THE MOSTELLARIA

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The Mostellaria by Plautus

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PLAUTUS

THE MOSTELLARIA

Trieste

The Mostellaria of Plautus

AN ABRIDGED ACTING EDITION

ARRANGED, TRANSLATED, AND ENACTED BY

The Classical Society of the
Victoria University of Manchester

EDITED BY

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PREFACE.

THIS abridgement of the *Mostellaria* has been made with a view to its performance by members of the Classical Society of this University; it is published with a verse-translation primarily for the use of their audience, and also in the hope that others may find it useful, whether for acting or as an introduction to the writings of a highly-talented and amusing dramatist.

The text is based on the Teubner edition of Goetz and Schoell; much use has also been made of Prof. Sonnenschein's admirable edition. The abridgement has been made by the omission, not (as a rule) of whole scenes,* but of a large number of isolated lines or short passages, many of them apparently valueless. This text, therefore, presents the whole of the plot.

At several points where excisions have been made, and where the text is faulty or incomplete, it has been necessary to alter or supply the Latin. With one exception (see Prof. Conway's note on page 83 of the text) these alterations do no violence to the meaning of the passages in which they occur.

The translation has been written by the following members of the Classical Society: Miss H. L. Chaffers, Miss A. Greenhalgh, Miss S. E. Jackson, B.A., Miss J. Nicholson, Miss E. Watson, Mr. W. T. Parker, my

* The only passages of interest or length which have been omitted are (i.) the short scene—amusing but broadly farcical—between Delphium and Callidamates; (ii.) the soliloquy of Simo, which explains the ill-humour on which Tranio so cleverly trades; (iii.) the soliloquy of Phaniscus and his conversation with Pinacium, a passage which is utterly uninteresting.

colleagues, Mr. A. C. B. Brown, B.A., Mr. W. J. Goodrich, M.A., Mr. J. MacInnes, M.A., and myself. The initials of each translator are appended to his or her section.

The description of the scenery and the costumes in the following *Note* has been written by Mr. J. H. Hopkinson, M.A., to whom the Society is greatly indebted for this and for other most valuable assistance.

To Dr. R. S. Conway, Professor of Latin in this University, my very hearty thanks are due for the unwearied kindness with which, in the midst of most important and varied business, he has found time to give me invaluable help with the text. Practically all the re-writing to which I have referred is his work, and the troublesome matter of scansion he has taken entirely on his own shoulders.

G. NORWOOD.

THE UNIVERSITY, MANCHESTER,
January 31st, 1908.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The Play.—The *Mostellaria*, written about two hundred years before Christ, is one of the best plays of Plautus, who took as his model a Greek comedy named *Phasma* (*The Ghost*), written probably by Philemon, a celebrated poet of the New Comedy, who flourished in the last decades of the fourth century B.C. The name *Mostellaria* (*A Tale of a Bogey*) is derived from one of the most effective scenes of the play.

The Plot.—Theopropides, an Athenian merchant, is abroad in Egypt. In his absence his son Philolaches, abetted by a clever and knavish slave named Tranio, has given himself up to wild living. His chief escapade is to buy a slave-girl, Philematium, with whom he has fallen in love, and to give her her freedom. For this purpose he has borrowed money from an usurer named Misargyrides.

On the day on which the action opens Philolaches, with Philematium and his friend Callidamates, is sitting at table when Tranio arrives from the harbour to say that he has seen Theopropides coming ashore. Philolaches is panic-stricken, but Tranio undertakes to extricate him. The house is shut up as if deserted, and when Theopropides arrives Tranio tells him that it is haunted and induces him to run away in terror.

Misargyrides enters to demand payment of his interest, and at the same moment Theopropides returns. The slave persuades the old man to settle matters with the money-lender, and, when asked what has been done with the loan, tells his master that Philolaches has bought the house next door in place of the "haunted" one. Theopropides expresses a desire to see over it and Tranio escapes detection by telling

Simo (the neighbour) that his master wishes to build a new wing to his own house. Theopropides, after viewing the house with much satisfaction, sends Tranio to summon Philolaches.

While he is waiting, Theopropides sees two slaves, who have come for Callidamates, knocking at the door of the "haunted" house. He tells them that it is unoccupied, and their incredulous replies fill him with misgivings. He meets Simo and questions him about the supposed purchase of the latter's house, and is soon convinced that he has been tricked. Simo promises to lend him his slaves to catch and chastise Tranio.

The latter returns in time to hear his master giving orders to these slaves, and before Theopropides can stop him takes sanctuary on the altar. Callidamates enters to make Philolaches' peace with Theopropides. He succeeds in this, and with some difficulty the old man consents to forgive Tranio also.

Scene.—The scene is laid in one of the narrow residential streets of Athens. Two houses side by side form the back of the stage. The houses (very small to our eyes) are one storey high with a gable-end to the street. There are no windows, but a double-leaved door gives access to each house. The house of Theopropides is considerably the larger and finer of the two, the door being recessed so as to give a broad shallow vestibule supported by two columns. An altar stands against the front wall. Simo's house is small and mean-looking with the front door opening directly into the street.

Costumes.—Theopropides: A long *chiton* reaching to the ankles; over this a large *himation* carefully draped; sandals and a staff.

Simo: A poor well-worn *himation* badly put on; slippers.

Misargyrides: Dress similar to that of Simo; wallet.

Philolaches: White *chiton* reaching to the knees (with embroidered key-pattern); *chlamys* of bright colour with elaborate brooch; broad felt hat; high leather boots.

Callidamates: Dress similar to that of Philolaches, but (at his first entrance) very untidily worn.

Tranio: a short *chiton* (fastened on the left shoulder with the right shoulder left bare); slippers.

Grumio: A short coarse *chiton*; a rough conical felt hat; sheepskin leggings and brogues.

Phaniscus: Dress similar to that of Tranio.

The other male slaves: Dress similar to that of Tranio, but plainer and coarser.

Philematium: White Doric *chiton*, embroidered; a fine *himation* of soft material; sandals.

Scapha: A long sleeved *chiton* without embroidery, and no *himation;* slippers.