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The origin of the harlequinade and its influence on modern drama (1888-1920)

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Thesis

THE ORIGIN OF THE HARLEQUINADE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON MODERN DRAMA (1888–1920)

Submitted by
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(A.B., Smith, 1920)

In partial fulfilment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts
Drama - High-reviti
Pantomime
Harlequinade
Series
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THE ORIGIN OF THE HARLEQUINADE AND ITS INFLUENCE
ON MODERN DRAMA (1888-1920)

THERE is a sort of contradiction in terms in taking seriously anything that is supposed to be humorous, but in tracing "origins", the dignity of the venerable gathers about misty beginnings; a sort of aureole of gray hairs elevates antiquity to austerity so that one may discourse on the Al Jolson or the Charlie Chaplin of the sixteenth century with impunity in the most academic circles, although I doubt not that the Renaissance counterparts of these gentlemen were in every bit as small repute among their contemporary intellectuals as Mr. Jolson and Mr. Chaplin would be in the faculties of our universities today.

Again, the word "influence" is an extraordinary word, a string that attaches itself visibly or invisibly, to practically every human relationship, and trails off at times in almost incredible directions. Literary people, in particular, appear to be very susceptible to it, and no mother's son or daughter of them ever rises to appreciable eminence without festoons and garlands, or ropes and chains of it, real or imaginary, clinging to his or her literary personality, at times almost eclipsing all semblance of individuality. It is only a matter of time, however, before these become influences in turn, and hand on the tradition, to wit, Chaucer on Spenser, Spenser on Keats, Keats on Amy Lowell. At moments, one is tempted to reverse the machine, and discuss the influence of Amy Lowell on Keats. But one does not.

The word "harlequin" is not a very familiar word to American children. Perhaps by the age of twelve, they associate it with a kind of striped ice-cream or a masquerade costume, but it is incidental, not momentous to them. English children, on the other hand, are almost born with it. It is as intimate a part of their personal property as Jack the Giant-Killer, or Bluebeard. As perennial as holly
and Father Christmas and Boxing Day, Harlequin leaps into their lives, together with Clown and Pantaloon and Punch-and-Judy, and they all go around, thinking about each other for days, and then they forget about each other for months, until another Christmas time and Boxing Day, and then they begin remembering all over again.

At least, this is the way it used to be, but unfortunately, the time is imminent when this pleasant familiarity will exist no more. To greater and greater extents have the sophistications of the present age trespassed on materials erstwhile acknowledged property of children or of childish intelligences. The stories of Bluebeard and Cinderella, of Beauty and the Beast, are moving in stranger and stranger circles, becoming reinterpreted in terms of Sadism, or inferiority complexes; their simplicity is shorn from them, and the Christmas pantomime of Great Britain has become nothing but a form of the Musical Revue of Broadway, a series of spectacular stagedrops, expensive paraphernalia of costuming and mechanics, with a dramatis personae of vulgar comedians whose chief attentions are addressed to a thoroughly sophisticated audience. The children are still taken, but they sit for the most part in uncomprehending wonder, dazzled by the lights and music, convulsed by the gymnastic feats of the clowns and acrobats, but otherwise unconscious that the real reason d'être of the performance has ceased to center in the juvenile sideshows, and become concentrated in dialogue and gestures, fortunately far beyond them. Moreover, the percentage of children in the audiences is becoming smaller and smaller as British parents find no improvement from year to year. Harlequin, Columbine and Clown are vanishing from the toyshops, but everywhere in drama, sometimes fantastic, sometimes profoundly serious, they are appearing more and more, somewhat metamorphosed, perhaps, in the transition, but with an extraordinary significance and depth of meaning.
The Clown as a character is much, much older than Christendom, and in the interests of this paper, it has been something of a pleasure to me to take seats at a Keith-Albee production, and, with inner intellectual snobbism, look down upon the colored buffoons, and observe that, in parodying the preceding serious act, they are only reproducing the ancient "lazzi." The popularity of the clown continues, but parallel to his vaudeville distinction emerges a serious interpretation, due largely to an inevitable confusion, or perhaps I should say, conscious mingling of the public and private personalities of the player. It is the individualizing of the type, and the history of this tendency is varied and complex. All accounts of the development of pantomime make frequent reference to the lives and personalities of famous actors. The pathos of the tragedy of a comic character held possibilities which were seized upon years ago, and have been used as the theme of innumerable successful literary and dramatic ventures, such as PAGLIACCI, L'HOMME QUI RIT, DEBUREAU, HE WHO GETS SLAPPED. In these treatments, a sort of reverse action has taken place. The inevitable unhappiness of all individuals has been heightened in dramatic contrast in the case of clowns, and made to appear doubly effective. In the unhappiness of a Hamlet, for instance, there seems to be little irony, but the heavy heart behind the painted smile of a professional joy-manufacturer invites sympathy to the point of sentimentality.

Before abandoning myself to the early mists of historical data, it might be well to state clearly at this point that the actual characters of the Harlequinade do not emerge in recognizable form before the sixteenth century. Opinions differ as to their antecedents before this period, but where we have only two and two to count upon, we must make our own four. From the earliest stages of dramatic development, there have been interesting coincidences, however, to which I must call attention, in spite of conflicting modern authorities, and, having given all the evidence at my disposal, I shall leave it to my readers
to draw their own conclusions.

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For hundreds of years before Christ, the inhabitants of the civilized world had participated in the elaborate mimetic performances which were a part of their religious exercises, and the dance and gesture of early Bacchic festivals at times centred around an individual who identifies himself vaguely with Harlequin. The word "pantomime" is derived from the Greek words meaning the imitators of Nature, hence, Pan, hence, because of the peculiar confusion of the pagan deities, Bacchus. The original character of Bacchus is traced by some Scriptural enthusiasts, to Cush, the son of Ham, the grandson of Noah. In the same casual confusion, Bacchus and Mercury, the god of speed, with his winged hat and feet, and his serpent-twined rod, whereby he made himself invisible and performed other miraculous acts, are frequently composite, and from the original conception of Mercury emerges a Harlequin, wearing in his cap a rabbit's foot, and brandishing a short wooden sword or bat which had the same powers ascribed above to Mercury's staff.

In the same connection, there is also an interesting theory concerning the origin of his female associate. Above, traditionally the symbol of peace and goodwill, was, at one time, the name which, by metonymy, the priests and soothsayers bore. Especially were the priestesses of Dodona in Epiris so-called, "columbae" or in the diminutive, the "columbines," or "little doves." The mythological goddess whose personality thus survived was said to be Psyche, and in his "Travels", Vol. IV, Dr. Clarke says that:

"Some of the representations of Mercury upon ancient vases are actually taken from the scenic exhibitions of the Grecian theatre; and that these exhibitions were also the prototypes whereon D'Hancarville shows Mercury, Momus and Psyche delineated as we see Harlequin, Columbine and Clown on our stages. The old man (Pantaloon) is Charon (the ferryman of hell.) The clown

*R.J.Broadbent: A History of Pantomime
** D'Israeli: Curiosities of Literature
The text on the page is not legible due to the quality of the image. It appears to be a page from a book or a report, but the content cannot be accurately transcribed.
is Momus, the buffoon of Heaven, the god of raillery and wit, and whose large gaping mouth is in imitation of the ancient masques." *

Further association of the art of miming with the god, Pan, is to be found in the symbolism of the segment, Aries, or Ram, in the Signs of the Zodiac. This obviously concerned Pan, the Goat God, in ancient devinations, and physiologically, it was supposed to control the fortunes of the head and face, hence pantomimic art, which stressed in particular, the head and face, was placed under the protection of this constellation. Again, there is an interesting correlation with Scriptural history to be found in the fact that the story of Pan's death as related by Plutarch, coincides strangely with the story of the Crucifixion. Lastly, the conventional dress of Harlequin, the coat of many colors, is also traced to a pagan origin by this indefatigable researcher,* for in earliest pageants, satyrs were represented in "a tiger's skin of various colors which encircled the performer's body tightly, and who carried a wooden sword, wore a white hat and a brown mask." It is from satyr-worship that we derive our satirical or grotesque and occasionally unkind drama.

There is no definite date for the beginnings of organized acting-troupes. The patent medéline exhibitions which were once familiar events in the small and growing towns of our west and middle west fifty or even twenty-five years ago, and which are still eking out a precarious existence in some localities, and have left their prototypes in the sideshows of our county-fairs, were in full working order in Athens and Sparta in 400 B.C. Doctors and medicine-men, their gowns girt about them, drummed up a lively trade between the tricks and contortions of the street-players, and Harlequin's ancestor did not scruple to part with certain of his magic potions for the currency of the day. As the acting profession became more and more definitely organized, the classifications of the actors and their social positions were indicated by names.

*Quoted from R.J. Broadbent: A History of Pantomime
We are able to trace some five separate kinds of actors: (1) ethlogues, the lowest and most corrupt of vulgar performers, (2) biologues, whose forte consisted in parodying the eminent persons of the day, (3) cinedologues, whose chief business was the performance of obsceneities, (4) hilarodes, a sort of heavenly incarnation who dressed in white and wore gold crowns and sandals, and (5) phallophores, whose name was derived from the obvious exaggeration of a part of their costumes, who later became the planipes of Rome, and from whom developed the sixteenth century Harlequin of Bergamo.*

All these actors played without masques and frequently included women whose presence among them did not tend to elevate the tone of their morale. Obviously from the above descriptions, the earliest forms of popular comedy were coarse with a coarseness that was thoroughly in keeping with the frank sensuality of the day. Bacchic orgies had not developed their unsavory reputations without foundation, and much of the vulgarity which was so conspicuous a part of their celebrations was taken over by the mountebanks and buffoons. It continued to characterize the theatre of the people for many centuries, and the gross costume of the phallophores was retained for some time after the Italian comedy had become popular in France.

D'Israeli, however, makes an interesting distinction between the mimes and the pantomimes of the Romans, which may very well have held for the Greek actors. The Mimi, he says, were humorous buffoons, whose chief art lay in mimicking, and who were employed at banquets and entertainments as professional domestic fools, and at funerals, for the purpose of imitating the deceased. These were performers of a coarser grain. The Pantomimi, on the contrary, were artists of high tragic abilility, who performed with seriousness the most

*This theory is not held by many modern authorities whose opinions I shall refer to presently. It is given here on the authority of Maurice Sand: The History of the Harlequinade
eloquent and moving scenes without the use of the voice. The subjects of
the earliest known pantomime performances were always taken from mythology.
In Greece, favorite subjects were based on the labyrinth and Minotaur of
Crete, the battles of Theseus, the rapid changing of Proteus, and all situa-
tions were consistently conveyed to the audience by gesture and action alone.
Cassiodorus (500 A.D.) describes them as having "tongues at the tip of each
finger." Their patroness was Polhymnia, whose image usually shows her with
finger on mouth. Both Plutarch and Nonnus are of the opinion that her name
meant "tradition." Nonnus said of her:

"Sweet Polhymnia see advance,
Mother of the graceful dance,
She who taught the ingenious art,
Silent language to impart:
Lips for sentiment she found,
Eloquent without a sound;
Hands loquacious save her lungs,
All her limbs are speaking tongues."*

In this way, like other arts, the development of popular acting migrates
from Greece, and the next evidences of it are found in Italy which remains to
the present the mainspring of the inspiration and realest birthplace of the
characters as we know them today, and the scene of their ascendancy and later
wane. But although as a form of national literature, this type of light drama
has vanished except in the scarcely recognizable form of vaudeville and Musical
Revue, and the more obvious marionette and puppet-show movements of the present,
the characters, together with their peculiar characteristics and consequent
fascination have survived in the imaginations and lurking romantic tendencies
of many modern writers in this, the age or realism, as we shall presently see.
In Italy, the mysterious Etruscan civilization identifies itself with this
form of artistic expression, as well as the other arts, and we find that the
town of Atella (today, Aversa) had at one time a theatre in which were played
the first comedies we have record of, hence the name "Atellanae" which has

*Leopold Wagner: Pantomimes and All About Them
survived, and is later used to designate the play of peculiarly coarse character which was so much in vogue. D’Israeli maintains that the odor of licentiousness which clung to the name was historically unjustified, and quotes the following letter from Cicero to Papyrius Paetus:

"But to turn from the serious to the jocose part of your letter—the strain of pleasantry you break into, immediately after having quoted the tragedy of Oenomaus, puts me in mind of the modern method of introducing at the end of these graver dramatic pieces the buffoon humour of our low Mimes instead of the more delicate burlesque of the old atellan Farces." *

Of the Atellan farces themselves, very little is known. They appear to have been extemporal and in the form of interludes, or brief acts between longer plays, and to have brought into prominence the four ancient mask-characters, known in Rome as Maccus, Bucco, Pappus and Dossenus. The name "Atellanae" was unmistakably attached presently to the type of play which soon supplanted the old "Saturae", and swept the youth of Rome with enthusiasm for its wit and pleasantry. The young men reserved for themselves the monopoly of this type of acting, and for some time, were in such favor with the Powers that were that they enjoyed extraordinary liberties and exemptions from the arduous taxes of ordinary citizenship. The literary highlights of this period were none other than Terence and Plautus, and the performances were sometimes mixed speech and action, and sometimes all action. Usually, however, pantomime alone was used for two excellent reasons. First, the politics of the time were too uncertain to permit of verbal utterances for which one might pay with one’s head the next morning, and second, the cosmopolitan and polyglot audiences often made speech of any kind an unintelligible medium.

* See Curiosities of Literature, p. 219. I think the italics in this quotation are D’Israeli’s.
Thus the art of pantomime became very highly developed. Actors remained in high favor with the emperors and at times were privileged most unfairly. During the reign of Constantine, when the authorities required all aliens practising liberal arts to leave the city in the face of a bad famine, some six thousand mimes were permitted to remain. Moreover the moral conditions among them were shocking examples to the public. In Rome, Tiberius tried to oppress the mimes, but Caligula tolerated them, and Aurelius is actually said to have made them priests of Apollo. There was a rumor that Nero secretly aspired toward an expression of his overweening egotism as a "planipes" himself, possibly on account of the incredible license permitted them in public. Augustus freed them from military service, and exempted them from magisterial control.* What with all this gracious majesty extended toward them, many of them became very wealthy, and a famous actor who lived about 129 B.C. left his son twenty million sesterces (about $800,000) at his death. **

At a comparatively early period, however, the opposition with which the acting profession has had always to contend became marked. Their position in society was never sustained; they lost their privileges of citizenship, were theoretically looked down upon, and often suffered much at the hands of more fortunately situated devotees of the fine arts. Though popular long after the beginning of the Christian era, they soon called down upon themselves the wrath of the holy fathers, and as the Church grew stronger, and frowned more darkly, their favor waned and waned. Meanwhile, the strolling mountebanks and street-performers of the people had continued, without strengthening their moral reputations, and upon them, too, did the Holy Church look with disfavor.

*R. J. Broadbent: A History of Pantomime
** Maurice Sand: A History of the Harlequinade
In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, it would seem that the Church was playing a losing game, for, helpless to combat the demands of human nature for amusement and diversion, it decided to give up fighting this particular form of devil, and convert it. Thus it was that the Church began to sponsor what it had vigorously opposed, and all the varieties of miracles and mystery-plays sprang into being with the odor of sanctity upon them. Further, when the barbaric Huns and Vandals swept down from the north, and all theatres and other places of amusement were turned into fortresses, drama rested tranquilly in the sanctuary of Holy Church, and survived the stress of those difficult centuries, through her gracious protection.

Although the expressions of contumely and fiery condemnation on the part of many Church dignitaries were consistently maintained toward the acting-profession in the laity, St. Thomas of Aquinas, the most twentieth century saint of all the Middle Ages, speaks kindly of it, providing only that "Harlequin be not a clergyman, nor Punch be given in a Church." The Crusades championed the drama joyfully for all forms of propagandist means and ends, and miracle-plays spread rapidly through Italy and France to England.

In Italy, as the alpenglow of the Renaissance began its slow and glorious illumination, it shone with unkind clarity upon a weak and stagnating but potentially prolific germ of drama. In Mr. Chatfield-Taylor's biography of Goldoni, he presents very convincingly the situation. Drama, he says, being per se, the most democratic of all arts in its appeal to living people, has always existed, but at the time of the Renaissance, was not freed of the shackles which bound all classical dramaturgy to a slavish foundation.

** R.J.Broadbent: A History of Pantomime
much as the whole of Greek and Roman perfection was built upon a slaving lower class. The names of its shackles were unity, of time, space and action, and a mistaken haughtiness and intellectual snobbery of tone which led to popular disfavor. Drama was further handicapped by traditions of patronage and kowtowing with their accompanying flourishes and protestations, and incessant and gnawing pettinesses of fallings in and out of favor with the changing breath of the day's wind. The so-called sacred drama of the Church had degenerated to screaming farce. There was no single center or metropolis to take upon itself the responsibility of furthering an unpopular cause. There were only a great many divided little principalities, each so involved in the poisoning and murdering of its heirs and assigns, and the plotting of its own highly plotted plots, that the infinitely pleasanter vicarious experience as offered by drama did not occur to anyone as a solution of the difficulties. The intellectual plays of the period (commedia erudita) were pastoral dramas, false and artificial, or the coarse and cultivated plays of Bruno, Aretineo, Bibbiena, Ariosto, and Machiavelli. The written word was decadent; it was being replaced by the famous form of artistic expression which had dogged and aped and shadowed its footsteps since the Golden Age, and now came amazingly into the limelight. This was the commedia dell'arte all'improvviso, direct descendant of the ancient buffoons and street-players, a humble but legitimate offspring of the atellanae and masks of the Roman youths of the first centuries before and after Christ.

Recent authorities deny any immediate connection between the ancient atellanae and the Harlequinade characters. DIIIsrael, appears to see no reason for differing from this theory. Mr. E.K. Chambers, who is never unreasonably committal, says in an early chapter in The Mediaeval Stage (p. 2) "From Compania came.....the oscum ludicrum or fabula Atellana, with its standing masks of Maccus and Bucco, Pappus and Dossenus in whom it is hard not to find a kinship to the traditional personages of the Neapolitan commedia dell'arte."
But Mr. Chatfield-Taylor, in his thoroughly comprehensive "Goldoni", devotes a whole chapter to the improvised comedy of Italy, and appears to offer there the last word on the question when he says:

"Certain characters, too, of Roman comedy, both written and extemporized, resemble vaguely the masks of the Renaissance; hence, it is easy to be carried away, like Riccoboni, Maurice Sand, and Vernon Lee, with the feeling that Improvised Comedy has 'existed in rudiment ever since the earliest days of Latin, Oscan, and Italo-Greek civilization.' Dr. Winifred Smith, however, comes to the conclusion that 'even admitting the unproved hypothesis, that the Atellanae were farces marked by improvisation and masked personages, it would be impossible to establish between them and the Italian extemporized a connection worthy of the name.' Giulio Caprin, a modern Italian authority, also scours the idea that the masks of the Renaissance are directly descended from the buffoons of Roman comedy, a view with which Symonds accords, when he states that 'nothing could be more uncritical than to assume that the Italian masks of the sixteenth century A.D. boasted of an uninterrupted descent from the Roman masks of the fifth century B.C.,' his assumption being that 'Out of the same persistent habits emerged the same kind of native drama; and just as the Atellanae of ancient Rome eventually brought the comedy of the proletariat upon the public stage in cities, so at the close of the sixteenth century the Commedia dell'arte worked up the rudiments of popular farce into a new form which delighted Europe for two hundred years.'"

The situation appears to be then, much like that of the theory of evolution. We did not descend from the ape, but from a common parent; the pantomime characters did not descend from the atellanae, but from a form of popular farce which was in itself responsible for both the atellanae and the commedia dell'arte. None of these modern authorities seems able to place more accurately the origin of the improvised comedy, and I have therefore felt justified in giving the proverbial, even if antedated, traditions concerning it.

Before taking up the discussion of this important form of dramatic expression, I will take the opportunity here to refer briefly to two distinguishing influences which helped to characterize it: first, the use of masks, and second, the parallel existence of the marionettes or puppet-shows, which at one time threatened to overshadow all other stagecraft. Masks were originally used, of course, because in the enormous open-air theatres of the Greeks, it

*See p. 112-113
was impossible to see the faces on the stage, and equally difficult to hear the voices of the actors without the aid of the bronze resounding-plates which the masks concealed. Furthermore, men acted all female parts which were more convincing when assisted by female masks, the only attractive form known. Other types were tragical, comical or satirical. Sometimes, a single mask represented both comedy and tragedy, which was displayed in profile, the actor turning from side to side to indicate the appropriate emotion. At times, these masks actually represented well-known people, Aristotle on one occasion introducing a mask of Socrates so successfully that many thought him actually present, but the Romans did not permit such an extravagant similitude.*

That these masks or typical countenances have left permanent traces, however, may be implied from the fact that the physiognomy of the famous Punch is said to have originated from a Roman bronze statue. Limited at first to expressing the emotions of laughter, tears or distorted anger, the masks began to typify the characters employed until the impressive array accumulated, each individual represented by his or her disguise: the slave, the parasite, clown, captain, old woman, harlot, austere old man, debauched young man, prodigal, prudent young woman, matron, father of a family. Between the ancient use of masks and the above-mentioned variety introduced by the commedia dell’arte, there is a long hiatus, and the reason for the modern or sixteenth century use remains undefined.** The masks themselves were later abandoned for a form of makeup, the foundation of which was the face itself, and in the calcimined face of the modern circus-clown, with its red smears and pained leers, we have a very obvious survival. Perhaps even our negro "end-men" and specialty song-and-dance men may trace their burnished countenances to an early Harlequin of the sixteenth century, who appeared with "shaven head,

*R.J. Broadbent: A History of the Pantomime

** See Chatfield-Taylor: Goldoni: p.110
The marionettes or the miniature form of pantomime which has taken upon itself the perpetuation of Punch, or Polichinelle, who originally was a member of the Harlequinade troupe, came first from Egypt where mechanical effigies were used in purely religious ceremonies, according to Herodotus. These appeared also in Roman festivals as monsters worked by strings. The name "marionettes" has a religious derivation, because young girls addressed their prayers to diminutive statuetts of the Virgin Mary, which were called "Maria," "Mariola," or "Marionettes," a name frequently used to indicate young girls or maidens themselves. The step-brotherhood between the marionettes or puppet-shows, and the pantomimes rests in the popularization of the type, the appeal to multitudes through the familiar personalities, for it was before the days when "the eternal monotony of never doing the same thing twice" was 'de rigueur,' and the audiences, both educated and uneducated, thronged to see Harlequin, Columbine, Punch, Judy and the Policeman, or their sixteenth century equivalents, whether man-size or diminutive, and fell instantly into the spirit of the performance when the curtains rose or parted.

In addition to its use of masks, the most distinguishing characteristic of the commedia dell'arte was its improvised dialogue. The actors had no memorized lines, merely the barest outline of the plot which was written out beforehand, and posted for all to read. This placard went by the name of scenario, or soggetto, or canevas (canvas), and in England, was called a plat. There are extant today few evidences of these famous scenarios, but a collection was published in 1611, by Flaminio Scala, who compiled therein the fragmentary masterpieces of Niccolo Schi and Niccolo Barbieri. The original name for the acts, or interludes, was "lazzi," which in Lombardian is colloquial for the Tuscan "lacci," meaning knots, or complications, and in England two hundred years later, became

*R.J. Broadbent; A History of the Pantomime
known as "jigs." D'Israeli quotes the following explanation of them from Riccoboni:

"These pleasantries called lazzi are certain actions by which the performer breaks into the scene, to paint to the eye his emotions of panic or jocularity; but as such gestures are foreign to the business going on, the nicety of the art consists in not interrupting the scene, and connecting the lazzi with it; thus to tie the whole together."

Another device of stage "patter" used at times were the dotes or dowries, certain memorized speeches in particular plays which were introduced like italics to call attention to important points, and there was also a third stock form of repartee known as the zibaldone, or phrases which were in current use, or made so by the popular actors, and which never failed to bring applause. As the commedia dell'arte became more and more recognized, the zibaldone or set speeches, were relegated to the serious or love-scenes, while the lazzi became the more distinguishing extemporized lines of the interludes. Unfortunately, most of the vitality and charm of these scenarios have vanished with the actors and actresses who made their own parts, and whose particular virtues died with them. In no field of art does living personality count so high, and reminiscence count for so little to those who have never seen or heard. The music of operas, the lines of famous plays remain, but the grimaces of Toto, or the irresistible quibbles of the famous pair of Roman "mimi", Pylades and Bathyllus, insure themselves from imitation or duplication by the mysterious and evanescent quality of personality.

It is evident that persons who chose a stage-calling in those days, even more than now, must needs have been extraordinarily gifted. Says Riccoboni:

"To a comedian who depends upon improvisation, face, memory, voice and sentiment are not enough. If he would distinguish himself, he must possess a lively and fertile imagination, a great facility in expression; he must master the subtleties of the language, too, and have at his disposal a full knowledge of all that is required for the different situations in which his role places him."*

*Histoire de l'ancien theatre italien, quoted by Chatfield-Taylor, Goddemi, p.95.
Sand also quotes the same author as calling attention to the value of actors. They could not be replaced. Not only had they to have personality and imagination of their own, but they had to support their fellow-actors with instinctive infallibility, coming into the conversation and dropping out of it as unerringly as acrobats place their hands and feet. From the very nature of what was expected of them, then, they took a more personal and at the same time, cooperative interest than we find among actors today. Each performance moreover, was different, and one might go night after night, or afternoon after afternoon to the same play and behold a different interpretation, so variously did the actors' imaginations move, and their wits adapt themselves to the temper of the audience.

Returning to Chatfield-Taylor, there is further evidence that the commedia dell'arte, like its ancient forbear, the Roman version of the Atellan ae, was characterized by indecency. To such unabashed lengths did it go that the civil authorities were frequently moved to interfere, but with little Blue Law satisfaction, inasmuch as the accused producers mildly produced as evidence their harmless scenarios. In the same way, the speeches of the actors could often be modified of elaborated as patriotic and political implements, varying hints and thrusts, or compliments and innuendoes being inserted when it was known who was present.

A further point made by the same authority is the remarkable indebtedness of the present theatres, with their scenery and technical stage-business, to the theatres of the Italian Renaissance, very tenable evidence that the modern theatre sprang from the Italian, rather than the Elizabethan form. Italian actors used enclosed halls, a famous theatre being Palladio's Teatro Olimpico at Vicenza in 1590, (even the name has a familiar cadence), and there are traces of other Italian theatres hundreds of years before. We find the Teatro Olimpico described as even more elaborate than many of our modern playhouses. The stage was so
arranged that four or five groups of actors could be visible to the audience without being visible to each other. This was made possible by an arrangement of three arcades which led out from openings or streets to a common proscenium. The sides of the arcades represented houses or shops, and groups loitered or chatted in the different streets, or ran from each other, or hid in ambush to the immense edification of the audience, and without undue call upon its imagination. The Italian theatre also sanctioned actresses as early as 1529, twenty years before Marie Fairet, the first French actress, and by 1662, actresses were common in Italy. Further, the Italian theatre introduced perspective in its scenery, and theatrical makeup, in short, almost all the distinguishing marks between mediaeval and modern drama. This leads to the interesting and frequently overlooked fact that improvised drama, and not the religious drama of the Middle Ages was the forerunner of the theatre as we patronize it, write and act for it today. Molière was directly influenced by it. His plots, characters and settings are usable with hardly any adaptation, a characteristic which certainly does not hold for any Elizabethan play.

Having given at some length an account of the development of the theatre itself, I come now to the discussion of the characters around whose personalities grew up so elaborate a stagecraft. There appear to be two ways of accounting for the name, commedia dell' arte, depending upon the translation of arte. According to some authorities, it indicated a gild, or craft of professional actors who made acting their art; according to others, it may have meant the amateur performances of groups of workers or artisans, such as Snug and Bottom in their presentation of Pyramus and Thisbe. Other names by which it is sometimes known are commedia improvvisa, commedia non scritta, commedia a soggetto, or commedia a maschera (masked comedy). The first traces of the typical characters as we recognize them today, appear in 1528 under the actor-managers, Angelo Beolco and Ruzzante, who presented characters speaking different dialects. These immediately became types supposedly in keeping with the general characteris-
tics of that part of the country in which the dialect was used. The list of
dramatis personae resulting is almost interminable; many of the names with their
many different spellings and their attending eccentricities have been quite lost
sight of, but others have survived gloriously, even in twentieth century forms
to which I shall presently call your attention. The characters which are bywords
to English, Italian and French theatre-goers, and distant acquaintances of
Americans, are Pantaloon, Harlequin, Columbine, Brighella and Scaramouch. Others
which are also familiar are Polichinelle, Fracasso, the Doctor, the Captain,
Acometo, Scapin, Narcisimo.

Pantaloon was once, in his heyday, a merchant of Venice. His name is variously
accounted for; some say as "Plant-the-lion", because all Venetians, in taking
property in the name of the Venetian Republic, planted thereon their leonine
emblem; others say he was named for St. Pantaleon, but the former origin is
authorized by Boerio, an authority on Venetian dialect.* In any case, a mer-
chant he was, and the vicissitudes of his fortunes have been varied these many
long years, to say nothing of the alterations in his character. From a pro-
perous financier, or real estate investor, he has become for the most part, a
blundering old dotard, often pathetically comic, as he is sympathetically por-
trayed in Barrie's pantomime by the same name.**

The origin of Harlequin's name is very uncertain, and the transformations
in his character even more confusing. The most authentic source is suggested
by the Oxford Dictionary, which refers to a book called Ursprung des Harlekins,
Berlin, 1904, by Dr. Dreiser, wherein the author refers to the name "harlekin"
as appearing in Old French literature, (probably originally Teutonic) as early
as 1100, and later, in 1262, a number of harlekins appear in an ancient fairy play
which presented Prince Hellekin of the Fairies courting Morgan le Fay. The name
was probably taken over by the Italians as "Arlecchino", together with many of

** See p. 32, ff.
the customs of the strolling players and buffoons of Mediaeval Europe when the
improvised comedy was coming into its own. The Encyclopaedia Americana traces
the name to a corruption or perhaps a milder form of the word meaning hell-kin,
or devil-connected. In character, he was first popularized as a stupid and lout-
ish clown, accompanied always by Brighella, his servant, who was sly and deceiving,
extremely witty, and underhand in his dealings. The famous pair undoubtedly came
to their Italian birth in Bergamo, where the inhabitants of the hills or higher
portion of the town were said to be clever, like Brighella, and those of the lower
section, stupid and clownish, like Harlequin. A century or so later, we find that
the two characters have interchanged personality, Harlequin having become a grace-
ful and sprightly magician, and Brighella descended into the widest known modern
survival, the circus and pantomime clown. To the actor Sacchi is given the credit
for the present popular interpretation of Harlequin's personality. In France, he
has always appeared as a wit, and in Florian's charming compositions, he is the
"creature of manners." Broadbent quotes the following:

"He is a mixture of wit, simplicity, ignorance and grace, he is a half-made
up man, a great child with gleams of reason and intelligence, and all his mistakes
and blunders have something arch about them. The true mode of representing him
is to give him suppleness, agility, the playfulness of a kitten with a certain
coarseness of exterior, which renders his actions more absurd. His part is that
of a faithful valet, greedy; always in love; always in trouble, either on his own
or his master's account; afflicted and consoled as easily as a child, and whose
grief is an amusing as his joy."*

Other names for the same individual are Trivelin and Truffaldin, the former always
represented as clothed in triangular patches, wearing a soft hat and a hare's foot
or symbol of speed. A prototype of Brighella is to be found in Scaramouch in
modern drama; although originally Scaramouch was the name of the character known as
the Captain and distinguished by a Spanish cast of countenance, in compliment
to the Spanish occupation of Charles V in the early sixteenth century. Later, as
the popularity of the Spaniards waned, he continued to wear the Spanish costume,
but became an object of derision, invariably played in a perpetual panic. Like
*See Broadbent: A History of Pantomime: p. 119. The source of this quotation is
not given, but I think it may be from Nicholas Barbieri.
** See p. 4/-42 under discussion of PRUNELLA
Polichinelle, he was of Neapolitan origin, and these two, being southerners, invited much rivalry in the various productions.

Polichinelle has become no less a person than Punch. D'Israeli seems to think that his identity with the ancient Roman mask, known from the days of the Atellanae as Maccus is unquestionable, and certainly the description of the bronze statue known to be struck in the likeness of Maccus has a remarkable likeness to the modern Punch. It had, said D'Israeli, "the nose long, prominent, and hooked; the staring goggle eyes; the hump at his back and at his breast; in a word, all the character which so strongly marks the Punch race, as distinctly as whole dynasties have been featured by the Austrian lip and the Bourbon nose." This opinion, however, as indicated above, is not shared by modern authorities.* His sixteenth century birth-place is undoubtedly Naples or its vicinity, and he is described by Broadbent as "a wag from Apulia."

The only origin I can discover for the name, Columbine, I have already referred to:** her personality is even more elusive, but she appears to be introduced as a necessary apex for the necessary triangle. Sometimes, she is constant; more often, she is fickle. She is the deserted sweetheart; she is the heartless seducer. At times, she is accompanied by a rival, Pasquella, an older, more experienced lady of uncertain reputation, who appears as Dona Serena in Benavente's modern imitation, "Bonds of Interest."*** At other times, the name "Harlequina" appears, but very seldom, and then usually in the sense of a common noun to indicate any strolling female player.

Still another puzzling complication arises in the discussion of the affinities so extremely popular in France during the eighteenth century. These are Pierrot and Pierrette, obvious counterparts of Harlequin and Columbine. The name and personality of Pierrot seems to have gone through much the same process of transformation as those of Harlequin. The Oxford Dictionary claims that Pierrot meant

*See p. 12
**See p. 8
*** See p. 45-49
originally "Little Peter," or "Peter*, the country clown and pumpkin, like the English "Johnny", and that he later assumed the delicate melancholy and grace which we associate with the name today. In French literature, he almost always appears a lovelorn impractical dreamer, but in England, he oddly enough retained his earlier reputation and throve to such an extent that he has now lost himself in Pantaloon, and become a lovable clown. Broadbent quotes Baudelaire as saying:

"The English Pierrot is not a person as pale as the moon, mysterious as silent, straight and long, like the gallows, to whom we have been accustomed in Debureau.* The English Pierrot enters like the tempest, and tumbles like a parcel; his laugh resembles joyous thunder. He is short and fat; his face is floured and streaked with paint; he has a great patch of red on each cheek, his mouth is enlarged by a prolongation of the lips by means of two red bands, so that when he laughs, his mouth appears to open from ear to ear."

In Robert Emmons Rogers' "BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE, there is an interesting use of both conceptions.**

The idea of a group of types, each cut out and defined and repeating itself in play after play for hundreds of different plays throughout hundreds of years, appears to us inordinately monotonous. At first thought, it is difficult for us to understand the popularity and demand in which these plays must have stood during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But when we realize that each actor reinterpreted the part in his own personality, built up his own rôle, and, if he failed to do so, was almost instantaneously hissed from the boards, and further, when we realize that the vaudeville circuits of the present day are contributing the same form of humour in the same way night after night, year after year, and that the public has not yet struck for variety beyond a demand for current slang, we are somewhat more reconciled to the tastes of a public which could welcome the same names year after year, decade after decade, without remonstrance, rather with wholehearted enthusiasm. The secret of their charm lay not in variety of costume, but in individual personality which had as strong

* See p. 34
** See p. 43
a bread-earning capacity then as it has now. The days of the famous Scaramouch and Harlequins are over; only the faithful clown remains with us, adding to his list of famous personalities in every age and every nation. But the names and traits of the other characters have survived in a different way, and we meet them again and again in our own day, at times symbolized into aesthetic abstractions, at others, shorn of all illusion, preserving only their fleshly frames and human foibles.

It was the commedia dell' arte, then, with its borrowed intervals of commedia erudita, its rollicking and spontaneous lazzis, its dotis and its zibaldone, its so-called half-masks, Pantaloon and the Doctor, who were serious as well as comic actors, its full-masks, Harlequin and Brighella, who served only as comic relief, that appeared in France in 1570, under Juan Ganessa. Two years later, the characters had found not only popular, but royal favor, and with strange irony Porbut shows a picture of a masquerade ball at the court of Charles IX with the Duke of Guise as Scaramouch, the Duke of Anjou (Henry III) as Harlequin, the Cardinal of Lorraine as Pantaloon, Catherine of Medici as Columbine, and Brighella personified by no less a person than the King himself. In August of the same year was the masque momentously reversed to the tragical denouement of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve.*

The history of Italian Comedy in France is filled with the vicissitudes of all theatrical ventures, successes and failures, disbandings and combinings, shiftings from actor to manager to actor, from stage-hand to producer, from insignificance to fame and back to insignificance. Flaminius Scala, whose name is identified with the only collection of scenarios known to have been made, was one of the most successful promoters of Italian Comedy stock. With occasional setbacks, he played in France from 1577 until 1664 when his most successful troupe, the Confidenti was disbanded on the death of its famous actress, Isabella Andreini. Her son, Giovanni Battista Andreini, however, organized the Comidi *Maurice Sand: A History of the Harlequinade
Fadeli, which lasted from 1605 to 1652. Andreini wrote his own plays, and because his French audiences found the Italian dialect unintelligible, he bribed them for their favor, as it were, by introducing French intervals, such as a wellknown extravaganza called "La Centaura." This fantastic fable was composed of three acts, the first a comedy in which the centaurs pranced, the second a pastoral in which they grazed, and the third a molodrama in which they reared, galloped, fought with each other and finally expired, leaving a lone little Miss Centaur to carry on the centauric tradition.

While the fortunes of the Italian players fluctuated variously, the mean of their popularity steadily increased. By the early part of the eighteenth century, their playhouses were crowded to the serious detriment of the box-office receipts of the established theatre, the Comédie Française. The Italian performances, or the "theatres de la foire," (the theatres of the fair), at length brought down upon themselves by their success the displeasure of the Law which attempted to silence them by the usual process of restrictive petty measures. They were forbidden to introduce dialogue. On the twentieth of February, 1709, Scaramouch and the Scrumulous Pedant was produced all in monologue, each character entering, speaking his part and withdrawing upon the cue for the next speaker. The device caused an uproar; armed constables, together with emissaries and delegations from the rival theatre appeared in forces to drive out the impudent actors. The latter immediately returned, but were eventually forced to abandon the home of their genius which was instantly burned to the ground by their assailants. Even this did not entirely discourage the troupe who continued to amuse vast audiences for many years, though forbidden to speak or sing. Their mute demonstrations gave rise to the usual interpretation of the word "pantomime" as it is used today. An amused witness of their continuous popularity was moved to write the following quatrain which was sung about the streets:
"Les lois ne sont qu'une barrière évasive
Que les hommes franchissent tous;
Car, par-dessus, les grands passent sans peine,
Les petits, par-dessous."

Whether the "theatres de la foire" classified as "grands" or "petits", we do not know. Perhaps, they were both. At length, the Directors of the Opera sold them the right to sing, and they lost their original identity in the Opéra Comique. The last original Italian troupe played in 1716, under the Regent, Philippe of Orleans, and was a strange medley of old and new and Italian and French. In 1779, the Italian players were dismissed, and the French, by temperament a theatrical people, easily assumed for themselves the powers and the glories of pantomimic art and its possibilities. Mr. Chatfield-Taylor gives very simply the fate of Harlequin and his companions in modern times:

"Made mute in France, these characters of the Improvised Comedy of Italy, crossed to free England, there to dwell unhindered, yet, being sun-loving southerners, they withered and declined in the cold northern air. They bear now but a faint semblance of their former merry selves."

The history of the Harlequinade in England is brief. There is evidence of Italian troupes there in 1577, when Brusiano Martinelli took out a London license. Thomas Heywood refers to "doctors, sawnyes, pantaloons and harlakenes," and Broadbent quotes Heywood in 1624 as making satirical and unkind references to the type of humor engendered by clowns: "By his mimic gestures to breed in the less capable, mirth and laughter." Shakespeare, of course, makes mention of the "lean and slipper'd pantaloons," and Harlequin appears in a play following Twelfth Night in 1637. The earliest known reference to the players as pantomime characters occurs in Butler's Hudibras:

"Not that I think those Pantomimes
Who vary action with the times
Are less ingenious in their art
Than those who duly act one part."

Mrs. Ephra Behn introduced Harlequin and Scaramouch as two characters in one of her plays, and in 1697, Novelty or Every Act a Play contained Harlequin, Pantaloons, Columbine and Clown. D'Israeli reports the interesting discovery of
"plats" at Dulwich College, bearing close resemblance to the ancient Italian scenarios, and conveying the following cryptic information:

"Pigg White and Black, Dick and Sam, Little Will Barnes, Jack Gregory and the Red-faced Fellow."

But Dr. Winifred Smith doubts if the English were ever wholly dependent, or able to depend upon the plats alone, and usually memorized lines in addition.

Broadbent says further that Milton knew and was impressed by the famous Andreini, but the actual pantomime, such as it was produced in England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was probably first staged by John Weaver in 1812.

In 1717, Christopher Rich, perceiving the great possibilities therein, started on a theatrical venture in that speculating spirit, so anciently and modernly characteristic of theatrical productions. He produced "Harlequin Executed" on December 26, says Mr. Leopold Wagner. His story was taken from Ovid, and his production was noted for amazing stage devices; there were sudden transformations of "men and women into wheelbarrows and joint-stools, colonnades to beds of tulips, mechanics shops into serpents and ostriches."

But even before this time, a tendency to extravagance in costuming and scenery had been felt in dramaturgical circles: when Ben Jonson collaborated with Inigo Jones in the elaborate production of various masks, his professional jealousy as a writer of the lines was roused by the attention required for the increasingly complicated stage-setting. The partners quarrelled, and Jonson shouted in disdain: "Carpentry and Painting are the Soul of Mask."

In 1724, Rich produced his "History of Dr. Faustus," which consisted of two parts, one serious, the other comic relief between the acts. He himself performed as Lun Junr, and through his interpretation, Harlequin became intelligible to Englishmen. The popularity of the pantomimes ascended, and rivalry actually existed between Garrick and Rich. Of almost equal success at the same time were

*Leopold Wagner: Pantomimes and All About Them
the puppet-shows which we have already indicated were related anciently by a faint, far cousinship.* The Harlequin and Pantaloon of the pantomime played side-by-side with the puppet, Punch, or Polichinelle, and an attractive toast opposite the Opera House caused keen competition between Handel's "Rinaldi" and "Dick Whittington and His Cat."

Meanwhile, the character of Harlequin in itself had changed amazingly from the earliest days. The stupid and loutish dolt of Bergamo had become a slender and vivacious fascinator, nimble of foot, acrobatic of wit and limb, ingenious and elusive. His dress, always tattered and patched and variously colored, is pictured in Italian and French pantomime as loose coat and trousers, but in 1779, James Byre, an English actor, adopted the tight-fitting dress so becoming to the lines of a good figure. Before this time, the colors of the patches were supposed to have had some significance, red indicating temper; blue, love; yellow, jealousy; brown or mauve, constancy; while the bumps of his mask denoted knowledge and thought. Byre adopted a different "key," using only four colors, and those symbolical of the elements, rather than emotions: red, fire; blue, water; yellow, air; and black, earth, the whole governed by Mercury. This modernized costume has become the conventional form, and whereas Pantaloon frequently wears the loose clothes, Pierrot invariably, Harlequin goes hosed and fitted like a glove, but his cap is still jaunty with a hare's foot, and his slender hands twirl his wonder-producing bat. To Byre is also attributed another innovation, the use of an unlimited number of attitudes, whereas previously, Harlequin's repertoire had consisted of only five: admiration, defiance, flirtation, thought, and determination. Byre gave him as many moods as his mercurial disposition justified him in portraying. He has now not only moods, but personalities.

In America, alas, the pantomime made slow progress. Mr. Wagner gives an amusing and dismal account of the first English performance in America in

* See p. 14
New York, 1831. The play was "Mother Goose", (an interesting choice of subject in view of the supposed American origin of the lady) and the company, but recently imported, still a little seasick and homesick, struggled to the footlights with the following melancholy results:

"Parsloe", who had injured his spine by a fall down the companionway on his voyage over, struggled to evoke the customary merriment, yet, despite all his best exersions, the spectators, doubtless puzzled by the strangeness of the performance, only noted his quips and bumbles by cracking pea-nuts."

At length behind the scenes, the exhausted Parsloe dissolved in sobs, and maledictions descended upon the Americans' lack of understanding. There is something extraordinarily tragic to me in this simple little incident; it seems to strike the note of pathos which is the secret of Harlequin's immortality, to prove the close borderline between the public and private personalities of the actors and the parts they played. I never realized before how brutal might sound the continuous and phlegmatic cracking of "pea-nuts."

Unfortunately, the best of English pantomime had only begun to gain a footing here when it failed for want of breath in England. The old order was no longer the fashion of the day. More and more had the demand for quantity of scenery, rather than quality of acting, influenced the producers; music-hall novelties, screaming sentimental-ditties, and vulgar repartee swept the boards of all semblance of refined folk-lore. Still, in England, a sure sign of Christmas and its attendant festivities is a swarm of handbills and posters, announcing the coming of the Christmas pantomime with its familiar fairy-tale characters and Harlequin transformations, but alack, the performance which I attended at Oxford in 1922 was thoroughly disillusioning. In American parlance, it was only a second-rate musical comedy, presented by a third-rate troupe, and characterized by hoarse soubrettes and coarse cockney dialogue. Its increasing vulgarity harks back to the days of the early Italian performances,
but while we may trace in its ugly leers an atavistic resemblance to a great-great-grandfather, the present importance of the pantomime, as such, is negligible compared to the influence of its leading characters and its haunting tradition upon the minds and imaginations of many dramatic writers today.

Harlequin was born then, to amuse. This was his conventional raison d'être, but like many other conventions in the last fifty years, his mission has altered its complexion. It is not difficult to perceive how easily his original forte of representing a type might swing to the interpretation of a type, or to symbolism. He is no longer the musical comedy star, nor the farcical protagonist, but he has stepped from that limelight into the more delicate half-tones of fantasy, or danced into the sharp and definite colors of pure satire, and now and again, his face, grown haggard beneath its chalking, stares piteously through tragedy. In short, he is no longer the moving spirit of a commedia dell' arte all' improvviso: he is becoming erudita, a creature of the written word.
PROLOGUE

SILENUS: Gentle readers—I would fain say, hearers, but I am afraid I shall never fool it on the stage—I am very fond of Pantomimes. I don't know whether I like this one so well as I liked those which I witnessed when I was a boy. It is too pretentious, I think; to anxious to be more than a Pantomime—this play in which I am about to perform. True Pantomime is a good-natured nightmare. Our sense of humour is titillated and strummed, and kicked and oiled, and fustigated and stroked, and exalted and bedevilled, and, on the whole, severely handled by this self-same harmless invibus; and our intellects are scoffed at. The audience, in fact, is, intellectually, a pantaloon, on whom the Harlequin-pantomime has no mercy. It is frivolity whipping its schoolmaster, common-sense, the drama on its apex; art, unsexed, and without a conscience; the reflection of the world in green knotted glass. Now, I talked to the author, and showed him that there was a certain absence from his work of this kind of thing; but he put his thumbs in his arm-pits, and replied with some disdain, "Which of the various dramatic forms of the time may one conceive as likeliest to shoot up in the fabulous manner of the bean-stalk, bearing on its branches things of earth and heaven undreamt of in philosophy? The sensational dramas? Perhaps from them some new development of tragic art; but Pantomime seems to be of best hope. It contains in crude forms, humour, poetry, and romance. It is the childhood of a new poetical comedy." Then I saw where he was, and said, "God be with you," and washed my hands of him. But I'll do my best with my part.

There is a note of prophecy here, for, although the pantomime has not of itself developed to any extraordinary degree, it is certainly "bearing on its branches things of earth and heaven undreamt of in philosophy." Strangely enough, in the modern Harlequinade, there is more of tragedy, than the humour and comedy which caught Davidson's fancy. Perhaps, however, this play with its slight "pretension" to be a little more than a pantomime, offers the most obvious link between the Long Past, and the Recent Past, and the more Immediate Present.

Written at Crieff in 1888, it is an intriguing confusion of classical persons and choric dances and nineteenth century satire. The deliberate mythological element is refreshingly removed from the fairy-tale harping of most modern pantomimes, and when the scene opens on satyrs and bacchantes "leaping in a frantic ring" about Silenus, the dear old fool, and Harlequin and Columbine, with the "skies violet, and the beechen shade mellow," the watcher and the listener is removed to an Aegean atmosphere. The play that follows is pastoral,
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satire, idyll, and comedy; ancient buffoonery and modern wit. Bacchus, Silenus, Ariadne, and Ione are discovered crossing their life-interests with Harlequin, Columbine, and the showman, Scaramouche. The action, in five scenes, as complicatedly simple as most pantomimes, I imagine, is based upon the professional ambitions of Scaramouche. He is "out" to captivate Bacchus as a sideshow in London; but because Silenus, Bacchus' old foster-wine-bibber-nurse, looks more like the Public's conception of Bacchus, the Showman decides to carry back Silenus and pass him off as Bacchus, together with his rout of satyrs and bacchantes. The complication grows when the real Bacchus appears, stern and Apolloesque, accompanied by his faithful Ariadne, and punished everyone with just dues, condemns Scaramouche to pass on exhibition as an ape for a year, sends Harlequin and Columbine back to England, and brings to a happy conclusion an idyllic love-affair between Ione, an island maiden, and her lover, Sarmion.

The play is a curious revelation of the interests and tastes of its author. He knew his pantomimes and their traditions from the mistiest beginnings, for Silenus says, almost immediately:

"You, my good Harlequin, I take to be the son of Mercury and one of the furies...It's an old story now, as your joints might tell you, for you are a most degenerate Harlequin. Now do I remember Bathylus and Pylades, sweet youths both."

HARLEQUIN: Were they Harlequins?

SILENUS: Harlequins! They were anything. Their very hands were garrulous as beldames, and their fingers more exclamatory than Makyas under the knife of Apollo...You are like your father in nothing but the lightness of your heels, and the nimbleness of your pilfering...You are the bad angel of pleasantry, because you are, as it were, humour run to seed, and become a science: you are a mere name, and the thing which you once were is in limbo..."

Davidson's Harlequin is, in truth, something of a negative personality, an amenable puppet in the hands of persons of more authority. Scaramouche browbeats him; later, the Great God Bacchus commands even the magic of his bat, and he runs about through the play, charming but ineffectual. Perhaps it is through

*See p. 15; also D'Ismaeli: Curiosities of Literature, p. 215
the magic of his bat alone that his name is given to the traditions of his race, for in no situation in modern plays does he play more than a second part, and often he is not even that; In fact, Pierrot ousts him entirely in five out of the eight plays here under discussion, and for the rest, he is only a mere poet or starving underling. Scaramouch (at Naxos), on the other hand, is a tremendous personality, at least as far as mortal power can go. He is characterized by bustling efficiency and a pleasing penchant for oaths of the most charming disingenuousness. Silenus, whose strong suit appears to be character-analysis at first sight, observes of him: "You must be the son of a puppet."

SCARAMOUCH: Puppies and patchwork, why?

SILENUS: From your habit of unexpected, disjointed and inept gesticulation, which has its exact counterpart in your pattering speeches and preposterous preludes.

SCARAMOUCH: What am I to do? The world is old; it has been satiated with originality, and in its dotage cries bitterly for entertainment. A public man must therefore be extravagant in order to distinguish himself. My felicitous alliteration and prompt non-blasphemous oaths constitute my note, which is the literary term for trade-mark—a species of catch-word, in fact. Sweetness and light, you understand me?

Other examples of his expletives are "Oakum and orchids!" "Magic and mastodons!" "Body and bouquet!" He is a winning satire on business methods in general, and his sentence of apehood seems somehow unmerited.

The idyllic interludes, the love-affair of Ione with Sarmion, the star-inhabitant come to earth, and the somewhat uxorious Bacchus and Ariadne, are only by the way, but have a serious majesty of movement in their lines. The tone is perhaps a little self-conscious, more grandiose than profound, more sententious than convincing, but there are lyric touches such as Ione's plea to be permitted to "walk home."

BACCHUS: We must 'ere dawn, away to India, you two shall be transported through the air to Glaucis' house.

IONE: How far are we from home?
BACCHUS: Three miles, I think.
IONE: Oh pray you, let us walk:
Sarmin, three miles together through the wood
Shimmering with moonlight, full of smothered sound,
and ghostly shadow, and the mindgled scent
Of flowers and spices, and the cooling earth:
It is a very lifetime of delight.

A great part of the play suggests a brave imitation: the seashore and the sands,
the magical transformations and fairy songs, the lyrics of the satyrs and bacco-
chantes, the serious blank verse passages combine to give an unmistakable flavor
of "The Tempest." It is an echo of the sort of expression that is never attempted
nowadays; a glimpse of Shakespearian grace and refinement, of romance and wit,
of song and dance and nonsense, uncomplicated by intentional subtleties or in-
versions, psychological significances or profound reflections on Life and its
Problems. It is a refrain of a fin de siecle backward turning, veined with
unconscious prophecy, and from it, we turn to another pantomime, written some
twenty years later to commemorate the passing of the old order, yet in itself
a foreshadowing of the new.

In PANTALOON by J.M.Barrie, "the scene makes-believe to be the private home
of Pantalone and Columbine, though whether they ever did have a private home is
uncertain.

"In the English version (and with that alone are we concerning ourselves) these two were figures in the harlequinade which in Victorian days gave a finish
to a pantomime as vital as a tail to a dog. Now they are vanished from the boards;
or at best they wander through the canvas streets, in everybody's way, at heart
afraid of their own policeman, really dead, and waiting, like the faithful old
horse, for some one to push them over."

Barrie has a consistent and somewhat fascinating ability of being true to
hints and insinuations. If he ends a book with a "But that's another story!"--
the Public is never cheated. Sooner or later, the other story saunters quietly
out from a sidepath, or jumps upon us from behind, or smiles in a friendly fashion
between the lines of a totally different story until we recognize it. So in
The Little White Bird, the retired army officer, who tells the tale, expresses
very aptly the pantomime situation in England in the late 90's, (we easily per-
ceive that it is very serious) hints strongly that Joey, the Clown, might a
story tell, if he would; implies unmistakably, in other words, that, in the pass-
ing of the old order, J.M. Barrie perceives other possibilities, and in PANTALOON, they are ours. Nowhere do we find more delicately welded buffoonery and sym-
bolism, broad humor and grief. The "Half Hour" play is half-pantomime in its sense of mute acting, and half dialogue; Columbine and Harlequin never speak, except with their feet, but Pantaloon and Clown are loquacious and very, very cockney. Plot with Harlequin is never predominating; he overpowers it with personality, and so here, the plot is Pantaloon, the father of Columbine, and Harlequin, her lover, and Clown, the cleverest man who ever walked the stage (for Clowns are always clever), the vulgar rival, who dominates and hires them all three, and dictates to them egregiously, until Harlequin bethinks him to paralyze them all with his magic, and elopes with Columbine under his arm. Only, then, the pro-
tagonists are all terribly poor, and Pantaloon naturally loses out with his em-
ployer most lamentably, and all is sorrow and sighing, until a year later when Harlequin and Columbine trudge wearily back, and life laughs again, because, behold "This is the great surprise:" their child is a Clown. But at that, it is all rather sad, because, says Barrie: "Poor little baby, he is the last of the clowns, and knows not what is in store for him." They dance: "who so gay now, as Columbine and Harlequin, dancing merrily as if it were again the morning? Oh what a lark is life. Ring down the curtain quickly, Mr. Prompter, before we see them all swept into the dust-heap."

It is very satisfying, theatrically speaking, thus to be invited behind the scenes and assured that Harlequin and Columbine do not instantly revert to chorus-girls and johnnies with vanity-boxes and bowler hats, as soon as the curtain falls; that Pantaloon at a fancy-dress-ball goes completely disguised in mufti, and struts like the Public, and makes a tremendous hit, and that his sausage-bills are tremendous. One has an ineffable feeling of eugenic security,
moreover, in the knowledge that the offspring of Harlequin and Columbine always run true to type. How much more exciting are birthdays under such circumstances! The expectant parents have four guesses instead of two, and the odds are three to one on the favorite sex. How amazing to count on one's buttons the night before: Pantaloon, Harlequin, Columbine, Clown. We hope they do not hurry over poor Columbine too precipitately. I suppose that in this thesis, Barrie is really being philosophical. He is reminding us that what we see, we see; what we do not see, we need not imagine to be what common sense assures us it is. In imagination, the pleasantest, as well as the unpleasantest, is always possible.

To Barrie's type of mind, the Harlequinade makes a very definite appeal, especially, perhaps, because of the tinge of tragedy in its passing. He portrays the characters as types, not of northern and southern Italians, but of celebrated personalities. Their position in the theatre has always been, and is so unique that it is difficult to find any equivalents. One can invent successful replicas of them no more than one can write sequels to Mother Goose. They are born of tradition, made, like Rome, in centuries rather than days, and O Mr. Barrie, when you say, "Ring down the curtain, quickly, Mr. Prompter!" do you mean the asbestos curtain? For ourselves, we prefer to think that it is only the painted curtain with the picture on it, and that soon it will rise again to show that the Clown Baby has grown up, and married a Columbine, and had a Pantaloon Baby of its own.

Another powerful treatment of the drama behind the scenes, the other-side-of-the-Moon Pierrot which the ordinary audience never sees, the Pierrot who leaves the footlights and washes off the white chalk and drags on his overcoat, and goes out in the cold is Sacha Guitry's Debureau, translated into the English version by H. Granville Barker. Like many other popular plays, "Laugh, Clown, Laugh," and "He Who Goes Slapped," the central figure is an actor, and the play is based on the legends of the famous pantomime-clown Debureau, who was at the
height of his triumph in Paris in 1839. The play is so constructed that, in
addition to its peculiarly heart-rending situation and dramatic climaxes, it is
al'ire with local color, so that the very spirit of pantomime popularity surrounds
it. We feel the pushing and crowding and hooting and jeering, the uncertainty
of success, the applause and triumphs, the laughter and bows, the petty financial
profits, the human vanities and rivalries and disdains. The Harlequin influence
here is not so literary as it is discerningly analytic. A sort of undercurrent
of inheritance breaks out. One feels that the powerful personality of the
original clown of some centuries before stands over the lives of those who follow
his profession, as relentless and luring as the calling of any Art. The indi-
vidual is powerless; the clown-fire runs in his blood. In the play, it is not
so much a constituent of the plot as of the character. Jean Gaspard Debureau
is not only a comic actor; he is a Pierrot, a pantomime artist whose voice nor
language is not heard in speech, but whose line had gone out through all the
earth, and his words to the end of the world.

The play itself is one of those thoroughly engrossing plays within plays
where even the stage business is so fascinating that for full appreciation,
one must needs study the words and follow them through the performance like an
opera score. In the Prologue, there are snatches of a famous pantomime story,
"The Old Clo' Man," with Debureau at his best in the leading part. This story,
according to Guitry, was told by Theophile Gautier in the Revue de Paris of
September 4, 1842, and was very popular with the public. Pierrot, in love with
a grand duchess, kills an old clo' man for a costume to wear to her ball, and is
thereafter haunted by the ghost of the old clo'man until they meet as partners
at the ball. There, the ghost clasps poor Pierrot to his sword-spitted bosom,
and stabs him to death. This is certainly not the American idea of a side-
splitting comedy, suitable for showing to best advantages the amblings and
tumblings of a clown, but that is because we are a"pea-nut" loving nation.
The French audiences are unlike us: they prefer that type of acting which brings with it tears of laughter and the laughter of tears, and they are uncompromisingly critical of any slightest trace of mediocrity or failure to transport. Deafening hisses and catcalls are the immediate fate of inability or weakness or any kind of inferiority, and although the voice of the public is the voice of the "people," its judgment is infallible, perhaps because the French are themselves a nation of actors. Gautier, quoted by Guitry, continues to comment on the significance of the play, and he introduces a symbolism which is very pertinent to the present discussion:

"Pierrot, walking the street in his white blouse, his floured face, lost in his dreams, does not that symbolize for us the human heart, still white and innocent, but wrung by cruel longings for the things beyond its reach? The sword-hilt presenting itself to his grasp and inviting him by the treacherous brilliancy of its yellow copper, is it not the striking emblem of the power of circumstance over souls already tempted and vacillating? The facility with which the blade enters the body of the victim indicates how easily one may commit a crime, and how simple a gesture may lose one forever. Pierrot in taking the dagger, had no other idea than to perform a sly trick. The ghost of the Old 'lo' Man coming from the cellar shows that crime never conceals itself, and when Pierre made the ghost of the moaning victim fall into the cellar with one blow from a block of wood, the author shows most ingeniously that precautions can sometimes retard the discovery of a crime, but that the way of judgment will not fail to come... and in the love-scene where the ghost groans under the floor and lifts its head from time to time, does it not indicate most clearly that nothing can quiet the remorse in the heart of a criminal?..." *

Perhaps here, Gautier begins to account for the immortality of Pierrot and his kind. It may be that these characters symbolize not so much of Berganza and Venice, of Naples and Padua, as of human weaknesses, love and passions, jealousy and desires. Notice that they are always mortals, never gods. Pan and Apollo we know are deathless, and their very immortality removes them from us by a long stretch of eternity, but Harlequin and Columbine are born, and marry, and die, like us. They are of our clay, their crimes are our crimes, and their retributions awake a pitying sympathy, and their loves a familiar fire.

So Debureau discharges his acting obligations, and in the first act, emerges to fame. Sad variations on the theme of "La Dame Aux Camellias" constitute the

* Translated from the French version. J.M.
rest of the play, with the difference that here, Guitry's concern is with the professional, as well as the emotional heart of Debureau, whose Pierrot temperament shadows his private self. As he says:

"I could never be a hero.  
I'm just a poor Pierrot,  
Rather sad, and sometimes so tired.  
I must make up my mind to be jolly at night  
As I make up my face, black and white."

In the fourth act, after Debureau's pathetic failure, as he makes up his son who is to take his part, he expresses triumphantly the creed of the actor, the breathless moment when the audience waits to be moved to laughter or tears or hisses:

"Then it begins.  
A whisper they sway to, a rhythm...  
First it's only a smile you cause,  
Like a ripple that has just  
Been raised by that tiny gust  
Of laughter, but the laughter will keep growing  
Till a gale of it is blowing...  
But high renown  
We leave to tragedians...  
Let them look down  
On you, call you a clown.  
Let the great world neglect and forget you.  
Who cares?"

The play as a whole is a superb vindication of the clown's artistry. Perhaps most of all, however, do I seem to appreciate in it the peculiar refinement with which Guitry interprets the soul of his Pierrot character. He is shown us as an idealized and idealizing creature, whose very philosophy and understanding in the face of his cruellest hurt, interpenetrate his being with a fineness and a sympathy as thoroughly purging to the understanding heart as any Euripidean tragedy. Debureau's Pierrot is again a wistful chalk-cheeked mankin, with the moonlight playing on him, and his face a-smile. If a sword pierces his heart, it is only the sword of human weakness, a clown's version of Cupid's arrow with an agonizing barb that the audience is not aware of. I think it is not difficult for us to realize from this how much of the charm of the Harlequinade may be accounted for in its universality of appeal and the human interpretation of the present day.
I have commented upon the foregoing plays because of their historical or personal interest in portraying an older form of pantomime sympathy, and I come now to a group of three plays written by different authors and at different periods, but each in its own way a product of what might be called the "landscape gardening" school of architectural drama: formal sets, redolent with flower-beds, regularly plotted with green hedges or garden-walls, and squares of grassy lawn and moonlight; statues, gleaming in half-light, and music, gay or wailing harmonies, accompanying flights of emotion. In theme, they offer an interesting contrast. The first of these, Ernest Dowson's "PIERROT OF THE MINUTE", written sometime in the late 90's, there is a fragile black-and-white symbolism which is not apparent until the Epilogue. The name, it seems, was originally applied to a Pierrot firework at a ducal celebration at Baden Baden. The display caused tumultuous applause, until

"A terrible disaster came to pass.
His nose grew dim, the people gave a shout,
His red lips paled, both his blue eyes went out.
There rose a sullen sound of discontent,
The golden shower of rockets was all spent:
He left off dancing with a sudden jerk,
For he was nothing but a firework.
The garden darkened, and the people in it
"Cried,"He is dead,—the Pierrot of the minute!"

With every artist it is even so:
The artist, after all, is a Pierrot—
A Pierrot of the minute, naïf, clever,
But Art is back of him, She lives for ever!"

The fantasy itself is a moonlight fabric, woven of silver and shadows. It is the essence of Romance, and to be properly effective should be faultlessly produced, for one feels that in such fantasy the imagination must needs grow impatient of pasteboard pedestals, cheesecloth draperies, memorized lines, or self-conscious gestures. One must see with enchanted eyes, and wake as from a dream, rather than from a theatrical performance.

The scene is Versailles at its most romantic: a glade in the Park du
Petit Trianon before a temple of Love. The characters are a Moon Maiden, the Spirit of Art, and Pierrot, the Artist. The Pierrot here is the haunting French interpretation of a white and loosely clad dreamer, a little slight creature, Peter Pannish in his youth and innocence, pathetically curious about emotions, and wistful to learn of them in grown-up terms. His is only a little page-figure among all the other figures of the patterned Court. His life had been lived on the outskirts of that aristocracy, and he has learned a host of little imitations, a gesture, a bow, a courtly game, a murmur of gossip which he is almost too inexperienced to understand. He is young; he desires to learn of Love. The deceptive word one longs to dodge, but its meaning here is obviously that charming confusion between the chivalry implied by the word in the troubadour and trouvére days (when all of mediaeval Europe prated and sang and thought in the Court of Love, so that it was become a sort of science or philosophy, with a Chair and a host of professors to expound its tenets) and the inexplicable desire of men and women for each other, that merging of love and love which knows no science, nor formula nor explanation. Pierrot, one enchanted summer night, follows the directions on a magic scroll, and comes to invoke a maiden who will teach him what he wishes to learn. A Moon Maiden appears to him, and there follows his pretty captivation with its inevitable sorrow:

"Mortal, beware the kisses of the Moon!
Whoso seeks her, she gathers like a flower.
He gives a life, and only gains an hour."

Her kiss is frore and tantalizing; his vague desires are kindled; bewildered, he implores an undefined request, but day dawns, the enchanted night is fled, and he is woo'd to dreams, and the Maid bids him farewell as she bends over his sleeping form:

"Go forth and seek in each fair face in vain
To find the image of thy love again.
All maids are kind to thee, yet never one
Shall hold thy truant heart till day be done
Whom once the moon has kissed, loves long and late,
Yet never finds the maid to be his mate."
The wanderlust of the artist, embraced by his mistress, Art, is created, and Pierrot, filled with dreams, will wake to a life of fruitless searching, a Knight of a Holy Grail whose Presence will never be seen.

Yet, in spite of its thoroughly fantastic quality, there hovers over this romance a curious suggestion of classicism. The dialogue has a classic restraint and conventionality, in keeping with the formal gardens, the moonlight tableaux; there is a sort of austerity in its most emotional scenes; the blackness-and-whiteness in which the whole is obviously staged suggests no color or warmth. The very metre is the heroic couplet, and at times the lines are oddly suggestive of Pope: Pierrot offers to explain the life at court, and the Moon Maiden answers:

"Let brevity attend
Thy wit, for night approaches to its end."

And later, when he describes the court conversation:

"We quiz the company and praise the rout,
Are polished, petulant, malicious, sly,
Or what you will, so reputations die."

Although many of the couplets are not closed, there are didactic touches, bon mots and epigrams, and always courtesies, low bows and blandishments playing over the surface of what suggests underneath a suspicion of the tragedy of unsatisfied desire.

The commedia dell'arte, though a powerful dramatic influence, had little or no literary value. The modern interpretation has lifted the characterization out of its original milieu of farce and slapstick into an atmosphere as here illustrated of symbolism and charm. The graceful figures, the typical traits of character, or "clothescreens" of emotions and domestic intrigues, the use of the comic element as relief from situations in themselves serious or pathetic, all offer a richness of material to the modern write with a weakness for artistic effect rather than inartistic realism. Thus, Pierrot, with his moonlighted face, and his hands full of lilies, seems a far cry from the boisterous scoundrels of the Italian farce, but as the personification of the art-starved soul, he is very convincing, ghost-frail though he may be, and mortally fragile.
PRUNELLA, or LOVE IN A DUTCH GARDEN by H. Granville Barker and Lawrence Housman, and BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE by Robert Emmons Rogers offer other exquisite retreats from the sights, sounds and smells of realism. PRUNELLA is perhaps the more satisfactory as the triumph of Love, whereas in BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE, the curtain falls on defeat, on Futility and Death; the former is a fantasy for Youth and April, the latter, the poetry of cynical maturity and disillusionment.

In PRUNELLA, everything runs true to form, one might even say English form. From the beginning, all is as transparent and innocuous as a jelly-glass. The Pierrot-Scaramel combination is the modern version wherein Pierrot is the impractical love-making philandering dreamer, attended always by his servant, who is still cunning in insidious suggestion, but not necessarily opposed to the welfare of his master. The plot is old and irresistible; the sheltered, unsophisticated maiden is lured from her Dutch garden seclusion and her three maiden aunts by Pierrot and his band of mummers. Three years later, she returns to find that Pierrot, long since a deserter, has bought the house in the vain hope of reliving his courtship and finding her there. The eternal Light o' Love succumbs to a permanent attachment at last, and, as the play closes, one is certain, of course, that now and forever will he be constant. Around the very simple thread of the elopement, the authors build up a satisfying type of padding: decrepit old gardeners, as cockney and quaint as the gardeners in the White Queen's palace, whose mission it is to supply the exposition; the maiden aunts with their trepidations, flutterings and mistaken self-confidence; a may rout of mummers in Pierrot's train with a babble and confusion of talk and exclamation among themselves; and a statue of Love who rouses and sings whenever our confidence in Love's permanent endurance is permitted to slacken. The action fills the spectator with that eager-eyed suspense of one who knows
beforehand exactly what is bound to happen. Everything follows suit: Pierrot wears loose white floppy garments and snatches a guitar from Scaramel when he feels the need; Prunella is a Kate Greenaway child with a sash which her aunts remind her to "retreat" by way of improving her posture; when she consents to elope with Pierrot, he wraps his cloak about her, and it immediately falls from her revealing her in the costume of Pierrette. In the third act, the garden is fallen to thoroughly anticipated ruin, "overgrown, weedy and neglected. The fountain is moss-grown and thick with creepers..." and later murmurs the poor remaining aunt:

"How poor the place is; weeds are everywhere.
Dead leaves beneath one's feet, rustling like memories:
Poor restless ghosts of unforgotten time."

The statue of Love never fails to respond at exactly the right moment, to remain discreetly silent when its interlocutor deserves no reassurance. The moral of the play is refreshingly uncomplex: Love will find a way, and is undeniably the most important thing in existence.

The love-motif here is that unequivocal kind that is awakened at adolescence, and then grows and grows and lasts to eternity. It is the cottage variety that flies in at the window in a little song, and illumines stone-statues and expresses itself in viol-playing. In short, the theme of the play is a fairy-tale, a theory long since exploded but always possible, an expression of that seventh-heavenism which only romantic writers are capable of conceiving, and audacious enough to present.

Technically speaking, the form of the play is attractive, snatchy lines of rhyming verse with bits of prose and blank verse at appropriate moments, lyrical fragments and units; nothing of monotony, yet enough of rhythm to quite sing itself at times. Like other such plays, it is most effective when performed with all its delicate trappings, its singing birds, its laughter and motion and gesture. The Harlequinade influence is like the plot of the play, obvious
and fundamental, and healthy and wealthy and wise.

BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE, as original and elaborate as PRUNELLA is conventional and simple, is not particularly healthy, but it is very, very wise. Again are there gardens and gates and moonlight; again the characters of the Harlequinade with the slight interchange of identity which is so frequent. Here again, is A Pierrot the central figure, but he is attended by Harlequin, instead of Scaramel, and Columbine replaces Pierrette. In his introduction, Mr. Rogers says:

"The spirit of the play should be that of poetic fantasy rather than melodrama. Players should be chosen for their grace and ease, and particularly for their ability to speak rhymed verse skilfully. Care should be taken not to strive for 'naturalness' at the expense of cadence and rhyme. Beauty of diction, of grouping of color and lighting...these are the essentials."

The curtain rises on the tableau vivant of a Watteau painting called 'La Marquise Ennuyée.' A Museum Guide passes rapidly through its history as the "companion piece to 'The Lovesick Pierrot'" and disappears. The persons of the tableau, a Marquise, a Marquis and a Poet come to life to the sound of the Poet's song:

"Love bringeth naught of good
Over Death's wall."

This is the refrain of the play.

At the suggestion of the lady, the three finally gain entrance to the mysterious garden behind the gate and the scene changes to the other side of the garden wall. It is a haunted place and filled with shadows and the scent of dead romance. Forebodings crowd upon them, but before they can escape, a tragedy is precipitated at their very feet. With uncanny rites and ceremonies, spirits of the Orient and dark Africa appear to dig the grave of trembling rose-and-gold Columbine. A spangled ruthless Harlequin is the master of ceremonies, but the master of Harlequin and Columbine as well, is a Melancholy Pierrot, "a tall, thin white-faced thing in the usual loose clothes of a Pierrot, but fashioned of a deep purple crepe with blood-red rosettes on coat and shoes. His wide ruff
is black; so is his skull-cap. His white-washed face is very drawn and lean,—
with hollow dark eyes and a sardonic slash of scarlet for a mouth... He is very
absent and moody and languid."

The marquis and the poet spring to Columbine's defense, and half-passively,
Pierrot commands that she be freed. The gate stands wide; the Marquise begs
that they withdraw. Too late: the passion for Columbine's loveliness has fired
both the Marquis and the Poet, and with heartless caresses, she incites them to
the use of their swords. In vain, the Marquise pleads; the two men fight and
wound each other to the heart while the Marquise swoons, and Columbine and Pierrot
tread a melancholy measure.

COLUMBINE: Oh! Oh! See, Pierrot,
Two pretty gentlemen
Lying in a row,
Each crying for the moon,
Each wanting... mine.
Oh, happy gentlemen,
Poor Columbine!

But Pierrot silences her and turns to the stunned Marquise: Harlequin, he
says, shall lead her back to life, but before she goes, she asks him who he is.

PIERROT: I am the Melancholy Pierrot.
Some call her Light-o-Love, false as breath,
Some call me... Death.

The curtain falls upon the lonely garden with Columbine pleading at the locked
gate and the Melancholy Pierrot sitting upon the wall, silhouetted against the
moon and singing his sad song:

"Oh sorry hearts of dust:
Love sings a tawdry lie,
Passion her name, and Lust
When you come nigh.
You whom she slayeth soon
Love will not pardon,
Love dwells beyond the moon,
Not in Death's garden."

In examining such a texture of filigree and crumbling rose-leaves, one runs the
risk of unpardonable penetration. One is in danger of demanding words for
songs which were written without words, of being literal, where literality is
as serene as hoar-frost and not half so beautiful in its effect. Demands for explanation are frequently spoliation and blasphemy, a shouting in holy houses where the spirit commands the reason. In BEHIND A WATTEAU PICTURE, the spirit is that of pure poesy, the artificiality is candid, indeed, essential to the effect, like its powdered wigs and patches and paper Chinese moons, and nowhere in modern drama is the pagan quality of Pierrot so fascinatingly expressed. His sadness has the disillusionment, the indifference of a Byron, the singing hopelessness of a Keats, the ruth and gentle courtesy of a Shelley. There is no woman who would not be more than "half in love with easeful Death" in this form; but here are no women in love. Say rather, three men transported to a frenzied passion for a "light-o-love," and a negative lady whose refrain, a kind of reflection upon her escorts, it may be said, is "Let us go home; I am afraid!" The play appears to be nothing more or less than the double standard, expressed in verse and shortclothes. But after all, it is not a play to be standardized in any sense of the word. Its moral, oddly obvious, if one stops to consider, leaps out in spite of itself, the fiery Hebraic: the wages of Sin is Death. Yet with its morality or non-morality I am sure the writer was not concerned. It was his purpose to produce fantastic atmosphere, and while the Harlequinade characters lend themselves with surprising adaptability to all walks of life, in fantasy, they give themselves away.

I shall conclude my discussion of their influence on modern drama by referring to two other plays, thoroughly dissimilar in authorship, period of composition and subject-matter, but alike in subtlety of satire, and appreciative of the forceful ends such a form of expression may serve. In December, 1907, the Teatro Lara of Madrid produced an eminent example of the modern imitation of the commedia dell' arte. This was the BONDS OF INTEREST by Jacinto Benavente, whose dramatic ability had been demonstrated first some years before, and has since been widely recognized. Inhowfar his play
is an accurate reproduction of the sixteenth century farces, is difficult to
state positively because so few of the original commedia dell'arte are ex-
tant, and of those few, none is available to the writer. Judging from the
plays of Molière and Goldoni, who were admittedly influenced by the impro-
vised drama just preceding them, however, it seems fair to state that Benavente
knew and appreciated his model and concealed his twentieth centuryism
to a marked extent. The conditions at which his barba are aimed are those
universal situations that we have always with us. The prologue, spoken by
Crispin, the leading character, gives such a charming explanation of the old
plays and Benavente's purpose in imitating them that I think I shall give
it here:

Here you have the mummer of the antique farce who enlivened in the country
ins the hard-earned leisure of the carter, who made the simple rustics
gape with wonder in the square of every rural town and village, who in the
populous cities drew about him great bewildering assemblages, as in Paris,
where Tabarin set up his scaffold on the Pont-Neuf and challenged the attention
of the passers-by, from the learned doctor pausing a moment on his solemn
errand to smooth out the wrinkles on his brow at some merry quip of old-time
farce, to the light-hearted outpurse who there whiled away his hours of ease
as he cheated his hunder with a smile, to prelate and noble dame and great
grandee in stately carriages, soldier and merchant and student and maid.
Men of every rank and condition shared in the rejoicing—men who were never
brought together in any other way—the grave laughing to see the laughter of
the gay rather than at the wit of the farce, the wise with the foolish, the
poor with the rich, so staid and formal in their ordinary aspect, and the rich
to see the poor laugh, their consciences a little easier at the thought:
"Even the poor can smile." For nothing is so contagious as the sympathy of a
smile.

Sometimes our humble farce mounted up to Princes' Palaces on the whims of
the mighty and the great; yet there its requeries were not less free. It
was the common heritage of great and small. Its rude jests, its sharp and
biting sentences it took from the people, from that lowly wisdom of the poor
which knows how to suffer and bear all, and which was softened in those days
by resignation in men who did not expect too much of the world and so were able
to laugh at the world without bitterness and without hate.

From its humble origins Lope de Rueda and Shakespeare and Molière lifted
it up, bestowing upon it high patents of nobility, and like enamoured princes
of the fairy-tales, elevated poor Cinderella to the topmost thrones of Poetry
and of Art. But our farce tonight cannot claim such distinguished lineage, con-
trived for your amusement by the inquiring spirit of a restless poet of to-day!

This is a little play of puppets, impossible in theme, without any reality
at all. You will soon see how everything happens in it that could never happen,
how its personages are not real men and women, nor the shadows of them, but
dolls or marionettes of paste and cardboard, moving upon wires which are visible even in a little light and to the dimmest eye. They are the grotesque masks of the Italian Commedia dell'Arte, not as boisterous as they once were, because they have aged with the years and have been able to think much in so long a time. The author is aware that so primitive a spectacle is unworthy of the culture of these days; he throws himself upon your courtesy and upon your goodness of heart. He only asks that you should make yourselves as young as possible. The world has grown old, but art never can reconcile itself to growing old, and so, to seem young again; it descends to these fripperies. And that is the reason that these outworn puppets have presumed to come to amuse you tonight with their child's play.

The play which follows is a series of complicated situations in which Leander, an artless strolling adventurer, and his extremely artful servant-accomplice, Crispin, contrive, through the cleverness of the latter to tie themselves so securely to the interests of the entire population of a town that when their ruse is exposed, all their creditors find that nothing is so much to their advantage as the happy consummation of the end toward which the pair have been working, a marriage between Leander and the daughter of the wealthy Polichinelle. The characters, as they appear and reappear, have familiar names and vocations, Harlequin, the poet, Columbine, attendant on Dôna Sirena, a Pasquella type*, Pantaloon, a rich real-estate agent, Polichinelle, the wealthy merchant, the Captain, a valiant sword-wielder, the Doctor, an expounder and confounder of the law. The lines of the play have sufficient innuendo and play on words in the English translation to remind the tantalized English reader that he is foregoing about one-half the value of the original. The dialogue is largely an excuse for brilliant paradox and epigram; the situations are those eminently unmoral, albeit, veracious complications so fatal to the New England literal-minded conscience, so essential to mankind's sense of proportion. Perpetual balance is a colorless existence and fatal to progress in any form.

At the conclusion, moreover, the author leaves us vaguely puzzled. To the bewildered, there are three possible attitudes. (1) One goes one's way, content that there are those things beyond mere mediocre mortal ken. (2) One

*See p. 20
demands explanations: Who is Crispin? What's the symbolism of that last speech? Why do they all talk so much? Why does Silvia sing that song about the "Kingdom of the Soul"? What does it all mean, anyway? Or (3), one persuade himself that in a pinch, his own explanation will fall like dew from heaven, which it does, and never does he admit to dissatisfaction, though at times this form of manna is lacking in substantiality. The tone, or mood, of the author is a curious medley of chicane, sententiousness, cynicism, sentimentality, yet the unity is maintained. The whole action passes swiftly by in the gestures and words of the standardized types, wearing their standardized costumes, living nobly up to their standardized parts. Yet, in the person of Crispin, there is a haunting suggestiveness, a mystery of omniscience that we cannot get away from. He has been a galley-slave in his time, shared oars with Polichinelle, the wealthy, in his less balmy days. He knows alletry and all military history; his is all the audacity, all the cleverness, all the diplomacy, all the philosophy. Perhaps the best clue to himself he gives in the following speech:

"Of course you know who my master is: he is the one of the towering thoughts, of the lofty, beautiful ideals. Of course you know who I am I am the one of the forlorn and hidden things, the one who grovels and toils on the ground, delving among falsehood and humiliation and lies. Only there is something in me which redeems me and elevates me in my own eyes. It is the loyalty of my service, this loyalty which humiliates and abases itself that another may fly, that he may always be the lord of the towering thoughts, of the lofty beautiful ideals."

Perhaps he is the mortal part of man which is destined to cling to such mortal means as "bonds of interest" for its advance in the world. He is that canniness of the business-nature which thrives upon "intelligence as the conscience of Truth," rises upon other men's foolishness; he is schooled with experience and worldliness, the puller of the strings of the men and women in life, "strings which are their interests, their passions, and all the illusions and petty miseries of their state."

In sum, Benavente has here given us the familiar masks with a generous
undercurrent of significance and penetration; he is wise to the emptiness and futility of many of our commonest by-words, our mission-burdened literateurs, our pretentious militarism, our cumbersome and ridiculous law-courts, our pedestalled high finance and the rottenness of its foundation, our subservience to symbols and deceptions and knavery. He has used his types to generalize the weaknesses of mankind, and very sensibly, he does not account for the "Origin of evil" by denying its existence; nor does he in so many words imply that evil exists for good ends. He leaves us wondering, and rather surprised at ourselves for not finding this game of puppets so childishly simple to play after all.

The other modern satirical use of the Harlequinade characters occurs in Edna St. Vincent Millay's ARIA DA CAPO, a rapier-thrust of the most delicate tempering. In much of her work, it is difficult to determine whether her entenAres are double, or quadruple, or entirely nugatory, and their significance often depends upon the astuteness of the reader as well as his mood. One is either in sympathy with her, and being led with a foolish and hypnotized gaze, or utterly lost and cross, battering futilely at green yew-walls of mysticism, or tangled in symbolic lily-stems. I suppose there has never yet been a real poet to whom Italy has not been the poet's land, Italy whose literary sun lit by reflection or strong direct fire the geniuses of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Shelley and Browning. I feel that Miss Millay is as real a poet as modern America has produced, and it does not surprise me that she turns at intervals from her Maine harbors toward the fishermen at Capti. Her Vassar Occasional, The Lamp and the Bell, takes place in a nameless country where scenes are enacted beside garden-pools at midnight, and false Guidos are stabbed through the heart by jealous Fransescas. The Harlequinade nuance here is only incidental, a moving fragment of Italian backdrop. A pantomime is vaguely indicated, but its real business is to suggest atmosphere and offer an excuse for meaningful parry-and-thrust:
CARLOTTA: No! how he stumbles! Look you, Pantaloon, If you were not so learned i' the head You might know better where you put your feet.

LAURA: (to Carlotta) 'Tis curious how it addles a man's bones To think too much.

CARLOTTA: Nay truth, wise men were ever Awkward i' the legs.

ANSELMO: (to Columbine) Ah, pretty lady!

CARLOTTA: La, she is fickle! How she turns from one face To another face,—and smiles into them all!

FRANCESCA: Oh, ay, but 'tis the Pierrot that she loves.

There is a Hamlet tour-de-force underlying all this, I suppose; the reflection on Columbine is a reflection on Beatrice of the story, but this thrusting myself into interpretation is like thrashing about amidst a group of delicate china figurines who walk and pose about for Art's sake, not the Public's.

The ARIA DA CAPO is a masterful combination of serious absurdity and tragic farce. Being interpreted, it seems to mean that the world's a stage, and war is very foolish. The humdrum platitudes and facetious superficialities of life are represented by Pierrot and Columbine, whose irrelevant banter opens the scene, "set for a Harlequinade, a merry black-and-white interior." Their patent dialogue is interrupted by Cothurnus, the masque of tragedy, who calls in his actors, the shepherds, Corydon and Thyrsis:

CORYDON: Sir, we were counting on this little hour. We said, "Here is an hour,—in which to think A mighty thought, and sing a trifling song, And look at nothing."—And behold! the hour, Even as we spoke, was over, and the actbegum, Under our feet!

THYRSIS: Sir, we are not in the fancy To play the play. We thought to play it later.

CORYDON: Besides, this is the setting of a farce. Our scene requires a wall; we cannot build A wall of tissue-paper!

THYRSIS: We cannot act a tragedy with comic properties!
COTHURNUS: Try it and see. I think you'll find you can.
One wall is like another. And regarding
The matter of your insufficient wood,
The important thing is that you speak the lines,
And make the gestures. Therefore I shall remain
Throughout and hold the prompt-book. Are you ready?

BOTH: (sorrowfully) Sir, we are always ready.

COTHURNUS: Play the play.
Throughout the allegory following, the subtle merging of a contest begun in
play with a death-struggle carried on in bitter earnest, Cothurnus grimly
prompting forgotten lines from time to time, the light repartee of Columbine
and Pierrot off-stage pierces the tragedy. From a crêpe-paper wall and confetti jewels, Miss Millay constructs about as satisfactory an international battlefield as one could ask for. Pierrot and Columbine are merely the rest of life, playing all around and about their little play within a play within a play; Columbine, the coquette and helpmeet, thoroughly unimaginative and practical, Pierrot, the all-seeing and dangerous buffoon, ridiculing in rapid succession, a student, a painter, a pianist, a socialist, a philanthropist, a critic:

COLUMBINE: Here's a persimmon, love. You always liked them.

PIERROT: I am become a critic; there is nothing I can enjoy...However, set it aside. I'll eat it between meals.

And so, when Cothurnus' tragedy is done, and the bodies of the shepherds are lying on the stage, he pushes them under the table, and Pierrot and Columbine begin their humdrum stage-business again. The dead bodies disconcert them a little, but Cothurnus calls back indifferently: "Pull down the tablecloth...and hide them from the house, and play the farce. The audience will forget."

PIERROT: That's so. Give me a hand there, Columbine..."

And the vicious circle is rounded; the Pierrot-Columbine banter begins again--
and the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and the Hohenzollern dynasty is
accounted for.

The play as a fantastic symbolism and a dramatic unit withstands the severest scrutiny. The significance of the title in itself, "a tune in the head," repeating itself over and over again, over and over and over, is a touch of extraordinary genius. The application of the Harlequinade characters, whose chief intrinsic charm, perhaps, lies in their versatility, is both old and new. They are types of the monde, drawn not from Italy, but from humanity; in this play, moreover, they play their traditional parts; they are the comic prelude, interlude and postlude to the bucolic tragedy of life. They mimic, they satirize, they appear at wrong moments, but they only serve to heighten the tragic imports by the method which Shakespeare tried and found not wanting. With the exception of Synge's "Riders to the Sea", I do not know of any one-act play which upon analysis offers so much of life in so short a space to a thoughtful mind. It is not a "tranche de vie," it is a whole loaf.
A Comprehensive Summary

In brief, we find that our earliest definite knowledge of the characters to which we refer to day as the Harlequinade, came from the commedia dell'arte, which was at its height in Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Since this form of popular entertainment was largely improvised, we have little to judge by save the names of the characters and the reputations of the actors. Previous to this period, all theories are conjecture, but it seems highly probable that the improvised farce had its origin in the productions of the strolling players, who, frowned upon by the Church in the early Christian era, lay low for some centuries, and then reappeared. Before the hiatus in the development of liberal arts caused by the barbaric invasions, there was popular in Rome and other parts of Italy a form of grotesque farce of an obscene and satirical quality known as "Atellanae", so-called from the town in Italy where the type of play appears to have been most popular during the Etruscan heyday. The "Atellanae" were characterized by the use of masks which indicate their close relationship to the Greek drama. It is possible that long before the classic coarseness of Aristophanes, there were types of street-strolling comic entertainments which may claim to be the common parent of the later tragic, comic and satirical drama of the Golden Age.

The religious rites of much pagan worship frequently centered about "miming," or imitation, and there are extant interesting albeit doubtful indications that Harlequin was originally Bacchus or Mercury, or Maccus. Modern authorities, however, such as Dr. Winifred Smith and Mr. Chatfield-Taylor, discredit this theory as fantastic and uncritical.

To revert to the commedia dell'arte in its prime in late Renaissance Italy, we find the conventional characters, too numerous to mention, but including Pantaloon, The Doctor, Harlequin, Columbine, Polichinelle, and Scaramouch, to be products of certain sections of the country, each speak-
ing his own dialect and representing a vocation typical of the locality, as for instance, Pantaloon, the rich merchant from Venice. The popularity of these plays which included serious love-themes and comic improvised interludes or imitations of the more serious scenes, soon spread to France where the competition with established French players added to the vicissitudes of their fortunes. They rose and fell in favor, but the more highly plotted and artistically unified plays of Molière in France and Goldoni in Italy, finally supplanted them, though recognizing their influence, and the characters began to appear in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the form of extravaganzas, known as the English pantomimes.

These were series of elaborate scenes which depended for their unity upon a slender thread of legend, such as Tomb Thumb, or Jack the Giant-Killer, in which the leading characters were always converted early in the play into the dramatis personae of the Harlequinade, and passed through many adventures and crises to the happy conclusion. At present, this form of musical extravaganza has largely given way to the expensive staging of modern revues, or musical comedies. The Harlequin figures are less and less conspicuous, in fact not at all familiar in America, in the sense of music-hall characters.

The influence of the Harlequin tradition is still strong, however, and is notable in much of the dramatic literature of the last two or three decades. In the eight plays here discussed, one French, one Spanish, four English and two American, it is evident that the Harlequin influence is principally symbolic, and consequently has a more or less fantastic or artistic appeal. It may be a poetical tragedy, as in the case of DEBUREAU, or a whimsical satire as in BONDS OF INTEREST, or it may be a delicate allegory such as THE PIERROT OF THE MINUTE or ARIA DA CAPO; but at all times, it has seized upon the imaginations or the hearts or the ingenuities of the writers with an undeniable force and vigor, and holds today its unique
significance with less prevalence, but in a more permanent literary form than heretofore.
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