissimo, *Bombomachides*— *Cluninstaridy*— *Sarchides*, great *Neptune's* Grand-child?—

Art. —The same, Sir. Him with the golden Armour, whose whole Army you blew away with a single Puff, like Leaves before the Wind, and Feathers in a Storm.

Pyr. By *Hercules*, 'twas nothing.

Art. No, faith, Sir, nothing at all to what I can relate,— [*Aside*] but the Devil a bit of Truth's in't. If any Man can shew me a greater Lyer, or a more bragging Coxcomb than this Blunderbuss, he shall take me, make me his Slave, and starve me with Whey and Butter-milk— Well, Sir?

Pyr. Where are you?

Art. Here, Sir:— Wonderful! how you broke the great *Indian* Elephants Arm with your single Fist?

Pyr. What Arm?

Art. I wou'd ha' said Thigh.

Pyr. Pshaw, I did that with ease.

Art. By *Jove*, Sir, had you us'd your full Strength, you'd ha' flead, gutted, and bon'd the huge Beast at once.

Pyr. I wou'd not ha' ye relate all my Acts at this time.

Art. Really, Sir, 'tis impossible to innumerate all your noble Acts that I have been Spectator of.— [*Aside.*] 'Tis this Belly of mine creates me all this Plagues. My Ears must bear this Burden, for fear my Teeth shou'd want Work; and to every Lye he tells, I must swear to.

Pyr. What was I going to say?—

Art. O, Sir, I know your meaning.— 'Twas a noble Exploit; I remember't very well.

Pyr. What was't?

Art. Whatever you perform'd, was so.

Pyr. Ha' ye a Table-Book here?

Art. D'ye want one, Sir?— Here's a Pencil too.

Pyr. Thou'st ingeniously accommodated thy Sentiments to mine.

Art. O, 'tis my Duty to adapt my Manners to your Nod, and always keep 'em within the compass of your Commands.

Pyr. Well, how many can you remember?

Art. I remember a hundred and fifty *Cilicians*, a hundred *Sycolatronideans*, thirty *Sardeans*, and threescore *Macedonians*, you slew in one day.

Pyr. And how many are there in all?

Art. Seven thousand.

Pyr. That's right. You're an excellent Arithmetician.

Art. I have 'em *in capite*, tho' not in black and white.

Pyr. Truly, a prodigious Memory!

Art. That's owing to your Table.

Pyr. As long as you proclaim my Honour, you shall never want eating: my Table shall be always free to receive ye.

Art. Then in *Cappadocia*, Sir, where you wou'd ha' certainly cut off five hundred Men, had not your Sword been a little blunt; and those but the Relicts of the Infantry you had just defeated,— [*Aside*] if there were any such in being.— But why shou'd I mention these things, when the whole World knows how much the mighty *Pyrgopolinices* excels the rest of Mortals in Valour, Beauty, and Renown'd Exploits. All the Ladies in Town are ready to run mad for ye; troth, and all the reason i'the World for't, since you've so charming a Countenance. As yesterday, some of 'em catch'd me by the Cloak, and—

Pyr. Prithee, what did they say o' me?

[*Smiling.*

Art. They fell to questioning: *Prithee*, says one, *is n't this the stout Achillis? His Brother indeed,*

quoth I. *Let me dye, says another, if he be n't a wonderful handsome Man, how nobly he looks, and how gracefully he wears his Hair! What a prodigious Happiness 'tis to be his Bed-fellow!*

Pyr. Said she so, i' faith?

[*Laughing.*

Art. And more than that, begg'd of me, for God's sake, to get ye to pass that way, that they might see how triumphantly you march'd along.

Pyr. This same extraordinary Beauty brings a Man to extraordinary Inconveniencies.

Art. Well, strangely importunate they were, they nothing but begg'd, pray'd, and conjur'd me to bless 'em with a sight of ye; nay, they sent for me so often, that I was sometimes forc'd to neglect your Business.

Pyr. I think 'tis high time to be marching to the Piazza, and pay off the Soldiers I listed yesterday; for the King was very earnest with me to do him the favour of raising him some new Levies. This day have I appointed to pay him a Visit.

Art. Let's be marching then.

Pyr. Guards, follow your Leader.

Exeunt omnes.

I need not make many Reflections upon this Scene; but for the clearer perceiving of it, let us bring it to the Touch-stone of Nature, that is, compare it with Terence, and shew how modestly he has manag'd the same Subject and Characters, to wit, his Thraso and Gnatho, in the beginning of the third Act of his Eunuch.

Thraso and Gnatho.

Thra. Was the Lady so extremely thankful?

Gna. O, vastly, Sir.

Thra. And wonderfully pleas'd, say ye?

Gna. Really, Sir, not so much for the present as the honorable Person who bestow'd it; and for that, Sir, she triumphs above measure.

Thra. Truly, 'tis my peculiar Fortune, to have every thing I do most gratefully receiv'd.

Gna. Faith, Sir, I've observ'd as much.

Thra. Why the King of *Persia*, whenever I did him a Kindness, was extremely sensible of it: He was n't so to others.

Gna. A smart Tongue so well hung as yours, Sir, can obtain that Glory with Ease which cost others so much Toil and Labour.

Thra. Right.

Gna. The Monarch has you in his Eye then?

Thra. Right again.

Gna. And wears you next his heart?

Thra. Very true: And trusts all his Army and Secrets to my Discretion.

Gna. Prodigious!

Thra. Then if he happen'd to be tir'd with Company, or fateagu'd with Business, and was desirous of Ease,— as tho',— you know what I mean.

Gna. Yes, Sir:— As tho, when he had a mind to clear his Stomach, as a Man may say, of all Concerns,—

Thra. Right: Then was I his only Companion hand to fist.

Gna. Ay marry Sir! This is a Monarch indeed.

Thra. Oh! he's a Man of a thousand.

Gna. Yes, one of a million, if he chose you for his Companion.

Thra. All the Officers envy'd me, and grumbl'd at me behind my back; but I valued it not: They envy'd me intolerably: But above all, one who had the Charge o' the vast *Indian* Elephants. One day, this Fellow being more turbulent than the rest, I snap'd him up; *Prithee Strato*, said I, *why art thou so fierce? Is't because you're Lord o' the wild beasts?*

Gna. Neatly said, as I hope to live; and shrewdly. Bless me! you overthrow Man and Beast.— What said he, Sir?

Thra. Not a word.

Gna. Nay, I can't tell how he shou'd.

Thra. But, *Gnatho*, did I never tell you how sharp I was upon a young *Rhodian* Spark at a Feast?

Gna. Never, Sir; let's hear't, by all means.— He has told it me a thousand times. [*Aside.*

Thra. Why this *Rhodian* Spark I told ye of, was with me at a Feast, where I happen'd to have a small Girl: This Stripling began to be sweet upon her, and waggish upon me too. *How now, you impudent Saucebox*, said I; *you're Man's meat your self, and yet have a mind to a Tid-bit.*

Gna. Ha, ha, he.

Thra. What's the matter, hah?

Gna. Very fine, sharp, and delicate; that cou'd not be mended. But pray, Sir, was this your own? I took it for an old Jest.

Thra. Did you ever hear't before?

Gna. Often, Sir; and it takes to a miracle.

Thra. They're oblig'd to me for't.

Gna. I'm sorry tho', you were so sharp upon the foolish young Gentleman. But pray, Sir, what did he say then?

Thra. He was quite dash'd out of Countenance; and the whole Company ready to dye with laughing. After that, every body stood in great awe of me.

Gna. And truly they had reason.

Here may be seen Bragging and Wheadling sufficiently, but still Nature closely observ'd, and all its due proportions; whereas the other has too much out-gone Probability, and strain'd his Characters to an extravagant pitch. I shall not criticise upon the Particulars, but leave the Reader to judge their Differences; but only I may observe, that when Characters are carry'd too high, as many of ours are, they may probably make an Audience laugh very heartily, but can give 'em but small Pleasure; whereas others will give 'em great Delight, tho' less Laughter.

I am afraid I have dwelt too long upon this Subject, therefore I pass on to our Author's Plots. In that respect, he had not often that Art and Management that Terence had, nor in all his Plays was so regular as he; tho' in several he was, particularly in those I have chosen. But then his Scenes were commonly less languishing, his Incidents more surprizing, and his Surprizes more admirable; undoubtedly he had more of the *Vis comica*, which I may translate Liveliness of Intreague, than Terence. His Subjects were all more Simple than the other's, but I am apt to believe, that will be reckon'd but a very small Commendation in our Nation, who are but little Lovers of such thin Dyet, as they call it. His Narrations are more lively and sharp than those of Terence's, and, I think, every whit as natural and as well brought in: I'm sure in some of 'em he can never be out-done as to his way of bringing of 'em in. As for the General Rules of the Stage, I refer the Reader to the Preface to Terence.

Our Author's principal Fault was, his mixing the Representation with the Theatral Action in many places, where he often makes his Actors speak immediately and directly to the Spectators; a Fault that Terence was not wholly free from. This our modern Plays, I think, are never guilty of; only in our Monologues and Asides, our Actors have got a custom of looking so full upon the Spectators, that it seems but one degree better. But our Author is not guilty of this in these three Plays, except in *Amphitryon*, and that by way of Prologue, or of any other Faults but what, I believe, I have shewn in my Remarks. And these that I have here chosen, are no ways inferior to Terence's in matters of Plot and Intreague, but in some respects superior, tho' not so elaborately wrought up, or always with that Niceness; so that these may undoubtedly prove excellent Models for our Poets Imitation, provided they observe Differences of Tastes, Humours, Ages, and Persons, and keep to those principal Beauties they already possess, some of which are undoubtedly above the Ancients. Only Terence will teach 'em one thing that Plautus does not, to wit, the great Cunning of working in Under-Plots, and still preserving the Unity of Action; for Plautus has none of them. As for the Necessity of Rules, the Objections against 'em, and the wonderful Perfection our Plays might arrive to by a more close Observance of 'em, I must once more refer my Reader to the Preface to Terence. It was principally upon the Poets Account, and for all such as are desirous of understanding and judging the Excellencies of Dramatick Poetry, that I translated these Plays. If it be objected, that the Poets, Criticks, and Lovers, as well as Judges of Dramatick Poetry, do most of 'em understand the Original; I must deny the Truth of it, tho' several of 'em do: But if they did, these will be much more proper for their Design, especially by means of the Notes and Remarks; and the Reasons I urg'd for the translation of Terence, bear a greater force in this Author, for here is a greater Obscurity, by reason of corrupted Copies, wrong Points, false Divisions of whole Acts as well as Scenes, besides a greater number of knotty and obscure Passages, than in Terence.

Tho' this was my principal, it was not my only Design of translating this Author, for I had all the way an Eye to School boys, and Learners of the Latin Tongue: Therefore, upon that account, I have not only kept perfectly close to his Sence, but almost always to his Words too; a thing not only extream difficult in an Author so frequently verbose, but oftentimes dangerous too: And for an Instance, I need not go any further than the very first Sentence of the Prologue to *Amphitryon*, which if I had made shorter, I cou'd have made better. I can't forbear mentioning a Passage in the third Act of the same Play, which just now comes to my remembrance:

Nam certo si sis sanus, aut sapias satis,
Quam tu impudicam esse arbitrare, & prædicas,
Cum ea tu sermonem nec joco, nec serio
Tibi habeas, nisi sis stultior stultissimo.

Which I have translated, perhaps, too closely thus; I'm sure, had ye either Wit, or Discretion, or weren't the greatest Fool in Nature, you'd ne'er hold Discourse, either in Mirth or Earnest, with the Woman you believe and declare a Strumpet. I'm confident many other Translators wou'd not have been so scrupulously nice, but have made shorter work of it. But I have not only been so

scrupulous in this Case, but I have likewise imitated all his Faults and Imperfections, whenever I cou'd do it without extream Injury to the Translation; I speak of his Puns, Quibbles, Rhimes, Gingles, and his several ways of playing upon words; which indeed were the Faults of his Age, as it was of ours in Shakespear's and Johnson's days, and of which Terence, as correct as he is, is not perfectly clear. Our Author's playing upon words are of that various nature, and so frequent too, I need not go far for a single Instance, which shall be in the fore part of the Prologue to Amphitryon:

Justam rem & facilem esse oratum à vobis volo.
Nam juste ab justis sum orator datus.
Nam injusta ab justis impetrare non decet:
Justa autem ab injustis petere, insipientia 'st:
Quippe illi iniqui jus ignorant, neque tenent.

b2 Which I have translated thus: I desire nothing but what's reasonable, and feasible; for 'tis a reasonable God requires Reason from a reasonable People; but to require Roguery from reasonable People, is base; and to expect Reason from Rascals, is nonsense; since such People neither know Reason nor observe it. Our Author's Wit did many times consist in his playing upon Words; a great pity indeed, for a person who was so well able to writ after a more substantial way, of which we have many remarkable Instances. Besides his Quibbling, partly from his Carelessness and Necessities, he hath sometimes a vein of Trifling, which was but very indifferent; and on those places the Reader must make some allowance for the translation, and not expect more than the Matter will well bear. As for our Author's Jests and Repartees, for what we know of 'em, I took a particular care in preserving their Force; and for the most part, I presume, I have done it in a great measure, sometimes by a lucky hit; or a peculiar happiness of our Tongue, other times by a little Liberty taken, and when all have fail'd, the Remarks have generally supply'd the Defect, a way I was forc'd to content my self withal in many places; the worse they were, they were frequently more difficult to preserve, therefore I thought it as well to slur over some few of the meaner sort. Several of his Jests and bits of Satyr are undoubtedly lost to us, not only in respect of our Language, but also our Knowledge, and this sometimes makes his Sence a little obscure. And as the Sence of an Author ought to be his Translator's chiefest Care, so it has been mine; and tho' I cannot affirm, that I have kept to it in every passage, yet I believe I have often done it where a common Reader will think I have not; and I think it no commendation to my self to say I have hit it on many places where the Common Interpreters have missed.

After all, I dare not pretend to say, that this Translation equals the Original, for there is such a peculiar Air in this Author as well as Terence, that our Tongue seems incapable of, or at least it does so to me. Yet still if 'twere always read with the Original, it wou'd make far more for me than otherwise. In short, the Reader ought to look upon this as a Translation of an Author who had several Faults, and such places, as the English must of necessity appear mean, being little better in the Original; and likewise as an Author of Antiquity, some of whose Customs and Manners will appear a little uncouth and unsightly, in spite of all a Translator's Care. I endeavour'd to be as like my Author as I cou'd, especially in that which I reckon his distinguishing Character, to wit, the natural and unaffected easiness of his Stile, and as this seems the most capable of imitation, so I believe I have been more successful in this Particular than in any other: and that is the main Reason I have had so many Abbreviations, to make it appear still more like common Discourse, and the usual way of speaking. Perhaps I may be thought to have been too bold in that point, because I have had some that are not usual in Prose; therefore I don't set this way as a Copy for any one to follow me in, nor shall I use it myself in any other Piece. I have all the way divided the Acts and Scenes according to the true Rules of the Stage, which are extreamly false in all the Editions of this Author, especially the Scenes.

To make this Translation the most useful that I cou'd, I have made Remarks upon each Play, and those are of two sorts, tho' equally intermix'd: The first, to shew the Author's chief Excellencies as to his Contrivance and Management of his Plots and Incidents; the second, to discover several Beauties of Stile and Wit, principally such as are not very clear, or cannot well be preserv'd in our Tongue; and those are likewise to vindicate my Translation. Several of these I must own my self oblig'd to Madam Dacier for, or at least the hint, tho' some of 'em I cou'd not have miss'd of in the prosecution of those Designs I aim'd at. I have borrow'd little or nothing from any other, for her's are far the best Notes I ever met with, tho' many of 'em were done more to shew her Parts and Reading than for any real use, a thing which I shall never aim at. I have been forc'd in most of 'em to be extream nice and curious in penetrating into the bottom of the Author, for I find it far more difficult to discover a Beauty than a Fault. I might have enlarg'd upon 'em, and have made several more, with good grounds, but I thought it dangerous to say all that cou'd be said; but instead of that I was forc'd, much against my will, to dash out several of those upon Amphitryon upon the account of the Printer, but the rest are more full and compleat.

If business wou'd have permitted me, I shou'd have ventur'd upon three more of our Authors Plays; and upon that Account, I have taken somewhat less time than was necessary for the translating such an extraordinary difficult Author; for this requires more than double the time of a Historian or the like, which was as much as I cou'd allow my self. I made choice of these three Plays as well for their Modesty as Regularity, for above all things I wou'd by no means give the least Encouragement to Lewdness or Obscenity, which grow too fast of themselves; and therefore I thought I cou'd not chuse better than after a Lady. Amphitryon had the Name, and never fail'd of a general Approbation; Epidicus was our Author's Favourite, and truly there is much Art in it, tho' it is a little heavy; and Rudens is in several respects a better Play than any of Plautus's or Terence's. I'm afraid Amphitryon will bear the worse in our Tongue, upon the Account of Mr.

Dryden's, whose Improvements are very extraordinary; but considering Mr. Dryden's Management is of such a different Nature, this will still be as useful and as proper for my Design, or at least to School-boys and Learners. I must do that great Man the Justice in saying, that he has not only much improved the Humour, Wit, and Design in many places, but likewise the Thoughts. I'll mention one, which just now comes into my mind. Alcmena in the Second Act complains thus: How poor and short are this Life's Pleasures, if once compar'd with the Sorrows we endure? 'Tis Man's Destiny, and Heaven's Pleasure, to mix our Joys with bitter Potions; and for some few Hours of Satisfaction, we meet with Ages of Ills and Troubles. Mr. Dryden, by the help of Blank Verse, and a little more room, has better'd it extreamly.

Ye niggard Gods! you make our Lives too long:
You fill 'em with Diseases, Wants, and Woes,
And only dash 'em with a little Love;
Sprinkled by Fits, and with a sparing Hand.
Count all our Joys, from Childhood ev'n to Age,
They wou'd but make a Day of ev'ry Year:

And to carry it on further yet, and to make it appear more fine and clear, he says,

Take back your Sev'nty Years, (the stint of Life)
Or else be kind, and cram the Quintessence
Of Sev'nty Years into sweet Sev'nty Days:
For all the rest is flat, insipid Being.

I mention this the rather, because it may serve for one Instance of what Improvements our Modern Poets have made on the Ancients, when they built upon their Foundations. For we find that many of the fine things of the Ancients are like Seeds, that, when planted on English Ground by a Skilful Poet's Hand, thrive, and produce excellent Fruit.

But I'm afraid this Preface has been too long and tedious for this small Piece; but the Press stays, and the hast I'm in will not permit me to make it shorter, or so much as review it; yet before I conclude, I must inform the Reader, that I had the Advantage of another's doing their Plays before me; from whose Translation I had very considerable Helps, especially in the Jests and Quibbles.

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