

The Pot of Gold: Major Characterisation

I. Euclio

Euclio is the central figure in *The Pot of Gold*. The plot of this play revolves around him. *The Pot of Gold* was evidently written by Plautus to portray a man with an obsession for money. Euclio is the type of the greedy, miserly man for whom money is the most important thing in the world and who has no time to think of anything else. Money governs Euclio's mind and body; it dominates his thoughts; and it is the motivating force behind all his actions. He carries his frugality and thrift to absurd lengths and, in doing so, he becomes a comic figure who arouses the mirth even of servants. A miser is a comic person in real life too; and Euclio is one of the best-known misers in literature. Subsequently the French writer Moliere modelled his famous comic character Harpagon on Euclio.

Euclio has found a pot of gold which had been buried in the house by his grandfather. Having become unexpectedly rich he now wishes to guard his new-found wealth so that it may not be stolen from him. In fact, he becomes over-anxious about the safety of his pot of gold and is constantly going back to his house from wherever he may be at any time, to take a look at it to make sure that it is still safe. At the very outset, he is shown as turning out his house-keeper from the house in order that he may be able to take another look at his gold and make sure that it lies intact where he has hidden it. He is aware of the fact that he is worrying too much about the safety of his gold and that is why, speaking to himself, in the very beginning, he says: "The damned stuff is driving me off head with worry".

Euclio's house-keeper, whose name is Staphyla, is fed up with Euclio's ill-treatment of her. She thinks that the man has gone off his head because he turns her out of the house ten times in a day and because sometimes he keeps awake all night and then spends the whole day sitting indoors like a crippled cobbler. Anyway, Euclio now comes out of his house after satisfying himself about the safety of his pot of gold, and orders his house-keeper to go inside and keep an eye on things. The house-keeper replies that she does not know what things she must keep an eye upon because the house is almost empty and because there is nothing in it worth stealing. She does not know, of course, anything about his pot of gold. Euclio repeats his order to her and says that she must not open the door to anybody' in his absence. She must not open the door even to Dame Fortune in case she comes, says Euclio.

Actually Euclio would not have left his house if he did not have some urgent business elsewhere. The chairman of the ward to which Euclio belongs is to distribute a donation among the needy persons of the ward and Euclio is one of the candidates for a share of it. Being rich, Euclio does not really need any charity but he does not want that anybody should know about his wealth. He is keeping his gold a secret from everybody and is still pretending to be poor as he was previously known to be. At the same time, it seems to him that everybody has come to know of his secret and that everybody has become respectful to him. Anyhow he goes in a hurry to receive his share of the donation so that he may come back as quickly as possible to his house. Though he does not need any share of the donation, he would not mind receiving a free gift in order to produce the impression that he is still a poor man.

On reaching the place where the donation was to be distributed, Euclio finds, to his dismay, that the function had been cancelled and that nobody has turned up there except himself. His coming here has proved to be a wild goose chase, and so he gets back home "double-quick" because his mind had been there all the time. Before Euclio is able to get inside his house, he is accosted by his neighbour Megadorus who is a rich man and who seems to Euclio to be extra courteous towards him on this day. It

occurs to Euclio that Megadorus has come to know about Euclio's wealth and that his unusual courtesy towards him is being prompted by that knowledge. He suspects that his house-keeper, Staphyla, has told Megadorus about his wealth (though in actual fact Staphyla herself has not the least notion about this wealth). To remove from Megadorus's mind any idea about his wealth, Euclio says that he is a poor man who cannot even afford to give a dowry to his daughter when she gets married. When Megadorus assures him of his help in the matter, Euclio feels even more certain that Megadorus has come to know about his wealth because otherwise a rich man would not toady a poor man

2. Megadorus

Megadorus is indispensable to the action of the play. If we remove Megadorus from the play, the play would simply cease to exist. In the first place, he is a candidate for Phaedria's hand in marriage. We can well understand why he wants to marry Phaedria when he is opposed to the very idea of marriage. The desire to marry Phaedria has been aroused in his heart by the mysterious working of Lar Familiaris, who uses his supernatural powers to produce this desire in him. His getting Euclio's consent to his proposal of marriage produces the necessary complication in the play. Without this complication, Lyconides's desire to marry Phaedria could easily be achieved; and, without this complication, the plot would lose much of its interest. There can be no drama without a complication and a conflict of purposes. Secondly, Megadorus serves also as the means by which that complication is resolved. He not only withdraws his proposal to marry Phaedria but also gives the needful guidance and advice to Lyconides about the procedure which Lyconides should adopt in order to appease Euclio and obtain Euclio's consent to his marrying Phaedria. Then Megadorus helps the play's design by serving as a contrast to Euclio. Euclio is an avaricious and miserly man, while Megadorus is a generous, large-hearted, and liberal man. Megadorus's view about dowries, his view about money, and his comment upon Euclio's change of heart at the end show him as a very practical and wise man. While we hold Euclio in contempt and also laugh at him and his habits, we admire and respect Megadorus. At the end, Megadorus also serves as a means of bringing the play to a close by addressing the audience and saying a few words which may be regarded as the epilogue to the play.

Megadorus is one of the four leading characters in *The Pot of Gold*. We meet him first when his sister Eunotnia comes to him with a matrimonial proposal. From his conversation with her, we come to know firstly that he is opposed to the very idea of marriage, and secondly that he is opposed to the practice of giving and receiving dowries. When his sister says that she would like to see him married, he feels alarmed and says: "Murder! Help!" Then he says that any talk of marriage is like a torture to him. He tells his sister that he would rather die than get married. When his sister speaks of a middle-aged woman who can bring a rich dowry to him, he says that, in the first place, he does not approve of the idea of a middle-aged man like himself marrying a middle-aged woman and that, secondly, he is not in favour of a man getting married to a woman who can bring him a rich dowry. A woman, who brings a fat dowry, is sure to drag her husband into the slavery of extravagance, he says. He then tells his sister that, if he marries at all, he would marry Euclio's daughter who is no doubt a pauper but of whom he fully approves.

Then we meet Megadorus when he accosts Euclio and, after an exchange of formal greetings, he offers to marry Euclio's daughter. He readily agrees to Euclio's condition which is that he would not demand any dowry. It is then agreed that Megadorus would get married to Euclio's daughter on the same day.

Megadorus not only wants no dowry but he does not even want that Euclio should spend any money on the wedding feast which Euclio is expected to arrange for the wedding guests. He therefore directs his steward to buy the needful provisions from the market and also to engage a number of cooks and flute-girls; and he further directs the steward to send half of the provisions and the work-force to Euclio's house to prepare the wedding feast at Euclio's house, and to utilize the remaining provisions and the remaining work-force at his own house for a similar purpose.

Subsequently, we find Megadorus speaking to himself aloud about the favourable reaction of his friends to his intention to marry Euclio's daughter. He also here says that he would like all rich men to marry poor men's daughters who can bring no dowries at all. If such a procedure is adopted by rich men, it would contribute greatly to harmony in the community and also to harmony in the house itself. Wives, who bring no dowries, are more respectful and obedient to their husbands; and such husbands do not feel any compulsion to spend too much money on their wives. The majority of people, says Megadorus, would welcome such a reform; and only the greedy people would oppose it. Euclio, who has been overhearing this speech by Megadorus, fully approves of Megadorus's ideas.

Later, Megadorus is prevailed upon by his sister Eunomia to give up his intention to marry Euclio's daughter in view of the peculiar circumstances of the case, and in view of his nephew's desire to marry that girl. On this occasion, Megadorus also expresses his true opinion about his sister, calling her "an intolerable nuisance" and he strongly disapproves of her trying to act as his guide and instructor in everything.

Then Megadorus offers very sound advice to Lyconides when the later needs it most. He dispels Lyconides's moral objection to obtaining the pot of gold from his slave in exchange for a promise of freedom to him. In this connection, Megadorus says that money is valuable only in so far as it can buy things. Money is best utilized if it is spent on purchasing happiness and contentment for human beings. He then explains his point of view by saying that Lyconides would be making Euclio happy, himself happy and his slave also happy if he can obtain the pot of gold from the slave in exchange for a promise of freedom to the slave, and if he then passes on the treasure to Euclio to whom it really-belong. Lyconides is fully convinced by Megadorus's reasoning and acts upon his sound advice, thus achieving the threefold purpose which Megadorus had specified.

Finally, Megadorus makes a most sensible comment upon Euclio's action in handing over the pot of gold to Lyconides as Phaedria's dowry. In this connection Megadorus says; "Contentment, peace of mind, and sound sleep at night are worth more than a dozen pots of gold".

3. Lyconides

Lyconides is the young man who had seduced Euclio's daughter Phaedria on Harvest Eve. Lyconides belongs to a rich and respectable family, and he had seduced Euclio's daughter when he was under the influence of liquor. Later he learns that the girl had become pregnant as a consequence of his folly and that she is going to give birth to a child. Urged by his conscience, he would now like to make amends to the-girl by marrying her but he then learns that Euclio had promised that very morning to give his daughter's hand in marriage to Megadorus. He also learns that the marriage is going to take place that very day. Megadorus happens to be Lyconides' maternal uncle; and Lyconides therefore urges his mother Eunotnia to speak to her brother Megadorus and dissuade him from marrying the girl so that he (Lyconides) can then try to marry her.

When Lyconides first appears in the play, he is in his mother's company. He has brought his mother to Megadorus's house so that she may explain the whole position to Megadorus in order to prevent him from marrying Phaedria. While passing Euclio's house on the way, Lyconides overhears Phaedria crying in pain because her time to give birth to a child has come and she is having what are known as labour pains. Lyconides thereupon urges his mother to put the maximum possible pressure upon Megadorus to dissuade him from marrying Phaedria.

While Lyconides' mother goes into her brother's house, Lyconides waits in the street for his slave whom he had directed to meet him here. Just at this time Euclio, who has been lamenting the loss of his pot of gold, appears there. Lyconides does not know whether he should hide himself from Euclio or whether he should confront that man. Before he can make up his mind, Euclio sees him and asks who he is. Lyconides replies that he is a very unhappy man. Euclio says that he himself is very unhappy too and that he is, in fact, a victim of a very great misfortune.

Now, here we have to understand the situation correctly. Lyconides does not know that Euclio has lost his pot of gold and that, in describing himself as a victim of a great misfortune, Euclio is referring to his loss of the pot of gold. Far from that; Lyconides thinks that Euclio is unhappy because his daughter is going to give birth to a child without having been married. Lyconides, wanting to solve Euclio's problem, informs Euclio that he (Lyconides) is responsible for the misfortune which has befallen Euclio. Lyconides means that it was he who had seduced Euclio's daughter and had made her pregnant without getting married to her. But Euclio takes Lyconides' remark to mean that Lyconides had stolen Euclio's pot of gold.

Thus there is a lot of what is known as dramatic irony behind the dialogue which is taking place between the two men. Euclio threatens to take action against Lyconides for having stolen his property while Lyconides thinks that Euclio is scolding him for his seduction of Phaedria. At last Lyconides is able to inform Euclio that what he meant to say, was that he had seduced Euclio's daughter and would now like to marry her. He also now informs Euclio that the girl is about to give birth to a child because she had become pregnant as a result of her sexual intercourse with him. Euclio had so far been ignorant of this fact because both his daughter and his house-keeper had managed to keep the whole thing a secret from him.

By now Lyconides' mother has succeeded in prevailing upon Megadorus not to marry Euclio's daughter so that Lyconides can marry her. Then, acting under Megadorus's guidance, Lyconides manages to obtain the pot of gold, which his slave had stolen, and restores it to Euclio. Now, when it is proposed that Lyconides should marry Euclio's daughter, Euclio readily agrees; and he even does what could never have been expected from him. He gives the pot of gold to Lyconides as the bride's dowry.

Lyconides is one of the leading characters in *The Pot of Gold*. Of course the most important characters in the play are Euclio and Megadorus; but, without Lyconides and his slave, the story of the play could not have been built up satisfactorily. Euclio's daughter had to be seduced and shown as having become pregnant if Megadorus was to be dissuaded from marrying her.

Lyconides is the young man who seduced the girl and (unwittingly) made her pregnant too. Then it was a necessary part of the play's design that Euclio's pot of gold be stolen and then restored to him. The pot of gold is stolen by Lyconides' slave so that Lyconides may be able to get it from him and restore

it to Euclio. Euclio agrees to let Lyconides marry his daughter because Lyconides has rendered a great service to him. Lyconides is important in another way also.

The play was intended to teach a moral which is that miserliness is a great vice and that it is only a cause of worry, anxiety, tension, and heart-burning. Euclio realizes this fact just when he gets back the pot of gold. He must now get rid of the pot of gold. And who is the most suitable person to receive this gift?

Naturally Lyconides who is not only going to become Euclio's son-in-law but who has been instrumental in the recovery of the pot of gold. By himself and in himself also, Lyconides is a remarkable young man because of his honesty and moral scruples.

4. The Slave

The slave is one of the indispensable characters in *The Pot of Gold*. The theft of Euclio's pot of gold brings about a crisis in Euclio's life. That scene, in which he laments the loss of his treasure like a madman, could not have occurred in the play if the pot of gold had not been stolen; and the pot of gold could have been stolen only by a low-class fellow with no moral scruples. The slave is thus the right person for this role. Some device had also to be adopted by the author for the transfer of Euclio's daughter from the position of Megadorus's would-be wife to that of Lyconides' would-be wife.

Lyconides' could have won Euclio's goodwill and favour only if he were to render some service to Euclio. Under Megadorus's guidance, Lyconides manages to get the stolen pot of gold from his slave, and restores it to Euclio who is told that the slave had come by it just by chance. Euclio feels so pleased with both Lyconides and the slave that he agrees quite casually and almost absent-mindedly to have his daughter married to Lyconides. In fact, Euclio is now busy thinking what to do with this pot of gold, and he gives it abruptly to his would-be son-in-law as his daughter's dowry. The slave is the means whereby a complication is created in the plot, and he is also the means whereby the hurdle in Lyconides' way of marrying Euclio's daughter is removed. The slave is thus essential to the plot. But he is also an interesting person in himself. His soliloquies are very amusing and do in fact contribute greatly to the comedy of the play. Like the steward and the cooks, he too is a source of much entertainment to us.

We meet the slave almost in the middle of the play, *The Pot of Gold*". He is Lyconides' slave and he has been sent by his master to station himself somewhere near Euclio's house and observe carefully what goes on there arriving at the place, the slave makes a soliloquy in which he dwells upon the duties of a good slave. Here he says that a good slave is one who serves his master without hesitation and who puts his master's good first and his own good last. A slave should be a kind of life-preserver to his master, says. Not only that, a slave should anticipate his master's orders and should carry out his master's wishes as quick as a racing chariot. From this, soliloquy, we get a very good impression about this slave but soon we shall hold him to be a rogue.

Soon afterwards, the slave overhears Euclio speaking to himself about the pot of gold which he has hidden inside the shrine of Good Faith and out his belief that the gold would be safe there. As soon as Euclio has left, the slave rushes into the shrine to find the pot of gold. While the slave is searching for the treasure, Euclio comes back into the shrine to make sure that the treasure is safe. Seeing the slave inside the shrine he gets suspicious and gives him a good beating. However, as the slave has got nothing on his person, Euclio lets him go away with a warning.

The slave now hides himself behind a door and overhears Euclio's plan to take away his pot of gold from here and to bury it in the grove of Silvanus outside the walls. This time the slave has better luck. After Euclio has buried his treasure in the grove and gone away, the slave goes and digs it out. He is now a happy man. In a soliloquy he says that he is richer now than the Griffins who live in the Golden Mountains and richer even than King Philip. He decides to stow the pot of gold in a box at his house.

All this time Lyconides has been wondering where his slave has disappeared. At last the slave comes. He is talking to himself about the good fortune with which he has been blessed. He is the richest man on earth, he says. The gods have done more for him than for any other man in Athens, he goes on to say. He then inwardly decides to tell his master about his good luck, and then to ask the master to release him from slavery. The slave now tells Lyconides that he has got a four-pound jar full of gold and that he had stolen it from old Euclio. He then asks Lyconides to free him. But Lyconides replies that he would never reward the slave's criminal act of stealing a pot of gold with the gift of freedom. Lyconides in fact asks the slave to surrender the pot of gold so that it may be returned to Euclio. But the slave now says that he had not stolen any pot of gold and that he had merely told his master a lie just for fun. But when Lyconides insists on getting the pot of gold from the slave, the latter replies that he would never part with the pot of gold. Saying this, he runs away. This incident shows that the slave is not a seasoned rogue. If he had been a seasoned rogue, he would not have frankly told his master about his theft of gold but would have adopted some other method of obtaining his freedom. He is certainly a dishonest man and a crook but he is a raw hand in this line.

Subsequently the slave does hand over the pot of gold to Lyconides who restores it to Euclio. The slave is persuaded to part with the pot of gold in exchange for his freedom. Of course it is most unwillingly that he gives away the pot of gold because he had been dreaming of leading a comfortable life as a rich man but as the choice is between wealth and freedom, he chooses freedom. Besides, Lyconides could have reported the matter to the police and got the pot of gold from the thief anyhow, but Lyconides wants to settle the matter amicably, and the slave is intelligent enough to understand the situation. When he is confronted with Euclio, he answers the latter's questions exactly as he had been tutored to do by Lyconides. He falters just once but, at a signal from Lyconides, he does give the correct answer.

5. Staphyla

Staphyla is Euclio's house-keeper. She is an old woman who seems to have been in Euclio's service for a long time but whom he still does not trust. In fact, Euclio trusts nobody where his wealth or his pot of gold is concerned. At the very outset, we find Euclio shouting at Staphyla in order to turn her out of the house for a little while so that he can take a look at his money and make sure that it is safe. Using bad language, Euclio asks her to get out of the house; and, when she complains that she is a poor, long-suffering woman who does not know why he is treating her in this unkind manner, he replies that he would make her suffer as much trouble as she causes in his house. When she asks why he must turn her out of the house to make her suffer, he replies that there is no need for him to give her any reason for the way in which he is treating her. She then says that she is not going to tolerate this kind of ill-treatment any longer. But he becomes even more angry and wants her to walk away from his house so that she may not pry into his affairs. He calls her the wickedest old witch he has ever seen; and after scolding her even more severely he goes back into the house. Staphyla then makes a soliloquy in which she bemoans her fate, saying that she cannot understand why her master is constantly losing his temper and why he keeps turning her out of the house. She says that sometimes he remains awake all night and then spends the whole day sitting indoors like a crippled cobbler. She also says here that his miserable

daughter is soon going to give birth to a baby and that she (Staphyla) must do something to save the girl from disgrace (because the girl became pregnant without having got married to the fellow with whom she had slept on Harvest Eve). Staphyla further says that she must somehow hush up the affair of this unmarried girl's pregnancy but that she does not know how she would be able to hush it up. Perhaps the only course open to Staphyla is that she must hang herself to death in order to get out of this difficult situation. At this point Euclio again comes out of the house and this time orders her to go inside and keep an eye on things. Staphyla points out that there is hardly anything in his house which anybody would like to steal, and that there is no need for her to keep an eye on things. All he has got in his house are the cobwebs, she says; and Euclio then again speaks angrily to her, saying that he is going away for a little while and that she must not open the door to anybody, not even to Lady Fortune if she were to knock at the door. Staphyla, speaking in a taunting manner, replies that Lady Fortune would never come to this house, and that Lady Fortune has never even been anywhere near this house so far. Euclio thereupon orders her to hold her tongue and go inside; and she says that he would go inside and hold her tongue.

A little later, when Euclio comes back to his house, he again begins to scold Staphyla, saying that she has been telling the neighbours that he is a rich man and can give a good dowry to his daughter at the time of her marriage. He then orders her to make the necessary preparations for his daughter's marriage, informing her that his daughter would be married to Megadorus that very day. Euclio goes away once again, asking her to lock up the house and to keep everything ready for the marriage. Staphyla now feels deeply worried because she does not know how to meet this situation. The young mistress (that is, Euclio's daughter) is going to have a baby; and the whole secret will become known. Staphyla finds herself in deep trouble because she wants to protect the young girl's name and because her father has suddenly decided to have her married just when she is about to give birth to a baby. Once again Staphyla describes her distress in a soliloquy. Soon afterwards, Megadorus's steward, Strobilus, comes and informs her that Megadorus has sent some cooks and some provisions for the wedding of Euclio's daughter. Staphyla asks if any wine has also been sent. Strobilus replies that wine would also be coming. She then says that there is no firewood in the house whereupon one of the cooks says that they can pull down some of the wooden rafters from the roof and light a fire with them. Staphyla gets angry with the fellow for making such a foolish suggestion but she does admit the cooks into the house to do the cooking.

Staphyla does not have much of a role in the action of the play. She does not contribute much to the development of the plot. However, she does give us some vital information which is essential to our understanding of the central situation of the play. From her first soliloquy we learn that Euclio's daughter is going to have a baby. Previously we were told in the epilogue that the girl had been seduced on Harvest Eve by 'a young fellow, but now we further learn that the girl had become pregnant on that very occasion and is now about to give birth to a child. This is an important fact which will facilitate Euclio's agreeing to give his daughter's hand to that young fellow (Lyconides) in marriage. Secondly, it is through Staphyla's talk with Euclio and through her soliloquy that we come to know about Euclio's bullying disposition, his over-anxiety about the safety of his possessions, and his fussy nature. Staphyla seems to us to be a likable woman who feels deeply concerned about the welfare of her young mistress whom she would like to protect from disgrace and scandal. We feel sorry that such a faithful house-keeper should be treated unkindly and sternly by her master. Staphyla's presence in *The Pot of Gold* certainly adds to the variety of characterization in the play, and enhances its interest.

6. Eunomia

Eunomia is the sister of Megadorus who is one of the two central characters in *The Pot of Gold*. She calls on Megadorus early in the play with matrimonial proposal. However, before actually putting forward her proposal, she prepares him for it by asserting her claim as a sister to advise him in his affairs in his own interest, and also because her conscience demands that she should do so. She also here says that no man loves a sister because sisters talk too much. She admits that sisters are too talkative and that, in fact, no woman in this period of history, or in any other period, could keep her thoughts to herself. As a woman is under an internal pressure to express her thoughts to somebody or the other, it is natural for her to indulge in excessive talk. She further says that, as Megadorus's nearest relative, she must discuss things with him and that, in fact, they should both give each other what advice seems best. As close relatives they should not keep each other in the dark or be afraid to speak frankly. She wants to have no secrets from him, and he should have none from her, she says. She tells him that she has come to him on this occasion for a little private talk about his affairs. When Megadorus makes a gallant gesture towards her by kissing her hand and saying that she is the best woman known to him, she bluntly tells him that he does not really mean what he has said. She asks him not to tell lies. She tells him that no woman can be the best woman known to him because each woman is worse than the other in some way. Megadorus has no choice but to agree with what his sister has said about women in general; and she then urges him to give her his attention for a little while, and thereafter act upon the advice she would give him because her advice would be in his own best interest. She then goes on to say that she would like to see him married for his own advantage in this world as well as in the next world. She speaks about his hope of fathering a family and about the need of getting married to attain the fulfilment of that hope but Megadorus laises a howl of protest even before Eunomia has completed her sentence. He says that he is firmly opposed to the idea of marriage and fathering a family. She tells him that he is talking nonsense and bids him do as his sister tells him because it would be for his own good. Megadorus has no intention at all to accept his sister's advice but he does ask her whom she has in mind as a wife for him. She replies that she can find him a middle-aged woman with a rich dowry. But Megadorus says that he would rather marry a young woman without a dowry and mentions Euclio's daughter. Eunomia says that she has no objection to his marrying the daughter of Euclio whom she knows and who, in her opinion, is a very decent man. She then offers her good wishes to her brother, saying: "May the gods be good to you", and departs.

We next meet Eunomia much later in the play. This time she is talking to Lyconides, the young fellow who had seduced Euclio's daughter and who now wants to marry that girl especially because he has come to know, that she had become pregnant by him and that she is now about to give birth to a child. Lyconides is Eunomia's son; and he has therefore asked for her, support for his plan to marry Phaedria (Euclio's daughter). The difficulty in Lyconides' way is that Euclio has already promised to give his daughter's hand in marriage to Megadorus. Lyconides wants that Eunomia should dissuade her brother (Megadorus) from marrying Euclio's daughter so that he (Lyconides) may try to marry the girl. Eunomia has agreed to speak to her brother in, the matter because she feels that Lyconides has a strong reason for marrying that girl in view of his having seduced her even though he had seduced her under the influence of drink. She now assures Lyconides that she would talk to her brother (Megadorus) and that she is confident of prevailing upon him to give up his intention to marry the girl. Lyconides now gets busy looking for his slave while Eunomia goes into her brother's house and explains the whole position to him with regard to her son's desire to marry the girl whom he had seduced. Eunomia talks so much

on the subject that Megadorus feels tired of her lecturing and tells her that he would not go ahead with his plan to marry the girl concerned. Thus Eunomia has succeeded in her purpose.

At this point Megadorus makes a soliloquy in which he describes his reactions to what Eunomia had told him earlier in the day and what she has now urged him to do. He says that this sister of his can sometimes become an intolerable nuisance. He deplors the fact that she treats him as a child of six and that she tries to guide and instruct him in every single thing which he does. In the morning she had urged him to marry the middle-aged woman whom she had selected for him; and now, when he wanted to, marry a young girl of his own choice, she has come to him with the story that her son is the girl's lover and earnestly desires to marry her. Megadorus is now ready to drop his plan of marrying Euclio's daughter and feels happy at the thought that, if he now lets his sister (Eunornia) have her way for her son, she would never in the future interfere with his affairs and would let him lead his own life independently of her counsel.

Eunomia is undoubtedly an interesting woman. We feel greatly amused by the manner in which she talks about the female sex. Firstly, she says that women are by nature garrulous because they feel an urge to express all their thoughts to others. Secondly, she says that no woman can be the best woman because every woman is worse than every other woman in some way. Thus Eunomia does not flatter the sex to which she belongs. On the contrary, she speaks like a censor of the female sex. Most of us would agree with Eunomia's comments on woman. Her comments certainly add to the comic effect of this play.

But Eunomia also plays a vital role in the action of the play. Lyconides must in the end marry Euclio's daughter but that is possible only if Megadorus first refuses to marry her. The girl has already been promised by her father to Megadorus, and even the preparations for the wedding have been made. Megadorus must have a strong reason to go back upon his word; and this strong reason is conveyed to him by his own sister who has learnt the true facts about the pregnancy of Euclio's daughter from her son Lyconides. Thus Eunomia's role in the play is essential and indispensable. Somebody had to bring all the facts of the case to Megadorus's notice; and Eunomia was the best-fitted to perform this role. Finally, the portrayal of Eunomia adds to the variety of characterization in this play. She is a woman with strong convictions. Her comments on the female sex are made in firm and categorical tones; and she has a great confidence in her capacity to argue a case. Both as a sister and as a mother she acquits herself well.

7. Strobilus

Strobilus is a steward to Megadorus who buys the required provisions from the market and entrusts Strobilus with the task of having the food cooked for the wedding feast. Megadorus has also hired a few cooks and flute-girls and put them under Strobilus's charge: Strobilus tells all the hired persons that they are to be divided into two batches, one batch to work at Euclio's house and the other to work at his own master's house. Anthrax, one of the cooks, asks if the old man, namely Euclio, cannot afford a wedding-dinner for his own daughter and if the provisions had to be bought and the cooks to be hired by Megadorus. To this question Strobilus replies that Euclio is such a miser that more can be squeezed out of a pumice stone than can be got out of that old beggar (namely Euclio).

Strobilus then goes on to describe Euclio's miserliness in some detail to satisfy the curiosity of Anthrax who wants to know more about Euclio. Strobilus says that, if Euclio were to lose just one grain of salt, he

would think that he had been robbed, and that, likewise, Euclio would raise heaven and hell if he were to see a puff of smoke escaping from his roof. (Euclio does not want that even smoke should go out of his house because it's going out would mean a loss for him). Strobilus further says that, when Euclio goes to sleep, he ties a balloon round his mouth so that the breath exhaled by him should collect in the balloon and not mingle with the air around and thus be lost to him. Strobilus's next remark is that Euclio begins to weep with regret when he takes a bath and sees the water flowing away from his body. The point of all these remarks by Strobilus is that Euclio does not wish to lose anything at all. Euclio would like to preserve and to keep in his possession even those things which are of no use to him and which are simply thrown away by other people. Of course Strobilus is here exaggerating Euclio's miserliness in order to make Euclio appear as an absurd and ridiculous person in the eyes of the cooks who have been hired. Strobilus's remarks are a satire on Euclio's miserliness; and exaggeration is a necessary part of satire. Strobilus has a strong sense of humour and he makes several witty remarks to expose Euclio's stinginess to the cooks.

But that is not the end of Strobilus's satirical remarks about Euclio. He yet has a couple of more remarks to make in the same vein. Euclio is the kind of man who would not lend to anyone even the smallest amount of money, not even the price of a day's stay, says Strobilus, adding that one day, after having his toe-nails trimmed by a barber, Euclio had collected all the clippings and taken them home. Of course the cooks laugh heartily on hearing such stories. Strobilus further says that one day, when a hawk had swooped down upon Euclio's dinner and had carried it away, Euclio had gone to the magistrate to file a suit for damages against the hawk in the magistrate's court.

Strobilus shows his wit and his sense of humour through some of his other remarks also. When Anthrax claims to be sharper than Congrio, Strobilus says that he needs a cook, not a crook. (the word "sharper" means quicker or more prompt; but this word also means a crook; and so Strobilus says that he does not need a crook). When Congrio feels reluctant to work at Euclio's house, Strobilus wittily points out to him the advantage which he would enjoy in working at Euclio's house. Euclio's house, he says, is absolutely empty; there is nothing in that house to tempt anybody to steal it. Working there, Congrio would be perfectly safe against any charge of theft being brought against him, says Strobilus.

Strobilus then goes to Euclio's house with the cooks and the provisions, and informs Euclio's house-keeper, Staphyla, that his master has sent the provisions for the wedding feast which Euclio would be holding at the time of his daughter's marriage. Staphyla asks if his master has sent no wine and if it would be a dry wedding-feast. Strobilus replies that wine would also be coming. Strobilus then gets ready to go back to his own master's house and, in a soliloquy, says that he would have to take special pains to see that the cooks at his master's house do not steal anything from the house and that they do not themselves eat the food which they would be cooking. He says that he must remain alert. "with all these rascalions in the house".

Strobilus has hardly any part in the main action of the play. In other words, he makes no contribution to the plot of the play. In fact, the play's main plot would remain intact even if the whole episode involving Strobilus and the cooks were to be eliminated from the play. But Strobilus does contribute to the characterization and to the comedy in the play. His remarks about Euclio strengthen and reinforce the impression which the author wishes to produce upon us about Euclio's miserliness. Euclio is the principal figure in this play, and Strobilus therefore serves a useful purpose by emphasizing Euclio's excessively thrifty and frugal habits and depicting him as a ridiculous and contemptible person before us. Finally, the portrayal of Strobilus adds to the variety of characterization in the play. He typifies the

faithful but witty servant of a rich man. He is not a knave or a rascal or a stupid fellow, but an intelligent servant with a ready wit.

8. Anthrax and Congrio

Anthrax and Congrio are two of the several cooks who have been hired by Megadorus in the play, *The Pot of Gold*, to do the cooking in connection with his wedding. Megadorus has instructed his steward Strobilus to divide all the hired men into two batches one batch to do the cooking at Euclio's house and the other to do the cooking at his own house. Anthrax and Congrio are head cooks under whom the others would work. Strobilus deposes Anthrax to take charge of the cooking at Megadorus's house, and orders Congrio to supervise the

work at Euclio's house. At the very outset, when Strobilus announces Megadorus's decision to split the workmen into two parts, Anthrax cheekily says that he would not allow anybody to split him into two parts and that, wherever he has to work, he would remain one, "all in one piece". It is evident that Anthrax has intentionally misinterpreted Strobilus's announcement to mean that every individual workman is to be split into two parts. Congrio does not wish to lag behind Anthrax in making a light, witty remark. When Anthrax says that he would not allow himself to be split into two parts, Congrio says that he would not mind Anthrax's being split into parts because only then would it become possible "for someone to take a slice off Anthrax's body.

It is in reply to a question by Anthrax that Strobilus makes a series of satirical remarks about Euclio's miserliness. Anthrax asks if Euclio could not afford a wedding feast for his own daughter, and Strobilus then tells the cooks a number of amusing stories about Euclio's stingy habits. The cooks enjoy the stories, and Anthrax says that Euclio is indeed a measly,* mean, old creature. Strobilus then asks which of the cooks is the quicker worker, and Anthrax promptly replies that he is sharper than Congrio, while Congrio says that Strobilus is free to take him (Congrio) for just what he seems to be. Anthrax thereupon says that Congrio is a fair cook who can only get a job on fair-days when workmen are difficult to find. Thus Anthrax speaks about Congrio in a disparaging manner, though in a witty way. Congrio gets angry and addresses him as a "three-letter word", and Anthrax hits back, describing him as "you three-times-throttled thief".

Congrio feels somewhat discontented when Strobilus asks him to supervise the work at Euclio's house. He tells the steward that it is a dirty trick o.) the steward's part to ask him to work for that mean old devil, namely Euclio. But Strobilus pacifies him by saying that at Euclio's house Congrio would be safe against all possible accusations of theft because there is nothing in Euclio's house which anybody would feel tempted to steal.

At Euclio's house, Congrio makes a mischievous, sarcastic remark when the house-keeper Staphyla says that there is no fuel wood in Euclio's house for the fires needed for the cooking. Congrio says that the rafters from the roof of the house can be pulled down and used as fuel-wood. However, Congrio becomes at once serious when the house-keeper snubs him.

Anthrax and Congrio are part of the comedy of the play though they do not play much of a part in the action of the play. Even if they were to be eliminated from the play, the plot would remain intact. It is to them that Strobilus talks about Euclio, and the occasion for this talk arises when Megadorus hires these men to prepare a wedding feast. Strobilus could not have talked freely about Euclio to anybody else. Strobilus adds to the comedy of the play by his satirical remarks about Euclio's miserliness; but he could

have made such remarks only to persons of his own social position or of a slightly inferior position. Thus the two cooks are necessary to make it possible for Strobilus to make his satirical comments upon Euclio. The cooks themselves are witty fellows too. They too are no fools. They are merry fellows though they can get angry when their vanity is hurt. They are impudent too. They are certainly not humble persons, cringing and grovelling to those for whom they work. However, they know when to yield and submit and when to assert themselves. Congrio gets involved in a dispute with Euclio and gets beaten; but he remains defiant till the end. These servants, like the servants of our own days, talk scornfully of employers who are miserly and close-fisted. They feel happy only when they perceive opportunities for filching things, and for befooling their employers. The two cooks certainly enhance the comedy of the play but they are not indispensable to the plot.

9. Women Characters in The Pot of Gold

There are three women characters in *The Pot of Gold*. They are Staphyla, Eunomia, and Phaedria. Staphyla is Euclio's house-keeper; and she is the first female character whom we meet. We find her being treated very harshly and sternly by her employer, namely Euclio. When she asks him what she has done to deserve this treatment, he replies that he wants to make her suffer as much as the trouble she causes to him in the house. Euclio suspects her of having come to know of his pot of gold, and of wanting to tell his neighbours and the others about his wealth. He, therefore, keeps rebuking her, and even threatening to beat her. She is a patient woman no doubt but now even her patience is running out. Euclio, in a soliloquy, says that she is a wicked old hag who works as a kind of spy in his house. In the same soliloquy: he calls her the wickedest old beldame who, by some cunning trick or the other, has come to know about his hidden pot of gold. When Euclio goes into the house to make sure that his pot of gold is safe, he leaves her outside the house. At this time, she, asks herself in a soliloquy why her employer is behaving in this mad maimer. She wonders what has come over him because sometimes he stays awake all night and then spends the whole day, sitting indoors like a crippled cobbler. Then she tells herself in the same soliloquy that her employer's daughter would soon be in trouble because she is going to give birth to a baby without having been married. Staphyla would like to save the girl and her father from the disgrace which would result from her giving birth to a child without having been married. But she does not know how she would be able to hush up the resulting scandal. She then feels like committing suicide because she finds herself in a helpless condition. A little later Euclio comes out of the house, and orders her to go inside and to keep the door shut against all visitors.

Subsequently, Staphyla is told by Euclio that his daughter would be married the same day, and that Staphyla should make the necessary preparations for it. Staphyla once again expresses to herself the predicament in which Euclio's daughter would find herself in a couple of hours when she would have given birth to a child. A little later, Staphyla rebukes the cock, Congrio, for talking in an irresponsible manner.

We find Staphyla to be a faithful servant to Euclio and to his daughter in spite of the unkind treatment which she receives from Euclio. She serves two purposes in the play. One is that, through Euclio's treatment of her, we come to know that Euclio is a bullying kind of master, Secondly, it is from her that we learn about the predicament in which Euclio's daughter Phaedria finds herself because of the child she had conceived as a result of her seduction by a young fellow on Harvest Eve and about the birth of the child which is now about to take place. Staphyla's presence in the play also adds to the variety of characterization in it. Furthermore, she adds to the comedy in the play.

The second woman in the play is Eunomia. She is Megadorus's sister. We meet her first when she comes to see her brother with a proposal that he should get married. She receives enough courtesy from him but also a flat refusal so far as her proposal is concerned. She tells him that she can find him a middle-aged woman who would bring him a rich dowry if he marries her. His answer is a firm "no", whereupon she asks him what kind of a woman he wants to marry. He replies that he would like to marry the daughter of his next-door neighbour, Euclio. She then offers her best wishes to him and goes away. We meet her again when she is brought by her son, Lyconides, to Megadorus's house to urge Megadorus to give up his intention to marry Euclio's daughter because Lyconides himself would like to marry that girl. Eunomia fully realizes the girl Phaedria's predicament, and also her son's moral duty to marry the girl whom he had wronged. She then speaks to her brother, and succeeds in dissuading him from marrying that girl. At this time, Megadorus expresses his true opinion about Eunomia in a soliloquy. He says that his sister can sometimes become an intolerable nuisance to him. She had come to meet him in the morning to persuade him to get married but now, after he has made up his mind to marry a girl of his own choice, she has come to dissuade him from carrying out his intention. He complains that his sister treats him as if he were a child of six and that she tries to guide and instruct him in everything he wants to do.

Eunomia is an assertive kind of woman who tries to influence his brother's actions and behaviour. However, her brother has little regard for her opinions and her views. Her suggestion to him to marry an elderly woman is sound enough but he offers a sound objection to that suggestion. She talks about the rich dowry which that elderly woman would bring with her; but the dowry does not tempt Megadorus. Eunomia's anxiety to help her son shows her in a favourable light because she can well understand not only the critical situation, in which Euclio's daughter is, but also the moral responsibility of her son towards the girl. On the whole, Eunomia is a good son of woman with a fairly rational approach to life. She plays an important part in the action of the play by dissuading Megadorus from marrying Euclio's daughter and thus helping her son to do something which is morally correct. Her view about women in general is quite interesting. When Megadorus says that she is the best woman he knows, she replies that no woman can be the best woman he knows because each woman is worse than every other woman in some way. This remark by her adds to the humour of the play. By this remark she shows her awareness of the dark side of the female sex. Her presence in the play, like that of Staphyla, adds also to the variety of characterization in it.

Phaedria, who is Euclio's daughter, does not make a personal appearance in the play. We first hear about her from Lar Familiaris when he says that this girl had been seduced by a young fellow, and that he feels favourably inclined towards her because she worships him regularly and brings him daily offerings of incense or flowers. Subsequently, we learn that she had become pregnant when she was seduced, and that she is now about to give birth to an illegitimate child. Soon afterwards, we hear her groaning in pain because the time for her to give birth to a child has come. She is essential to the plot of the play because, without her, the play would lose an important component of its plot. She too adds to the variety of the characterization in the play because she represents the type of a silly girl who is carried away by her sexual passion and who then allows an unknown young man to seduce her. Her predicament in the play should be a warning to all young girls to be always on guard against the sexual initiatives taken by irresponsible young men who are always on the look-out for gullible young girls.