

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

PROLOGUE.

LACHES.

PHIDIPPUS.

PAMPHILUS.

PARMENO.

SOSIA.

BOY, \_and other Servants.\_

SOSTRATA.

MYRRHINA.

BACCHIS.

PHILOTIS.

SYRA.

NURSE, \_Servants to Bacchis, etc.\_

SCENE, ATHENS.

PROLOGUE.

This play is call'd the STEP-MOTHER. When first  
It was presented, such a hurricane,  
A tumult so uncommon interven'd,  
It neither could be seen nor understood:  
So taken were the people, so engag'd  
By a rope-dancer!--It is now brought on  
As a new piece: and he who wrote the play  
Suffer'd it not to be repeated then,  
That he might profit by a second sale.  
Others, his plays, you have already known;  
Now then, let me beseech you, know this too.

ANOTHER PROLOGUE.

I come a pleader, in the shape of prologue:  
Let me then gain my cause, and now grown old.  
Experience the same favor as when young;  
Who then recover'd many a lost play,  
Breath'd a new life into the scenes, and sav'd  
The author and his writings from oblivion.  
Of those which first I studied of Cæcilius,

In some I was excluded; and in some  
Hardly maintain'd my ground. But knowing well  
The variable fortunes of the scene,  
I was content to hazard certain toil  
For an uncertain gain. I undertook  
To rescue those same plays from condemnation,  
And labor'd to reverse your sentence on them;  
That the same Poet might afford me more,  
And no ill fortune damp young Genius in him.  
My cares prevail'd; the plays were heard; and thus  
Did I restore an Author, nearly lost  
Through the malevolence of adversaries,  
To study, labor, and the Poet's art.  
But had I at that time despis'd his plays,  
Or labor'd to deter him from the task,  
It had been easy to have kept him idle,  
And to have scar'd him from attempting more:  
For my sake, therefore, deign to hear with candor  
The suit I mean to offer to you now.

Once more I bring the STEP-MOTHER before you,  
Which yet in silence I might never play;  
So did confusion crush it: which confusion  
Your prudence may allay, if it will deign  
To second our endeavors.--When I first  
Began to play this piece, the sturdy Boxers,  
(The dancers on the rope expected too,)  
Th' increasing crowds, the noise and women's clamor,  
Oblig'd me to retire before my time.  
I, upon this occasion, had recourse  
To my old way. I brought it on again.  
In the first act I please: meanwhile there spreads  
A rumor of the Gladiators: then  
The people flock together, riot, roar,  
And fight for places. I meanwhile my place  
Could not maintain--To-day there's no disturbance;  
All's silence and attention; a clear stage:  
'Tis yours to give these games their proper grace.  
Let not, oh let not the Dramatic Art  
Fall to a few! let your authority  
Assist and second mine! if I for gain  
Ne'er overrated my abilities,  
If I have made it still my only care  
To be obedient to your will, oh grant  
That he who hath committed his performance  
To my defense, and who hath thrown himself  
On your protection, be not giv'n to scorn,  
And foul derision of his envious foes!

Admit this plea for my sake, and be silent;  
That other Poets may not fear to write,  
That I too may hereafter find it meet  
To play new pieces bought at my expense.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

\_PHILOTIS, SYRA.\_

PHI. Now, by my troth, a woman of the town  
Scarce ever finds a faithful lover, Syra.  
This very Pamphilus, how many times  
He swore to Bacchis, swore so solemnly  
One could not but believe him, that he never  
Would, in her lifetime, marry. See! he's married.

SYRA. I warn you, therefore, and most earnestly  
Conjure you, to have pity upon none.  
But plunder, fleece, and beggar ev'ry man  
That falls into your pow'r.

PHI. What! spare none?

SYRA. None.  
For know, there is not one of all your sparks  
But studies to cajole you with fine speeches,  
And have his will as cheaply as he can.  
Should not you, then, endeavor to fool them?

PHI. But to treat all alike is wrong.

SYRA. What! wrong?  
To be reveng'd upon your enemies?  
Or to snare those who spread their snares for you?  
--Alas! why have not I your youth and beauty,  
Or you my sentiments?

SCENE II.

\_Enter PARMENO.\_

PAR. (\_to SCRITUS within\_). If our old gentleman

Asks for me, tell him I'm this very moment  
Gone to the Port to seek for Pamphilus.  
D'ye understand my meaning, Scritus? If he asks,  
Tell him that; if he should not ask, say nothing;  
That this excuse may serve another time. (\_Comes forward.\_  
--But is not that Philotis? Whence comes she?  
Philotis, save you!

PHI. Save you, Parmeno!

SYRA. Save you, good Parmeno!

PAR. And save you, Syra!  
--Tell me, Philotis, where have you been gadding?  
Taking your pleasure this long time?

PHI. I've taken  
No pleasure, Parmeno, indeed. I went  
With a most brutal Captain hence to Corinth,  
There have I led a wretched life with him  
For two whole years.

PAR. Aye, aye, I warrant you  
That you have often wish'd to be in Athens;  
Often repented of your journey.

PHI. Oh,  
'Tis quite impossible to tell how much  
I long'd to be at home, how much I long'd  
To leave the Captain, see you, revel with you,  
After the good old fashion, free and easy.  
For there I durst not speak a single word,  
But what, and when the mighty Captain pleas'd.

PAR. 'Twas cruel in him thus to tie your tongue:  
At least, I'll warrant, that you thought it so.

PHI. But what's this business, Parmeno? this story  
That Bacchis has been telling me within?  
I could not have believ'd that Pamphilus  
Would in her lifetime marry.

PAR. Marry truly!

PHI. Why he is married: is not he?

PAR. He is.  
But I'm afraid 'twill prove a crazy match,  
And will not hold together long.

PHI. Heav'n grant it.  
So it turn out to Bacchis's advantage!  
But how can I believe this, Parmeno?  
Tell me.

PAR. It is not fit it should be told.  
Inquire no more.

PHI. For fear I should divulge it?  
Now Heav'n so prosper me, as I inquire,  
Not for the sake of telling it again,  
But to rejoice within myself.

PAR. All these  
Fair words, Philotis, sha'n't prevail on me  
To trust my back to your discretion.

PHI. Well;  
Don't tell me, Parmeno.--As if you had not  
Much rather tell this secret than I hear it.

PAR. She's in the right: I am a blab, 'tis true,  
It is my greatest failing.--Give your word  
You'll not reveal it, and I'll tell you.

PHI. Now  
You're like yourself again. I give my word.  
Speak.

PAR. Listen then.

PHI. I'm all ear.

PAR. Pamphilus  
Doted on Bacchis still as much as ever,  
When the old gentleman began to tease him  
To marry, in the common cant of fathers;  
--"That he was now grown old; and Pamphilus  
His only child; and that he long'd for heirs,  
As props of his old age." At first my master  
Withstood his instances, but as his father  
Became more hot and urgent, Pamphilus  
Began to waver in his mind, and felt  
A conflict betwixt love and duty in him.  
At length, by hammering on marriage still,  
And daily instances, th' old man prevail'd,  
And made a match with our next neighbor's daughter.  
Pamphilus did not take it much to heart,

Till just upon the very brink of wedlock:  
But when he saw the nuptial rites prepar'd,  
And, without respite, he must marry; then  
It came so home to him, that even Bacchis,  
Had she been present, must have pitied him.  
Whenever he could steal from company,  
And talk to me alone,--"Oh Parmeno,  
What have I done?" he'd cry.--"I'm lost forever.  
Into what ruin have I plung'd myself!  
I can not bear it, Parmeno. Ah wretch!  
I am undone."

PHI. Now all the powers of heav'n  
Confound you, Laches, for thus teasing him?

PAR. In short, he marries, and brings home his wife.  
The first night he ne'er touch'd her! nor the next.

PHI. How! he a youth, and she a maidenhead!  
Tipsy, and never touch her! 'Tis not likely;  
Nor do I think it can be true.

PAR. No wonder.  
For they that come to you come all desire:  
But he was bound to her against his will.

PHI. What followed upon this?

PAR. A few days after,  
Pamphilus, taking me aside, informs me,  
"That the maid still remain'd a maid for him;  
That he had hop'd, before he brought her home,  
He might have borne the marriage:--but resolving  
Within myself not to retain her long,  
I held it neither honesty in me,  
Nor of advantage to the maid herself,  
That I should throw her off to scorn:--but rather  
Return her to her friends, as I receiv'd her,  
Chaste and inviolate."

PHI. A worthy youth,  
And of great modesty!

PAR. "To make this public  
Would not, I think, do well: and to return her  
Upon her father's hands, no crime alleg'd,  
As arrogant: but she, I hope, as soon  
As she perceives she can not live with me,  
Will of her own accord depart."

PHI. But tell me;  
Went he meanwhile to Bacchis?

PAR. Every day.  
But she, as is the way you know, perceiving  
He was another's property, became  
More cross and mercenary.

PHI. Troth, no wonder.

PAR. Aye, but 'twas that detach'd him chiefly from her.  
For when he had examined well himself,  
Bacchis, and her at home; and had compar'd  
Their different manners; seeing that his bride,  
After the fashion of a lib'ral mind,  
Was decent, modest, patient of affronts,  
And anxious to conceal the wrongs he did her;  
Touch'd partly with compassion for his wife,  
And partly tir'd with t'other's insolence,  
He by degrees withdrew his heart from Bacchis,  
Transferring it to her, whose disposition  
Was so congenial to his own. Meanwhile  
An old relation of the family  
Dies in the isle of Imbrus. His estate  
Comes by the law to them; and our old man  
Dispatching thither, much against his will,  
The now-fond Pamphilus, he leaves his wife  
Here with his mother. The old gentleman  
Retir'd into the country, and but seldom  
Comes up to town.

PHI. But what is there in this  
That can affect the marriage?

PAR. You shall hear  
Immediately. At first, for some few days,  
The women seem'd to live on friendly terms:  
Till all at once the bride, forsooth, conceiv'd  
A wonderful disgust to Sostrata:  
And yet there was no open breach between them,  
And no complaints on either side.

PHI. What then?

PAR. If Sostrata, for conversation' sake,  
Went to the bride, she instantly withdrew,  
Shunning her company. At length, not able  
To bear it any longer, she pretends

Her mother had sent for her to assist  
At some home-sacrifice. Away she went.  
After a few days' absence, Sostrata  
Sent for her back. They made some lame excuse,  
I know not what. She sends again. No lady.  
Then after several messages, at last  
They say the gentlewoman's sick. My mistress  
Goes on a visit to her: not let in.  
Th' old gentleman, inform'd of all this, came  
On this occasion yesterday to town;  
And waited on the father of the bride.  
What pass'd between them, I as yet can't tell;  
And yet I long to know the end of this.  
--There's the whole business. Now I'll on my way.

PHI. And I: for there's a stranger here, with whom  
I have an assignation.

PAR. Speed the plow!

PHI. Parmeno, fare you well!

PAR. Farewell, Philotis! (\_Exeunt severally.\_

[Changes:

\_Harper\_  
\_PAR. (\_to SCRITUS within\_).  
...  
D'ye understand my meaning, Scritus?

\_Colman 1768\_  
\_PAR. (\_to SCIRTUS within\_).  
...  
D'ye understand my meaning, Scirtus?

\_Harper\_  
\_PAR. All these  
Fair words, Philotis, sha'n't prevail on me  
\_Colman 1768\_  
\_PAR. No, no:  
Fair words, Philotis, sha'n't prevail on me

\_Harper\_  
\_As arrogant: but she, I hope, as soon  
\_Colman 1768\_  
\_Is arrogant: but she, I hope, as soon

The women seem'd to live on friendly terms:  
\_Harper edition reads "The woman" \_



\_Harper\_  
\_Shunning her company. At length, not able  
\_Colman 1768\_  
\_Shunning her company. At length, unable]

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

\_LACHES, SOSTRATA.\_

LACH. Oh heav'n and earth, what animals are women!  
What a conspiracy between them all,  
To do or not do, love or hate alike!  
Not one but has the sex so strong in her,  
She differs nothing from the rest. Step-mothers  
All hate their Step-daughters: and every wife  
Studies alike to contradict her husband,  
The same perverseness running through them all.  
Each seems train'd up in the same school of mischief:  
And of that school, if any such there be,  
My wife, I think, is schoolmistress.

SOSTRA. Ah me!  
Who know not why I am accus'd.

LACH. Not know?

SOSTRA. No, as I hope for mercy! as I hope  
We may live long together!

LACH. Heav'n forbid!

SOSTRA. Hereafter, Laches, you'll be sensible  
How wrongfully you have accus'd me.

LACH. I?  
Accuse you wrongfully?----Is't possible  
To speak too hardly of your late behavior?  
Disgracing me, yourself, and family;  
Laying up sorrow for your absent son;  
Converting into foes his new-made friends,  
Who thought him worthy of their child in marriage.  
You've been our bane, and by your shrewishness

Brew'd this disturbance.

SOSTRA. I?

LACH. You, woman, you!  
Who take me for a stone, and not a man.  
Think ye, because I'm mostly in the country,  
I'm ignorant of your proceedings here?  
No, no; I know much better what's done here,  
Than where I'm chiefly resident. Because  
Upon my family at home depends  
My character abroad. I knew long since  
Philumena's disgust to you;----no wonder!  
Nay, 'twere a wonder, had it not been so.  
Yet I imagin'd not her hate so strong,  
'Twould vent itself upon the family:  
Which had I dream'd of, she should have remain'd,  
And you pack'd off.--Consider, Sostrata,  
How little cause you had to vex me thus.  
In complaisance to you, and husbanding  
My fortune, I retir'd into the country:  
Scraping, and laboring beyond the bounds  
Of reason, or my age, that my estate  
Might furnish means for your expense and pleasure.  
--Was it not then your duty, in return,  
To see that nothing happen'd here to vex me?

SOSTRA. 'Twas not my doing, nor my fault indeed.

LACH. 'Twas your fault, Sostrata; your fault alone.  
You was sole mistress here; and in your care  
The house, though I had freed you of all other cares.  
A woman, an old woman too, and quarrel  
With a green girl! oh shame upon't!--You'll say  
That 'twas her fault.

SOSTRA. Not I indeed, my Laches.

LACH. 'Fore Heav'n, I'm glad on't! on my son's account.  
For as for you, I'm well enough assur'd,  
No fault can make you worse.

SOSTRA. But prithee, husband,  
How can you tell that her aversion to me  
Is not a mere pretense, that she may stay  
The longer with her mother?

LACH. No such thing.  
Was not your visit yesterday a proof,

From their denial to admit you to her?

SOSTRA. They said she was so sick she could not see me.

LACH. Sick of your humors; nothing else, I fancy.  
And well she might: for there's not one of you  
But want your sons to take a wife: and that's  
No sooner over, but the very woman  
Which, by your instigation, they have married,  
They, by your instigation, put away.

[Changes:

\_Harper\_

You was sole mistress here; and in your care

\_Colman 1768\_

You were sole mistress here; and in your care]

SCENE II.

\_Enter PHIDIPPUS.\_

PHID. (\_to PHILUMENA within\_). Although, Philumena, I know  
my pow'r  
To force you to comply with my commands;  
Yet yielding to paternal tenderness,  
I e'en give way, nor cross your humor.

LACH. See,  
Phidippus in good time! I'll learn from him  
The cause of this.-- (\_Going up to him.\_) Phidippus, though I own  
Myself indulgent to my family,  
Yet my complacency and easiness  
Runs not to that extreme, that my good-nature  
Corrupts their morals. Would you act like me,  
'Twould be of service to both families.  
But you, I see, are wholly in their power.

PHID. See there!

LACH. I waited on you yesterday  
About your daughter: but I went away  
No wiser than I came. It is not right,  
If you would have the alliance last between us,  
To smother your resentment. If we seem  
In fault, declare it; that we may refute,  
Or make amends for our offense: and you  
Shall carve the satisfaction out yourself.

But if her sickness only is the cause  
Of her remaining in your family,  
Trust me, Phidippus, but you do me wrong,  
To doubt her due attendance at my house.  
For, by the pow'rs of heav'n, I'll not allow  
That you, although her father, wish her better  
Than I. I love her on my son's account;  
To whom, I'm well convinc'd, she is as dear  
As he is to himself: and I can tell  
How deeply 'twill affect him, if he knows this.  
Wherefore I wish she should come home again,  
Before my son's return.

PHID. My good friend Laches,  
I know your care, and your benevolence;  
Nor doubt that all is as you say; and hope  
That you'll believe I wish for her return,  
So I could but effect it.

LACH. What prevents it?  
Tell me, Phidippus! does she blame her husband?

PHID. Not in the least. For when I urg'd it home,  
And threaten'd to oblige her to return,  
She vow'd most solemnly she could not bear  
Your house, so long as Pamphilus was absent.  
--All have their failings: I am of so soft  
A nature, I can't thwart my family.

LACH. Ha, Sostrata! (\_To SOSTRATA, apart.\_)

SOSTRA. Wretch that I am! Ah me! (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. And her return's impossible? (\_To PHIDIPPUS.\_)

PHID. At present.  
--Would you aught else with me? for I have business  
That calls me to the Forum.

LACH. I'll go with you. (\_Exeunt.\_)

SCENE III.

\_Manet SOSTRATA.\_

SOSTRA. How unjustly  
Do husbands stretch their censures to all wives  
For the offenses of a few, whose vices

Reflect dishonor on the rest!--For, Heaven  
So help me, as I'm wholly innocent  
Of what my husband now accuses me!  
But 'tis no easy task to clear myself;  
So fix'd and rooted is the notion in them,  
That Step-Mothers are all severe.--Not I;  
For I have ever lov'd Philumena  
As my own daughter; nor can I conceive  
What accident has drawn her hatred on me.  
My son's return, I hope, will settle all;  
And, ah, I've too much cause to wish his coming. (\_Exit.\_)

[Changes:

\_Harper\_

For the offenses of a few, whose vices  
Reflect dishonor on the rest!--For, Heaven  
So help me, as I'm wholly innocent

\_Colman 1768\_

Because of the offences of a few,  
Whose faults reflect dishonour on the rest!  
--For, heav'n so help me, as I'm innocent]

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

\_Enter PAMPHILUS and PARMENO.\_

PAM. Never did man experience greater ills,  
More miseries in love than I.--Distraction!  
Was it for this I held my life so dear?  
For this was I so anxious to return?  
Better, much better were it to have liv'd  
In any place, than come to this again!  
To feel and know myself a wretch!--For when  
Mischance befalls us, all the interval  
Between its happening, and our knowledge of it,  
May be esteem'd clear gain.

PAR. But as it is,  
You'll sooner be deliver'd from your troubles:  
For had you not return'd, the breach between them  
Had been made wider. But now, Pamphilus,  
Both will, I doubt not, reverence your presence.

You'll know the whole, make up their difference,  
And reconcile them to each other.--These  
Are all mere trifles, which you think so grievous.

PAM. Ah, why will you attempt to comfort me?  
Was ever such a wretch?--Before I married,  
My heart, you know, was wedded to another.  
--But I'll not dwell upon that misery,  
Which may he easily conceiv'd: and yet  
I had not courage to refuse the match  
My father forc'd upon me.--Scarcely wean'd  
From my old love, my lim'd soul scarcely freed  
From Bacchis, and devoted to my wife,  
Than, lo, a new calamity arises,  
Threatening to tear me from Philumena.  
For either I shall find my mother faulty,  
Or else my wife: In either case unhappy.  
For duty, Parmeno, obliges me  
To bear with all the failings of a mother:  
And then I am so bounden to my wife,  
Who, calm as patience, bore the wrongs I did her,  
Nor ever murmur'd a complaint.--But sure  
'Twas somewhat very serious, Parmeno,  
That could occasion such a lasting quarrel.

PAR. Rather some trifle, if you knew the truth.  
The greatest quarrels do not always rise  
From deepest injuries. We often see  
That what would never move another's spleen  
Renders the choleric your worst of foes.  
Observe how lightly children squabble.--Why?  
Because they're govern'd by a feeble mind.  
Women, like children, too, are impotent,  
And weak of soul. A single word, perhaps,  
Has kindled all this enmity between them.

PAM. Go, Parmeno, and let them know I'm come.

( \_Noise within.\_ )

PAR. Ha! what's all this?

PAM. Hush!

PAR. I perceive a bustle,  
And running to and fro.--Come this way, Sir!  
--To the door!--nearer still!--There, there, d'ye hear?

( \_Noise continues.\_ )

PAM. Peace; hush! (\_Shriek within.\_) Oh Jupiter, I heard a shriek!

PAR. You talk yourself, and bid me hold my tongue.

MYRRHINA (\_within\_). Hush, my dear child, for Heaven's sake!

PAM. It seem'd  
The voice of my wife's mother. I am ruin'd!

PAR. How so?

PAM. Undone!

PAR. And why?

PAM. Ah, Parmeno,  
They hide some terrible misfortune from me!

PAR. They said your wife Philumena was ill:  
Whether 'tis that, I can not tell.

PAM. Death, Sirrah!  
Why did you not inform me that before?

PAR. Because I could not tell you all at once.

PAM. What's her disorder?

PAR. I don't know.

PAM. But tell me,  
Has she had no physician?

PAR. I don't know.

PAM. But why do I delay to enter straight,  
That I may learn the truth, be what it will?  
--Oh my Philumena, in what condition  
Shall I now find thee?--If there's danger of thee,  
My life's in danger too. (\_Exit.\_)

SCENE II.

\_PARMENO alone.\_

It were not good

That I should follow him into the house:  
For all our family are odious to them.  
That's plain from their denying Sostrata  
Admittance yesterday.--And if by chance  
Her illness should increase (which Heav'n forbid,  
For my poor master's sake!), they'll cry directly,  
"Sostrata's servant came into the house:"  
Swear,--"that I brought the plague along with me,  
Put all their lives in danger, and increas'd  
Philumena's distemper."--By which means  
My mistress will be blam'd, and I be beaten.

SCENE III.

\_Enter SOSTRATA.\_

SOSTRA. Alas, I hear a dreadful noise within.  
Philumena, I fear, grows worse and worse:  
Which Æsculapius, and thou, Health, forbid!  
But now I'll visit her. (\_Goes toward the house.\_)

PAR. Ho, Sostrata!

SOSTRA. Who's there?

PAR. You'll be shut out a second time.

SOSTRA. Ha, Parmeno, are you there?--Wretched woman!  
What shall I do?--Not visit my son's wife,  
When she lies sick at next door!

PAR. Do not go;  
No, nor send any body else; for they  
That love the folks, to whom themselves are odious,  
I think are guilty of a double folly:  
Their labor proves but idle to themselves,  
And troublesome to those for whom 'tis meant.  
Besides, your son, the moment he arriv'd,  
Went in to visit her.

SOSTRA. How, Parmeno!  
Is Pamphilus arriv'd?

PAR. He is.

SOSTRA. Thank Heav'n!  
Oh, how my comfort is reviv'd by that!



PAR. And therefore I ne'er went into the house.  
For if Philumena's complaints abate,  
She'll tell him, face to face, the whole affair,  
And what has pass'd between you to create  
This difference.--But here he comes--how sad!

SCENE IV.

\_Enter PAMPHILUS.\_

SOSTRA. My dear boy, Pamphilus!

PAM. My mother, save you! (\_Disordered.\_)

SOSTRA. I'm glad to see you safe return'd--How does  
Your wife!

PAM. A little better.

SOSTRA. Grant it, Heav'n!  
--But why d'ye weep, and why are you so sad?

PAM. Nothing, good mother.

SOSTRA. What was all that bustle?  
Tell me, did pain attack her suddenly?

PAM. It did.

SOSTRA. And what is her complaint?

PAM. A fever.

SOSTRA. What! a quotidian?

PAR. So they say.--But in,  
Good mother, and I'll follow.

SOSTRA. Be it so. (\_Exit.\_)

PAM. Do you run, Parmeno, to meet the servants,  
And give your help in bringing home the baggage.

PAR. As if they did not know the road!

PAM. Away! (\_Exit PARMENO.\_)

SCENE V.

\_PAMPHILUS alone.\_

Which way shall I begin the wretched tale  
Of my misfortunes, which have fall'n upon me  
Thus unexpectedly? which even now  
These very eyes have seen, these ears have heard?  
And which, discover'd, drove me out o'doors.  
Cover'd with deep confusion?--For but now  
As I rush'd in, all anxious for my wife,  
And thinking to have found her visited,  
Alas! with a far different complaint;  
Soon as her women saw me, at first sight  
Struck and o'erjoy'd, they all exclaim'd, "He's come!"  
And then as soon each countenance was chang'd,  
That chance had brought me so unseasonably.  
Meanwhile one of them ran before, to speak  
Of my arrival. I, who long'd to see her,  
Directly follow'd; and no sooner enter'd,  
Than her disorder was, alas! too plain:  
For neither had they leisure to disguise it,  
Nor could she silence the loud cries of travail.  
Soon as I saw it, "Oh shame, shame!" I cried,  
And rush'd away in tears and agony,  
O'erwhelm'd with horror at a stroke so grievous.  
The mother follows me, and at the threshold  
Falls on her knees before me all in tears.  
This touch'd me to the soul. And certainly  
'Tis in the very nature of our minds,  
To rise and fall according to our fortunes.  
Thus she address'd me.-- "Oh, my Pamphilus,  
The cause of her removal from your house  
You've now discover'd. To my virgin-daughter  
Some unknown villain offer'd violence;  
And she fled hither to conceal her labor  
From you and from your family."--Alas!  
When I but call her earnest prayers to mind,  
I can not choose but weep.--"Whatever chance,"  
Continued she, "whatever accident,  
Brought you to-day thus suddenly upon us,  
By that we both conjure you--if in justice  
And equity we may--to keep in silence,  
And cover her distress.--Oh, Pamphilus,  
If e'er you witness'd her affection for you,  
By that affection she implores you now  
Not to refuse us!--for recalling her,  
Do as your own discretion shall direct.  
That she's in labor now, or has conceiv'd

By any other person, is a secret  
Known but to you alone. For I've been told,  
The two first months you had no commerce with her,  
And it is now the seventh since your union.  
Your sentiments on this are evident.  
But now, my Pamphilus, if possible,  
I'll call it a miscarriage: no one else  
But will believe, as probable, 'tis yours.  
The child shall be immediately expos'd.  
No inconvenience will arise to you;  
While thus you shall conceal the injury  
That my poor girl unworthily sustain'd."  
--I promis'd her; and I will keep my word.  
But to recall her would be poor indeed:  
Nor will I do it, though I love her still.  
And former commerce binds me strongly to her.  
--I can't but weep, to think how sad and lonely  
My future life will be.--Oh fickle fortune!  
How transient are thy smiles!--But I've been school'd  
To patience by my former hapless passion,  
Which I subdued by reason: and I'll try  
By reason to subdue this too.--But yonder  
Comes Parmeno, I see, with th' other slaves!  
He must by no means now be present, since  
To him alone I formerly reveal'd  
That I abstain'd from her when first we married:  
And if he hears her frequent cries, I fear  
That he'll discover her to be in labor.  
I must dispatch him on some idle errand,  
Until Philumena's deliver'd.

SCENE VI.

\_Enter at a distance PARMENO, SOSIA, and other slaves with  
baggage.\_

PAR. (\_to SOSIA\_). Aye?  
And had you such a wretched voyage, say you?

SOSIA. Oh Parmeno, words can't express how wretched  
A sea-life is.

PAR. Indeed?

SOSIA. Oh happy Parmeno!  
You little know the dangers you've escap'd,  
Who've never been at sea.--For not to dwell  
On other hardships, only think of this!

I was on shipboard thirty days or more,  
In constant fear of sinking all the while,  
The winds so contrary, such stormy weather!

PAR. Dreadful!

SOSIA. I found it so, I promise you.  
In short, were I assur'd I must return,  
'Fore Heaven, Parmeno, I'd run away,  
Rather than go on board a ship again.

PAR. You have been apt enough to think of that  
On slighter reasons, Sosia, before now.  
--But yonder's my young master Pamphilus  
Standing before that door.--Go in! I'll to him,  
And see if he has any business for me.

( \_Exeunt SOSIA, and the rest of the slaves with the baggage. \_

Master, are you here still? ( \_To PAMPHILUS. \_)

PAM. Oh Parmeno!  
I waited for you.

PAR. What's your pleasure, Sir?

PAM. Run to the Citadel.

PAR. Who?

PAM. You.

PAR. The Citadel!  
For what?

PAM. Find out one Callidemides,  
My landlord of Mycone, who came over  
In the same ship with me.

PAR. A plague upon it!  
Would not one swear that he had made a vow  
To break my wind, if he came home in safety,  
With running on his errands?

PAM. Away, Sirrah!

PAR. What message? must I only find him out?

PAM. Yes; tell him that it is not in my power

To meet him there to-day, as I appointed;  
That he mayn't wait for me in vain.--Hence; fly!

PAR. But I don't know him, if I see him, Sir.

PAM. (\_impatiently\_). Well; I'll describe him, so you can not miss him.

--A large, red, frizzle-pated, gross, blear-eyed,  
Ill-looking fellow.

PAR. Plague on him, say I!  
--What if he should not come, Sir, must I wait  
Till evening for him?

PAM. Wait.--Be quick!

PAR. Be quick?  
I can't be quick,--I'm so much tir'd. (\_Exit.\_

SCENE VII.

\_PAMPHILOS alone.\_

He's gone.  
What shall I do? Alas! I scarcely know  
How to conceal, as Myrrhina desir'd,  
Her daughter's labor. Yet I pity her;  
And what I can, I am resolv'd to do,  
Consistent with my duty: for my parents  
Must be obey'd before my love.--But see!  
My father and Phidippus come this way.  
How I shall act, Heav'n knows.

[Changes:

\_Harper\_  
And what I can, I am resolv'd to do,  
Consistent with my duty: for my parents  
\_Colman 1768\_  
And what I can, consistent with my duty,  
I am resolv'd to do: and yet my parents

SCENE VIII.

\_Enter at a distance LACHES and PHIDIPPUS.\_

LACH. Did not you say

She only waited my son's coming?

PHID. Aye.

LACH. They say that he's arriv'd. Let us return then!

PAM. (\_behind\_). What reason I shall frame to give my father,  
For not recalling her, I can not tell.

LACH. (\_overhearing\_). Whose voice was that?

PAM. (\_to himself\_). And yet I am resolv'd  
To stand to my first purpose.

LACH. (\_seeing PAMPHILUS\_). He himself,  
Whom I was speaking of!

PAM. (\_going up\_). My father, save you!

LACH. Save you, my son!

PHID. Pamphilus, welcome home!  
I'm glad to see you safe, and in good health.

PAM. I do believe it.

LACH. Are you just now come?

PAM. Just now, Sir.

LACH. Well; and tell me, Pamphilus,  
What has our kinsman Phania left us?

PAM. Ah, Sir,  
He, his whole lifetime, was a man of pleasure,  
And such men seldom much enrich their heirs.  
Yet he has left at least this praise behind him,  
"While he liv'd, he liv'd well."

LACH. And have you brought  
Nothing home with you but this single sentence?

PAM. What he has left, though small, is of advantage.

LACH. Advantage? No, it is a disadvantage:  
For I could wish he was alive and well.

PHID. That you may safely; for your wishing for't  
Will never bring the man to life again:

Yet I know well enough which you'd like best. (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. (\_to PAMPHILUS\_). Phidippus order'd that Philumena  
Should be sent over to him yesterday.  
--Say that you order'd it. (\_Aside to PHIDIPPUS, thrusting him.\_)

PHID. (\_aside to LACHES\_). Don't thrust me so.----  
I did. (\_Aloud.\_)

LACH. But now he'll send her home again.

PHID. I will.

PAM. Nay, nay, I know the whole affair.  
Since my arrival, I have heard it all.

LACH. Now plague upon these envious tale-bearers,  
Who are so glad to fetch and carry news!

PAM. (\_to PHIDIPPUS\_). That I've endeavor'd to deserve no blame  
From any of the family, I'm conscious.  
Were it my inclination to relate  
How true I've been, how kind and gentle tow'rd her,  
I well might do it: but I rather choose  
You should collect it from herself. For when  
She, although now there's enmity between us,  
Bespeaks me fair, you will the sooner credit  
My disposition tow'rd her. And I call  
The Gods to witness that this separation  
Has not arisen from my fault. But since  
She thinks it is beneath her to comply  
With Sostrata, and bear my mother's temper;  
And since no other means are to be found  
Of reconciliation, I, Phidippus,  
Must leave my mother or Philumena.  
Duty then calls me to regard my mother.

LACH. My Pamphilus, I can not be displeas'd  
That you prefer to all the world a parent.  
But take heed your resentment don't transport you  
Beyond the bounds of reason, Pamphilus.

PAM. Ah, what resentment can I bear to her,  
Who ne'er did any thing I'd wish undone,  
But has so often deserv'd well of me?  
I love her, own her worth, and languish for her;  
For I have known her tenderness of soul:  
And Heaven grant that with some other husband  
She find that happiness she miss'd in me;

From whom the strong hand of necessity  
Divorces her forever!

PHID. That event  
'Tis in your pow'r to hinder.

LACH. If you're wise,  
Take your wife home again!

PAM. I can not, father.  
I must not slack my duty to my mother. (\_Going.\_)

LACH. Where are you going? (\_Exit PAMPHILUS.\_)

SCENE IX.

\_Manent LACHES and PHIDIPPUS.\_

PHID. How perverse is this! (\_Angrily.\_)

LACH. Did not I say he'd take it ill, Phidippus,  
And therefore begg'd you to send back your daughter?

PHID. 'Fore Heaven I did not think him such a churl.  
What! does he fancy I'll go cringing to him?  
No;--if he'll take his wife he may:--if not,  
Let him refund her portion;--there's an end!

LACH. See there now! you're as fractious as himself.

PHID. You're come back obstinate and proud enough  
In conscience, Pamphilus! (\_Angrily.\_)

LACH. This anger will subside,  
Though he has had some cause to be disturb'd.

PHID. Because you've had a little money left you,  
Your minds are so exalted!

LACH. What, d'ye quarrel  
With me too?

PHID. Let him take to-day to think on't,  
And send me word if he shall have her home  
Or not: that if she don't remain his wife,  
She may be given to another. (\_Exit hastily.\_)



SCENE X.

\_LACHES alone.\_

Stay!

Hear me! one word, Phidippus! Stay!--He's gone.

--What is't to me? (\_Angrily.\_) E'en let them settle it

Among themselves; since nor my son, nor he

Take my advice, nor mind one word I say.

--This quarrel shall go round, I promise them:

I'll to my wife, the author of this mischief,

And vent my spleen and anger upon her. (\_Exit.\_)

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

\_Enter MYRRHINA hastily.\_

MYRR. What shall I do?--Confusion!--which way turn?

Alas! what answer shall I make my husband?

For I dare say he heard the infant's cries,

He ran so hastily, without a word,

Into my daughter's chamber. If he finds

That she has been deliver'd, what excuse

To make, for having thus conceal'd her labor,

I can't devise.--But our door creaks!--'tis he.

I am undone.

SCENE II.

\_Enter PHIDIPPUS.\_

PHID. Soon as my wife perceiv'd

That I was going to my daughter's chamber,

She stole directly out o'doors.--But there

She stands.--Why, how now, Myrrhina?

Holo, I say! (\_She affects not to see him.\_)

MYRR. D'ye call me, husband?

PHID. Husband!

Am I your husband? am I ev'n a man?

For had you thought me to be either, woman,

You would not dare to play upon me thus.

MYRR. How!

PHID. How?--My daughter has been brought to bed.  
--Ha! are you dumb?--By whom?

MYRR. Is that a question  
For you, who are her father, to demand?  
Alas! by whom d'ye think, unless her husband?

PHID. So I believe: nor is it for a father  
To suppose otherwise. But yet I wonder  
That you have thus conceal'd her labor from us,  
Especially as she has been deliver'd  
At her full time, and all is as it should be.  
What! Is there such perverseness in your nature,  
As rather to desire the infant's death,  
Than that his birth should knit the bond of friendship  
Closer betwixt us; rather than my daughter,  
Against your liking, should remain the wife  
Of Pamphilus?--I thought all this  
Had been their fault, while you're alone to blame.

MYRR. How wretched am I!

PHID. Would to Heav'n you were!  
--But now I recollect your conversation  
When first we made this match, you then declar'd  
You'd not endure she should remain the wife  
Of Pamphilus, who follow'd mistresses,  
And pass'd the nights abroad.

MYRR. I had much rather  
He should think any reason than the true one. (\_Aside.\_)

PHID. I knew he kept a mistress; knew it long  
Ere you did, Myrrhina; but I could never  
Think that offense so grievous in a youth,  
Seeing 'tis natural to them all: and soon  
The time shall come when he'll stand self-reprov'd.  
But you, perverse and willful as at first,  
Could take no rest till you had brought away  
Your daughter, and annull'd the match I made:  
There's not a circumstance but loudly speaks  
Your evil disposition to the marriage.

MYRR. D'ye think me then so obstinate, that I,  
Who am her mother, should betray this spirit,

Granting the match were of advantage to us?

PHID. Is it for you then to foresee, or judge  
What's of advantage to us? You perhaps  
Have heard from some officious busy-body,  
That they have seen him going to his mistress,  
Or coming from her house: and what of that,  
So it were done discreetly, and but seldom?  
Were it not better that we should dissemble  
Our knowledge of it, than pry into things  
Which to appear to know would make him hate us?  
For could he tear her from his heart at once,  
To whom he'd been so many years attach'd,  
I should not think he were a man, or likely  
To prove a constant husband to my daughter.

MYRR. No more of Pamphilus or my offense;  
Since you will have it so!--Go, find him out;  
Confer with him alone, and fairly ask him,  
Will he, or no, take back Philumena?  
If he avows his inclination to't,  
Restore her; but if he refuses it,  
Allow, I've ta'en good counsel for my child.

PHID. Grant, he should prove repugnant to the match,  
Grant, you perceiv'd this in him, Myrrhina;  
Was not I present! had not I a right  
To be consulted in't?--It makes me mad.  
That you should dare to act without my order:  
And I forbid you to remove the child  
Out of this house.--But what a fool am I,  
Enjoining her obedience to my orders!  
I'll in, and charge the servants not to suffer  
The infant to be carried forth. (\_Exit.\_

SCENE III.

\_MYRRHINA alone.\_

No woman more unhappy than myself:  
For how he'd bear it, did he know the whole,  
When he has taken such offense at this,  
Which is of much less consequence, is plain.  
Nor by what means to reconcile him to it,  
Can I devise. After so many ills,  
This only misery there yet remain'd,  
To be oblig'd to educate the child,  
Ignorant of the father's quality.

For he, the cruel spoiler of her honor,  
Taking advantage of the night and darkness,  
My daughter was not able to discern  
His person; nor to force a token from him,  
Whereby he might be afterward discover'd:  
But he, at his departure, pluck'd by force  
A ring from off her finger.--I fear too,  
That Pamphilus will not contain himself,  
Nor longer keep our secret, when he finds  
Another's child acknowledg'd for his own. (\_Exit.\_)

SCENE IV.

\_SOSTRATA, PAMPHILUS.\_

SOSTRA. Dear son, I'm not to learn that you suppose,  
Though you dissemble your suspicions to me,  
That my ill-humor caus'd your wife's departure.  
But by my trust in Heav'n, and hopes in you,  
I never knowingly did any thing  
To draw her hatred and disgust upon me.  
I always thought you lov'd me, and to-day  
You have confirm'd my faith: for even now  
Your father has been telling me within,  
How much you held me dearer than your love.  
Now therefore, on my part, I am resolv'd  
To equal you in all good offices;  
That you may know your mother ne'er withholds  
The just rewards of filial piety;  
Finding it then both meet for your repose,  
My Pamphilus, as well as my good name,  
I have determin'd to retire directly  
From hence into the country with your father;  
So shall my presence be no obstacle,  
Nor any cause remain, but that your wife  
Return immediately.

PAM. What thoughts are these?  
Shall her perverseness drive you out of town?  
It shall not be: Nor will I draw, good mother,  
That censure on me, that my obstinacy,  
Not your good-nature, was the cause.--Besides,  
That you should quit relations, friends, diversions,  
On my account, I can't allow.

SOSTRA. Alas!  
Those things have no allurements for me now.  
While I was young, and 'twas the season for them,

I had my share, and I am satisfied.  
'Tis now my chief concern to make my age  
Easy to all, that no one may regret  
My lengthen'd life, nor languish for my death.  
Here, although undeservedly, I see  
My presence odious: I had best retire:  
So shall I best cut off all discontent,  
Absolve myself from this unjust suspicion,  
And humor them. Permit me then to shun  
The common scandal thrown upon the sex.

PAM. How fortunate in every thing but one,  
Having so good a mother,--such a wife!

SOSTRA. Patience, my Pamphilus! Is't possible  
You can't endure one inconvenience in her?  
If in all else, as I believe, you like her,  
Dear son, be rul'd by me, and take her home!

PAM. Wretch that I am!

SOSTRA. And I am wretched too:  
For this grieves me, my son, no less than you.

[Changes:

\_Harper\_  
Finding it then both meet for your repose,  
My Pamphilus, as well as my good name  
\_Colman 1768\_  
Finding it then both meet, my Pamphilus,  
For your repose, as well as my good name]

SCENE V.

\_Enter LACHES.\_

LACH. I have been standing at a distance, wife,  
And overheard your conversation with him.  
You have done wisely to subdue your temper,  
And freely to comply with what, perhaps,  
Hereafter must be done.

SOSTRA. And let it be!

LACH. Now then retire with me into the country:  
There I shall bear with you, and you with me.

SOSTRA. I hope we shall.

LACH. Go in then, and pack up  
The necessaries you would carry with you.  
Away!

SOSTRA. I shall obey your orders. (\_Exit.\_)

PAM. Father!

LACH. Well, Pamphilus?

PAM. My mother leave the town?  
By no means.

LACH. Why?

PAM. Because I'm yet uncertain  
What I shall do about my wife.

LACH. How's that?  
What \_would\_ you do but take her home again?

PAM. 'Tis what I wish for, and can scarce forbear it.  
But I'll not alter what I first design'd.  
What's best I'll follow: and I'm well convinc'd  
That there's no other way to make them friends,  
But that I should not take her home again.

LACH. You don't know that: but 'tis of no importance  
Whether they're friends or not, when Sostrata  
Is gone into the country. We old folks  
Are odious to the young. We'd best retire.  
In short, we're grown a by-word, Pamphilus,  
"The old man and old woman."--But I see  
Phidippus coming in good time. Let's meet him!

[Changes:

\_Harper\_

PAM. 'Tis what I wish for, and can scarce forbear it.

\_Colman 1768\_

PAM. 'Tis what I wish for, and can scarce forbear.

\_Harper\_

That there's no other way to make them friends

\_Colman 1768\_

No other means remain to make them friends]

SCENE VI.

\_Enter PHIDIPPUS.\_

PHID. (\_to PHILUMENA within\_). I'm angry with you--'fore Heaven, very  
angry,  
Philumena!--You've acted shamefully.  
Though you indeed have some excuse for't, seeing  
Your mother urg'd you to't; but she has none.

LACH. You're come upon us in good time, Phidippus;  
Just in the time we wanted you.

PHID. What now?

PAM. What answer shall I give them! how explain? (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. Inform your daughter, Sostrata will hence  
Into the country; so Philumena  
Need not dread coming home again.

PHID. Ah, friend!  
Your wife has never been in fault at all:  
All this has sprung from my wife Myrrhina.  
The case is alter'd. She confounds us, Laches.

PAM. So that I may not take her home again,  
Confound affairs who will! (\_Aside.\_)

PHID. I, Pamphilus,  
Would fain, if possible, make this alliance  
Perpetual between our families.  
But if you can not like it, take the child.

PAM. He knows of her delivery. Confusion! (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. The child! what child?

PHID. We've got a grandson, Laches.  
For when my daughter left your house, she was  
With child, it seems, although I never knew it  
Before this very day.

LACH. 'Fore Heav'n, good news!  
And I rejoice to hear a child is born,  
And that your daughter had a safe delivery.  
But what a woman is your wife, Phidippus?  
Of what a disposition? to conceal

Such an event as this? I can't express  
How much I think she was to blame.

PHID. This pleases me no more than you, good Laches.

PAM. Although my mind was in suspense before,  
My doubts all vanish now. I'll ne'er recall her,  
Since she brings home with her another's child. (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. There is no room for choice now, Pamphilus.

PAM. Confusion! (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. We've oft wish'd to see the day  
When you should have a child to call you father.  
That day's now come. The Gods be thank'd!

PAM. Undone! (\_Aside.\_)

LACH. Recall your wife, and don't oppose my will.

PAM. If she had wish'd for children by me, father,  
Or to remain my wife, I'm very sure  
She never would have hid this matter from me:  
But now I see her heart divorc'd from me,  
And think we never can agree hereafter,  
Wherefore should I recall her?

LACH. A young woman  
Did as her mother had persuaded her.  
Is that so wonderful? and do you think  
To find a woman without any fault?  
--Or is't because the \_men\_ are ne'er to blame? (\_Ironically.\_)

PHID. Consider with yourselves then, gentlemen,  
Whether you'll part with her, or call her home.  
What my wife does, I can not help, you know.  
Settle it as you please, you've my consent,  
But for the child, what shall be done with him?

LACH. A pretty question truly! come what may,  
Send his own bantling home to him of course,  
That we may educate him.

PAM. When his own  
Father abandons him, I educate him?

LACH. What said you? how! not educate him, say you?  
Shall we expose him rather, Pamphilus?



What madness is all this?--My breath and blood!  
I can contain no longer. You oblige me  
To speak, against my will, before Phidippus:  
Think you I'm ignorant whence flow those tears?  
Or why you're thus disorder'd and distress'd?  
First, when you gave as a pretense, \_you could not  
Recall your wife from reverence to your mother\_,  
She promis'd to retire into the country.  
But now, since that excuse is taken from you,  
You've made \_her private lying-in\_ another.  
You are mistaken if you think me blind  
To your intentions--That you might at last  
Bring home your stray affections to your wife,  
How long a time to wean you from your mistress  
Did I allow? your wild expense upon her  
How patiently I bore? I press'd, entreated,  
That you would take a wife. 'Twas time, I said.  
At my repeated instances, you married,  
And, as in duty bound to do, complied:  
But now your heart is gone abroad again  
After your mistress, whom to gratify,  
You throw this wanton insult on your wife.  
For I can plainly see you are relaps'd  
Into your former life again.

PAM. Me?

LACH. You.  
And 'tis base in you to invent false causes  
Of quarrel with your wife, that you may live  
In quiet with your mistress, having put  
This witness from you. This your wife perceiv'd.  
For was there any other living reason  
Wherefore she should depart from you?

PHID. He's right,  
That was the very thing.

PAM. I'll take my oath  
'Twas none of those that you have mention'd.

LACH. Ah!  
Recall your wife: or tell me why you will not.

PAM. 'Tis not convenient now.

LACH. Take home the child then;  
For \_he\_ at least is not in fault. I'll see  
About the mother afterward.

PAM. (\_to himself\_). Ev'ry way  
I am a wretch, nor know I what to do:  
My father has me in the toils, and I,  
By struggling to get loose, am more entangled.  
I'll hence, since present I shall profit little.  
For I believe they'll hardly educate  
The child against my will; especially  
Seeing my step-mother will second me. (\_Exit.\_)

[Changes:

\_Harper\_  
How much I think she was to blame.  
\_Colman 1768\_  
How very much I think she was to blame.]

SCENE VII.

\_Manent PHIDIPPUS, LACHES.\_

LACH. Going? how's that? and give me no plain answer!  
--D'ye think he's in his senses?--Well--send home  
The child to me, Phidippus. I'll take care on't.

PHID. I will.--I can not wonder that my wife  
Took this so ill. Women are passionate,  
And can't away with such affronts as these.  
This was their quarrel: nay she told me so,  
Though before him I did not care to speak on't:  
Nor did I credit it at first; but now  
'Tis evident, and I can plainly see  
He has no stomach to a wife.

LACH. Phidippus,  
How shall I act? What's your advice?

PHID. How act?  
I think 'twere best to seek this wench, his mistress.  
Let us expostulate the matter with her,  
Speak to her roundly, nay, e'en threaten her,  
If she has aught to do with him hereafter.

LACH. I'll follow your advice.--Ho, boy! (\_Enter a boy\_) run over  
To Bacchis. Tell her to come forth to me. (\_Exit boy.\_)  
--I must beseech you also to continue  
Your kind assistance to me in this business.

PHID. Ah, Laches! I have told you all along.  
And I repeat it now, that 'tis my wish  
To render our alliance firm and lasting,  
If possible, as I have hopes it will be.  
--But would you have me present at your conference  
With Bacchis?

LACH. No; go, seek the child a nurse. (\_Exit PHIDIPPUS.\_)

SCENE VIII.

\_Enter BACCHIS attended by her Women.\_

BACCH. (\_to herself\_). 'Tis not for nothing Laches wants to see me;  
And, or I'm much deceiv'd, I guess the cause.

LACH. (\_to himself\_). I must take care my anger don't transport me  
Beyond the bounds of prudence, which may hinder  
My gaining my design on her, and urge me  
To do what I may afterward repent.  
I'll to her.-- (\_Going up.\_) Save you, Bacchis!

BACCH. Save you, Laches!

LACH. Bacchis, I do not doubt but you're surpris'd  
That I should send the boy to call you forth.

BACCH. Aye, and I'm fearful too, when I reflect  
Both who and what I am: lest my vocation  
Should prejudice me in your good opinion.  
My conduct I can fully justify.

LACH. If you speak truth, you're in no danger, woman.  
For I'm arriv'd at that age when a trespass  
Would not be easily forgiven in me.  
Wherefore I study to proceed with caution,  
And to do nothing rashly. If you act,  
And will continue to act honestly,  
It were ungenerous to do you wrong,  
And seeing you deserve it not, unjust.

BACCH. Truly, this conduct asks my highest thanks;  
For he who does the wrong, and then asks pardon,  
Makes but a sorry reparation for it.  
But what's your pleasure?

LACH. You receive the visits  
Of my son Pamphilus----

BACCH. Ah!----

LACH. Let me speak.  
Before he married I endur'd your love.  
--Stay! I've not finish'd all I have to say.----  
He is now married. You then, while 'tis time,  
Seek out another and more constant friend.  
For he will not be fond of you forever,  
Nor you, good faith, forever in your bloom.

BACCH. Who tells you that I still receive the visits  
Of Pamphilus?

LACH. His step-mother.

BACCH. I?

LACH. You.  
And therefore has withdrawn her daughter: therefore  
Meant secretly to kill the new-born child.

BACCH. Did I know any thing, to gain your credit,  
More sacred than an oath, I'd use it, Laches,  
In solemn protestation to assure you  
That I have had no commerce with your son  
Since he was married.

LACH. Good girl! but dy'e know  
What I would farther have you do?

BACCH. Inform me.

LACH. Go to the women here, and offer them  
The same oath. Satisfy their minds, and clear  
Yourself from all reproach in this.

BACCH. I'll do't;  
Although I'm sure no other of my calling  
Would show herself before a married woman  
Upon the same occasion.--But it hurts me  
To see your son suspected on false grounds;  
And that, to those who owe him better thoughts,  
His conduct should seem light. For he deserves  
All my best offices.

LACH. Your conversation has much wrought upon me,  
Gain'd my good-will, and alter'd my opinion.  
For not the women only thought thus of you,

But I believ'd it too. Now therefore, since  
I've found you better than my expectation,  
Prove still the same, and make my friendship sure.  
If otherwise--But I'll contain myself. I'll not  
Say any thing severe.--But I advise you,  
Rather experience what a friend I am,  
Than what an enemy.

BACCH. I'll do my best.

[Changes:

\_Harper\_

LACH. If you speak truth, you're in no danger, woman.

\_Colman 1768\_

LACH. Speak but the truth, you're in no danger, woman.]

SCENE IX.

\_Enter PHIDIPPUS and a Nurse.\_

PHID. (\_to the Nurse\_). Nay, you shall want for nothing at my house;  
I'll give you all that's needful in abundance;  
But when you've eat and drank your fill yourself,  
Take care to satisfy the infant too.

LACH. I see the father of Philumena  
Coming this way. He brings the child a nurse.  
--Phidippus, Bacchis swears most solemnly---

PHID. Is this she?

LACH. Aye.

PHID. They never mind the Gods,  
Nor do I think the Gods mind them.

BACCH. Here are  
My waiting-women: take them, and extort  
By any kind of torment the truth from them.  
--Our present business is, I take it, this:  
That I should win the wife of Pamphilus  
To return home; which so I but effect,  
I sha'n't regret the same of having done  
What others of my calling would avoid.

LACH. Phidippus, we've discover'd that in fact  
We both suspected our wives wrongfully.

Let's now try her: for if your wife perceives  
Her own suspicions also are unjust,  
She'll drop her anger. If my son's offended  
Because his wife conceal'd her labor from him,  
That's but a trifle; he'll be soon appeas'd.  
--And truly I see nothing in this matter  
That need occasion a divorce.

PHID. 'Fore Heaven,  
I wish that all may end well.

LACH. Here she is:  
Examine her; she'll give you satisfaction.

PHID. What needs all this to Me! You know my mind  
Already, Laches: do but make them easy.

LACH. Bacchis, be sure you keep your promise with me.

BACCH. Shall I go in then for that purpose?

LACH. Aye.  
Go in; remove their doubts, and satisfy them.

BACCH. I will; although I'm very sure my presence  
Will be unwelcome to them; for a wife,  
When parted from her husband, to a mistress  
Is a sure enemy.

LACH. They'll be your friends,  
When once they know the reason of your coming.

PHID. Aye, aye, they'll be your friends, I promise you,  
When they once learn your errand; for you'll free  
Them from mistake, yourself from all suspicion.

BACCH. I'm cover'd with confusion. I'm asham'd  
To see Philumena.-- (\_To her women.\_) You two in after me.  
(\_Exeunt PHIDIPPUS, BACCHIS, etc.\_)

\_LACHES alone.\_

What is there that could please me more than this,  
That Bacchis, without any loss, should gain  
Favor from them, and do me service too?  
For if she really has withdrawn herself  
From Pamphilus, it will increase, she knows,  
Her reputation, interest, and honor:  
Since by this generous act she will at once

Oblige my son, and make us all her friends. (\_Exit.\_

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

\_PARMENO alone.\_

I' faith my master holds my labor cheap,  
To send me to the Citadel for nothing,  
Where I have waited the whole day in vain  
For his Myconian, Callidemides.  
There was I sitting, gaping like a fool,  
And running up, if any one appear'd,  
--"Are you, Sir, a Myconian?"--"No, not I."----  
--"But your name's Callidemides?"--"Not it."----  
"And have not you a guest here of the name  
Of Pamphilus?"--All answer'd, No.  
In short, I don't believe there's such a man.  
At last I grew asham'd, and so sneak'd off.  
--But is't not Bacchis that I see come forth  
From our new kinsman? What can she do there?

[Changes:

\_Harper\_  
Of Pamphilus?"--All answer'd, No.  
\_Colman 1768\_  
Of Pamphilus?"--No--no--All No.]

SCENE II.

\_Enter BACCHIS.\_

BACCH. Oh Parmeno, I'm glad I've met with you.  
Run quick to Pamphilus.

PAR. On what account?

BACCH. Tell him that I desire he'd come.

PAR. To you?

BACCH. No; to Philumena.

PAR. Why? what's the matter?

BACCH. Nothing to you; so ask no questions.

PAR. Must I  
Say nothing else?

BACCH. Yes; tell him too,  
That Myrrhina acknowledges the ring,  
Which formerly he gave me, as her daughter's.

PAR. I understand you. But is that all?

BACCH. All.  
He'll come the moment that you tell him that.  
What! do you loiter?

PAR. No, i' faith, not I.  
I have not had it in my pow'r, I've been  
So bandied to and fro, sent here and there,  
Trotting, and running up and down all day. (\_Exit.\_)

SCENE III.

\_BACCHIS alone.\_

What joy have I procur'd to Pamphilus  
By coming here to-day! what blessings brought him!  
And from how many sorrows rescued him!  
His son, by his and their means nearly lost,  
I've sav'd; a wife he meant to put away,  
I have restor'd; and from the strong suspicions  
Of Laches and Phidippus set him free.  
--Of all these things the ring has been the cause.  
For I remember, near ten months ago,  
That he came running home to me one evening,  
Breathless, alone, and much inflam'd with wine,  
Bringing this ring. I was alarm'd at it.  
"Prithee, my dearest Pamphilus, said I,  
Whence comes all this confusion? whence this ring?  
Tell me, my love."--He put me off at first:  
Perceiving this, it made me apprehend  
Something of serious import, and I urg'd him  
More earnestly to tell me.--He confess'd  
That, as he came along, he had committed  
A rape upon a virgin--whom he knew not----  
And as she struggled, forc'd from her that ring:



Which Myrrhina now seeing on my finger,  
Immediately acknowledg'd, and inquir'd  
How I came by it. I told all this story:  
Whence 'twas discover'd that Philumena  
Was she who had been ravish'd, and the child  
Conceiv'd from that encounter.--That I've been  
The instrument of all these joys I'm glad,  
Though other courtesans would not be so;  
Nor is it for our profit and advantage  
That lovers should be happy in their marriage.  
But never will I, for my calling's sake,  
Suffer ingratitude to taint my mind.  
I found him, while occasion gave him leave,  
Kind, pleasant, and good-humor'd: and this marriage  
Happen'd unluckily, I must confess.  
Yet I did nothing to estrange his love;  
And since I have receiv'd much kindness from him,  
'Tis fit I should endure this one affliction.

[Changes:

\_Harper\_

I've sav'd; a wife he meant to put away

\_Colman 1768\_

I sav'd; a wife he meant to put away]

SCENE IV.

\_Enter at a distance PAMPHILUS and PARMENO.\_

PAM. Be sure you prove this to me, Parmeno;  
Prithee, be sure on't. Do not bubble me  
With false and short-liv'd joy.

PAR. 'Tis even so.

PAM. For certain?

PAR. Aye, for certain.

PAM. I'm in heaven,  
If this be so.

PAR. You'll find it very true.

PAM. Hold, I beseech you.--I'm afraid I think  
One thing, while you relate another.

PAR. Well?

PAM. You said, I think, "that Myrrhina discover'd  
The ring on Bacchis' finger was her own."

PAR. She did.

PAM. "The same I gave her formerly.  
--And Bacchis bade you run and tell me this."  
Is it not so?

PAR. I tell you, Sir, it is.

PAM. Who is more fortunate, more bless'd than I?  
--What shall I give you for this news? what? what?  
I don't know.

PAR. But I know.

PAM. What?

PAR. Just nothing.  
For I see nothing of advantage to you,  
Or in the message, or myself.

PAM. Shall I  
Permit you to go unrewarded; you,  
Who have restor'd me ev'n from death to life?  
Ah, Parmeno, d'ye think me so ungrateful?  
--But yonder's Bacchis standing at the door.  
She waits for me, I fancy. I'll go to her.

BACCH. (\_seeing him\_). Pamphilus, save you.

PAM. Bacchis! my dear Bacchis!  
My guardian! my protectress!

BACCH. All is well:  
And I'm o'erjoy'd at it.

PAM. Your actions speak it.  
You're still the charming girl I ever found you.  
Your presence, company, and conversation,  
Come where you will, bring joy and pleasure with them.

BACCH. And you, in faith, are still the same as ever,  
The sweetest, most engaging man on earth.

PAM. Ha! ha! ha! that speech from you, dear Bacchis?

BACCH. You lov'd your wife with reason, Pamphilus:  
Never that I remember, did I see her  
Before to-day; and she's a charming woman.

PAM. Speak truth.

BACCH. So Heaven help me, Pamphilus!

PAM. Say, have you told my father any part  
Of this tale?

BACCH. Not a word.

PAM. Nor is there need.  
Let all be hush! I would not have it here,  
As in a comedy, where every thing  
Is known to every body. Here those persons  
Whom it concerns already know it; they,  
Who 'twere not meet should know it, never shall.

BACCH. I promise you it may with ease be hid.  
Myrrhina told Phidippus that my oath  
Convinc'd her, and she held you clear.

PAM. Good! good!  
All will be well, and all, I hope, end well.

PAR. May I know, Sir, what good I've done to-day?  
And what's the meaning of your conversation?

PAM. No.

PAR. I suspect, however.--"I restore him  
From death to life"--which way?----

PAM. Oh, Parmeno,  
You can't conceive the good you've done to-day;  
From what distress you have deliver'd me.

PAR. Ah, but I know, and did it with design.

PAM. Oh, I'm convinced of that. (\_Ironically.\_)

PAR. Did Parmeno  
Ever let slip an opportunity  
Of doing what he ought, Sir?

PAM. Parmeno,

In after me!

PAR. I follow.--By my troth,  
I've done more good to-day, without design,  
Than ever with design in all my life.----  
Clap your hands!