

Plutus

Henry Fielding, William Young

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Plutus

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Plutus, The God Of Riches. A comedy

Plutus,
THE GOD OF RICHES.
A Comedy,
Translated from the Original Greek of ARISTOPHANES: WITH LARGE
NOTES, EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

Dedication TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE THE LORD TALBOT.

My Lord,

In an age when learning hath so few friends, and fewer patrons, it might require an apology to introduce an ancient Greek poet to a person of an exalted station.

For could the poet himself revive, and attend many such in his own person, he would be esteemed an unfashionable visitor, and might, perhaps, find some difficulty in gaining admittance.

But when we reflect on the revered name of the late Lord Chancellor of Great Britain, who, at the head of the greatest excellences and abilities, which ever warmed the heart, or embellished the understanding of man, preserved (which is, perhaps, the highest of human perfections) the most tender regard for the distressed; when we recollect what manifest tokens you have given that you inherit the virtues of that truly great and amiable person, we are emboldened, rather than discouraged, by this very consideration, to address the following attempt to your Lordship.

Permit us then, my Lord, to recommend *Aristophanes*; and with him, the distressed, and at present, declining, state of learning to your protection.

The greatness of this author's genius need not be mentioned to your Lordship; but there is a much stronger recommendation to one of your known principles. He exerted that genius in the service of his country. He attacked and exposed its enemies and betrayers with a boldness and integrity, which must endear his memory to every true and sincere patriot.

In presenting *Aristophanes*, therefore, to your Lordship, we present him to one, whom he, had he been an Englishman, would have chosen for his patron. Permit us, therefore, to make him this amends for the injury done him in our translation, and to subscribe ourselves,

My LORD, Your Lordship's *most Obedient, and most Humble Servants*, HENRY FIELDING, WILLIAM YOUNG.

Dramatis Personae.

MEN.

Plutus, the God of Riches.

Chremylus, An Old Yeoman in decayed circumstances.

Blepsidemus, An Old Yeoman in decayed circumstances.

Dicæus, a just and honest Man.

Sycophantes, a Sycophant, or common Informer.

Neaniscus, a young Gallant.

Mercury.

Priest of Jupiter.

Cario, a Slave belonging to Chremylus.

Chorus of Yeomen.

WOMEN.

The Wife of Chremylus.

An Old Woman.

SCENE—Athens.

Plutus

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Scene, the street in Athens before the house of Chremylus. Cario and Chremylus following Plutus.

Cario.

O Jupiter, and all ye Gods! what a vexatious thing it is to be the slave of a mad master! for, be the servant's advice never so excellent, if his master takes it into his head not to follow it, the poor domestic is by necessity forced to partake all the bad consequences. Fortune permits not the natural lord to have any power over his own person; but transfers it all to the purchaser. Well! these things are all so. However, I do complain (and my complaint is just) of that oblique deity, who sings forth his oracles from his golden tripod. Who, though he is both a physician and a prophet, a very good one too, as folks say, hath sent my master away in such a fit of the spleen, that with his eyes open he follows behind a blind fellow. Doing thus, the very reverse of what is agreeable to reason: for, whereas the blind are always led by us who can see, this master of mine follows the guidance of the blind; nay, and compels me also to do the same: and all this without the blind rascal's answering us a single word. There is, therefore, no reason why I should be silent any longer; unless you will tell me, Sir, for what purpose we follow this fellow, I shall be very troublesome, indeed I shall—I know you will not lift your hand against a man with a sacred chaplet on his head. *Chrem.*

By Jupiter! if you plague me, I will,— first taking off your chaplet, to punish you the more.

Cario.

This is trifling: I shall never leave off till you tell me who that fellow there is. It is my great affection to you, which makes me so extremely vehemently inquisitive.

Chrem.

Well: I will not hide it from thee; for, of all my domestics, I believe thee to be the most faithful, and most expert at concealing what thou canst of thy master's! Thou knowest, that I a religious and upright man as I am, have had very ill success in the world—nay, have suffered extreme poverty.

Cario.

Ay, Ay, I know it very well.

Chrem.

Whilst others have acquired great riches, being at the same time guilty of sacrilege, public incendiaries, informers, and villains of all kinds.

Cario.

I am persuaded of it.

Chrem.

I went therefore to consult Apollo, concluding indeed the quiver of my miserable days to be almost shot out, to inquire of him, for the sake of my son, , who is my only child, whether it was his interest to depart from his father's morals, and to become crafty, unjust, entirely corrupt; for these seemed to me the necessary qualifications for this world.

Cario.

What, from his garlands, chatter'd forth the God?

Chrem.

You shall hear. The god told me this plainly: The first person whom I should meet after I departed from the temple, him he commanded me never to quit, till I had prevailed on him to accompany me to my house.

Cario.

And pray who was the first person you met?

Chrem.

Why, this very person here before us.

Cario.

And can you be so dull to misapprehend the god's meaning, which declares to you in the plainest manner, that your son should pursue the manners of his country.

Plutus

Chrem.

Whence do you infer this?

Cario.

Most certainly. A blind man may see into this oracle, that it is extremely advantageous to exercise all kind of corruption at this present season.

Chrem.

The oracle can by no means lean to this; it tends to something more important. And if this fellow will but tell us, who he is, and for what purpose, or on what occasion, he is come hither with us, we may then understand what our oracle means.

Cario to Plutus.

Come on; you, Sir, first and foremost, tell us who you are, or consequences will follow.

[Laying his stick on Plutus's shoulder. Chrem.]

It behoves you to speak to him immediately.

SCENE II.

Plutus, Cario, Chremylus. *Plutus.*

I then desire much grief may attend thee.

Cario.

Do you understand, Sir, whom he declares himself to be?

Chrem.

It is to you, not me he speaks thus: for you questioned the gentleman in an awkward and rude manner. [*To Plutus*]
But, Sir, if you delight in the behaviour of a gentleman, declare yourself to me.

Plutus.

I then declare, I wish much wailing may attend thee.

Cario.

The gentleman, and the omen, Sir, are both your own.

Chrem.

By Ceres, no joy shall ever attend thee: for, if thou dost not unfold thyself, to a miserable end will I bring thee, thou miserable wretch.

Plutus.

Good gentlemen, depart from me, I beseech you.

Chrem.

No, by no means.

Cario.

Odso! Master, I will tell you the best method in the world to deal with him. I will put this fellow to the most execrable end imaginable: for, having led him up to the top of some precipice, there leaving him, away go I—that tumbling from thence, the gentleman— may break his neck.

Chrem.

Away with him then immediately.

[*Cario lays hold on Plutus. Plutus.*]

O by no means!

Chrem.

Will you not tell then?

Plutus.

Ay, but if you should know who I am, I am certain, you will still do me some mischief, and not dismiss me.

Chrem.

Not we, by all the gods, if you will but—

Plutus.

Take your hands off from me.

Cario.

There, you are at your liberty.

Plutus.

Hear me then: for, it seems I must discover what I had so firmly resolved to conceal. Know then that I am Plutus.

Chrem.

O thou most accursed of all mortals. What! Art thou Plutus, and would'st thou conceal thyself?

Cario.

What! you, Plutus? in such a miserable pickle —O Phoebus, Apollo, and O ye Gods! and O ye Dæmons, and O Jupiter!—How say you? And art thou he indeed?

Plutus.

Indeed.

Chrem.

What! he himself.

Plutus

Plutus.

The very self–same he.

Chrem.

Tell me then, whence comes it that thou art in this dirty condition?

Plutus.

I come, Sir, from the house of one Patroclus, who hath never been at the expense of washing himself, from his mother's womb. *Chrem.*

But pray tell me, how came you by this misfortune in your eyes?

Plutus.

Jupiter, out of envy to mankind, afflicted me thus: for, when I was a little boy, I threatened, that I would only visit the just, and the wise, and the modest among them; whereupon he struck me with blindness, that I might not distinguish those from others. To such a degree doth this good envy good men!

Chrem.

And yet it is by the good and just only that he is honored.

Plutus.

I agree with you.

Chrem.

Well, Sir, and if you should be restored to your sight, would you now avoid the habitations of the wicked?

Plutus.

I do promise it.

Chrem.

And you would frequent the just?

Plutus.

Most certainly: for it is a long while since I have seen them.

Chrem.

No wonder, truly: for neither have I, who have my eyes, seen any such lately.

Plutus.

Well: now dismiss me; since you know every thing concerning me.

Chrem.

No, by Jupiter, we will stick so much the closer to you.

Plutus.

Did I not say you would be troublesome to me? *Chrem.*

Be prevailed on, I beseech you, and forsake me not: for, should you seek him never so diligently, you will not find an honest man. No, by Jupiter, will you not; for, indeed, there is no other honest man besides myself.

Plutus.

Ay, all of you say this: but when once you have possession of me, and are become rich, you throw off the mask, and grow rampant in iniquity.

Chrem.

It is indeed too commonly so: yet all men are not villains.

Plutus.

Yes, by Jove, every mother's son of you.

Cario [aside.]

You shall roar aloud for this, Sir.

Chrem.

That you may know then how many advantages you will enjoy under my roof, only lend me your attention, and I will make you sensible. I flatter myself, indeed, I flatter myself, (with the assistance of Heaven be it spoken) that I shall deliver you from this infirmity of your eyes, and restore you to perfect sight.

Plutus.

Indeed you shall not: for I have no desire to see any more.

Cario.

What doth the fellow say? This is a miserable dog in his own nature.

SCENE II.

Plutus

Plutus.

Should Jupiter, who so well knows the follies of mankind, hear I had recovered my sight, he would pound me in a mortar. *Chrem.*

Doth he less to you now, who suffers you to stroll about stumbling in this manner?

Plutus.

I know not what he may do: but I dread him exceedingly.

Chrem.

Indeed, thou art the greatest coward of all deities. Do you think the power of Jupiter, and all his thunderbolts, would be of a triobolus consequence to you, if you could once recover your sight, though it were for never so little time.

Plutus.

O miserable wretch! utter not such things.

Chrem.

Be under no concern: for I will demonstrate that your power is much greater than that of Jupiter.

Plutus.

You demonstrate this of me!

Chrem.

Yes, by heavens! Instantly will I. By whose means doth Jupiter reign over the gods?

Cario.

By the means of money: for he hath the most of it.

Chrem.

Well, and who furnishes him with these means?

Cario.

This honest gentleman here.

Chrem.

And through whom do men sacrifice to Jupiter— Is it not through him there?

Cario.

Ay, by Jupiter, for they pray aloud for riches. *Chrem.*

Most certainly he is the cause, and if he pleased, could easily put an end to their sacrifices.

Plutus.

How so, pray?

Chrem.

Because no man could offer an ox, nor even a barley-cake, no, nor any other thing, without your good pleasure.

Plutus.

How!

Chrem.

How! Why he will not know how to purchase any thing, unless you are present, and give him the money: so that if the power of Jupiter be offensive to you, you alone will be able to demolish it.

Plutus.

How say you? Do men sacrifice to him through me?

Chrem.

I do say so. And by Jupiter! if there is any thing splendid, or beautiful, or lovely, among men, it proceeds from you; for to money all things pay obedience.

Cario.

Even I myself, for a small piece of money, am become a slave: because I was not so rich as some people.

Chrem.

They say too of the Corinthian courtesans, that, if a poor lover attacks them, they will not even lend him an ear: but when a rich lover presents himself before them, they will themselves present any thing to him. *Cario.*

They say that boys will present too: not for the sake of their lovers, but of money.

Chrem.

You speak of prostitutes, not the worthier sort: for those never ask for money.

Plutus

Cario.

Why, what do these ask for?

Chrem.

One will accept a fine horse, another a pack of hounds.

Cario.

O then it is probable they are ashamed to ask for the money: they are pleased to cover their iniquity with the name of a present.

Chrem.

All arts, all crafts known amongst mankind, are invented through thee. One sits down, and cuts out leather; another hammers out brass, a third hammers up wainscot, and a fourth casts the gold he hath received from thee. This filches away clothes from the public bagnio, another breaks open houses. One cleans cloth, another skins, another tans them; one deals in onions: nay, through thee, that gallant, when surprised with another man's wife, is stripped as naked as when he was born.

Plutus.

Unhappy wretch that I am! I never knew a syllable of all this before.

Chrem. to Cario.

Doth not the mighty emperor of Persia owe all his splendor to this person?

Cario.

Are not all public assemblies called together through him?

Chrem.

What! dost not thou man our gallies? answer me. *Cario.*

Doth not he maintain the foreign troops in Corinth?

Chrem.

Will not Pamphilus owe many a groan to thee?

Cario.

And will not Belonopoles together with Pamphilus?

Chrem.

Is it not through him that we support the F—ts of Argyrius? *Cario.*

Ay, Sir, and is it not through him that we support the stories of Philepsius? *Chrem.*

Do we not through thee send auxiliaries to the Egyptians? *Cario.*

Is not Nais through thee enamored of Philonides?

Chrem.

Nay, the tower of Timotheus. — *Cario.*

O may it fall on thy head.

Chrem.

Are not all matters, in short, transacted through thee? For thou art the whole and sole author of all things, whether evil or good—Assure yourself, Sir, you are.

Cario.

This I am sure of—that in all battles they obtain the victory, into whose scale this gentleman throws himself.

Plutus.

What I! who am but one; can I effect such mighty matters?

Chrem.

Can you! Ay, by Jupiter, and many more too: for no man ever had his fill of thee; of all other things we may be surfeited: even with love.

Cario.

With bread.

Chrem.

With poetry.

Cario.

With sweetmeats.

Chrem.

Plutus

With honor.

Cario.

With cheese-cakes. *Chrem.*

With bravery.

Cario.

With figs.

Chrem.

With glory.

Cario.

With hasty-pudding.

Chrem.

With the command of armies.

Cario.

With pease-porridge.

Chrem.

Whereas of thee none ever had his fill: For when any one hath acquired thirteen talents, he becomes the more desirous of acquiring sixteen; and when he hath compassed these, he then desires forty; and if he fails in his last wish, he complains he hath none of the comforts of life.

Plutus.

You seem to me to speak very well; I apprehend only one thing. *Chrem.*

Tell me what.

Plutus.

How I shall be able to retain the possession of this power, which you represent me to have.

Chrem.

By Jove, you need not fear it: but indeed, all men agree that thou art a most timorous animal.

Plutus.

Not in the least. This is no more than the scandal of a housebreaker, who, when he had stolen into a house, and found every thing so cautiously locked up, that he was able to carry off no booty; he, forsooth, called my prudence timidity.

Chrem.

However, be under no concern now: for, if you will but heartily enter into my proposals, I will undertake to make you more quick-sighted than Lynceus himself.

Plutus.

But how will you be able to effect this, being but a mortal?

Chrem.

I have very good hopes from what Apollo himself, shaking his Pythian laurel, communicated to me.

Plutus.

Is he then privy to this?

Chrem.

He is, I assure you.

Plutus.

Be very cautious.

Chrem.

Good Sir, give yourself no trouble about it: for, be assured, tho' at the expense of my life, I will accomplish it.

Cario.

And I promise you too, if you desire it. *Chrem.*

And many others will assist us, who are so honest, that they now want bread.

Plutus.

Alas! you promise me very sorry assistants.

Chrem.

Not at all, provided you change their circumstances, and make them rich: but, *Cario*, do thou run away with the

Plutus

utmost expedition.

Cario.

You will please to tell me what I am to do.

Chrem.

Call hither my brother—farmers—you will find them, probably, in the fields sweating at their hard labor—bid them come hither, that every one may have his share in this Plutus.

Cario.

Well, I am going: but let some of your family within take care of this beef—steak here.

Chrem.

That shall be my care—But away, fly instantly —And now, Plutus, thou most excellent of all deities, be pleased to go in with me; for this is the house, which you must this day fill with riches, by all methods whatsoever.

Plutus.

Oh! Sir, I swear to you, I never enter another man's house without the utmost concern; for I have never been dealt well with in any. If I enter the house of a miser, he instantly buries me deep under ground; and if a worthy friend comes to ask him for a little piece of money, he denies me stoutly, says that he never saw me: but, if I visit a mad-headed fellow, I am exposed to whores and dice, and in a moment turned naked out of doors.

Chrem.

But you have never lighted on a moderate man before: for my part, this was ever my way. I rejoice in frugality more than any man alive; and so I do in expense, whenever it is necessary to be expensive. But let us go in: for I am desirous that you should see my wife, and my only son, whom I love dearer than any thing—I mean, after you.

Plutus.

I verily believe you.

Chrem.

For why should any man tell a falsehood to you?

Plutus

ACT II.

Plutus

SCENE I.

Scene, the open country.

Cario, Chorus.

Cario.

O yes! All you that live upon grass-sallets, as well as my master, my good friends, and countrymen, and lovers of hard work; come, hasten, hurry, the time admits no delay; it is, indeed, the very nick of time, when your assistance is required.

Chorus.

You perceive we have been long bustling towards you with all our might, making the best haste in the power of feeble old men: but you would have me run as fast as yourself—besides, first tell me on what account your master hath sent for us.

Cario.

I have been telling you a long time: but you don't hear me. My master then says, that he will deliver you from that cold and comfortless life you now lead, and make you all live pleasantly.

Chorus.

What is all this? Whence doth this fellow talk in such a manner? *Cario.*

Why, my good pains-taking men, he hath brought home with him a certain old gentleman, who is all dirty, crooked, wretched, wrinkled, bald, toothless—Nay, and by Jupiter, I believe he is circumcised into the bargain.

Chor.

O golden news! How say you! pray tell me, for you are proving he hath brought home a whole heap of Money

Cario.

I think I prove that he hath brought home a heap of the infirmities of old-age.

Chor.

And do you expect to escape in a whole skin, after imposing on us thus, whilst I have this cudgel in my hand?

Cario.

You think then that I am a person naturally given to such tricks; and nothing but what is stark naught, I warrant you, can come from my mouth.

Chor.

Observe the gravity of this hang-dog. Sirrah, your shins cry out aloud for the stocks and fetters.

Cario.

Your lot is to distribute justice in the other world; yet you will not set out, tho' Charon hath delivered you your staff. *Chor.*

Burst thy guts for an impudent rascal as thou art, and a cheat in grain, that hast thus imposed on us— and hast had the assurance not yet to tell us on what account thy master sent thee to call us from our work, and made us hasten hither when we had so little leisure, and pass by many good herbs, without gathering any.

Cario.

Well, I will conceal the matter no longer; Plutus then, my good people, is the person my master hath brought home; Plutus, who will make us rich.

Chor.

Indeed! and is it possible that we shall all become rich? *Cario.*

Ay, by the Gods, shall ye, all be Midas's, if you can but each procure a pair of Ass's ears.

Chor.

How I am delighted! How I am transported, and ready to dance for joy —if all this is really true.

Cario.

And I myself will dance like the Cyclops, Tantararara —and capering thus with my feet, I will lead up myself. Come on, my boys, at every turn bawl and bleat forth the songs of sheep and stinking goats—Come, follow me,

Plutus

and dance as wantonly as ye can, with all the qualifications of a goat.

Chor.

We'll follow thee bleating, Mr. Tantararara Cyclops; and when we have caught thee, thou hungry cur, with thy satchel full of wild pot-herbs, staggering before thy flock; or, perhaps, when thou art snoring under some hedge, then, sirrah, we will take a swinging staff, and, burning it at one end, blind thee.

Cario.

I will in all things imitate the Circe, who mixed up those drugs, which formerly persuaded the retinue of Philonides at Corinth, as if they were really swine, to eat well-kneaded dung, which she herself kneaded for them; and do you, my little pigs, grunting with delight, follow me, your dam.

Chor.

Well then, and we, in our merry mood, will take thee, Madam The Circe, mixing up those drugs, enchanting and defiling that retinue, and hang thee up by thy virility; and anoint thy nostrils with thy kneaded dung, till they have the savor of a he-goat; and thou, like gaping Aristyllus, shalt say—Pigs, follow your dam.

Cario.

But, come—now a truce with jesting. Do you return to your former shapes. As for my part, I will steal some bread and meat from my master, and employ the remainder of my leisure in eating; and, when I have filled my belly, will set my hands to the work we are upon.

Plutus

SCENE II.

Chremylus, Chorus. *Chrem.*

To bid you barely welcome, my countrymen, is an old and fusty salutation. I say, I receive you with open arms, since you hasten to me with so much alacrity, and in such good order. Now persevere, and lend me your assistance, that we may be the preservers of this God.

Chor.

Courage! Imagine you have in me a very Mars before your eyes. It would be a shame indeed, that we, who all of us wrangle so stoutly in our assemblies for a Triobolus, should tamely suffer any one to carry off Plutus from us.

Chrem.

Odso! I see Blepsidemus too coming this way: it is plain, by the haste he is in, he hath heard something of this business.

SCENE III.

Blepsidemus, Chremylus. *Blepsid.*

What can I make of this? Whence, and by what means, hath Chremylus got all these riches on a sudden? I will not believe it; and yet, by Hercules, it is the public discourse of all the barbers' shops, that he is grown rich in an instant: but to me it is a prodigy, that a man, who hath any good luck, should send for his friends to share it. Surely, he hath done a very unfashionable thing.

Chrem.

By the gods, I will tell him the truth, concealing nothing. O Blepsidemus, our circumstances are finely altered since yesterday; for you are at liberty to share my good fortune, since you are one of my friends!

Blepsid.

And are you indeed become rich, as the report goes?

Chrem.

I shall be so very suddenly,—if our God pleases: for there is yet—there is some hazard in the matter.

Blepsid.

What hazard?

Chrem.

Why, there is—*Blepsid.*

Tell me instantly, what is it?

Chrem.

If we are successful, we are made for ever. If we miscarry, we are utterly ruined.

Blepsid.

This concern of yours looks ill on your side, and is far from pleasing me; for, to grow extremely rich all on a sudden, and at the same time to be so full of apprehensions, betokens a man who hath committed some heinous crime.

Chrem.

How! some heinous crime!

Blepsid.

If you have stolen something from Delphos, whence you are just arrived, either gold or silver belonging to the god, and you now repent of it—*Chrem.*

O Apollo, the averter—Not I indeed.

Blepsid.

Leave trifling, good old gentleman, I know very well—

Chrem.

Do you suspect such a thing of me?

Blepsid.

I know—that there is no man truly honest; we are none of us above the influence of gain.

Chrem.

By Ceres, you seem to me to be out of your senses.

Blepsid. [aside.]

How different is this poor man's behaviour from what it was!

Chrem.

By heavens, friend, you are out of your mind. *Blepsid. [aside.]*

How his eyes wander! —the certain indication of a man who hath committed some knavish prank.

Chrem.

I know what you are croaking to yourself. You think I have stolen something, and want to share in the booty.

Blepsid.

I want to share! In what, pray?

Chrem.

Plutus

But this is no such thing—it is an affair of quite another nature.

Blepsid.

O! then you have not stolen, you have taken it away by violence.

Chrem.

The man is possessed.

Blepsid.

What, not even cheated any one?

Chrem.

Not I, truly.

Blepsid.

O Hercules, which way can a man turn himself in this affair: for I see you will not discover a word of truth.

Chrem.

You accuse me, before you have informed yourself of the nature of my case. *Blepsid.*

Harkee, friend; I will make this matter up for you very cheap, before the town knows any thing of it. A small matter of money will stop the orators' mouths.

Chrem.

By Jupiter, you appear a very good friend indeed; I suppose you will lay out three minæ, and then charge me twelve. *Blepsid.*

Methinks, I see a certain person standing at the bar, with his petition in his hand, and his wife and children by him, extremely resembling the picture of the Heraclidæ, as it was drawn by Pamphilus.

Chrem.

I a suppliant! No, thou sot: but henceforward none but the good and worthy, and modest part of mankind, shall be enriched by me. *Blepsid.*

How say you! What, have you stolen such a prodigious sum?

Chrem.

O villany! Thou wilt ruin —

Blepsid.

You will ruin yourself, or I'm mistaken.

Chrem.

Not I: for I have Plutus in my possession, you wretch!

Blepsid.

You Plutus! What Plutus?

Chrem.

Plutus, the god of riches.

Blepsid.

And where is he?

Chrem.

Within.

Blepsid.

Where?

Chrem.

Here, in my house.

Blepsid.

In your house!

Chrem.

Even so. *Blepsid.*

Go hang yourself —Plutus at your house!

Chrem.

Yes, by the gods, is he.

Blepsid.

And do you really tell truth?

SCENE III.

Chrem.

I do.

Blepsid.

Do you, by Vesta?

Chrem.

Yes, and by Neptune too.

Blepsid.

What Neptune? do you mean the god of the sea?

Chrem.

Ay, and t'other Neptune too, if there be any other.

Blepsid.

What, keep Plutus to yourself, and not send him over to us your friends! *Chrem.*

Matters are not yet ripe enough for that.

Blepsid.

What, not to communicate him to any one!

Chrem.

No, by Jupiter—we must first—

Blepsid.

What must we?

Chrem.

Restore him to his sight.

Blepsid.

Restore whom! tell me.

Chrem.

Plutus; and by some means or other, make him see as well as ever.

Blepsid.

Is Plutus then really blind?

Chrem.

Ay, by Jove is he.

Blepsid.

O! then it is no wonder he never came near my house.

Chrem.

But, by the blessing of the gods, he will come now.

Blepsid.

Would it not be proper then to call in the assistance of some physician?

Chrem.

Pray, what physician can there be in this city: for, as there are here no fees for physicians, there is, consequently, no such art. *Blepsid.*

Let us see, however.

Chrem.

But I tell you there is none.

Blepsid.

Nay, I believe so too.

Chrem.

By Jupiter, the best way is to lay him in the temple of Æsculapius, as I myself before intended.

Blepsid.

You say true. Be not dilatory: but do something or other immediately. *Chrem.*

I am going.

Blepsid.

Well, make haste.

Chrem.

Plutus

I think of nothing else.

SCENE IV.

Poverty, Chremylus, Blepsidemus. *Poverty.*

O ye wretches, possessed with the devil, who dare attempt this bold, wicked, and lawless action— whither, whither do you fly? will you not stop?

Chrem.

O Hercules!

Poverty.

Be assured I will absolutely destroy you, ye wicked wretches, who have dared conceive such an insufferable and audacious attempt; an attempt, which no one, at any time, either god or man, hath ventured on: wherefore you may both conclude yourselves already destroyed.

Chrem.

Who, pray, are you with your terrible pale countenance?

Blepsid.

Perhaps, she is a tragical fury belonging to the play-house: for she hath a wild and tragical aspect. *Chrem.*
Ay, but she hath no torch in her hand.

Blepsid.

If she be no fury, she shall howl for this behaviour.

Poverty.

Whom, pray, do you imagine me to be?

Chrem.

Why, some paltry hostess, or oyster-wench; for else you would not have scolded at us in this manner, without receiving any affront.

Poverty.

Indeed! Why, have you not done me the greatest injury in the world, who have endeavoured to expel me out of this whole country. *Chrem.*

Not out of the whole country; there is still the Barathrum left open to you.—But seriously, you had best tell us this very instant who you are?

Poverty.

I am one, who will this day punish you both, for having endeavoured to exterminate me hence.

Blepsid.

Oho! is not this she, who keeps the Hedge-Tavern in our neighbourhood, who is constantly ruining me with her bad half-pints.

Poverty.

I am Poverty then, who have dwelt with you both these many years.

Blepsid.

O King Apollo, and ye gods, whither may one fly? *Chrem.*

What are you doing? What a cowardly animal art thou?—Why don't you stand your ground!

Blepsid.

Not by any means.

Chrem.

How! not stay! shall we two men fly from one woman?

Blepsid.

But she is Poverty, thou miserable man, than which a more pernicious creature was never produced.

Chrem.

Stand firmly: I beseech thee, stand.

Blepsid.

By Jove, but I wont.

Chrem.

Plutus

Why, I tell you, we shall be guilty of the absurdest of all actions in the world, if we should run away, and leave the god destitute, for fear of this woman here, without daring to contend with her.

Blepsid.

In what arms, or what strength shall we confide: for, is there a breast-plate, or even a shield, which this old hag doth not carry to pawn? *Chrem.*

Courage! This god alone (I am confident) will triumph over all the tricks of this woman. *Poverty.*

Do you presume to mutter, you refuse of mankind, when you have been caught in this detestable undertaking, caught in the very fact.

Blepsid.

Why dost thou, while the rod hangs over thee, attack us with thy reproaches, when thou hast not suffered the least injury?

Poverty.

How! in the name of the Gods, do you think you have done me no injury, in endeavouring to restore the eyes of Plutus?

Chrem.

What injury do we do you in this, whilst we are doing so much good to all mankind?

Poverty.

What great good are you contriving?

Chrem.

What good! First, having expelled you out of Greece —

Poverty.

Expelled me! and, pray, what greater mischief can you imagine yourselves able to bring on mankind?

Chrem.

What?—why, by delaying to expel you.

Poverty.

But I am willing, first, to give you a satisfactory account of this matter: and if I demonstrate, that I am the only cause of all the good which happens to you; and it is through me alone you live—Nay, if I dont, then to do to me whatever is agreeable to your pleasure.

Chrem.

And have you the boldness, you hag, to say this?

Poverty.

Nay, be you undeceived: for I shall easily demonstrate you to be utterly mistaken, when you say that you will make honest men rich.

Blepsid.

O for some instruments of torture for thee! *Poverty.*

You ought not to make this outcry and uproar before you know any thing of the matter.

Blepsid.

Who can forbear roaring out, when he hears all this?

Poverty.

Every man of sense can forbear it.

Chrem.

But, if you are cast, what penalty will you be bound to undergo?

Poverty.

Whatever you please.

Blepsid.

Now you talk to the purpose.

Poverty.

For if you are cast, you must submit to the same terms. *Blepsid.*

I suppose twenty hangings will be sufficient.

Chrem.

Ay, for her: but one—a-piece will suffice for us.

Plutus

Poverty.

This you shall surely suffer, or find some very substantial reply to my allegations.

Plutus

SCENE V.

Chorus, Chremylus, Blepsidemus, and Poverty.

Chor.

It now behoves you to say something very specious on your side; if you will get the better of this antagonist, it will require your utmost abilities.

Chrem.

First then, I am persuaded this is universally acknowledged, that good men are justly entitled to prosperity; and as certainly, that the base and wicked should suffer a contrary fate. We, therefore, having considered this, have, with great difficulty, found out the means to effect an expedient in itself excellent, generous, and most effectual to this purpose: for, if Plutus should be now restored to his sight, instead of strolling blindly about the world, he will then go to the habitations of the good, and never again forsake them: at the same time he will fly the dwellings of the wicked. And thus he will, in the end, make all men good, rich and religious. And now, who can invent an expedient more useful to mankind than this?

Blepsid.

No one, surely. I will attest all you say, dont ask her confirmation.

Chrem.

For, as human affairs are now circumstanced, who would not rather call the whole phrenzy, and raving madness! For, how many villains flourish in riches, notwithstanding the injustice with which they have accumulated them; and how many of the best of men are in the utmost distress, nay, even starve, and are obliged to spend most of their time in thy company. (*To Poverty.*) There is a way, therefore, I say, to stop this mischief; and, if we put Plutus with his eyes open into it, he will effect the greatest advantages for mankind.

Poverty.

You two old dotards, joint companions in folly and madness; you, who of all men are the most easily persuaded to quit the road of sound reason. Should this which you long for, be accomplished, I say, it would not be conducive to your happiness: for, should Plutus recover his sight, and distribute his favors equally, no man would trouble himself with the theory of any art, nor with the exercise of any craft; and if these two should once disappear, who afterwards will become a brasier, a shipwright, a taylor, a wheelwright, a shoemaker, a brick-maker, a dyer, or a skinner? Or who will plough up the bowels of the earth, in order to reap the fruits of Ceres, if it was once possible for you to live with the neglect of all these things.

Chrem.

Ridiculous trifler! our slaves will with their labor perform for us all you have enumerated.

Poverty.

But whence will you have any slaves?

Chrem.

We will purchase them with money, to be sure.

Poverty.

But who will be the seller, when he himself is in no want of money?

Chrem.

O! some Thessalian merchant, or other, amongst those numerous slave-mongers, will be induced by the lust of gain.

Poverty.

But, according to your scheme, there will, in the first place, be no such slave-monger: for what rich man would run the hazard of life in such traffic? You yourself, therefore, will be obliged to plough and to dig, and to undergo all other laborious tasks; so that you will pass your time much worse than at present.

Chrem.

May this evil fall on your own head.

Poverty.

Plutus

No more shall you sleep on downy beds, or repose on carpets: for none such will be; since no man with his pockets full of money will be a weaver. Nor shall you be perfumed with liquid sweets, not even on your wedding-day; nor adorn yourselves with sumptuous embroidery. What then will avail your riches, when you will be able to purchase none of these things with them: for, as for the necessaries of life, these will be copiously supplied you by me: for I it is, who standing by the handicraft, compel him, like a mistress, through poverty, and the want of necessaries, to labor for his sustenance.

Chrem.

With what good canst thou supply mankind, except blisters on the legs from the public bagnio-fires, and the cries of half-starved children and old women! together with an army of lice, gnats, and fleas, (too numerous to be mustered) which humming round our heads, torment us, awakening us, and saying, *rise, or starve*. Moreover, instead of clothes we shall have rags; instead of a bed of down we shall have one of rushes full of bugs, which will awaken us out of the soundest sleep; instead of a carpet we shall have a rotten mat; and instead of a pillow, we shall prop our heads with a stone. As to our food, we shall exchange bread for mallow-branches, and furmety for the leaves of radishes. Our seats will not be chairs, but the head of a broken jar; and lastly, we shall be even compelled to use one side of a broken crutch, instead of a kneading-trough.—Well, madam, do not I demonstrate that you are the author of many blessings to mankind?

Poverty.

You have not been describing my life: but canting forth the life of beggars.

Chrem.

Well: and we commonly say, that poverty is the sister of beggary.

Poverty.

Very well you may, who make no distinction between the tyrant Dionysius and the patriot Thrasybulus. But I never suffered any of these calamities; nor, by Jupiter, am I in any danger of them. The life of a beggar, which you mention, is indeed exposed to every want: but the state of poverty is only confined to frugality and business; and neither wants, nor abounds.

Chrem.

O Ceres! what a blessed life you have described. If after all his parsimony and labor, he shall not leave enough to bury him.

Poverty.

You aim at banter and raillery, and are unwilling to be serious; not knowing that I make better men, both in body and mind, than Plutus; for about him are the gouty, and the tun-bellied, and the dropsy-legged, and men choaked with their own fat; but in my train are only the slender, the active, and the most terrible to their enemies.

Chrem.

Very probably! for by starving them you make them slender enough.

Poverty.

Well then, I proceed now to the purity of men's manners, and I shall convince you, that good manners dwell entirely with me; for all abuse belongs to riches.

Chrem.

O certainly! for to steal, and to break open houses, is, no doubt, a very mannerly thing. *Blepsid.*

Yes, by Jove: it must be certainly very reputable, if the thief be obliged to conceal himself. *Poverty.*

Look round among the orators; whilst they are poor, how careful of conserving the rights of the people; but, when they are once enriched with the public money, they immediately part with their honesty; they form designs against their city, and declare war with the people.

Chrem.

Why, there is no great falsehood in this, as malicious a witch as thou art; but you shall not suffer the less; so I would not advise you to swagger: for I will not forgive your endeavor to deceive us into an opinion that poverty is superior to the god of riches. *Poverty.*

Nor can you refute a word of what I have said. You trifle only: your wit, like an unfledged bird, can but flutter; it is unable to rise.

Chrem.

But how comes it that all men shun you as they do?

Plutus

Poverty.

Because I make them better. This may be chiefly perceived in children, who shun their fathers, for advising them to pursue what is most excellent: so difficult is it to distinguish what is right. *Chrem.*

You will not, I hope, say, that Jupiter doth not truly distinguish what is right, for he hath riches: but he keeps them to himself, and sends you only to us.

Poverty.

O you dotards, whose minds are blinded with obsolete opinions—Jupiter is most certainly poor— and I will convince you of it plainly: for, if he was rich, would he, when he celebrates the Olympic games, (for which purpose he convenes all Greece every five years) crown with wild olive those whom he proclaims the victorious wrestlers. It would rather become him, if he was rich, to give them a golden crown.

Chrem.

By this instance you see he manifestly shows his respect for riches: for, with the utmost frugality, and hatred to expense, he binds the victors with trifles, and keeps all the riches to himself.

Poverty.

You endeavor to fasten a much greater scandal than poverty on him, by saying he is rich; and at the same time so void of liberality, and so tenacious.

Chrem.

May Jupiter confound thee; but may he first crown thee with wild olive.

Poverty.

For your presuming to contradict me, when I say that poverty is the authoress of all your blessings, may you —

Chrem.

You need only consult Hecate, to know whether wealth or poverty be preferable: she will tell you, that the rich send her in every month a supper; but that the poor snatch it away before it is laid on the table— But go hang yourself, without muttering another word: for, though you should persuade us of the truth, you shall not persuade us to believe you. *Poverty.*

O city of Argos, hear what he says.

Chrem.

Call rather for your mess-mate Pauson.

Poverty.

What shall I do? unhappy that I am!

Chrem.

Go hang yourself immediately.

Poverty.

Whither shall I go?

Chrem.

To the pillory. Nay, loiter not—but away with you.

Poverty.

Verily, verily, you will send for me hither again.

Chrem.

When we send for thee thou shalt return: but, at present, go, and be d—d: for riches seem to me much the more eligible; and you may blubber, and tear your hair off with madness, if you please.

Blepsid.

For my part, the moment I have got the riches which I have set my heart upon, I will feast it with my wife and children; and then, having washed and perfumed myself, as I return from the bagnio, I will f—t in the faces of all the handicraft-men, and this hag Poverty, wherever I meet her.

Plutus

SCENE VI.

Chremylus, Blepsidemus.

Chrem.

Well, this goal-bird is gone at last; and now we two will, with the utmost expedition, convey the god into the temple of Æsculapius, and there lay him on a bed. *Blepsid.*

Let us then lose no time, lest we should meet with a second interruption in our business.

Chrem.

Here, Cario, bring out the blankets, and conduct Plutus himself with all proper ceremonies, and bring too all the other things which are prepared within.

Plutus

ACT III.

Plutus

SCENE I.

Cario, Chorus.

Cario.

O yes! All ye happy old men, who in the festivals of Theseus, have been contented with very scanty meals of bread; and all others, who have any honesty in you.

Chor.

What is the matter, thou best of all thy gang; for thou seemest to be the messenger of some good news.

Cario.

My master hath had some excellent good fortune; or rather indeed, Plutus himself hath had it: for, from blindness, he hath recovered his eyes; ay, not only the sight, but the beauty of them, by the favorable assistance of Æsculapius.

Chorus.

You give me joy, you set me a huzzaing.

Cario.

Yes; joy is come to you now, whether you will or no.

Chorus.

I will halloo forth the praises of Æsculapius, the father of so fine and numerous a progeny, and great light to mankind.

SCENE II.

Cario and the Wife of Chremylus.

Wife.

What can be the meaning of all this hallooing? will it bring us any good tidings; for I have waited within for this Cario a long time, in expectation of them?

Cario.

Quickly, quickly, mistress, give us some wine; that you may drink yourself—(which is, I know, what you dearly love to do) *aside* : for I bring all manner of blessings to you in a lump.

Wife.

And where are they?

Cario.

You shall soon know them in what I am going to tell you.

Wife.

Dispatch them immediately.

Cario.

Hasten then: for I will deduce the whole affair from foot to head. *Wife.*

Deduce nothing on my head, I beseech you.

Cario.

What? not the good things which have just now happened.

Wife.

None of your affairs, I desire.

Cario.

As soon as we arrived at the temple, conducting a man, then in the most miserable condition; but now happy and blessed, if any one is so: first, we led him to the sea, and then washed him.

Wife.

By Jove, he must be truly happy; a poor old fellow, ducked in the cold water.

Cario.

But when we came within the holy precincts, and the loaves, and previous sacrifices were placed on the altar, together with a cake well hardened with fire, we laid Plutus down, and, according to the custom, every one of us fell to making his own bed.

Wife.

What, were there any more of you who wanted the god's assistance?

Cario.

There was only one, Neoclides by name; who is indeed blind, but in thieving hath always out-shot those who can see. There were likewise many others afflicted with various diseases. At length the sacristan having put out the lights, ordered us to fall asleep; and charged us, if we heard any noise not to cry out. We then laid down all of us in a very orderly manner: but I could not sleep. A pot of pease-porridge, which lay at a little distance from an old woman's head, had a violent effect on my nostrils: indeed, I had a supernatural motion to creep towards it; when looking up, I saw the priest greedily snatching away the cakes and figs from the sacred table: after which he took his rounds about the altars, to see if there was any loaf left, and consecrated all he found into a wallet, which he carried for that purpose; upon which, I, thinking this was a great act of devotion, stood up in my turn to the porridge-pot.

Wife.

O thou wretch, hadst thou no apprehension of the god?

Cario.

Yes, by all the gods, had I, an apprehension, that, having his garlands on, he would get to the pot before me: for that the priest had told me before-hand. As for the old woman, when she heard the noise, she put out her hand to

Plutus

secure her porridge; I, hissing like one of Æsculapius's serpents, seized it in my teeth; upon which she immediately drew it back into her bed, and wrapping herself up close, very quietly laid down till she outstunk a cat, f—ting with fear; but I then fell to supping up the pease—porridge. When my belly was full, I betook myself to my repose.

Wife.

But, did not the god appear to you?

Cario.

No, not yet. After this I did a very merry thing: for, as the god was approaching, I let a loud f—t; for my belly was cursedly puffed up with the porridge.

Wife.

For which he certainly held thee in the utmost abhorrence.

Cario.

No, but his daughter Jaso, as she attended her father, reddened a little; and her sister Panacea turned away her head, holding her nose; for I assure you I f—t no frankincense.

Wife.

But Æsculapius himself—what did he?

Cario.

O by Jove, he never troubled his head about it.

Wife.

Surely, according to your account, this god hath very little regard to good manners.

Cario.

My account!—I say the gold finders and he live upon the same commodity. *Wife.*

O wretch!

Cario.

After this, I presently covered myself up, out of fear; and he very decently went his rounds, and inspected all the cases: immediately afterwards his apprentice brought him his stone mortar, and his pestle, and his box.

Wife.

What! a stone—box?

Cario.

No, by Hercules! not the box, but the mortar was of stone.

Wife.

Sure, some terrible judgment will fall on thy head: for, how could you see all these things, when you say you had covered your head in the bed—clothes?

Cario.

I saw all through the hole of my cloak; and, by Jupiter, there are windows enow in it. The first operation was performed on Neoclides, for whom the god ordered his apprentice to pound an ointment in a mortar, throwing in three heads of garlick of Tenos; which being done, he himself mixed it with benjamin and mastic, and then adding some vinegar of Sphettus, he spread the plaister, and put it on, having first turned his eye—lids outwards, that he might put him to the greater torment. Poor Neoclides first squalled, then roared, then took to his heels, and ran away full speed: at which the god laughing heartily, said to him, sit quietly down with your plaister; I will take care you shall keep your oath, and abstain from the courts of justice. *Wife.*

What a wise deity this is, and what a lover of the people! *Cario.*

He then sat down by Plutus. And first he stroked his head; next, taking a clean napkin, he wiped round his eye—lids. Panacea now covered his head and face with a scarlet cloth, after which the god whistled; immediately two serpents of a supernatural size rushed forth from the sacred part of the temple. *Wife.*

O good God!

Cario.

And these creeping softly under the scarlet cloth, fell a licking the eye—lids; at least so it seemed to me: and in less time than you could drink off ten half—pints of wine, Plutus, (I assure you, Madam, it is true,) was started up with his eyes open. I clapped my hands for joy, and wakened my master; presently the god disappeared, and the serpents returned into the inmost recesses of the temple. Now several of those who lay near him fell to embracing

Plutus

him with inexpressible affection, and kept awake till it was broad day—light. I uttered vehement praises of the god, for having so suddenly restored Plutus his eyes, and made Neoclides blinder than before.

Wife.

O Æsculapius, what a powerful deity art thou! but, tell me, what is become of Plutus?

Cario.

He is coming: but there is a prodigious crowd gathered about him. Those who had led honest lives, and been poor, embraced him, and all received him with much pleasure; but those who had dishonestly acquired great substance, knitted their brows, and looked very sour. Whereas the former, crowned with garlands, followed behind, laughing, and shouting. The shoes of the elders resounded as they went; for they advanced, beating time, as it were, with their feet: come on, my boys, with one accord, every man of you, dance and caper, and figure in; for no man will hereafter tell us, when we enter his house, that there is no pudding in the pot.

Wife.

O Hecate, I will crown thee—with a string of buns for this good news.

Cario.

Make no longer delay; for the men are near our door.

Wife.

Well, I go in, and will fetch the customary entertainment, to welcome his new—purchased eyes.

Cario.

And I will go and meet the procession.

Plutus

SCENE III.

Plutus, Chremylus, and his Wife.

Plutus.

First, I pay my adoration to the sun; then I salute the illustrious soil of the venerable Pallas, and all the country of Cecrops, which hath hospitably received me. I blush at my misfortunes, when I recollect with what men I have ignorantly passed my time, and have shunned those, who were only worthy of my conversation. Unhappy as I was, who knew nothing of the matter all this while. How wrong have I been in both; but, for the future, turning over a new leaf, I will show all mankind, that it was against my will I gave up myself to the wicked.

Chrem.

Go, and be hanged, all of you—what troublesome things are friends, who immediately appear, when any good fortune attends you! They tread on my heels, and squeeze me to death, every one expressing his affection for me: for, who hath not spoken to me! with what a crowd of elders have I been surrounded in the Forum!

Wife.

Your humble servant, dear Sir, (*to Plutus*) and yours, Sir, (*to her husband*)—Give me leave, Sir, according to our custom, to welcome you with this entertainment.

Plutus.

By no means: for, at my entrance into your house, on the recovery of my sight, it becomes me better to make you a present than to receive one.

Wife.

Will you be so unkind not to accept it?

Plutus.

Not till I am at your fire-side: for there it is the custom to receive it. After I have got clear of this troublesome crowd: for it becomes not our poet to throw figs and sweetmeats among the spectators, in order to bribe their applause.

Wife.

You say very true: for, yonder I see stand up Xenicus ready to scramble for the figs.

Plutus

ACT IV.

Plutus

SCENE I.

Cario.

How sweet is it, Sirs, to get riches, without sending out any ventures for them! How is a whole heap of good things rushed in upon us, without doing the least evil! Riches, so acquired, are indeed a blessing.—Our bin is full of fine flour; our vessels, of black sweet-flavored wine; our trunks, of gold and silver! Well, it is wonderful! Our well is full of oil, our oil-cruises are filled with precious ointment! Our garret with figs! Every vinegar-jar, and tray, and pot, are all become of shining brass! Our fish platters, which were of wood, and something rotten, are now all silver! Our dresser is of a sudden become ivory! we servants now play at even and odd with golden staters, and are so elegant, that we wipe our posteriors with garlic, instead of stones. And now my master, with a garland on his head, is sacrificing within, a hog, a goat, and a ram; the smoke hath sent me out: for I was able to bear it no longer, it so offended my eyes.

SCENE II.

Dicæus and Cario.

Dicæus. (speaking to a youth.)

Follow me, my child, and let us go together to the god.

Cario.

Hey dey! who comes here?

Dicæus.

One, who was miserable; but is now fortunate.

Cario.

O then, certainly you are of the number of good men, as it should seem. *Dicæus.*

Most certainly.

Cario.

And what do you want?

Dicæus.

I am going to the god; who is the author of great blessings to me. You must know, that I, having inherited a very sufficient fortune from my father, supplied my necessitous friends with it: for I thought it the surest way to secure to myself a comfortable life.

Cario.

No doubt you soon saw the bottom of your purse.

Dicæus.

You are in the right.

Cario.

You were then certainly miserable.

Dicæus.

Even so. But I thought, when I assisted them in their necessity, that I should find them friends indeed, if I should ever want any; whereas, when that day came, they turned their backs, and pretended not to see me.

Cario.

Ay, and I make no doubt laughed heartily at you into the bargain.

Dicæus.

Very true. I was almost destroyed by the drought—of my dishes. *Cario.*

But it is not so now with you?

Dicæus.

No: for which reason I am come to the god to offer my adoration, as I ought.

Cario.

But this old cloak here —what, in the name of Jupiter, is the meaning of this old cloak, which the boy carries after you?—Pray tell me.

Dicæus.

I intend to dedicate it to the god. *Cario.*

I hope you were not initiated into the great mysteries in this—

Dicæus.

No, but I have shivered in it these thirteen years.

Cario.

And those old shoes there?

Dicæus.

And these have spent the winter with me.

Cario.

And do you dedicate these too?

Plutus

Dicæus.

Yes, by Jove.

Cario.

You have brought most grateful offerings to the deity, no doubt.

SCENE III.

Sycophantes, Cario, and Dicæus.

Sycoph.

O unhappy and undone man that I am! O thrice unhappy, and four times, and five times, and twelve times, and ten thousand times—O! O! of what a variety of ills is my fortune composed! *Cario.*

Apollo, and all propitious Deities defend us! What terrible misfortune hath happened to this man!

Sycoph.

Have not the greatest misfortunes fallen on me this day; who am, by the means of this god, stripped of every thing I had in the world? But, if there be any justice upon earth, I'll have him restored to his former blindness again.

Dicæus.

I begin to smell the matter. This man is certainly in a very bad way; but he hath a very bad stamp on his countenance.

Cario.

If he is a rascal, I think, when he is in the road to destruction, he may be said to be in a very *fair way*. *Sycoph.* Where is he! where is the traitor! who promised to-day, that, when he had recovered his eyes, he would alone make us all rich; and now he hath them, he puts some of us into a worse condition than we were in before!

Cario.

Whom, pray, hath he served so?

Sycoph.

Whom! why me myself.

Cario.

You! Ay, but you are a rogue, and a house-breaker. *Sycoph.*

No, Sirrah! but there is not a grain of honesty in such fellows as you—nor is it possible but you must have robbed me of my money.

Cario.

Bless me! what a magisterial air the Sycophant advances to us with.

Dicæus.

The man is plainly perishing with hunger.

Sycoph. [to Cario.]

Come, you Sir, this instant, into court: you shall be put on the wheel, and racked till you confess all your rogueries.

Cario.

You be racked yourself!

Dicæus.

By Jupiter the preserver; this god is worthy of the highest honor from all Greece; for exacting such just vengeance of Sycophants.

Sycoph.

What a wretch am I!—Ha! do you too laugh at me, after having a share in the plunder! for whence could you otherwise come by this fine coat; you, whom yesterday I saw wrapped up in a miserable old cloak! *Dicæus.* I regard you not. See on my finger this amulet—ring, which I bought of Eudamus for a drachma.

Cario.

There are no charms in your ring against the bite of a Sycophant.

Sycoph.

I think this very injurious treatment: you revile me, but will not tell me what is your business: for you are here on no good design, I am certain.

Cario.

With no design for your good, you may be well assured of that.

Plutus

Sycoph.

By Jupiter, but you will sup to-night at my expense.

Dicæus.

May this be true; and may you and your witness burst your bellies—but not with meat.

Sycoph.

Do you deny it, you villains, when I smell such a flavor of fish and roast-meat from within? phu, phu, phu.

[*sniffing.*]

Cario.

What do you smell, sirrah?

Dicæus.

I suppose he smells the cold: for his clothes are in a very tattered condition. *Sycoph.*

This is insufferable. O Jupiter, and all you gods! are these fellows to insult me! how my indignation rises, that an honest man, and a patriot, should be reduced to such a condition.

Dicæus.

You an honest man, and a patriot!

Sycoph.

Yes, no other comes near me.

Dicæus.

Answer me a few questions.

Sycoph.

What are they?

Dicæus.

Are you a farmer?

Sycoph.

Do you think me such a madman?

Dicæus.

You are a merchant then, I suppose.

Sycoph.

I pretend to be so, when I see occasion. *Dicæus.*

What then?—Have you learned any handicraft?

Sycoph.

No, by Jove.

Dicæus.

How do you live then, if you do nothing for your livelihood?

Sycoph.

I am a superintendant of the public weal, and of the good of every private person.

Dicæus.

You! and how came you, pray, to take this office upon you?

Sycoph.

Such is my will and pleasure.

Dicæus.

Thou villain! dost thou pretend to be an honest man, who art odious to every one, by doing what doth not belong to you?

Sycoph.

Doth it not belong to me, thou gull, to serve my country with all my might?

Dicæus.

Is an officious meddling with every man's business serving your country?

Sycoph.

Yes, to assist the dead letter of the law; and not to suffer those who offend it to escape with impunity.

Dicæus.

The public takes care to provide proper judges.

SCENE III.

Plutus

Sycoph.

But who will inform?

Dicæus.

Whoever pleases.

Sycoph.

I am then that he, and thus the affairs of the city devolve on me.

Dicæus.

The city hath indeed a sorry protector. Would it not be better for thee to live quietly and peaceably, and intermeddle in nobody's affairs? *Sycoph.*

You describe the life of a silly sheep: for such is the life of a man without business.

Dicæus.

You are resolved then not to reform.

Sycoph.

No, not if you would give me Plutus himself, and all the benjamin in Cyrene.

Dicæus.

Off with your cloak immediately.

Cario.

The gentleman speaks to you, Sir.

Dicæus.

And your shoes too.

Cario.

It is all to you, Sir.

Sycoph.

Touch me either of you, whoever pleases.

Cario.

I am then that he. (Here Cario lays hold on the informer, and strips him, at which his witness runs away.)

Sycoph.

What a wretch am I, to be thus stripped in open day—light!

Dicæus.

This is your punishment for seeking a scandalous livelihood, by meddling with what doth not belong to you.

Sycoph.

Take care what you do; for I have a witness present.

Cario.

No, sirrah, your witness hath taken to his heels.

Sycoph.

Ha! Wo is me! am I then left alone?

Cario.

What, now you roar?

Sycoph.

Wo is me! I say again.

Cario.

Lend me your old cloak then, that I may cover the gentleman's nakedness.

Dicæus.

By no means. It is already sacred to Plutus.

Cario.

How can it be offered more properly than on the shoulders of this rogue and robber? Plutus should be adorned with rich clothes.

Dicæus.

But tell me to what use shall we put these old shoes?

Cario.

I will nail them up to his forehead, as you nail offerings against the wild olive—tree. *Sycoph.*

SCENE III.

Plutus

I will depart; for I see you are too many for me: but, as soon as I find any of my evidences, though never so bad a one, I will bring this god, stout as he is, to condign punishment this very day: for this single fellow manifestly subverts the government, and all without obtaining any authority from the senate or people.

Dicæus.

Well, Sir, since you march in my furniture, make as much haste as you can to the bagnio—fire, that you may get the first place, and warm yourself. It is a post I myself have often stood centry at.

Cario.

The master of the bagnio will lug him out by the heels: he will know him the moment he sees him; for the fellow hath rogue written in his face—But come, let us two go in, that you may pay your adoration to the Deity.

SCENE IV.

Old Woman, Chorus, Chremylus.

Old Woman.

Tell me, honest friends, are we indeed arrived at the house of this new Deity, or have we missed our way?

Chorus.

Know, my pretty miss, you ask in very good time; for you are arrived at the very door.

Old Woman.

Well then, shall I call some-body out?

Chrem.

There is no need of calling any one; for I am just come out myself: but it will be necessary for you to tell me your business.

Old Woman.

O Sir! I have suffered very great and sad mischiefs indeed; for ever since this god here hath recovered his eye-sight, I have had a most uncomfortable life.

Chrem.

What is this? you are an informeress, I suppose. *Old Woman.*

Not I, by all that is sacred!

Chrem.

What, I suppose, you never had the good fortune to be toast-mistress at your club?

Old Woman.

You banter me: but, alas! I am troubled with a terrible itch.

Chrem.

What itch? discover quickly, what itch?

Old Woman.

Listen then. I had a dear young fellow, poor indeed he was, but a handsome well-shaped lad, and good-natured; for he supplied all my wants, in the modestest, and prettiest manner: and I, on the other hand, supplied him with all these necessaries—

Chrem.

What were the necessaries, pray, which he chiefly used to want of you?

Old Woman.

Not many: for he was a bashful youth, and had a most awful respect for me—He would ask me twenty drachmas to buy him a coat, and eight to buy him a pair of shoes. And he would ask me to buy a cheap gown for his sisters, and a poor wrapper for his mother. Sometimes he would beg four medimni of wheat of me.

Chrem.

By Apollo, what you tell me is no great matter; it is indeed plain he had a most awful respect for you.

Old Woman.

And these things, he constantly told me, he did not ask as the reward of his performances, but out of pure friendship, that he might wear my coat for my sake, and remember me by it.

Chrem.

This young fellow, by your account, must have been most desperately in love with you.

Old Woman.

Ah! the impudent varlet is not now of the same mind, but is exceedingly altered; for, upon my sending him this cheesecake, and a whole saucer full of sweetmeats, with an assignation, that I would come to him in the evening—

Chrem.

What did he do?—tell me. *Old Woman.*

He returned me the cheesecake, intending, that I should come no more thither to him; nay, and besides all this, he

Plutus

ordered the messenger to tell me, that the Milesians were formerly stout fellows. *Chrem.*

It is plain this young fellow hath not a depraved taste; since now he is grown rich, he delights no longer in lentils: for formerly his poverty obliged him to take up with any dish he could procure. *Old Woman.*

And yet I swear to you, by the twin gods, he formerly used to walk every day by my door.

Chrem.

What looking for your corpse!

Old Woman.

No, only for the pleasure of hearing my voice.

Chrem.

Bidding him take something, I suppose.

Old Woman.

And then, if ever he found me in a fit of the vapors, he would caress me by the fond names of my little duck, and my little dove.

Chrem.

And then, perhaps, he would ask you for a pair of shoes.

Old Woman.

When I have rode out in my chariot, on the day of celebrating the great mysteries, I have been sure of a hearty thrashing, if any young fellow took it into his head to ogle me: so violently jealous of me was this sweet youth.

Chrem.

It seems then he liked to eat alone.

Old Woman.

My hands were, he said, extremely beautiful.

Chrem.

When they held out twenty drachmas to him.

Old Woman.

And my skin, he said, had a most delicate smell.

Chrem.

Very probably while you poured forth Thasian wine.

Old Woman.

That I had a soft and lovely eye.

Chrem.

This was no awkward fellow, I find—he knows how to feed upon a rampant old woman.

Old Woman.

The god, therefore, my good friend, doth not do well; though he pretends that he will redress the wrongs of the injured. *Chrem.*

Tell me what you would have him do, and it shall be done immediately.

Old Woman.

It is surely reasonable, that he should compel this young man, to whom I have done so much good, to return some good offices to me, otherwise it is not just he should enjoy any advantage whatever.

Chrem.

What! did he not make you a suitable return every night?

Old Woman.

Ay, but he promised never to leave me, whilst I was alive.

Chrem.

True! but he now thinks you alive no longer.

Old Woman.

Indeed, friend, I am considerably pined away with trouble.

Chrem.

You seem rather to be pined away with rottenness.

Old Woman.

You may draw me through a ring.

Plutus

Chrem.

Ay, if it was as big as a hoop.

Old Woman.

As I live, here comes the very youth I have been all this while accusing; he seems to be come a reveling.

Chrem.

He doth so; for he hath a garland and a torch with him.

SCENE V.

Neaniscus, Old Woman, Chremylus.

Neaniscus.

Save you good people. *Old Woman.*

What says he?

Neaniscus.

My old friend, you are grown grey all on a sudden.

Old Woman.

What a wretch am I, to be thus abused!

Chrem.

It seems he hath not seen you a long while.

Old Woman.

How long, sirrah!—he was at my house but yesterday.

Chrem.

I find drink hath a contrary effect on him to what it hath on others; it makes him see the clearer.

Old Woman.

No; but he is always saucy in his behavior.

Neaniscus.

O Sea—Neptune, and all ye antique gods, what a number of wrinkles she hath in her forehead!

[Holding his torch up to her face. Old Woman.]

Ah! Oh! don't thrust your torch in my face.

Chrem.

She is in the right: for, if a single spark should seize her, she will burn like a dry olive—branch.

Neaniscus.

Are you willing we should have a little play together, after this long absence?

Old Woman.

Where, wretch?

Neaniscus.

Here, with these walnuts.

Old Woman.

What play?

Neaniscus.

How many teeth have you?

Chrem.

I will have my guess. Perhaps, she hath three or four.

Neaniscus.

Pay me: she wears but one, and that is a grinder. *Old Woman.*

Sure, you are out of your senses, villains, to endeavour before so many men to besprinkle me thus with your jests.

Neaniscus.

Sprinkle you!—I am sure you would be the better for it, if you was well washed.

Chrem.

No, truly: for she is now varnished over; but should the paint be once washed away, the furrows of her face will appear plain.

Old Woman.

As old a man as you are, you seem to me a very simple fellow.

Neaniscus.

Perhaps, he is tempting you. I suppose he doth not think I see him playing with your pretty bobbies.

Old Woman.

No, by Venus, you rascal, he touches not mine.

Chrem.

Not I, by Hecate! I am not so simple: but, harkee, young gentleman, you must not have such an aversion to this lass.

Neaniscus.

I! I dote on her!

Chrem.

Why, she accuses you. *Neaniscus.*

Of what doth she accuse me?

Chrem.

She says you are insolent, and have told her, that the Milesians were formerly stout fellows.

Neaniscus.

I will not fight with you for her.

Chrem.

Why, pray?

Neaniscus.

In respect to your age; for I should permit this in no other: but, as you are, you may go off safely, and carry the lass along with you.

Chrem.

I well know your meaning—you will not now vouchsafe to converse with her, as you have.

Old Woman.

Who is he, who is so free to deliver me up?

Neaniscus.

I do not choose a conversation with one who hath been embraced by thirteen thousand years.

Chrem.

But, since you have drank the wine, you ought to drink the dregs also.

Neaniscus.

Ay, but these are very old and fusty indeed.

Chrem.

Well then, a strainer will cure all that.

Neaniscus.

But go in: for I am desirous to consecrate these crowns to the god.

Old Woman.

And I too have something to say to him.

Neaniscus.

But I will not go in.

Chrem.

Courage, man, never fear; she shant ravish you. *Neaniscus.*

You speak very kindly: for I have sufficiently pitched up the old vessel already.

Old Woman.

Enter; and I will follow you behind.

Chrem.

O king Jupiter, how closely the old woman sticks to the youth, even as a limpet doth to the rock!

Plutus

ACT V.

SCENE I.

Cario, Mercury.

Mercury knocks hard at the door, and then retires.

Cario.

Who knocks at the door? —Heyday! What is the meaning of this? Here is nobody.—What, hath the door made all this lamentation, when no-body hurt it!

Mercury.

You, you, Cario; I speak to you, stay.

Cario.

Pray tell me, sir, was it you that knocked so heartily at our door?

Mercury.

Not I, by Jove! but I should have knocked had not you prevented me, by opening it; but run quickly and call your master hither; and then call his wife and children; then his servants, then the bitch, then yourself, and then the sow.

Cario.

Pray, what is the meaning of all this?

Mercury.

Jupiter, sirrah, intends to make a hotchpotch of you altogether, and then souse you into the Barathrum.

Cario.

Such criers as you, truly deserve a tongue cut out: but wherefore, pray, is he contriving this for us?

Mercury.

Because you have committed the most horrible of all facts: for ever since Plutus hath recovered a glimpse of sight, no one hath sacrificed to the gods any frankincense, or laurel, or cake, or any victim; or, in short, any thing at all.

Cario.

No, faith! nor will not either: for I am sure you have taken very little care of us.

Mercury.

Well, as for the other gods, I trouble not myself much: but I myself am ruined and undone.

Cario.

Why, this is modestly spoken.

Mercury.

Formerly I received every morning all kind of good things from the tavern-women, such as wine-cakes, honey, figs, as much as was decent for Mercury to eat: but now I go all day hungry, and have nothing to do but stretch out my legs, and sleep.

Cario.

Very justly: since, notwithstanding all these good things, you often made losers of those who gave them you.

Mercury.

O miserable deity!—O for that cheesecake, which used to be dressed for me on the fourth day of the moon.

Cario.

You desire one who is absent, and call for him in vain.

Mercury.

O! for a gammon of bacon, which I used to feed on.

Cario.

Leap upon the bottle here in the open air. *Mercury.*

O those meals of tripe, which I have made?

Plutus

Cario.

The wind in your own tripes turns your meditations that way.

Mercury.

O those cups of wine and water equally mixed up!

Cario.

You shall not stir till you have drank this cup also. *Mercury.*

Will you assist one, who hath a great friendship for you?

Cario.

Ay, if you want any thing within my capacity of helping you to.

Mercury.

If you would but give me one of those well-baked loaves, and a piece of that flesh you are sacrificing within.

Cario.

But they must not be conveyed out.

Mercury.

Why, when you used to filch any vessel from your master, I always assisted you in concealing it.

Cario.

Ay, you rascal; that you might partake in the booty: for a well-baked cake came always to your share.

Mercury.

Ay, but you eat it afterwards yourself.

Cario.

Well: for you had no share in the whipping, when I was taken in my rogueries.

Mercury.

No remembrance of past injuries now Phyle is taken. So pray receive me into your house, in the name of the gods, and let me dwell with you. *Cario.*

What, will you leave the gods to dwell with us?

Mercury.

Yes indeed will I: for your affairs are in a much better situation.

Cario.

But in what light do you esteem a man who deserts from his country?

Mercury.

That is every man's country, where he lives best.

Cario.

Well, but what advantage would you bring to us, if you were here?

Mercury.

I will be your turnkey, and stand behind your door. *Cario.*

Turnkey! —No, we want none of your turns.

Mercury.

Employ me then in my mercantile capacity.

Cario.

But we are rich, what then should we do with such a huckster as Mercury?

Mercury.

In my crafty vocation then.

Cario.

We have done with craft. Honesty is for our purpose.

Mercury.

You know me to be a conductor.

Cario.

No, the god hath his eyes now, and wants no conductor. *Mercury.*

Odso! I will be master of your sports — will not that do?—This is an office, which I am sure will be very convenient for Plutus: for rich men often make matches between musicians and prize-fighters.

Cario.

Plutus

How useful it is to have various occupations: for by one or the other this fellow hath found out a livelihood: it is not without reason, I find, that our judges put in as many tickets with their names as they can. *Mercury*.
Will nothing that I have said gain me admittance?

Cario.

Yes, yes; come to the well, and wash some guts for me; then you will show yourself to be a good scullion.

SCENE II.

Priest of Jupiter, Cario. *Priest.*

Who can direct me to the very door where Chremylus lives?

Cario.

What is the matter, honest gentleman?

Priest.

No good, I assure you, sir. Since this Plutus first recovered his eyes, I have been perishing with hunger: for, indeed, I have not a morsel to eat; and this, though I am the priest of Jupiter the Protector.

Cario.

And what is the reason of this, pray?

Priest.

No person thinks proper to sacrifice any longer.

Cario.

On what account?

Priest.

Because they are all rich; whereas formerly, when they were poor, the merchant returning from his voyage offered up his victim: the rogue who escaped out of the hands of justice did the same; and when any one made a handsome sacrifice, he invited the priest to it: but now there is not one who sacrifices, no, not the least matter in the world; nor even comes near the temple, unless those thousands who come there to lay their cates.

Cario.

And have you not your lawful share of these?

Priest.

As to Jupiter the Protector, I think proper to take my leave of him, and abide here with you. *Cario.*

Courage! all will be well, if the god pleases: for the Jupiter the Protector is within already: he came hither of his own accord.

Priest.

You now tell me delightful news indeed.

Cario.

We shall presently place (bear it with patience) Plutus where your Jupiter was formerly placed, to preserve the treasure which is behind the temple of Minerva. —But give me those lighted torches there, somebody.

—Here, priest, do you take them, and carry them before the god.

Priest.

We are doing no more than we ought.

Cario.

Now call Plutus out.

SCENE III.

Old Woman, Cario, Chorus. *Old Woman.*

What shall I do?

Cario.

Take these pots, with which we are to place the god in the temple, carry them on your head with a grave countenance. I see you have already your flowered gown on.

Old Woman.

Ay, but of that which I came hither for—

Cario.

All shall be immediately done for you. The young fellow shall be with you in the evening. *Old Woman.*

Well, if you will be bound that the youth shall visit me, I will carry the pots.

Cario. (turning to the spectators.)

These pots are the very reverse of all others: for in all others the scum used to be at the top of the pot, here it is at the bottom.

Chorus.

There is no reason why we should stay here longer, but follow behind: for it is usual to bring up the rear with a song.