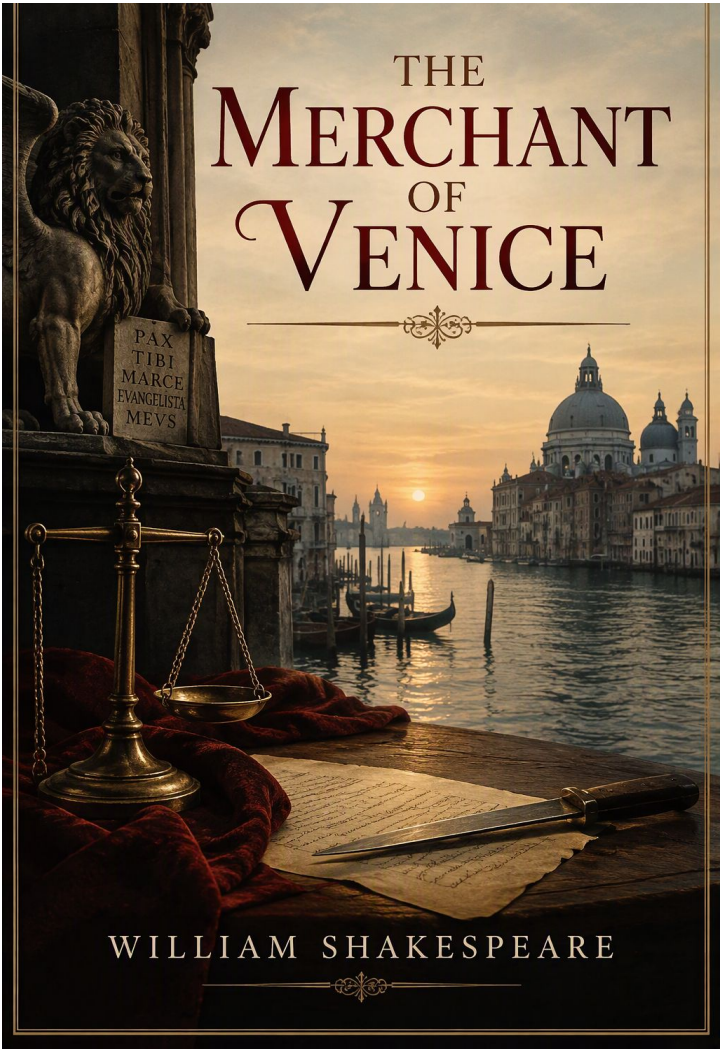

THE
MERCHANT
OF
VENICE
PAX
TIBI
MARCE
EVANGELISTA
MEVS
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

by

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Edited, with
An Introduction and Notes, by

P. H. B. LYON, M.A.
Headmaster of Rugby

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NOTE

THE text here adopted is that of Macmillan's *Globe Edition*. A few lines have been omitted.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Introduction	ix
The Minor Characters	xii
Portia	xiii
Shylock	xiii
Act V, The Poetic Summit	xvii
The Merchant of Venice	1
Date and Sources of the Play	92
Notes	93
Appendix A (The Trial Scene)	131
The "Law of Venice"	131
Antonio's Friends	133
Disguises	133
Portia's Decision	134
Appendix B	139
The Life of Shakespeare	139
The Order of the Plays	140
The Elizabethan Theatre	141
Questions on the Text	147
Essay Subjects	150

INTRODUCTION

THE origin of a work of art defies human discovery; the moment when the poet's mind is fired by the spark from Heaven, when the trivial impression, the seed of the flower to be, stays caught in some crevice of the brain—that moment passes for ever beyond research, even beyond the memory of the artist himself. Yet now and then we think we can see some incident in the man's life or the life of his time which set his mind at work in a certain way, leading to an unimagined goal. And some such clue we have to the creation of *The Merchant of Venice*.

The incident was the alleged treason and the execution of a Jewish physician of Queen Elizabeth, Dr. Roderigo Lopez. He was one of the many Jews who seem to have been allowed to live in England, in spite of the 300-year-old decree of banishment which was not repealed till the time of Cromwell. When accused of having been bribed by the King of Spain to poison Elizabeth, he refused to be put to the torture, preferring to confess formally to a crime of which he persisted in declaring his real innocence. His execution was followed by an outburst of hatred against all English Jews which seems to have lasted some years.

There happened to be at this time a young actor in London who was beginning to show a talent for the then quite reputable art of rewriting the unsuccessful

plays of other dramatists. Plots were at that time common property, and there was no law of copyright ; so Shakespeare, possibly at his manager's suggestion, decided to make this anti-Jewish feeling serve his turn, and looked round for a play which would save him the trouble of inventing a fresh plot. He had not to look far. Fifteen years earlier we have mention of a play called *The Jew*, which represented, we are told, " the greediness of worldly choosers and the bloody mind of usurers," a phrase which describes exactly the two main themes of *The Merchant of Venice*. But the author of *The Jew* had himself merely combined two well-known plots ; both the story of " the pound of flesh " and that of the " three caskets " were familiar in the literature of more countries than one. So it seems that we have in this case sufficient evidence both for the causes which gave rise to the play and the materials used in its composition.

Shakespeare, then, wrote at a time when there was great prejudice against Jews in England, and wrote to exploit that prejudice. He used as his source a play in which " the bloody mind of usurers " was held up to scorn, and with Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* fresh in his own mind and that of his audience ; and Marlowe's Jew, Barrabas, was a monster of iniquity, played by a low comedian in a red wig and a false nose. His plot, moreover, contained the barbarous incident of the pound of flesh, which was and is revolting to every civilised mind. He had, in fact, the opportunity to make of his Shylock a figure so despicable and so loathsome that Barrabas would have been a shadow beside it. All the elements of melodrama were to his hand ; and melodrama was all the fashion.

Yet *The Merchant of Venice*, as melodrama, is a failure.

In the Trial Scene we have evidence that Shakespeare did aim at melodramatic effect; the remorseless villain, the blameless (but inactive) hero, the heroine (in disguise) saving the situation at the eleventh hour, the lofty moralisings, the sudden reversal of fortune—all these are in the best Lyceum tradition. To the uncritical reader the scene may at first seem successful; yet as a climax to the play it fails. And the trouble was, not that the author was unequal to his task, but that he was too good for it. He was not content to let his characters be puppets, to let his plot make his play, to see life from one angle and one alone. In melodrama there is no room for a heroine who at times loses our sympathy, for a hero who is mercenary, for a villain who so won the support of the "pale fair Briton" (in Heine's story of his visit to the play) that he "fell a-weeping passionately, several times exclaiming 'The poor man is wronged.'" Yet all these things happen; and not the most appealing of stage Portias or the most repulsive of Shylocks can disguise the fact that the melodrama does not work.

Yet it is not because it is not good melodrama that we find the play unsatisfactory, but rather because it is melodramatic at all. Shakespeare is always at his best when he is most original, when he is surprising or bewitching his audience, not when he is playing down to it. The Trial Scene probably filled the theatre; and quite possibly it was written with at least one eye on quick profits. But to us, three hundred years later, the fine moments of the play lie elsewhere, in some of Shylock's speeches, in the Portia who accepts Bassanio, in the opening of the Fifth Act. To realise this is to understand why it matters not at all that Shakespeare borrowed his plots from others,

except that at times he seems sadly inconvenienced in his attempts to follow them; for the plot is never more than a necessary framework; only two things matter—his characters and his poetry.

The Minor Characters

Apart from Portia and Shylock, who come to life during the play and nearly wreck the plot in doing so, the characters of *The Merchant of Venice* are lightly sketched and are apt to be inconsistent. Gobbo is the conventional clown, Tubal a laughing-stock, the Duke a figurehead, Nerissa the shadow of her mistress, Lorenzo and Jessica a very ordinary and unprincipled pair of lovers. The minor gentlemen of Venice, Salanio, Salarino, Salerio, are as like one another as their names, which indicate Shakespeare's contempt for them and their type. The three chief Venetians, though more fully developed, are not much more life-like. Antonio is a passive, virtuous, sentimental creature, much loved by his friends for reasons which never appear conclusive; the best impression we have of him comes from his letter to Bassanio. Gervinus suggests that he was made colourless in order that his danger should not rouse "too painful and exciting a sympathy"; more probably Shakespeare was not interested in him. Of his friends, Gratiano is described by one critic as "a most delightful and most natural character"; others have found the buffoonery of this cheerful ass, which is quite entertaining at first, definitely offensive in the last two acts. And the character of Bassanio has come sadly to grief in the attempt to make him at one and the same time the reckless profligate of one plot and the hero of the

other ; this adventurous money-seeker has indeed to " suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange " to become worthy of the love of Portia.

Portia

The Portia of the best scenes of the play is indeed worthy of a noble love, and of a place among Shakespeare's finest women (and what higher praise can be given ?). Yet most of those who commend her lay special stress on the Trial Scene, where, all things considered, she appears to least advantage. She steps adequately into the breach in that scene, and sustains passably the lofty tone of her opening speeches until the crisis is over ; she is dignified, resourceful, appealing. Yet when her cause is won, Shakespeare saw too clearly to be kind; the danger had been deadly, the enemy cruel; the best of women in such cases are apt to turn revengeful. The famous speech on mercy loses something of its flavour when we compare it with Portia's own practice when she has the upper hand. Rather let us think of her as she is elsewhere : the witty, clear-sighted lady of the Second Act ; the generous and humble lover of the Third, whose charm is so great that it inspires all around her, until even Gratiano becomes graceful and Bassanio unselfish ; the brave adventurer, two scenes later, meeting the crisis with resolution and humour ; and at the end of all the gracious hostess, the solver of riddles, who " drops manna in the way of starvéd people." Here is the real Portia.

Shylock

Over the character of Shylock the critics still fight

their battles. The plot demands that he should be a villain, and it is not hard for a melodramatic and unscrupulous actor playing to an uncritical audience to turn Shylock into a mere personification of villainy. This is indeed what at first happened, with the result that the most human character in the play was for long presented, in the words of Gottschall, as "one of the maddest monsters in a story as unnatural as it is disgusting." Nor was it only Shakespeare's play, as originally written, which gave rise to this view. For forty years, between 1701 and 1741, a "version" of the play by Lord Lansdowne held the stage; this must be read to be believed; the adapter's own lyrics and certain masques and dances relieve the monotony of Shakespeare's text, which is itself cut and seasoned to contemporary taste. Even Macklin, who revived the original play, and by his performance of Shylock re-established it for ever, made the Jew a creature of "snarling malignity." It remained for Kean in 1814 to suggest that the character was not only greedy and cruel, but also noble. Yet this interpretation led to yet another reaction: Gervinus, writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, laments that "in this age of degeneration of art and morals, lowness and madness could go so far as to make a martyr on the stage of this outcast of humanity."

For a "martyr," naturally enough, Shylock became, and to many he appears a martyr to-day. The sentimental eloquence of Heine was the signal for a campaign (often inspired, like many condemnations of Shylock, by racial prejudice) to present the Jew as a hero and the play as a tragedy. Uncritical condemnation evoked spirited defence, and "there has been much throwing about of brains." Yet this

extravagance is as irrational as the other. Shakespeare drew from life, where there are no unmitigated heroes or villains but a number of very different and interesting human beings. Just as Shakespeare's Venetian Christians (who in the perfect melodrama would have been patterns of all the virtues) are for the most part shallow, selfish, and heartless, so his Jew, escaping all the critics' attempts at classification, is intensely human and alive.

Shylock is indeed the great figure of the play. He is never on the stage but he dwarfs the rest, never argues, even though his theme be Christianity, but he silences his opponent. Alone to the last—for what is Tubal worth as an ally?—he towers over his enemies till they overwhelm him by sheer weight of numbers. All his qualities are superlative; his hate for Antonio, his love for Jessica, his greed, his pride of race. He despises tolerance and generosity with the devastating scorn of one to whom none have ever been generous or tolerant. Hatred is the one lesson Venice has taught him, and "it shall go hard but he will better the instruction." He alone of the characters is typical in the highest sense, for in him Shakespeare has given us his whole nation—that nation seen through Elizabethan eyes, yet seen with understanding. However great our hatred of Shylock's greed and cruelty, can we read his defence in the Trial Scene and not be moved by its logic? or his outburst against Antonio and not feel pity? or the memorable "apology" in the third act and not feel shame? Shakespeare outsoars his age; just as in a single sentence (III. II. 33) he shows himself a hundred years ahead of his hearers in the matter of judicial torture, so in this single character he displays a sympathy

deeper not only than that of his own time, but (must we add ?) than that also of our own.

It is not surprising, perhaps, that with the development of Shylock's character the plot goes somewhat to pieces—yet Shakespeare unfortunately tried to keep it together. Sir Walter Raleigh refers to " the incommodities and violences which are put upon him by the necessity of keeping to the story when the characters have come alive and are pulling another way." Part of the failure may be due to his desire to please ; and so he paid the penalty which, as Dr. Boas puts it, must be paid by all artists " who minister from conviction or opportunism to the prejudices of their age." Yet if he had refused to be dictated to either by his chosen plot or by the " groundlings " of the theatre, what a play it might have been ! Shylock would not then have been the victim of racial prejudice or a legal quibble ; he would have been beaten, but beaten in fair fight by men of his own stature—because the principle of hatred and vengeance can never be finally victorious. Those who take their stand on " justice " will find that perfect justice excludes mercy ; that (in Macbeth's words)

> this even-handed justice
> Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice
> To our own lips.

This is the truth which we feel should have been revealed in action, whereas it merely appears in Portia's sermon-like eulogy and is carefully bundled out of sight in the conclusion. And since Shylock is defeated, not by a higher principle, but by accident, by clever use of his lawyer's carelessness, we feel almost that the result is a tragedy. To quote Sir Walter

Raleigh again : " The whole action passes on the confines of tragedy and is barely saved from crossing into the darker realm. . . . The revengeful Jew whose defeat was to have added triumph to happiness, keeps possession of the play, and the memory of him gives to the closing scenes an undesigned air of heartless frivolity."

Act V, The Poetic Summit

It seems that Shakespeare felt the self-imposed burden of his plots no less than we. Just as Shylock is supreme among the characters, so the Fifth Act is incomparably the finest poetry. The diction up till then shows the constraint under which the poet wrote ; for beauty is not woven throughout into the stuff of this play as it is into *Hamlet* or *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* ; and melody comes fitfully while the shadow of Antonio's danger lies upon Venice. But when the dark plotting is ended, and only the little matter of a couple of rings left undecided, when, indeed, many of the audience have begun feeling for their hats, then beauty and melody come together with a consummate rush of poetry. The first lyrical dialogue closes, and melts imperceptibly (but what art incomparable goes to the fusion !) into the speech of common life. The interruption passes and once more the poet's music holds us spellbound, to be ended by the entry of the chief characters and the gentle comedy of errors which brings the play to a close. The beauty of this scene goes far to heal hearts still sore for Shylock.

" It is almost morning " when the lovers have done quarrelling and the curtain falls ; and in the peace and happiness of this epilogue we should be glad to

forget the problems that vexed us. Thus perhaps Shakespeare hoped that it might be. So if we must remember, let it be the great things and not the small ; the majesty of Shylock, not his cruelty, the graciousness of Portia, not her vindictiveness. Let us admire Shakespeare as the poet and the creator of character and pay less heed to the plots he chose and the troubles they brought with them. Above all, let us defy all those who talk to us of the " moral purpose " of the play. If there was a moral purpose, it has come to grief : Shakespeare was no writer of tracts in dramatic form ; to read and understand him is not to receive godly counsel, but to know life more abundantly. To the discerning heart Portia and Shylock speak not of law and justice and the payment of debts, but of the strange patterns man weaves on the web of this world, in London as in Venice, of passions which distort, and loyalties which redeem ; and the lovers in the garden speak a language that was old when they were young, and which is not of tragedy or of comedy or even of love alone, but the voice of the spirit that in all music and on every moonlit night whispers of eternity.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The DUKE OF VENICE.
The PRINCE OF MOROCCO } suitors to
The PRINCE OF ARRAGON } Portia.
ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.
BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.
SALANIO } friends to
SALARINO } Antonio
GRATIANO } and
SALERIO } Bassanio.
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.
SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.
TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.
OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.
LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.
BALTHASAR } servants to
STEPHANO } Portia.
PORTIA, a rich heiress.
NERISSA, her waiting-maid.
JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.
Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

SCENE : *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

ACT I

SCENE I. *Venice. A street.*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO

Ant. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad :
It wearies me ; you say it wearies you ;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn ;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself
Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.
Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads ;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt
Would make me sad.
Salar. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought

What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me, I know; Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let us say you are sad,
Because you are not merry: and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect

That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.

Salan. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well :
We leave you now with better company.
Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.
Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh ? say, when ?
You grow exceeding strange : must it be so ?
Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.
[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*
Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you : but at dinner-time,
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet
Bass. I will not fail you.
Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio ;
You have too much respect upon the world :
They lose it that do buy it with much care :
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano ;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. Let me play the Fool :
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,

And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!'
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

Lor. Well, we will leave you then till dinner-time:
I must be one of these same dumb wise men,
For Gratiano never lets me speak.

Gra. Well, keep me company but two years moe,
Thou shalt not know the sound of thine own tongue

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.

Gra. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*

Ant. Is that anything now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them, and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time something too prodigal
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love,
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Ant. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advisèd watch,
To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,

That which I owe is lost ; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both
Or bring your latter hazard back again
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.
Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance ;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have :
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it : therefore, speak.
Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left ;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues : sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages .
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia :
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece ;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate !
Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea ;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum : therefore go forth ;

Try what my credit can in Venice do :
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house.*

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Por. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are : and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness therefore, to be seated in the mean : superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions : I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree : such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word 'choose'! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike ; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father.

Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afeard my lady his mother played false with a smith.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say 'If you will not have me, choose:' he hears merry tales and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's, a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine; he is every man in no man; if a

throstle sing, he falls straight a capering: he will fence with his own shadow: if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him, for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you, then, to Falconbridge, the young baron of England?

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian, and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany and his behaviour everywhere.

Ner. What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety and sealed under for another.

Ner. How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony's nephew?

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and mostly vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man, and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast: an the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

Ner. If he should offer to choose, and choose the right casket, you should refuse to perform your father's will, if you should refuse to accept him.

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords : they have acquainted me with their determinations ; which is, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

Ner. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat ?

Por. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio ; as I think, he was so called.

Ner. True, madam : he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Por. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Serving-man.

How now ! what news ?

Serv. The four strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave : and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco, who brings word the prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.
Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.
Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Venice. A public place.*

Enter BASSANIO *and* SHYLOCK.

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months; well.

Bass. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

Bass. May you stead me? will you pleasure me? shall I know your answer?

Shy. Three thousand ducats for three months and Antonio bound.

Bass. Your answer to that

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shy. Oh, no, no, no, no: my meaning in saying he is a good man is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-

rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates, and then there is the peril of waters, winds and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats ; I think I may take his bond.

Bass. Be assured you may.

Shy. I will be assured I may ; and, that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

Shy. Yes, to smell pork ; to eat of the habitation which your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following, but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto ? Who is he comes here ?

Enter ANTONIO.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks !
I hate him for he is a Christian,
But more for that in low simplicity
He lends out money gratis and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation, and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him !

Bass. Shylock, do you hear ?

Shy. I am debating of my present store,
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross

Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.
Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?
Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Ant. And for three months.
Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you;
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.
Ant. I do never use it.
Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—
Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire,
The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;

A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.
Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose
An evil soul producing holy witness
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart.
O, what a godly outside falsehood hath!
Shy. Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—
Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?
Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
"Shylock, we would have moneys:" you say so;
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say
"Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,

With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this ;
" Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last ;
You spurn'd me such a day ; another time
You call'd me dog ; and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys " ?
Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friends ; for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal of his friend ?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.
Shy. Why, look you, how you storm !
I would be friends with you and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me :
This is kind I offer.
Bass. This were kindness.
Shy. This kindness will I show.
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.
Ant. Content, i' faith : I'll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.
Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me :
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

Ant. Why, fear not, man ; I will not forfeit it :
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others ! Pray you, tell me this ;
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture ?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship :
If he will take it, so ; if not, adieu ;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's ;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit Shylock.*
The Hebrew will turn Christian : he grows kind.

Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

Ant. Come on : in this there can be no dismay ;
My ships come home a month before the day.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house. Flourish of cornets. Enter the* PRINCE OF MOROCCO *and his train;* PORTIA, NERISSA, *and others attending.*

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun,
To whom I am a neighbour and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.
Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
But if my father had not scanted me
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renownéd prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.
Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets

To try my fortune. By this scimitar
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.

Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Venice. A street. Enter* LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow and tempts me saying to me "Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot," or "good Gobbo," or "good

Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away." My conscience says "No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo," or, as aforesaid, "honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels." Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: "Via!" says the fiend; "away!" says the fiend; "for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind," says the fiend, "and run." Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me "My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son," or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says "Launcelot, budge not." "Budge," says the fiend. "Budge not," says my conscience. "Conscience," say I, "you counsel well;" "Fiend," say I, "you counsel well:" to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run. 30

Enter Old GOBBO, *with a basket.*

Gob. Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's?

Laun. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not; I will try confusions with him.

Gob. Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew's ?

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left ; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties, 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no ?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot ? [*Aside*] Mark me now ; now will I raise the waters. Talk you of young Master Launcelot ?

Gob. No master, sir, but a poor man's son : his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man and, God be thanked, well to live.

Laun. Well, let his father be what a' will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But I pray you, ergo, old man, ergo, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot ?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. Ergo, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father ; for the young gentleman, according to Fates and Destinies and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three and such branches of learning, is indeed deceased, or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid ! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovelpost, a staff or a prop ? Do you know me, father ?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman : but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy, God rest his soul, alive or dead ?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may, but at the length truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but give me your blessing: I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man, and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed! How dost thou and thy master agree? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now?

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with

my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come : give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries : if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune ! here comes the man : to him, father ; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, *with* LEONARDO *and other followers.*

Bass. You may do so ; but let it be so hasted that supper be ready at the farthest by five of the clock. See these letters delivered ; put the liveries to making, and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Exit a Servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship !

Bass. Gramercy ! wouldst thou aught with me ?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

Laun. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man ; that would, sir, as my father shall specify—

Gob. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve,—

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify—

Gob. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins—

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is that the Jew, having done me wrong, doth cause me, as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify unto you—

Gob. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent to myself, as your worship shall know by this honest old man ; and, though I say it, though old man, yet poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. What would you?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit:
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir: you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

Laun. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no; I have ne'er a tongue in my head! Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table! which doth offer to swear upon a book I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! a'leven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.*

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this:
These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
My best-esteem'd acquaintance: hie thee, go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO

Gra. Where is your master ?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*

Gra. Signior Bassanio !

Bass. Gratiano !

Gra I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Gra. You must not deny me : I must go with you to Belmont.

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano ;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice ;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults ;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me :
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say " amen,"
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night : you shall not gauge me

By what we do to-night.
Bass. No, that were pity :
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well :
I have some business.
Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest :
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *The same. A room in* SHYLOCK'S *house. Enter* JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so :
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee :
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :
Give him this letter ; do it secretly ;
And so farewell : I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.
Laun. Adieu ! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew ! if a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu : these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit : adieu.
Jes. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me
To be ashamed to be my father's child !
But though I am a daughter to his blood,
I am not to his manners. O Lorenzo,
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife,
Become a Christian and thy loving wife. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV. *The same. A street. Enter* GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.

Lor. Nay, we will slink away in supper-time,
Disguise us at my lodging and return,
All in an hour.

Gra We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Salan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock : we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news ?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand · in faith, 'tis a fair hand ;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou ?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this : tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her ; speak it privately.
Go, gentlemen, [*Exit Launcelot.*
Will you prepare you for this masque to-night ?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salar. Ay, marry, I'll be gone about it straight.

Salan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt Salar. and Salan.*

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house,
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse,
That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. Before* SHYLOCK'S *house. Enter* SHYLOCK *and* LAUNCELOT.

Shy. Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,
The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio:—
What, Jessica!—thou shalt not gormandise,
As thou hast done with me:—What, Jessica!—
And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out;—
Why, Jessica, I say!

Laun. Why, Jessica!

Shy. Who bids thee call? I do not bid thee call.

Laun. Your worship was wont to tell me that I could do nothing without bidding.

Enter JESSICA.

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon

The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to my house. I am right loath to go :
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go : my young master doth expect your reproach.

Shy. So do I his.

Laun. And they have conspired together, I will not say you shall see a masque ; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica :
Lock up my doors ; and when you hear the drum
And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,
Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street
To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces,
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements :
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear
I have no mind of feasting forth to-night :
But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah ;
Say I will come.

Laun. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this ;
There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewès eye. [*Exit.*

Shy. What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha?

Jes. His words were " Farewell, mistress ; " nothing else.

Shy. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder ;

Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat : drones hive not with me ;
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in :
Perhaps I will return immediately :
Do as I bid you ; shut doors after you :
Fast bind, fast find ;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*
Jes. Farewell ; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

SCENE VI. *The same. Enter* GRATIANO *and* SALARINO, *masqued.*

Gra. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo
Desired us to make stand.
Salar. His hour is almost past.
Gra. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
For lovers ever run before the clock.
Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obligéd faith unforfeited !
Gra. That ever holds : who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down ?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with the unbated fire
That he did pace them first ? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chaséd than enjoy'd.
How like a younker or a prodigal
The scarféd bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embracéd by the strumpet wind !
How like the prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,

Lean, rent and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo : more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode ;
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait :
When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Approach ;
Here dwells my father Jew. Ho ! who's within ?

Enter JESSICA, *above, in boy's clothes.*

Jes. Who are you ? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much ? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours ?

Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket ; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange :
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit ;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames ?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love ;
And I should be obscured.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.

But come at once ;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.
Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above.*
Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.
Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily ;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,
Shall she be placéd in my constant soul.

Enter JESSICA, *below.*

What, art thou come ? On, gentlemen ; away !
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[*Exit with Jessica and Salarino.*

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Who's there ?
Gra. Signior Antonio !
Ant. Fie, fie, Gratiano ! where are all the rest ?
'Tis nine o'clock : our friends all stay for you.
No masque to-night : the wind is come about ;
Bassanio presently will go aboard :
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
Gra. I am glad on't : I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house. Flourish of cornets. Enter* PORTIA, *with the* PRINCE OF MOROCCO, *and their trains.*

Por. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.
Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;"
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;"
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
Mor. Some god direct my judgement! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.

As much as I deserve ! Why, that's the lady :
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding ;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here ?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold ;
" Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
Why, that's the lady ; all the world desires her ;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint :
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia :
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her ? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought : it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold ?
O sinful thought ! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stampéd in gold, but that's insculp'd upon ;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key :
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may !

Por. There, take it, prince ; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours.

[*He unlocks the golden casket.*

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgement old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.
Cold, indeed; and labour lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.
[*Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.*
Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII. *Venice. A street. Enter* SALARINO *and* SALANIO.

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail:
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica:
Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets :
" My daughter ! O my ducats ! O my daughter !
Fled with a Christian ! O my Christian ducats !
Justice ! the law ! my ducats, and my daughter !
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter !
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter ! Justice ! find the girl !
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."
Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.
Salar. Marry, well remember'd.
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarriéd
A vessel of our country richly fraught :
I thought upon Antonio when he told me ;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.
Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear ;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.
Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part :
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return : he answer'd, " Do not so ;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time ;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love :
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love

As shall conveniently become you there : "
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand ; and so they parted.
Salan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embracéd heaviness
With some delight or other.
Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house. Enter* NERISSA *with a* Servitor.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee ; draw the curtain straight :
The Prince of Arragon hath ta'en his oath,
And comes to his election presently.

Flourish of cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF ARRAGON, PORTIA, *and their trains.*

Por. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince :
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized :
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence immediately.
Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things :
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose ; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage :
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

Por. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
Ar. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
"Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
What many men desire! that "many" may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:"
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservéd dignity.
O, that estates, degrees and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
"Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."

I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortune here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,
Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.
How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!
"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposéd natures.

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss:
There be fools alive, I wis,
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head:
So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here:
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two.
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,

They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.
Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.
Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?
Por. Here: what would my lord?
Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.
Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.
Ner. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*



ACT III

SCENE I. *Venice. A street. Enter* SALANIO *and* SALARINO.

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there unchecked that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas; the Goodwins, I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.

Salan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,——O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!— 14

Salar. Come, the full stop.

Salan. Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

Salar. I would it might prove the end of his losses.

Salan. Let me say "amen" betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew. 21

Enter SHYLOCK.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

Shy. You knew, none so well, none so well as you, of my daughter's flight.

Salar. That's certain : I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

Salan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged ; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam

Shy. She is damned for it.

Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel !

Salan. Out upon it, old carrion ! rebels it? At these years ?

Shy. I say, my daughter is my flesh and blood.

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory ; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish. But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no ?

Shy There I have another bad match : a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto ; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart , let him look to his bond ; he was wont to call me usurer ; let him look to his bond : he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy ; let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh : what's that good for ?

Shy. To bait fish withal : if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million ; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies ; and what's his reason ? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes ? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions,

senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Gentlemen, my master Antonio is at his house and desires to speak with you both.

Salar. We have been up and down to seek him.

Enter TUBAL.

Salan. Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be matched, unless the devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt Salan., Salar., and Servant.*

Shy. How now, Tubal! what news from Genoa? hast thou found my daughter?

Tub. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her.

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now: two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin!

No news of them? Why, so: and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding—

Tub. Yes, other men have ill luck too: Antonio, as I heard in Genoa,—

Shy. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

Tub. Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

Shy. I thank God, I thank God. Is't true, is't true?

Tub. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck.

Shy. I thank thee, good Tubal: good news, good news! ha, ha! where? in Genoa?

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, in one night fourscore ducats.

Shy. Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again: fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.

Shy. I am very glad of it: I'll plague him; I'll torture him: I am glad of it.

Tub. One of them showed me a ring that he had of your daughter for a monkey.

Shy. Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer ; bespeak him a fortnight before. I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit ; for, were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will. Go, go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue ; go, good Tubal ; at our synagogue, Tubal. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA's *house. Enter* BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants.

Por. I pray you, tarry : pause a day or two
Before you hazard ; for, in choosing wrong,
I lose your company : therefore forbear awhile.
There's something tells me, but it is not love,
I would not lose you ; and you know yourself,
Hate counsels not in such a quality.
But lest you should not understand me well,—
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but I am then forsworn ;
So will I never be : so may you miss me ;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlook'd me and divided me ;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours,
Mine own, I would say ; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours. O, these naughty times
Put bars between the owners and their rights !
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,
Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.
I speak too long ; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,

To stay you from election.
Bass. Let me choose ;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.
Por. Upon the rack, Bassanio ! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.
Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love :
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.
Por. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforcéd do speak anything.
Bass. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.
Por. Well then, confess and live.
Bass. " Confess " and " love "
Had been the very sum of my confession :
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance !
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.
Por. Away, then ! I am lock'd in one of them :
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound while he doth make his choice ;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music : that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him. He may win ;
And what is music then ? Then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crownéd monarch : such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence, but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem

The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster : I stand for sacrifice ;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules !
Live thou, I live : with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that mak'st the fray.

Music, whilst BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart or in the head ?
How begot, how nourishéd ?
Reply, reply.
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed ; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell :
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves :
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil ? In religion,
What damnéd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament ?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts :
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk ;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted ! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight ;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it :
So are those crispéd snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposéd fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the gilded shore
To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty ; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee ;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man : but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence ;
And here choose I : joy be the consequence !

Por. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy !
O love,
Be moderate ; allay thy ecstasy :
In measure rain thy joy ; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing : make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bass. What find I here ?

[*Opening the leaden casket.*

Fair Portia's counterfeit ! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation ? Move these eyes ?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion ? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath : so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
Faster than gnats in cobwebs : but her eyes,—
How could he see to do them ? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

[*Reads*] You that choose not by the view,
Chance as fair and choose as true !
Since this fortune falls to you,
Be content and seek no new.
If you be well pleased with this
And hold your fortune for your bliss,
Turn you where your lady is
And claim her with a loving kiss.

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave ;
I come by note, to give and to receive.
Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no ;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so ;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,

Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am ; though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better ; yet, for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself ;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
More rich ;
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account ; but the full sum of me
Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised ;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn ; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn ;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted : but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself : and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord : I give them with this ring ;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins ;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude ;

Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence :
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead !

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy : good joy, my lord and lady !

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish ;
For I am sure you can wish none from me :
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours :
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid ;
You loved, I loved ; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls ;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa ?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith ?

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.

Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

Enter LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* SALERIO,
a Messenger from Venice.

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.
Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.
Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.
Saler. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you.
[*Gives Bassanio a letter.*
Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.
Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece
Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek :
Some dear friend dead , else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse !
With leave, Bassanio ; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper ! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman ;
And then I told you true : and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing ; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady ;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio ?
Have all his ventures fail'd ? What, not one hit ?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India ?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks ?
Saler. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,

He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man :
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice : twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him ;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.
Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him : and I know, my lord,
If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.
Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble ?
Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
Por. What sum owes he the Jew ?
Bass. For me three thousand ducats.
Por. What, no more ?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond ;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend ;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side

With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over :
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away !
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day :
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer :
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit ; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure : if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone !

Bass. Since I have your good leave to go away,
I will make haste : but, till I come again,
No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,
No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Venice. A street. Enter* SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, *and* Gaoler

Shy. Gaoler, look to him : tell not me of mercy ;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis :
Gaoler, look to him.

Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond ; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause ;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs :

The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.
[*Exit.*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Ant. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.
Salar. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law:
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of his state;
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in* PORTIA'S *house. Enter* PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR.

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of god-like amity ; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.
Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now : for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments of manners and of spirit ;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery !
This comes too near the praising of myself ;
Therefore no more of it : hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return : for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return :

There is a monastery two miles off ;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition ;
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.
Lor. Madam, with all my heart ;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.
Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.
Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !
Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.
Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you : fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*
Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua : see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario ;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the traject, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone : I shall be there before thee.
Balth. Madam, I go with all convenient speed
[*Exit.*
Por. Come on, Nerissa ; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of : we'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.
Ner. Shall they see us ?
Por. They shall, Nerissa ; but in such a habit,

That they shall think we are accomplishéd
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died ;
I could not do withal ; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them ;
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.

Ner. Why, shall we turn to men ?

Por. Fie, what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter !
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate ; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *The same. A garden. Enter* LAUNCELOT *and* JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly ; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children : therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter : therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned.

There is but one hope in it that can do you any good ; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

Jes. And what hope is that, I pray thee ?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that your father got you not, that you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jes. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed : so the sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Laun. Truly then I fear you are damned both by father and mother : thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother : well, you are gone both ways.

Jes. I shall be saved by my husband ; he hath made me a Christian.

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he : we were Christians enow before ; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs : if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter LORENZO.

Jes. I'll tell my husband, Launcelot, what you say : here he comes.

Lor. I shall grow jealous of you shortly, Launcelot, if you thus get my wife into corners.

Jes. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo : Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter : and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.

Lor. I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah ; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir ; they have all stomachs.

Lor. Goodly Lord, what a wit-snapper are you ! then bid them prepare dinner.

Laun. That is done too, sir ; only " cover " is the word.

Lor. Will you cover then, sir ?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither ; I know my duty.

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion ! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant ? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning : go to thy fellows ; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in ; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered ; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern. [*Exit.*

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited !
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words ; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica ?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife ?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life ;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth ;
And if on earth he do not merit them
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world

Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

Lor. I will anon : first, let us go to dinner.

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk ;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt.*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *Venice. A court of justice. Enter the* DUKE, *the* Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALERIO, *and others.*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?
Ant. Ready, so please your grace.
Duke. I am sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch
Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.
Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.
Saler. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter SHYLOCK.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice

To the last hour of act ; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty ;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal ;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow to press a royal merchant down
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose ;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond :
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats : I'll not answer that :
But, say, it is my humour : is it answer'd ?
What if my house be troubled with a rat
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned ? What, are you answer'd yet ?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig ;
Some that are mad if they behold a cat,
And others when the bagpipe sings i' the nose ;
For affection
Masters our passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer

As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;
Why he, a woollen bagpipe ;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd ?
Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love ?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill ?
Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice ?
Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew :
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height ;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven ;
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that—than which what's harder ?—
His Jewish heart : therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.
Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.
Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them ; I would have my bond.
Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none ?
Shy. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong ?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them : shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs ?
Why sweat they under burthens ? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands ? You will answer
" The slaves are ours : " so do I answer you :
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought ; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law !
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement : answer ; shall I have it ?
Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.
Saler. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.
Duke. Bring us the letters ; call the messenger.
Bass. Good cheer, Antonio ! What, man, courage yet !
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death : the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground ; and so let me :

You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

Enter NERISSA, *dressed like a lawyer's clerk.*

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?
Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace. [*Presenting a letter*
Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there
Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolvish, bloody, starved and ravenous.
Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.
Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?
Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

Duke. With all my heart. Some three or four of you
Go give him courteous conduct to this place.
Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter.

Clerk. [*Reads*] Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant; we turned o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.

Enter PORTIA, *for* BALTHASAR.

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informéd throughly of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow ;
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.
You stand within his danger, do you not ?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond ?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I ? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath : it is twice blest ;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes :
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes
The thronéd monarch better than his crown ;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway ;
It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation : we do pray for mercy ;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head ! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money ?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court ;
Yea, twice the sum : if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart :
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority :
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.
Por. It must not be ; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established :
'Twill be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state : it cannot be.
Shy. A Daniel come to judgement ! yea, a Daniel !
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee !
Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond
Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.
Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven :
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?
No, not for Venice.
Por. Why, this bond is forfeit ;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off
Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful :
Take thrice thy money ; bid me tear the bond.
Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.
It doth appear you are a worthy judge ;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement : by my soul I swear
There is no power in the tongue of man

To alter me : I stay here on my bond.
Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.
Por. Why then, thus it is :
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.
Shy. O noble judge ! O excellent young man !
Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.
Shy. 'Tis very true : O wise and upright judge !
How much more elder art thou than thy looks !
Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.
Shy. Ay, his breast :
So says the bond : doth it not, noble judge ?
" Nearest his heart : " those are the very words.
Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh ?
Shy. I have them ready.
Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.
Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond ?
Por. It is not so express'd : but what of that ?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.
Shy. I cannot find it ; 'tis not in the bond.
Por. You, merchant, have you any thing to say ?
Ant. But little : I am arm'd and well prepared.
Give me your hand, Bassanio : fare you well !
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you ;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom : it is still her use
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty ; from which lingering penance

Of such misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife :
Tell her the process of Antonio's end ;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death ;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt ;
For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart.
Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself ;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life :
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.
Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.
Gra. I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love :
I would she were in heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.
Ner. 'Tis well you offer it behind her back ;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.
Shy. These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter ;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian !
We trifle time ; I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine .
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. Most rightful judge !
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast ·
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!

Por. Tarry a little, there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh:"
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew !
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
Por. Why doth the Jew pause ? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee ; here it is.
Por. He hath refused it in the open court :
He shall have merely justice and his bond.
Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel !
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal ?
Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it !
I'll stay no longer question.
Por. Tarry, Jew :
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods ; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state ;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st ;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant ; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore and beg mercy of the duke.
Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself :

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord ;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.
Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it :
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's ;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.
Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all : pardon not that :
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house ; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.
Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio ?
Gra. A halter gratis ; nothing else, for God's sake.
Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,
I am content ; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter :
Two things provided more, that, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian ;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.
Duke. He shall do this, or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronouncéd here.
Por. Art thou contented, Jew ? what dost thou say ?
Shy. I am content.
Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.
Shy. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence ;
I am not well : send the deed after me,

And I will sign it.

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers :
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

[*Exit Shylock.*

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon :
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*

Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties ; in lieu whereof,
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.

Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.

Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied ;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid :
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again :
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further :
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee : grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To Ant*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake ;

[*To Bass*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you :
Do not draw back your hand ; I'll take no more ;
And you in love shall not deny me this.
Bass. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle !
I will not shame myself to give you this.
Por. I will have nothing else but only this ;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.
Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation :
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers :
You taught me first to beg ; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.
Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife ;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.
Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you !
[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*
Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring :
Let his deservings and my love withal
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.
Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him ;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house : away ! make haste.
[*Exit Gratiano.*
Come, you and I will thither presently ;

And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont : come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *The same. A street. Enter* PORTIA *and* NERISSA

Por. Inquire the Jew's house out, give him this deed
And let him sign it : we'll away to-night
And be a day before our husbands home :
This deed will be well welcome to Lorenzo.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en :
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.
Por. That cannot be :
His ring I do accept most thankfully ;
And so, I pray you, tell him : furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.
Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Por.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.
Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men ;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud*] Away ! make haste : thou know'st where I will tarry.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?
[*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to* PORTIA'S *house. Enter* LORENZO *and* JESSICA.

Lor. The moon shines bright: in such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise, in such a night
Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.
Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself
And ran dismay'd away.
Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.
Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.
Lor. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.
Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,

Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.
Lor. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.
Jes I would out-night you, did nobody come ;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter STEPHANO.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night ?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend ! what friend ? your name, I pray you, friend ?
Steph. Stephano is my name ; and I bring word
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont : she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
Lor. Who comes with her ?
Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd ?
Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Sola, sola ! wo ha, ho ! sola, sola !
Lor. Who calls ?
Laun. Sola ! did you see Master Lorenzo ?
Master Lorenzo, sola, sola !
Lor. Leave hollaing, man : here.
Laun. Sola ! where ? where ?
Lor. Here.

Laun Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news : my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter : why should we go in ?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand ;
And bring your music forth into the air.
[*Exit Stephano.*
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold :
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins ;
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho ! and wake Diana with a hymn :
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music. [*Music.*

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive :
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood ;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,

Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze
By the sweet power of music : therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils ;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus :
Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA *and* NERISSA.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less :
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music ! hark !

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect :
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.

How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection !
Peace, ho ! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*
Lor. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
Por. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
By the bad voice.
Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.
Por. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd ?
Lor. Madam, they are not yet ;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.
Por. Go in, Nerissa ;
Give order to my servants that they take
No note at all of our being absent hence ;
Nor you, Lorenzo ; Jessica, nor you.
[*A tucket sounds.*
Lor. Your husband is at hand ; I hear his trumpet :
We are no tell-tales, madam ; fear you not.
Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick ;
It looks a little paler : 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, *and their followers.*

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light ;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,

And never be Bassanio so for me :
But God sort all ! You are welcome home, my lord.
Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.
Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.
Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house :
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong ;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk :
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.
Por. A quarrel, ho, already ! what's the matter ?
Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, " Love me, and leave me not."
Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value ?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave :
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk ! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.
Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbéd boy,

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee :
I could not for my heart deny it him.
Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift ;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear
Never to part with it ; and here he stands ;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief :
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.
Bass. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.
Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed
Deserved it too ; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine ;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.
Por. What ring gave you, my lord ?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.
Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it ; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it ; it is gone.
Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.
Ner. Nor I in yours
Till I again see mine.
Bass. Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring
And would conceive for what I gave the ring
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.
Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.
Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;

I'll not deny him any thing I have,
No, not my body nor my husband's bed :
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it :
Lie not a night from home ; watch me like Argus :
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.
Ner. And I his clerk ; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.
Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.
Por. Sir, grieve not you ; you are welcome notwithstanding.
Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforcéd wrong ;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—
Por. Mark you but that !
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself ;
In each eye, one : swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.
Bass. Nay, but hear me :
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.
Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio ; swear to keep this ring.
Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor !
Por. I had it of him : pardon me, Bassanio ;
For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

Ner. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano ;
For that same scrubbéd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this last night did lie with me.
Gra. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough :
What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it ?
Por. Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed :
Here is a letter ; read it at your leisure ;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario :
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk : Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you
And even but now return'd ; I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome ;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect : unseal this letter soon ;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly :
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancéd on this letter.
Ant. I am dumb.
Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not ?
Gra. Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold ?
Ner. Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,
Unless he live until he be a man.
Bass. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow :
When I am absent, then lie with my wife.
Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living ;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.
Por. How now, Lorenzo !
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.
Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.
There do I give to you and Jessica,

From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.
Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvéd people.
Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in ;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.
Gra. Let it be so.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

DATE AND SOURCES OF THE PLAY

"THE JEW," the play mentioned in the Introduction, is spoken of in Gosson's "Schoole of Abuse," written in 1579. The story of "the pound of flesh" has been traced to Giovanni Fiorentino's "Il Pecorone" (a fifteenth-century book of tales), which includes even the detail of the lady judge. It appears again in the "Ballad of Gernutus," and is mentioned in "The Three Ladies of London" (1584); and the 95th Declamation in Silvayn's "Orator" is that "of a Jew who would for his debt have a pound of the flesh of a Christian." The casket story first appears in English in Robinson's "Rêcords of Ancyent Historyes," a translation which appeared in 1577 of the "Gesta Romanorum." The exact date of the play is not certain; it is not likely to be earlier than 1596, which was the year of the publication of the English version of Silvayn's "Orator"; and it cannot be later than 1598, when it was both entered at the Stationers' Hall and mentioned by Meres in his "Palladis Tamia." For these and other reasons we should probably be right in giving the winter of 1596–97 as the time of composition. The first and second quarto editions were published in 1600, the first folio edition twenty-three years later.

NOTES

Act I *Scene* 1

l. 1. This sadness of Antonio (not, be it noted, his accustomed mood) is the cloud like a man's hand ; a thing he cannot explain yet cannot forget. The brooding and inexplicable shadow warns us, as it seems to warn him, that ill-fortune lies in wait.

l. 7. His sadness, by dulling his perception, makes it still harder for him to find its cause.

l. 9. *Argosies :* derived, not from the " Argo," but from *Ragusa,* a city whose merchant-ships were familiar to English eyes. Thus a local name becomes a general term, just as " navy of Tarshish " is often applied to Solomon's Red Sea fleet. The word " portly " makes the whole simile that follows humorous as well as vivid.

l 11. *Pageants :* as we say, the " sights " Originally the word meant " a scene acted on the stage "—or perhaps the " framework " of the stage itself Probably from Latin *pagina.* Here it recalls the immense models of castles, dragons, etc., drawn about the streets at show-time.

l. 13. This detail of the small sailing-boats dipping in the wash of the great merchantmen brings a sudden beauty into the picture.

l. 17. *Still :* " continually "—cf. l 136 and *passim.* The commonest meaning in Shakespeare.

l. 18. Johnson quotes from Roger Ascham's " Toxophilus " how the archer " toke a fether or a lytle lyght grasse," to see which way the wind blew.

l 27. *Andrew :* apparently so common a name for a ship in those days as to serve as a stock term. Knight suggested that it was derived from the great Italian admiral Andrea Doria.

Dock'd : Rowe's emendation for " docks," read by Quartos and Folios

l. 28 *Vailing her high-top :* To " vail her top " is used in Heywood's " Fair Maid of the West," and elsewhere, of a vessel striking her flag to her conqueror. The picture here is of a stranded ship heeling over till her " high-top kisses her burial "—*i e.* the sea that is to engulf her. The word is not connected with " veil," but simply means to " make stoop "

l. 35. *And, in a word*—this vigorous phrase breaks in upon and yet completes his thought :—the ship is worth " this,"—with a sweep of the hands ;—the rock but touches her side, and then—" nothing."

l. 39. *But tell not me, I know ; Antonio . . . :* this punctuation seems to me more forcible than that usually adopted .—" *But tell not me ; I know, Antonio. . . .*"

l. 43. Clearly Antonio had an unusually large number of contracts on hand , for, though his " whole estate " may not have depended upon the results of that year's trading, we can see that disaster was to mean at any rate temporary bankruptcy.

l. 47. There is a touch of impatience in Salarino's dismissal of the subject—an impatience which Antonio's melancholy inspires at one time or another in many readers of the play ;—but we must not allow ourselves to forget how much his friends loved him in spite of it. (Edwin Booth, the actor, refers to this melancholy as " liver-trouble " ; this certainly seems the simplest, if not the most dramatic, explanation !)

l. 50. Janus was the Roman god whose temple was open in war and closed in peace. The fact that he had " two faces " gives obvious point to the invocation here.

l. 52. *Peep : i.e.* screw up their faces in laughter. These two lines are an apt introduction to Gratiano.

l. 53. *Like parrots at a bag-piper :* A parrot trying to imitate the bag-pipes might well produce a sound very like some people's laughter.

l. 56. *Nestor :* the wise, venerable, and permanently serious old man who was chief counsellor to the Greeks in the Trojan War.

l. 61. *Prevented :* in its original and simplest sense of " go before," without any additional idea of forestalling.

l. 74. *Respect upon the world :* regard for worldly matters.

l. 78. *Must play a part :* " In this theatre of man's life it

is reserved only for God and the angels to be lookers-on" (Bacon, "Advancement of Learning").

l. 79. *Play the Fool:* Gratiano, if he has not quite the shrewdness of most fools of comedy, has several other qualifications for the part. He makes quite an attractive first appearance, and only becomes offensive towards the end of the play.

l. 82 *Mortifying* · because every sigh was supposed to cost a drop of blood. Cf. "2 Hen. VI," III. II. 63. "Look pale as primrose with blood-drinking sighs." Shakespeare's plays are full of medical allusions, accurate according to the science of his day; cf. his reference in l. 85 below to the "jaundice," which is of all diseases that most definitely traceable to mental causes.

l. 89. *Cream and mantle: i.e.* grow set and overcast with weeds and green scum. Cf. "The green mantle of the standing pool" in "King Lear."

l. 91. *Opinion:* reputation.

l. 92. *Conceit:* in older English, generally "thought" or "imagination"; here "impression" of profundity.

l. 98. *i.e.:* Those who heard them ("those ears") would call them fools and thus incur the punishment of hell-fire; cf Matt. v. 22, to which quotation the word "brothers" has reference. This passage is an astonishingly bad piece of huddled syntax.

l. 102. *Gudgeon:* a fish not only greedy and easy to catch, but not worth having when you have caught it.

l. 110. *For this gear:* for this "business" or "occasion"; cf. II. II. 161. Probably it means here—"just to please you."

l. 112. *Not vendible:* whose favour cannot be won for money,—"honest."

l. 122. Bassanio's introduction to his request does not predispose us in his favour. He chooses all the fine words he can to tone down the fact that he has lived not only beyond his income, but beyond all the money he could induce Antonio to lend him. And then he asks for more. "Bassanio, to do him justice, is not trying to wheedle Antonio by this sort of talk, he knows his friend too deeply for that. But he is deceiving *himself*" (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch). He takes fifty lines to answer Antonio's first question.

l. 126. *Make moan to be abridged from :* complain at having to live less " nobly "

l. 129. *My time :* probably here the springtime of life, youth.

l. 138. *My person :* Shakespeare delights to quicken with a stray word or phrase our sense of tragedy ; looking back, after a first reading or sight of the play, we see how often the casual word or jest of his characters carries for those who know a whisper of their doom. Notice the touching devotion of Antonio to Bassanio—who is not worth it ;—Shakespeare insists on it again and again to soften the improbability of the plot.

l. 141. *Of the self-same flight :* weighted and feathered so as to carry the same distance.

l. 145. *Pure innocence :* " childishness " Rather a tame apology for such an unblushing request ; Antonio has little patience with his rigmarole about schooldays and arrows. Cf. l. 153.

l. 154. *To wind about :* to " go a longer way round," to " beat about the bush."

l. 160. *Prest :* possibly " ready," as editors take it ; the word is only used once elsewhere by Shakespeare Could it not mean " forced to serve " on your behalf, with reference to soldiers " pressed " for service ?

l. 161. The story makes it essential that Bassanio's wooing shall be in the first place a treasure-hunt. But Shakespeare has no fondness for mercenary lovers, and after this single concession—in the words " richly left " —to the obvious facts, he does his best to make Bassanio's love seem unselfish and honourable. But the bad taste remains in our mouth ; Bassanio will never be a very popular hero.

l. 166. The character of the Roman Portia, daughter of Caesar's most bitter and most worthy opponent, and wife of his murderer, is drawn with fine vigour in " Julius Caesar " (Act II. Sc. 1).

l. 170. *Golden fleece :* rather an unfortunate simile for Bassanio to use, considering his underlying motives. *Colchos* (or Colchis), to which the Argonauts journeyed, lies on the Eastern shores of the Black Sea. Cf. Act III. Sc. II. l. 239.

l. 175. *Thrift:* "thriving," "success." We use the word now for the means and not for the result.
l. 185. *Of my trust or for my sake:* either on credit or as a personal favour.

Scene II

l. 1. *My little body:* Portia is to play, in the end, a man's part; and so Shakespeare introduces her as essentially a woman, in frailty as well as in beauty. He had little use for "manly" women; those, for instance, who regard Lady Macbeth as a virago are blinding themselves to half the genius and knowledge that went to her creation. Shakespeare has filled that play with references to her womanliness, just as in this he at once forbids us to regard Portia's assumption of the lawyer's gown as a natural or easy feat for her.
l. 10. *Sentences* · maxims, "sententiae."
l. 17. Notice the close-packed metaphors:—the hare and the net—hot blood and good counsel—youth and crippled age. Yet there is no confusion, but a series of brilliant pictures. Portia's fine spirit and swift imagination set a gap between her and the more commonplace Nerissa.
ll. 23–24. *Will . . . will:* Shakespeare plays upon the two senses of the word, as so often Punning is a form of humour which has outlived its vogue.
l 37. *Level at:* "aim at" or "guess."
l 39 The men of Naples were called "the schoolmasters of all Christendom in the art of horsemanship"; Montaigne (translated into English about seven years after this play was written) describes in his essays a display of horsemanship by a prince of Naples.
l. 44. *County:* "counṫ." (*Count Palatine* was originally a count attached to the imperial palace in the Holy Roman Empire, and after came to mean a count independent of the court, who had full rights of jurisdiction over his province.)
l. 46. *Choose:* "do as you please," "take any you like," implying that if she would not take him it didn't matter whom she chose.
l. 47. *The weeping philosopher:* the nickname of Hera-

clitus, who took life very sadly; his counterpart was the "laughing" philosopher, Democritus.

l. 49. *Unmannerly sadness:* one of the many phrases which reveal Portia's awareness of her own beauty. She resented any man, especially any young man, not showing a cheerful gallantry in her presence.

l. 50. *With a bone in his mouth:* instead of a tongue (useless to this dullard), with fleshless, speechless jaws.

l. 59. *Throstle:* Pope first found the right reading. The Folios read "trassell," "tarssell," and "tassell."

l. 66. The amusing caricature of the Frenchman, which probably started Shakespeare's audience grinning, is followed by this brilliant summary of his own wealthier countrymen, which must have set them in a roar The English traveller was then as conspicuous for his ill-judged mixture of foreign fashion of dress, as he is—now as then—for his lack of languages.

l 72. The *doublet* was a close-fitting inner jacket; the *round hose* of France were breeches made very loose and puffed out. A combination of the two would be ludicrous in the extreme.

l. 75. *Scottish* lord. This, the original reading, is altered in the 1623 edition—copied from the acting copy—to "other," an interesting change, clearly made to avoid offending James I. The offence lies not so much in the implication of cowardice, as in the political allusion. The Scots had not yet "repaid" their defeats at the hands of England (at Solway Moss and Pinkie, fifty years before), though they had "sworn" to do so; and in this resolve they were backed by France, who was always intriguing—or suspected of intriguing—with the Scots.

l. 80. *Sealed under:* The guarantor set his seal beneath that of the man who "sealed to" the bond, as security for its payment.

l. 85. Germans, Dutchmen, and Danes were all reputed to be great drunkards. Compare Hamlet's indignant outburst ("Hamlet," Act I. Sc. 3)

l. 94. *Rhenish:* a kind of hock from the Rhine; a *white* wine, as we see in III. 1 40.

l. 104. *Sibylla:* The sibyl or prophetess of Cumae was permitted by Apollo to live for as many years as she could hold grains of sand in her hands.

l. 113 Nerissa's sudden challenge—she is more awake than she seems, this girl—catches Portia off her guard. For a moment we see her heart—and then—" *as I think he was so called.*"

l. 121. *Four:* Six "strangers" have been described. Either an oversight, or else Shakespeare took over the number and four of the characters from an earlier play, and forgot to change the figure when he added the English and Scottish lords.

l. 129. *Shrive:* originally "impose penance," and so used of religious penalties. Afterwards it meant simply to hear confession and grant absolution, especially just before death; this is the meaning here.

Scene III

l. 1. Shylock needs no introduction; he speaks for himself. Observe how whenever he is on the stage he is the dominating figure, the man of power, even among those who hate him.

Ducats: The ducat was about the value of a dollar. But the value of a pound in 1600 was roughly eight times its value to-day, so a ducat was the equivalent of thirty-five of our shillings.

l. 17. *In supposition:* not actual or realised, because dependent on the safe return of his ships.

l. 18. *Tripolis:* probably not Tripoli in Africa, but the seaport of this name in Syria, N E. of Beyrout Cf. Act III. Sc. 2, l. 266.

l. 19. *The Rialto:* the "Exchange of Venice," where all business was transacted.

l. 28. *Be assured:* a conventional phrase, not meant by Bassanio, but taken up and repeated in its full implication by Shylock, who means "to make assurance doubly sure."

l. 33. *Nazarite:* To-day there is a great difference between "Nazarite" and "Nazarene." Christ was a Nazarene—John the Baptist a Nazarite. But in Shakespeare's time Nazarite was the proper name for "man of Nazareth." Cf. Tyndale's Bible.

l. 37. Shylock of course knows Antonio, at any rate by sight. So he must have his back turned to the latter

as he enters ; and his question is prompted either by hearing his step or by the welcoming look on Bassanio's face.

l. 39. *Fawning publican :* The publicans were Jews who undertook the despised task of collecting taxes for their Roman masters ; hence the word " fawning " aptly describes their general apologetic attitude towards those who hated them. Antonio has now to beg money of his enemy, and in addition has by nature much of that humility which Shylock, like all proud men, feared and detested. (It is not so long ago that a prominent English politician confessed that he " did not like meek men.") Yet at the same time Shylock suspects that Antonio's " humility " conceals a nature of another sort (cf. III. 1. 66), just as the *low simplicity* of his business methods is aimed at breaking the power of Shylock and his fellow-usurers. He at least realises from the start that it is to be a battle of one hate against another, with no quarter given, and with all the fury of national and religious feeling behind it. The whole case is put very clearly in this speech.

l. 43. *Rate of usance :* In Thomas's " Historye of Italye " we are told that the Jews of Venice charged 15 per cent.

l. 44. *Upon the hip :* a metaphor from wrestling. Cf. Act IV. 1. 343.

l. 49. *Interest :* an invidious term. Shylock always avoids it. Cf. his disclaimer in l. 74.

l. 60. *Excess :* interest.

l. 72. *The third possessor :* third in line of descent, Abram being included.

l. 77. *Eanlings :* new-born lambs ; an old form of " yeanlings." *pied :* parti-coloured ; originally " black and white," like a magpie.

l. 85. Antonio's answer is, first, that Jacob ran the risk of failure ; he could not be certain his stratagem would succeed :—secondly, that at least he " served for " his reward and so in part deserved it—whereas the money-lender runs no risks and does no labour. His comment on the trickery employed lies in his insulting—" *Was this inserted to make interest good ?* " Throughout note that he makes no effort to conciliate Shylock, and asks, not for a favour, but for a formal business transaction.

l. 92. Cf. Matt. iv. 4 *seq*

l. 96. *Godly:* Rowe's emendation for "goodly" is more pointed than the original and avoids the rather empty repetition.

l. 106. *Gaberdine:* a gown—from old French *gauvardine*. Shylock's use of it here has led to its use in later times as a dress peculiar to Jews.

l. 111. *Void your rheum:* "spit"

l. 128. *Barren metal:* A reference to the old argument against usury—originated by Aristotle—that it was against nature for money to "breed" money as if it were a living thing.

Of: "from."

l. 129. The hate of Shylock and Antonio's defiance lead up to the climax of these words; had the bond been agreed upon now, in this spirit of mutual hatred, we should have seen in it nothing unnatural or incredible. Shakespeare would have been truer to himself if he had so shaped his story. But he was in bondage to his plot, and by that plot Antonio must be unsuspecting and innocent and Shylock calculating and scheming. And so we have this fine passage followed by a hypocritical semblance of "reconciliation." This, on its own merits, might have deceived some men into thinking that "the Jew grows kind." But we marvel at Antonio—even Antonio—consenting to the bond "in a merry sport," after Shylock's first outburst and his own answer to it—though there would have been nothing to marvel at in his acceptance of such a bond in the white heat of passion. Much as we may admire the dramatic subtlety shown in Shylock's change of attitude, and the glimpse it gives us of another side to his character, yet the end of this scene can never sound anything but forced and unnatural.

l. 134. *Doit:* originally a small Dutch coin, worth half a farthing.

l. 137. All the emphasis is on *were*. Bassanio is not so easily deceived.

l. 139. *Single bond:* a bond with only the signature of the borrower, and no names of sureties under it. This is put forward as a concession; but it was, of course, essential to Shylock's purpose that Antonio should be

alone responsible for repayment, with no other security to protect him in case of failure

Merry sport: In a sense, perhaps it was at this time a "merry sport" to Shylock. It was so unlikely that Antonio would become bankrupt that he could hardly have looked forward to the bond's fulfilment, even if he at the time intended it. He enjoys playing with the idea It is only when, hard upon the loss of Jessica and his wealth, his victim is put suddenly at his mercy, that his revengeful thoughts are given free play.

l 143. The "pound of flesh" comes straight, of course, from the old story which Shakespeare is using, and the barbarity of it makes it impossible to regard Shylock altogether with sympathy. We hardly know which to wonder at most—the making of such a suggestion, the acceptance of it at this stage by Antonio, or the nature of a constitution where such a bond was legally possible. The pound of flesh has made Shakespeare's play famous; but it has also made it a failure.

l. 164. *For my love:* with regard to whether I love you or not.

l. 168. *Purse:* make up a purse of.

l. 169. *Fearful* · here *causing* anxiety, not feeling it.

Act II *Scene* I

The old stage directions read: "Enter Morochus a tawnie Moore all in white, and three or foure followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerissa and their traine." Shakespeare knew well, and probably shared, his audience's love of the gaudy and the exotic; this African prince brings in a gorgeous foreign suite and an Oriental richness of language. The grandeur of the "casket" scenes and the careful characterisation of the different suitors make interesting what is not in itself a very absorbing by-plot.

l. 6. Morocco is throughout the simple warrior, pining for a more worthy test of his love than "blind fortune." It is fairly obvious in advance which casket this splendid person will choose; he has no conception that the test is really a test of character.

l. 14. *Nice:* This word has a curious history, and the meanings it has run through in 600 years are many and various. Originally it meant "ignorant," from the Latin *nescius*. It then came to mean, among other things, "wanton," "extravagant," "smart," "effeminate," "delicate," "shy," "fastidious" (the meaning it clearly bears here), "refined," "strict," "subtle," "precise," "critical," and "agreeable." To-day it is used in any of the last four senses—though as a synonym for "agreeable" it has lost all character, and is popularly and carelessly used of anything from a bun to a cathedral

l. 17. *Scanted:* "confined."

l. 20. *Fair:* Since the speaker is Portia, we may here suspect some allusion to Morocco's complexion, just as the nature of her compliment makes us wonder what the Prince would have thought if he had overheard her discussion of her earlier suitors. Even as it is, his reply suggests slight disappointment.

l. 25 *Sophy:* the Shah of Persia. Derived from *Cafi*, the surname of the ruling house of Persia at this period.

l. 26 *That: i.e.* "who" Sultan Solyman, "the Magnificent," reigned 1520 to 1566, and was defeated by the Persians in 1534.

l. 32. *Lichas* was Hercules' page, who was thrown into the sea for unwittingly bringing to his master the poisoned shirt of Nessus.

l. 35. *Page:* Theobald's certain emendation for the "rage" of the old texts.

l 46. *Blest or cursed'st:* The superlative is expressed with one adjective only but understood of both. Cf. III. II. 291.

Scene II

The old editions say "Enter the Clown alone." Launcelot Gobbo (Gobbo means "hunchback") provides the comedy of the play. Shakespeare's "clowns," or low comedians, must not be confused with his "fools," who are "spirits of another sort," too wise for this world rather than too foolish for it.

l. 1. *Will serve:* If we keep the reading (the best alternatives are Halliwell's "will not serve"; Allen's "will

forbid "), we must take it to mean " my conscience *will have to acquiesce in* my running away from my master "

l 10. *Via!* " away " ; an Italian word introduced into colloquial English.

l. 17. *Grow to :* a country phrase, of milk which was burnt and so had " a kind of taste " and " smacked " of the fire. He means that his father was " no better than he should have been."

l. 22. *God bless the mark :* originally used to avert an evil omen, and so by way of apology for what was going to be said. Cf. its humorous use in " 1 Henry IV," I. III. 56. *Saving your reverence* (l. 24) is a similar phrase, implying an apology to his " conscience," with which he imagines himself still to be arguing.

l. 26. *Incarnal :* the nearest his tongue can get to " incarnate." Launcelot's and his father's speeches are full of these malapropisms, which are not always so easy to interpret.

l. 34. *Sand-blind :* " half-blind " (Old English *sam*-blind). But the word was corrupted and the first syllable misinterpreted. Hence Launcelot pitches on " *gravel* "-blind as half-way between *sand*-blind and *stone*-blind.

l. 35. *Confusions :* a mistake of Launcelot's for " conclusions," though it is a singularly apt description of the scene which follows.

l. 43. *By God's sonties :* " Sonties " is variously explained as a corruption of " santé," " sanctities," and " saints." The latter is most probable, as " sauntie " was a recognised Scottish diminutive of " saint."

l. 47. *Raise the waters :* He means to draw tears from his father by an affecting " recognition-scene."

l. 51. *Well to live :* " likely to live long."

l. 59. *Father :* accepted here, and in ll. 71 and 74 below, as simply a term of respect.

l. 61. *Sisters Three :* the three Fates. Launcelot is here using all his rag-store of odds and ends of knowledge to impress his father.

l. 90. *Thou :* Note the change from the respectful " you" as soon as old Gobbo recognises his son.

l. 92. Launcelot kneels down with his back to his father, and the latter feeling his long hair mistakes it for a beard.

l. 93. *Fill-horse* · "shaft-horse." The "fills" were the shafts of a cart.

l. 95. *Grows backward:* loses its hair, decreases.

l. 101. *Set up my rest:* "finally determined." Probably a metaphor from "primero," a Spanish game of chance. The "resto" was the reserve stake, which was only "set up" or wagered as a last hope. Some, however, think the metaphor purely military, from the "rest" used in firing a match-lock. Shakespeare has made the phrase immortal by using it in the climax of tragedy. Cf. "Romeo and Juliet," V. III. 109

> "O here
> Will I set up my everlasting rest,
> And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
> From this world-wearied flesh."

l. 109. *I am a Jew:* a slight indication of the feeling about Jews, in London as well as in Venice.

l. 126 *Cater-cousins:* cousins who catered for each other, or boarded together. Cf. "companion" from *cum* and *panis*.

l. 141. *Preferr'd:* "recommended." Launcelot was not the only one who wanted a change. Cf. ll. 5, 49 *seq.*

l. 144. *The old proverb:* That referred to is "God's grace is gear enough."

l. 150. *Guarded:* "guards" were trimmings of braid which protected the stuff from fraying. Antonio's dear-borrowed money is already being squandered—on feasts and splendid liveries.

l. 151. The reading followed (merely a change of punctuation is involved) is that of Kenrick. *Table:* Staunton explains the references to palmistry as follows: "The *table line* or *line of fortune* is the line running from the forefinger, below the other three fingers, to the side of the hand. The *natural line* is the line which curves in a different direction, through the middle of the palm; and the *line of life* is the circular line surrounding the ball of the thumb. The space between the two former lines is technically known as *the table.*" Here *table* seems to be used for the whole palm, which was laid on the Bible in taking an oath.

l. 156. *A'leven: i e.* "an eleven," as we say "a score,"—for an indefinite number.

l. 171. Bassanio's heart must have failed him at the prospect of taking with him the cheerful ass Gratiano on an occasion when it was so important that he should make a good impression. Hence his little lecture.
l. 185. *Prayer-books in my pocket:* sticking out of it, rather, so as to be seen.
l. 189. *Well studied in a sad ostent:* carefully coached to appear serious and well-behaved. This speech recalls many memories of instructions to "be good and behave pretty in the drawing-room."

Scene III

Jessica and Lorenzo are charming people, very much in love. But their elopement with all Shylock's portable wealth is hardly a thing to be proud of, though it was a trick which apparently delighted all their friends, simply because a Jew was the victim. At any rate, they succeeded in spurring Shylock on to his revenge.
l. 12. *Get:* "beget."

Scene IV

l. 5. *Spoke us . . . of:* "bespoken," "ordered."
l. 6. *Vile:* with something of its original sense of "cheap."
Quaintly ordered: arranged with taste; this meaning comes from a false derivation (quaint, from L *comptus*, arranged); the word really comes from *cognitus*, known. Cf. "acquaint."
l. 23. *I am provided of a torch-bearer:* this is an irrepressible outburst of joy at hearing that Jessica will join in his scheme. No need to bespeak torch-bearers now.

Scene V

The verbal ironies in this scene are worth noticing.
l. 18. Artemidorus ("Exposition of Dreames") says: "Some say that to dreame of money and all kinde of coyne is ill"
l. 21. *So do I his:* a grim response to Launcelot's mistake.
l. 25. Easter Monday, as we are told in Stow's

" Chronicle," was called *Black Monday*, because on that day in 1360 " K Edwarde (Edward III) with his hoast lay before the citie of Paris ; which day was full darke of mist and haile, and so bitter cold, that many men died on their horsebacks with the cold."

l. 30. *The wry-neck'd fife :* Barnaby Rich (quoted here by Boswell) says in his " Aphorisms," published twenty years after this play, " A fife is a wry-necked musician, for he always looks away from his instrument " But it is perhaps simpler to take the word " fife " as referring to the instrument itself, and " wry-necked " as a description of the old English flute, which had a curved mouth-piece.

l. 33. *Varnish'd :* in painted masks.

l. 36. *Jacob's staff*. a natural oath in the mouth of a Jew. Yet it was a phrase familiar to Christians in its meaning of " pilgrim's staff," St. James being the patron saint of pilgrims.

l. 43 *Worth a Jew's eye* was a common phrase, derived from the times when Jews were forced to pay large sums to escape mutilation. Here of course the words have a double point. All the early editions read " Jewes " or " Jew's." Pope, however, read " Jewess'," in which he is followed by most editors. But Shakespeare never uses this form elsewhere, using " Jew " for both genders ; and it seems better to accept the earliest reading as it stands, in which case " Jewes " will be the longer form of the genitive (to suit the metre) and the proverbial phrase is left unchanged.

l. 44. *Hagar's offspring* · Cf Genesis, chs xvi. and xxi.

l. 46. *Patch :* " fool," from the patch-work motley worn by jesters.

l. 47. *In profit :* in any matter of business.

Scene VI

l. 5. *Venus* was drawn in her chariot by doves. The lines mean that men are swifter to seal a new love-bond than they are to fulfil their obligations once the compact is made. Salarino, the older man, *is* a cynic ; Gratiano at the age when cynicism seems an attractive creed.

l. 13. Gratiano's illustrations all have different ideas

behind them, and are all a little wide of the mark. But this line gives the truth at which he is aiming his fancy —a truth so ignored by philosophers and happiness-seekers from Aristotle downwards that it is curious to find it in the mouth of this buffoon.

l. 14. *Younker :* a gay young fellow *scarfed* in all his best finery, with his false lady-love (*strumpet*) on his arm. Shakespeare's similes always touch his subject at more points than one. Cf. the "argosies with portly sail," etc , in the first scene of all.

l 42. *Light :* punning on its sense of "wanton."

l. 47. *Close :* "secret."

l. 51. *By my hood :* the hood of his masqued habit. Gratiano swears by whatever comes handiest. Cf. V. i. ll 142, 161.

Gentile. The first folio has "gentle," which points the pun.

l. 65. *Presently :* "at once." As Professor Withers remarks, "Generations of unpunctuality have weakened the force of the word."

Scene VII

l. 30. *Disabling :* "disparagement."

l. 41. Hyrcania was a district to the south and south-east of the Caspian Sea. *Deserts :* any jungle or wilderness was called a desert. There is brave imagery in Morocco's declamation. He is very much in love. Shakespeare himself was not free from the rather childish love of the bombastic ; but here it is well in character.

l. 51. *To rib her cerecloth : i.e.* to enclose her corpse. "Cered" or waxed cloth was used as a shroud.

l. 53. Incidentally this is a literally exact statement of the proportion of silver to gold in 1600.

l. 63. *Carrion death :* a fleshless skull.

l. 65. How can the inscription on the gold casket be justified ? Only if it be taken as referring merely to the actual gold of the casket itself, which needed no inscription to commend it. We can (later) justify the "blinking idiot" as being what Arragon "deserved," but who will venture to say that "many men desire" a

" carrion death "? Morocco might well have inveighed against such deception, had he been less of a gentleman.

l. 69. *Tombs :* Johnson's certain emendation for " timber " of the MSS.

l. 77. We cannot help feeling sorry for Morocco. He is a man of high courage and great devotion, a gentleman whose pride is little more than the natural overflow of his qualities. There is sound logic in his rejection of the silver and lead caskets, and we feel that he chose the golden casket, with its misleading and not unattractive inscription, in a spirit which deserved better treatment than a bundle of copy-book maxims tucked into the eye of a " carrion death." To anyone not suspecting a trap the arguments for choosing the golden casket are indeed overwhelming. But, like the eldest son in the fairy-tale, he was, of course, doomed to disappointment from the first ; just as it was obvious from the first that Portia could not be allowed to marry one of his complexion.

Scene VIII

l. 4. *Villain Jew :* It is worth while collecting the references of different characters in the play to the Jews as a race, and to Shylock in particular. It is only by so doing that we can estimate the feeling against the tribe in Venice (and in Elizabethan England) which finds such vent in the trial scene. Cf. " dog Jew," I, 14, and *passim.*

l. 26. *He :* emphatic. It is probably true that Shylock's loss confirmed him in his hatred of Christians and his determination for revenge.

l. 39. *Slubber* means either to " sully " or to " slur over " —*i. e.* spoil by too great haste—as here.

l. 42. *Of love : i. e.* devoted to love.

l. 45. *Conveniently :* suitably. From the Latin *convenire,* to " come together," " fit," " agree."

l. 46. *There :* " Let the reader note this ' there,' so subtly repeated that we see the man turning on the spot and on the word together " (Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch).

l. 48. *Sensible :* " sensitive " Cf. Milton's " Samson Agonistes " :

" What remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly."

For a different meaning of the word, cf II. IX. 89

l. 52. *Embraced:* To say that Antonio " embraces " heaviness is a very good appraisement of his character, at the best of times he is not excessively light-hearted. Cf. III. II. 115, " rash-embraced despair."

Scene IX

The Prince of Arragon is a very different person from Morocco; his pride is more offensive and less excusable, and as a result he chooses the one casket whose inscription obviously disqualifies it. It was no accident that Shakespeare made him a Spaniard; this play was published eight years after the Armada.

Portia is in a hurry to get the ordeal over; her relief shows itself in contempt when the prince has failed

l. 20. *Base lead.* This epithet must have brought Portia some relief.

ll. 25–30. This criticism is amusing in the mouth of one who has just dismissed the leaden casket because of its appearance.

l. 30. *Casualty:* " accident." The simile is picturesque, but not very apt.

l. 38. *Cozen:* " cheat." Apparently a favourite " confidence " trick was to pretend to be a man's cousin for your own advantage. Cf. French *cousiner.*

l. 49. *New-varnish'd:* the climax of a remarkably mixed metaphor. Arragon's similes and metaphors are as forced as Morocco's language was high-flown.

l. 51. *Assume desert:* take for granted the fact that I deserve.

l. 54. Arragon again shows his character by arguing about his failure. Morocco took his defeat manfully.

l. 55. *Schedule:* a strip of paper (originally of papyrus). Through French and Latin from the Greek σχίζειν—to " split "—generally used of a list or inventory.

l. 61. No one can be both defendant and judge. Arragon had " offended " against modesty and the caskets had passed judgement on him.

l. 68. *I wis:* a corruption of " ywis," an old English

word (originally "gewis") meaning "certainly." The corruption is due to false analogy from "I wist" = I knew. Shakespeare probably thought he was using a verb.

l. 73. Arragon takes refuge, like all discomfited suitors of his type, in crying "sour grapes." He says, in fact, "I was a fool to come" Perhaps, however, the more generously minded may find here a dawning humility in him.

l. 81. They are over-wise, and their subtlety ends in error.

l. 83. Cf. I. II 30 *seq*

l. 85. Portia is already in tremendous spirits—and no wonder, after such an escape—and finds in this pompous footman of hers a good safety-valve.

l 89. *Sensible*. here "tangible."
Regreets: "greetings."

l 98 *High-day*: words only good enough for Sundays and holy days.

Act III *Scene* I

l 9. *Knapped*. "gnawed" or "nibbled." Sometimes the word means simply to "break in pieces," as in Ps xlvi. 9, "knappeth the spear in sunder"

l 11 *Slips*: *i.e.* without "slipping" off on to side-issues.

l. 15. We have already observed that Salarino was something of a cynic.

l 22 The two Venetians are out, like the rest of them, to bait Shylock till he falls into one of his rages. They find it easy work; the continued absence of Jessica and the loss of his wealth, sharpened by the jeers and insults heaped on him wherever he goes, have made of him a man who feels every prick ("If you prick us, do we not bleed?") and who is ready to strike, and strike hard, at the only enemy within reach—Antonio.

l. 27. *The wings she flew withal*: It is surely unnecessary to see here, as many editors insist on doing, a reference to Jessica's disguise. Salarino is playing with Shylock's words, as Salanio does just after (l. 34), when he takes

Shylock's " flesh " in the biblical sense of " desires of the flesh "

l. 29. *Complexion :* nature. Originally the word meant a combination of all the supposed qualities which determined the nature of bodies. So any distinguishing quality or feature.

l. 40. *Rhenish* · Cf. I. II. 94.

l. 42. *Match :* " bargain."

l. 44. *Smug :* All Shylock's hate comes into this word Cf. " fawning publican," I. III 39.

l. 56. *I am a Jew :* We can imagine that here Salarino interrupts with a taunting laugh ; and then Shylock, turning on him, breaks into one of the finest and most immortal of Shakespeare's speeches. Hazlitt says that here " he is worth a wilderness of monkeys that have aped humanity." This passionate plea for justice, ending in its terribly logical creed of cruelty, rings truer in our ears than Portia's famous plea for mercy, truer even than Lorenzo's rhapsody on moonlight. Shylock has broken through the plot, broken out of Shakespeare's control, and shattered for good the artificial character the writer was so carefully building up, and which the play demanded. It is as well this outburst did not come in the trial scene ; it would have spoilt our taste for " the quality of mercy " It would be interesting to know what the " groundlings " thought of this passage ; their entertainer had forgotten them when he wrote it. But perhaps they were getting accustomed to finding him a little mad at times.

l. 68. *Why, revenge :* He almost croons the word in the ecstasy of his passion. It is his guiding star from now to the end.

l. 74. Shakespeare always allows us relief after his most passionate scenes ; and the blundering Tubal furnishes a much-needed touch of comedy. The scene with him also helps Shakespeare, and his audience, to get Shylock into focus again, as the villain of the piece. We see now—not his persecution, calling for our tears—but his avarice and cruelty, calling for derision or hate. Shylock is made as much of a monster in this part of the scene as is possible—selfish, miserly, heartless, and vindictive. Yet even here his human side breaks out (l. 117).

l. 109. Tubal babbles pleasantly on—now of Antonio, now of Jessica—with a most admired lack of discretion. This interpretation of his character seems more likely than that which makes him deliberately play upon the wretched Shylock's moods; though, of course, Shakespeare rings the changes in the dialogue to bring out the comedy, and Shylock's character, to the full.

l. 117. *Turquoise:* a valuable stone, since it was supposed to reflect in its change of colour the health of the wearer. But that is not why Shylock valued it. He has escaped out of the picture again, and become a poor man grieving—above all his sorrows—for the ring his dead wife gave him long ago, when they were lovers together. For a similar touch of poignancy Prof. Withers quotes Macbeth II. II. 14, "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done it."

l 118. *Wilderness of monkeys:* A bad actor will raise a laugh here. But it is, as Hazlitt has pointed out, a fine Hebraism, a phrase as magnificent in its completeness as any in the Old Testament.

l. 121. Shylock now is full of his revenge, and bundles the obsequious Tubal off the stage in his haste to be about it. And "*I will have the heart of him*" are his last words to us;—was Shakespeare hoping it might drive out the memory of "If you prick us, do we not bleed?"

Scene II

Portia is at her finest in this scene, her great love shines out, and the wit and cleverness which distinguish her elsewhere fall from her, in the presence of the issue which is to decide her fate. It is this scene, and not that of the trial, which sets her among Shakespeare's noblest women. And Bassanio seems, for the time, a lover almost worthy of her; so that we are spared the contemplation of her giving herself to the mere fortune-hunter he appeared at first.

l. 4. *But it is not love:* Before the verdict she tries hard to control, if she cannot conceal, her real feelings; but she very soon gives up the attempt. Notice the conflict in this speech, and compare it with the whole-hearted surrender of l 150 *seq.*

l. 9. *Month or two* · It was "day or two" when she began.

l. 15. *O'erlook'd :* "bewitched," with reference to the superstition of the "evil eye."

l. 20. *Prove it so, etc.* · *i.e.* if it turn out, by your choice, that I may not be yours, Fortune is to blame and must be punished, not I ; for I do not wish it so.

l. 22 *Peize :* lit. to "weigh" ; but here probably to "weight"—*i.e.* retard by putting weights on. Cf. "Edward III," II. i. "And peise their deeds with weight of heavy lead." Johnson reads "piece," which makes good sense , but the harder reading should always be preferred to the easier It might mean "weigh each moment carefully," and so make it go slower.

l. 26. Portia, still anxious for delay, sets her wits to work upon the idea contained in "rack" and keeps the ball rolling for another fourteen lines.

l. 33. A truism to us to-day. But, as Hunter first noted, Shakespeare said the words at a time when prisoners were tortured day after day in the Tower in the hope of discovering yet another of the secret plots against Elizabeth.

l. 41. The nearest she dare go to hinting the truth herself is to suggest that the choice is a real test of love.

l. 55. Hercules rescued Hesione, daughter of Laomedon, King of Troy, not for love of her, but to win the horses which once had belonged to Zeus.

l. 56. *Howling :* "lamenting." A word that has quite lost its flavour.

l. 63. Though Bassanio knows it not, this beautiful song is his salvation. From what we know of the young adventurer, it is almost incredible—if character means anything—that he would choose lead in preference to gold and silver, even when under the gracious influence of Portia's presence. But as he muses over the caskets the boys' voices break in upon his thoughts with a song which tells of the fate of those who judge by the eyes alone. It is perhaps going too far to imagine that the rhymes "bred" "head" suggest in his mind the answering thought "lead" ; but there can be no doubt

of the purport of the song The first voices ask where "fancy" lives; and "fancy," as a consideration of its uses in Shakespeare's time shows, was not true love, but love at first sight, love of the appearance (*φαντασία*). The answering voices tell how "fancy" is born in the eyes and dies soon after where it is born. But true love "looks not with the eyes, but with the mind" ("A Midsummer-Night's Dream," I. i. 234). To a man whose wits are quickened to meet the great crisis of his love every word is an omen; and Portia's elaborate excuse, in the preceding speech, for having music, comes perhaps as an attempt to quiet a somewhat uneasy conscience. Of course, she may have chosen this song by happy accident, or it may have been Nerissa's doing. For in the original story it is the maid who gives a hint of the truth. Bassanio's first words, "*So* may the outward shows," etc., tell us both that the suggestion is not lost upon him, and that Shakespeare meant us to know the source from which he derives his curiously reformed views of "ornament"

l. 81. *Simple:* "simple-minded." Even the stupidest sinners are hypocrites.

l. 86. Red blood was thought to mean courage (cf. II i. 7), and so a white liver meant cowardice; cf. "milk-livered" ("King Lear") and "lily-livered" ("Macbeth").

l. 87. *Excrement:* "outgrowth"—*i e.* a beard. The word is frequently used by Shakespeare of hair.

l. 89. *Purchased by the weight:* Shakespeare disliked the recent fashion of "making up." Cf. the bitter passage in "Hamlet," III i. 149 *seq.*

l. 91. *Lightest:* cf. II. vi. 42, where the same word serves for a different pun.

l. 92. Shakespeare is on dangerous ground here. Elizabeth is said to have worn a large wig of fair hair, and other ladies with dark hair followed her example. And Bassanio is on dangerous ground too. For did not Portia's

sunny locks
Hang on her temple like a golden fleece?

l. 97. *Gilded.* spelt "guilded" in the Folios. Most editors read "guiléd"—*i e.* guileful. But the original

reading is more pointed in the context and gives the right antithesis.

l. 99. *Indian beauty:* The emphasis is on "Indian" and the word "beauty" becomes contemptuous. We have seen that dark hair was at this time unfashionable, and the word "Indian" suggests foreign standards of beauty very different from those of Europe. Cf. Lysander's taunt to Hermia, "Away, you Ethiop!" ("A Midsummer-Night's Dream," III. II. 257).

Those who dislike the repetition of "beauteous" and "beauty" may choose between the following alternatives for the latter word (all genuine suggestions of otherwise reputable commentators): — "dowdy," "idol," "blackness," "body," "gipsy," "feature," "deity," "suttee," "virago," "beldam," "bosom," "poisoner," "favour," "swarthy," and "sooty." The best emendation of all is Kinnear's "Veiling an Indian brow; and in a word." "Brow & " may well have been read as "beauty." And the author of the conjecture goes far to prove that "*and* in a word" is a more likely and more more usual introduction of his conclusion than the accepted reading. Cf. I. I. 35.

l. 103. *Pale.* It is curious that Bassanio should reject silver for its "paleness"; after a weighty argument against ornament he should at least not give lack of ornament as a reason for rejection. It is again the very "paleness" of lead, a few lines below, which "moves" him "more than eloquence." Either Shakespeare was careless here (he may have been so in the repetition "beauteous" and "beauty" in 98 and 99), or we should (in all probability) either here read "*stale* and common drudge"—an emendation first suggested by Farmer—or (with Warburton and others) read "*plainness*" for "paleness" in 106.

l. 109. *As:* such as.

l. 113. *Rain:* The 2nd Quarto reads "rein," which spoils the force of "in measure."

l. 127. *Unfurnish'd:* without its fellow.

l. 131. *Continent:* that which contains.

l. 141. *By note:* in accordance with orders.

l. 173. The ring "motif" is skilfully and naturally introduced at the end of this beautiful speech; the giving of

the ring, which is to be the occasion of much pleasant comedy, comes at a moment when our minds and hearts are so fully Portia's that we are in no danger of forgetting it.

l. 193. *From me:* This apparently means "taken from" as well as "given by."

ll 201–202. I have adopted Theobald's punctuation. In this case "intermission" means "delay," "waste of time." If the original reading,

You loved, I loved for intermission.
No more pertains, etc.

be kept, then "intermission" must mean "pastime," and no great compliment to Nerissa is involved. The amended version is to be preferred on all grounds.

l. 219. *Youth of my new interest:* Bassanio has only just secured his "interest" or share in the household.

l. 241. Portia has, of course, been watching her lover, who has gone apart to read his letter.

l. 245. *Constant:* "self-possessed."

l. 260. *Mere:* "absolute" from Latin *merus*, unmixed.

l. 276. *Doth impeach the freedom of the state:* "calls in question the state's claims of freedom"—*i e* denies that the state really gives those rights, which she professes to give "freely" to aliens.

l. 280. *Envious:* "malicious."

l 296. It is significant that Portia and Bassanio, who have been away from Venice, are confident that the matter can be settled by payment. Salerio and Jessica know otherwise, yet their warnings are not heeded; however, their words leave us with a feeling of impending tragedy, which the false optimism of Portia only throws into higher relief.

l. 313. This is a fine letter, and makes us think more highly of Antonio than we do in his somewhat chilling presence. But it is very awkwardly introduced at a point where the scene should naturally end; we ought to have heard it fifty lines earlier; perhaps Shakespeare puts it here to deepen the sense of approaching crisis, and to prepare us for the next scene. But there may be a stronger reason. Portia, in Scene IV, is no longer so confident of the power of her money; in fact, she has no more hope of it, and has already made desperate

plans to confront Shylock at the trial and match her wits against his. This letter, which leaves little room for comfort, may have awoken her fears, which a few words with Lorenzo and Jessica after Bassanio's departure would confirm.

Scene III

l. 28 *If it be denied* · The words refer to "commodity," which here means "rights and privileges." Some editors, feeling a difficulty in using "denied" in agreement with another subject after the phrase "deny the course of law" in l. 26, follow Capell in altering the punctuation and sense of the whole phrase. But the difficulty seems a very artificial one. If an emphasis be placed in speaking on the word "it" in this phrase, the meaning is at once clear. With any interpretation the syntax is very mixed and unsatisfactory.

Scene IV

l. 2 *Conceit of god-like amity* · "conception of the divine claims of friendship."

l. 9. *I e* Ordinary kindness brings of necessity (enforces) some pride; how much more kindness to a man like Antonio.

l. 15. Warburton's reading. The word "lineaments" here means "form" Most editors keep a comma after "lineaments," involving the assertion that friendship makes people *physically* like each other.

l. 20. *The semblance of my soul*. *i.e.* the man so like Bassanio, who is as my soul to me.

l. 48. There was indeed need for haste Bassanio only arrives the night before the trial; Portia arrives in the nick of time, during the trial itself. She starts from Belmont, as she herself says in the last scene, very soon after Bassanio; travelling much slower she reaches the ferry not much sooner than Balthasar, who had ridden to Padua *en route*. What happened at Padua we can only surmise. That Portia should have written to the one man who was summoned by the Duke to judge the case (she could not possibly have known this), that he

should be sick, and that he should connive at the monstrous breach of procedure in allowing Portia to take his place, are only a few of those improbabilities which Shakespeare has massed together in the incident of the trial—so skilfully for the most part that we hardly notice them. One of the many unwritten scenes we should like Shakespeare to have given us is that of the meeting of Balthasar with Bellario. The latter must have had a refreshing sense of humour and not much conscience. We can almost hear him chuckle as he writes the letter introducing Portia to the court under the name of her messenger.

l. 51. *Notes:* It is a much-debated question how far Portia was Bellario's mouthpiece, and how far she found the solution by her own wit. (See Appendix.)

l 53. *Traject:* The Folios and Quartos read "tranect." Neither word is found elsewhere; but the Italian word for the ferries at Venice was *traghetti*, and so "traject" is a much more probable reading than the other, and has been adopted by most of the commentators.

l 61. *Accomplished:* "furnished"

l 62. Portia meets the crisis in admirable spirit, "as happy as a lover." Her wit is in fine place here, and helps to give her and Nerissa the confidence they need to carry them through their imposture. This scene, which reveals so well her ready mind, power of decision, and high courage, completes her portrait in our eyes, and makes us wish Bassanio were more worthy of his good fortune.

l. 72. *I could not do withal:* a common Elizabethan phrase for "I could not help it."

l. 77. *Bragging Jacks:* cf. "Much Ado about Nothing," V. i. 91. "Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops."

l. 80. Portia makes rather coarse fun of Nerissa's hesitating question as a drastic way of putting heart in her. Nerissa is not of the same metal as her mistress, though she plays her part well enough when the time comes.

Scene v

Life goes placidly on in happy Belmont; fools jest and lovers chaff in the very house from which the chief

characters have rushed post-haste to avert a tragedy. Shakespeare places such scenes with consummate skill.

l. 3. *Fear you :* fear *for* you.

ll. 14–15. *Scylla* and *Charybdis* were the rock and the whirlpool which guarded the Straits of Messina—personified and made notorious by ancient writers.

l. 23. *For money :* as we say, " for love or money."

l. 43 *I know my duty :* Lancelot now plays on the word " cover," taking Lorenzo's request to mean not " lay the table," but " put on your hat."

l. 44. *Quarrelling with occasion :* His answers are at odds with the matter in question. Cf. " defy the matter " below.

l. 53. *Discretion :* " discrimination," which is just what Launcelot lacks.

Suited : either " (ill-) arranged," or " dressed up " (in strange guise).

l. 65. *Merit them :* The Folios (which read " mean it it, Is reason ") and Quartos and most commentators differ in their reading here. The most accepted reading " mean it, then In reason " seems untenable, in spite of the numerous and ingenious interpretations offered for the word " mean." " Merit " was first suggested by Pope, who reads " merit it, In reason . . ." This may be correct. But a plural pronoun is needed ; and taking into account the introduction of the word " then" by the 1st Quarto, presumably on some authority, I venture to print " merit them." (I have since found that this emendation was suggested, but rejected, by Clarendon.)

Act IV *Scene* 1

For a discussion of various points of interest raised by this scene see Appendix.

l. 14. Interest is heightened by the delayed entrance of Shylock.

l. 20. *Remorse :* " pity," as nearly always in Shakespeare.

l. 26. *Moiety :* strictly a " half," but here, as often, a " part."

l. 39. *Charter:* Of course, Venice did not, like London, hold her independence by "charter" from any higher authority, but was a free state. Shakespeare never troubles about historical accuracies of this kind, but uses the word which will come home with the right meaning to his audience.

l. 47. *Gaping pig:* Probably a boar's head prepared for table, with a lemon in its mouth. Cf. Nash's "Pierce Penniless" (1592): "Some will take on like a madman if they see a pig come to the table." Others interpret "squealing" pig. Cf. "Henry VIII," V. iv. 3. "Ye rude rascals, leave your gaping."

l. 50. *For affection Masters our passion:* I print Mr. E. J. Thompson's emendation of the Folio's "for affection. Masters of passion." *Affection* is a sudden irrational impulse; *passion* is the mass of deeper feeling or emotion which "affection" calls into play. Most editors adopt Thirlby's reading:

For affection,
Mistress of passion, sways . . .

✓l. 56. *Woollen bag-pipe:* The wind-bag was perhaps covered with a woollen cloth. The word *sounds* right—*i.e.* it gives the right "harmless and necessary" impression, and so we may reject the numerous emendations, though Capell's "wawling" is attractive—if unsuitable in the context.

l. 60. *Losing suit:* a suit which brings no material gain with it.

l. 68. *With the Jew:* To understand the general attitude towards Shylock, it is sufficient to study the emphasis given to the word "Jew," especially when he is worsted; even Portia uses the word like a lash.

ll. 86–87. These two lines put the position with startling clearness. Any appeal to mercy is based on a recognition of the moral unworthiness of all men Shylock despises this kind of argument; to him the law is not a means to a higher end, but an end in itself. He is "doing no wrong" legally, and so claims that he "stands for justice." And though the "justice" by which he is eventually worsted seems to most people but a caricature of true justice, yet his indifference to all higher motives robs him of much of our sympathy.

l. 96. *"The slaves are ours":* Shylock here strikes home; this is just what they would have said, and what slave-owners have said from the beginning. To him it is the complete justification of his position To us it shows that the one claim was in reality no less barbarous than the other

l. 112. *A tainted wether:* Is this merely a kind of gloomy modesty, or was Antonio's constitutional melancholy the result of physical weakness?

l. 126. *Inexorable:* The original reading was "inexecrable," a word found nowhere else, and of doubtful meaning; it was probably a misprint. The later Folios read "inexorable."

l. 127. *For thy life · i.e.* for allowing thee to live.

l. 129. *Pythagoras ·* His philosophy seems to have been amusing London about this time. Cf. "Twelfth Night," IV II. 54

l. 132. Up till quite a late period animals were tried and punished for offences like human beings. A cow was tried and executed in France in 1740.

l. 148. Bellario must have had considerable respect for and confidence in his young cousin, to put his reputation into her hands in this fashion. But it is uncertain how far he knew what Portia's line of action would be. (See Appendix.)

l. 168. *Take your place: i.e.* as judge. We must remember that Portia comes to judge the case, not to plead on one side or the other. From this moment Shylock's whole attention is on her; the Duke has ceased to be the deciding factor. This curious procedure is paralleled in Spanish law; but it is essential to the plot here, and is only one of the legal shocks in store for us

l. 182. "This speech about mercy," says Hazlitt, "is very well; but there are 1000 finer ones in Shakespeare." Yet, since it is blessed (or cursed) with a Moral, it is a favourite with those who recite poetry or make other people learn it; a development which is apt to blind the reader to the fact that, though rhetorical and in places unnatural, it has considerable power, and would probably be sure of a good reception from an audience somewhat daunted by Shylock's logic. For the question as to whether this is a genuine appeal by

Portia, or merely a way of giving Shylock more rope with which to hang himself, see the Appendix.

Strain'd : " constrained." Portia raises the question to a higher plane. " Compulsion " simply is not in point.

l. 212. *Truth : i.e.* any true desire for justice.

l. 216. Here we seem to hear the voice of Bellario , that way of escape was barred.

l. 221. *Daniel :* When he gave judgment against the elders the Daniel of the " History of Susannah " is described as a " young child "

l. 246. *Hath full relation to :* applies to, justifies.

l. 255. The introduction of this curious point—why was it left to Antonio's enemy to provide a doctor ?—is clearly intended to alienate all sympathy from Shylock. He must needs be painted as black as possible, if we are to tolerate his treatment afterwards.

l. 280. A little interlude—once again placed with unerring accuracy just before the crisis—designed to remind us of the somewhat submerged identity of Portia.

l. 303. The crisis of the play There are two things to notice between this point and the exit of Shylock. In the first place, legal expositions not being very akin to poetry, these hundred lines are about the least poetical Shakespeare ever wrote ; the interest lies purely in the situation and not at all in the language, an unusual thing with this writer. Secondly, Shakespeare having succeeded in alienating our sympathy from Shylock, now does his best to win it back again, by setting Gratiano at him and by making even Portia rather malicious. Gratiano, who has already proved himself a bad loser, now shows the other side of his nature, and his insolent crowings over a triumph he has done nothing to win make any thoughtful reader of the play disgusted with him and all he represents. But how the " groundlings" must have loved him, and how Shakespeare—we cannot help feeling—knew they would.

l. 313. *As thou urgest justice :* Portia drives home this point again and again, which is such a good one (granted the legal improbabilities) that perhaps we may forgive the bitter way in which she does it ; even she is not proof against the prejudices of her time. The boy who acted Portia must have delighted in these pages.

l. 322. An old ballad (" The Northern Lord ") puts it rather pleasantly .—

" The knight in green said, ' Mr. Jew,
There's nothing else but flesh your due ;
Then see no drop of blood you shed,
For if you do, off goes your head.' "

l. 326. *In the substance, Or the division :* if the difference be the whole substance of a scruple, or even a twentieth part of a scruple.

l. 344. Melodramatic fitness requires that Shylock shall not go scot free ; and so the law of Venice reveals yet another amazing aspect (See Appendix.)

l. 378. Antonio's " mercy " is somewhat hard to fathom. At first sight it seems to consist, not in any abatement of his own claim, but in a request to the Duke to remit even the fine which he had proposed to exact in lieu of the state's half of Shylock's goods, except that he is willing that his own half should go intact to Lorenzo on Shylock's death.

But there is considerable doubt as to the meaning of *in use*. There are two possible explanations if we keep the original reading. 1. That Antonio should keep the money in *trust* for Lorenzo, and not touch it himself—this would be very self-sacrificing of him, but not very business-like. Why not give it to Lorenzo at once? 2. That he should take the interest from it himself (yet we know how he objects to interest) and leave the capital untouched In either case it is hard to see why *Shylock's* death should be the time-limit named. Johnson proposed to read " upon *my* death," and with this reading and taking the second interpretation above, the meaning becomes clear. We can hardly blame Antonio for taking something for himself, considering he was now a bankrupt.

l. 382. *The gentleman that lately stole his daughter:* The delicate irony of this incomparable phrase is probably not intended ; in any case, it would be above the heads of the groundlings. The metre charmingly emphasises the word " gentleman," as it does " favour," two lines further on.

l. 385. It is a curious fact that some editors argue that Antonio was impelled by kindness to make this provi-

sion, and so give Shylock a chance of salvation ! It needs only a cursory reading of the play to show that this one blow is more than all the rest ; it reduces Shylock from a defiant and dazed but still fighting opponent to a feeble old man, crushed and utterly undone. Read Browning's " Holy Cross Day " for an exposition of what the Jews must have thought of the conversion business ; if indeed it is not enough to read through what Shylock himself says of Christianity. Gratiano himself could not have devised a more malicious revenge.

l. 389. *Recant the pardon :* Another insight into the curious methods of procedure they must have had at Venice.

l. 397. This reference to a trial by jury is, of course, purely Elizabethan. Venice had no such thing.

l. 398. *Exit Shylock :* " So ends the tragedy of Shylock, and the air is heavy with it long after the babble of the love-plot has begun again " (Sir Walter Raleigh).

l 404. *Gratify :* to " make oneself pleasant to " (Latin *gratus*). Generally used, as here, of giving material gratification in the form of a fee.

l. 410. *Cope :* originally to " come to blows with," so to " encounter " and here to " match " the reward with the deed. It is an amusing thing to see Bassanio offering Portia her own money.

Scene II

The incident of the ring has been skilfully introduced to carry our minds away from the tragedy of the trial to the pleasant little comedy in which the play is to close. This scene is thus a double transition ; it divides two of the three main scenes of the play, and it also suggests to us that we are not merely to have a tame " winding-up " of the play in the last act, but that there is fresh matter to come.

l. 15. *Old swearing :* " old " is common in Shakespeare as a kind of intensive epithet. We, or some of us. to this day talk of a " high old time."

Act V *Scene* I

There are few passages more beautiful than the poetry with which this scene opens We pass from the doubtful victory of the Trial Scene, where life was passion and anger and disaster, into the peace of this moonlit garden where lovers speak in words as simple as they are exquisite. Into the first few minutes Shakespeare has so crowded his art and genius that at every reading or hearing of the dialogue we find fresh cause for wonder He calls up eight names out of the mist of legend, and in a dozen words paints each old story of love forsaken or ill-starred, of witchcraft or sad destiny ; and forthwith we are taken out of this garden and this night into the world where the eternal lover sighs to the unchanging moon. And then, with consummate art, he draws us back, first to the happy lovers we had forgotten, then to the world outside them which *they* had forgotten ; so we pass from the height of lyric poetry into the story again, scarcely aware that we have travelled so far, so gently have we come And beyond this there is more poetry to come, and at the end a happy comedy to drive (if it can) from our minds that " I am content," which has haunted us ever since it was uttered.

ll. 1–14. The classical stories were probably taken by Shakespeare direct from Chaucer ; all, except that of Troilus, are of very early origin.

l. 4. *Troilus*, a Trojan, loved Cressida, the daughter of Calchas, a priest who deserted to the Greeks during the siege of Troy ; she proved as faithless as her father.

l 7. Pyramus, thinking his beloved Thisbe eaten by a lion, slew himself, and Thisbe, finding his body later, took her own life with the same sword, a tragedy intensified like that of Romeo and Juliet by its needlessness. But this is the last time it was ever taken seriously ; for not long after Shakespeare drowned it in laughter in " A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

l. 10. *Dido*, Queen of Carthage, beloved and deserted by Aeneas, is the one passionate figure of the " Aeneid."

l. 13. *Medea*, by means of magic herbs, renewed to life and to youth Jason's father, whom she had herself slain.

l. 25. Here the melody ends on the keynote "night," and we pass—almost without knowing it—back to the speech of men; but Stephano has caught something of the infection, when he says that Portia

Doth stray about
By holy crosses

l. 39. Launcelot comes in imitating the horn of the "post" or courier.

l. 54. The interruption is past, after it has satisfied us that the main characters are at hand, and we are back in the moonlight of the garden. But, for all the beauty of Lorenzo's speech, something of the magic has been taken from the night; the lovers are now observing nature, no more just at one with it.

l. 59. *Patines:* the small plates of gold used in the Eucharist. The Folios read "patterns."

l. 61. Shakespeare and Milton both make beautiful use of the old Greek theory of the "music of the spheres." Cf. also the passage in Job (xxxviii. 7), where "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

l. 62. *Cherubins:* "cherubin" is really a variant of the Hebrew plural "cherubim," but was made by the Elizabethans into a new English singular.

l. 63. *Such harmony: i e.* of such kind is the harmony of our souls, which is shut up unheard in the "muddy vesture" of our bodies.

l. 66. *Wake Diana:* The moon has gone under a cloud. Cf. l. 92.

l. 70. *The reason is:* Lorenzo is a little prone to explain things and point them out. Some critics have seen in him a budding schoolmaster.

l. 85. Cassius, in "Julius Caesar," is dismissed as one who "hears no music."

l. 90. The spell still works. Portia says nothing more beautiful than this line; more wonderful still, she can moralise upon the beauty and yet not spoil it She is once more the Portia we know and love best, whose natural home is Belmont (how is it that all the characters show us the best that is in them at Belmont?), and whose "strayings at wayside crosses" have wiped from her heart all the bitterness of the encounter with Shy-

lock. Nerissa is, as always, not quite in harmony with her mistress. She lags behind in feeling, as she did in spirit and invention

l. 99. *Respect:* reference to circumstances

l. 102. A curious argument: "the songs are of equal sweetness, when no one attends to either." The train of thought is really taken up two lines below.

l. 109. *Endymion* was beloved and kissed by the moon as he lay asleep on Mt Latmus.

l 129. The old pun, by now getting a little stale.

l 138. *i.e.* I am well quit of my obligation on his behalf, I am no more "bound for him."

l 141. *Breathing courtesy:* cf. "courteous breath" in II. ix. 90.

l. 142. The final comedy now begins. Portia and Nerissa insist that their husbands must have given their rings to other women; so there is plenty of opportunity for jests upon unfaithfulness, which was a favourite topic of humour—generally rather coarse humour—with the Elizabethans. Fortunately the treatment of it here is, on the whole, light and witty, and there is little that can offend modern taste; it is a pity this cannot always be said. But no two centuries ever find the same things funny.

l. 144. *Gelt:* "mutilated."

l 160. It must be a relief to Nerissa, after her long association with Portia, to have someone to deal with whom she could be sure of out-talking. Gratiano, like most buffoons, was a dull wit; perhaps that is the real reason why Nerissa married him. But Gratiano—all unknowing—gets his own back in the next few lines.

l 162. *Scrubbed:* "stunted"

l 206. *i.e.* to press for a thing regarded as sacred.

l. 209. Bassanio comes out in his best light in his sincere apology; he says nothing of Antonio's appeal to him and makes no excuses.

l. 243. *Double:* in two senses.

l. 251. *Advisedly:* "deliberately."

l. 257. This is the second half of the jest, carefully rehearsed, of course; we now have the same theme treated from the opposite side. After upbraiding their husbands with unfaithfulness, the two wives now pre-

tend to have themselves deceived them. But the latter are getting angry, and Antonio unhappy, so Portia almost at once " calls it off."

l 260. *In lieu of this :* in return for this.

l. 263. *Cuckolds :* husbands whose wives have been unfaithful.

l. 273. We had forgotten all about Antonio's losses, and this forced and improbable salvage of three of his ships is introduced in a way which makes it seem all the more unlikely. Shakespeare obviously had contracted to make a thoroughly happy ending, and drags it in thus—though in Portia's quite natural refusal to say how she (of all people) should be the first bearer of the news, we perhaps catch a suggestion of what Shakespeare himself thought of his own device. Antonio's answer at any rate is a most natural one !

l. 293. " Shakespeare's landscape, his moonlight and sunlight and darkness, his barren heaths and verdurous parks, are all agents in the service of dramatic poetry. ' It is almost morning,' says Portia, and the words have an indescribable human value " (Sir Walter Raleigh).

l. 296. *Upon inter'gatories :* The practice of the Court of Queen's Bench, as Lord Campbell tells us, is to extract answer upon oath from the defendant (" charge upon interrogatories ") before sentence is passed.

APPENDIX A

THE TRIAL SCENE

The "Law of Venice"

Valiant spirits in every generation have tried to bring this phenomenon into the world of actuality. Commentators are at pains to "justify" Shakespeare's legal knowledge. Doyle parallels certain decisions from cases in Nicaragua and Mexico, a recent writer (Mr. H J. Griston, in "Shaking the Dust from Shakespeare") concludes that Shakespeare must be writing of the Venice of A.D. 311–320, since in this period alone were the more salient features of the scene legally possible. But these efforts are all based on a misunderstanding: they attribute to Shakespeare too great a knowledge of fact and too little knowledge of his art. The "Law of Venice" is a potentiality until he gives it life. It is a means to an end, and its incongruities are merely conveniences for the attainment of the main issue. A consideration of some of these incongruities will surely convince us that such a law can be modelled on no group of laws which has ever existed.

First of all, we have the appearance of Portia as the "young doctor." Bellario appears to be a lawyer no less extraordinary than the law of which he is an interpreter. He is in such a position that apparently this *cause célèbre* can be settled by his sole interpretation of the law and of the bond. Moreover he seems to have the power to delegate this legal dictatorship by letter to a man (not even to a man, as it happens) unknown to the Duke and to all his court. And yet this pundit of the law-court risks his whole career and reputation on his cousin's ability, and is apparently so little disturbed by his irregular action that he delights in writing a letter packed with all the lies at his disposal to

introduce her. It is surely time commentators began whitewashing this neglected character; he stands in as sore need of justification as the law itself.

Secondly we come to the most criticised provisions of the law, the two legal quibbles by which Antonio escapes. These, as a matter of fact, admit of justification in a formal sense—for, in early days, when laws were written with a general import, and without much attempt to meet special cases, a judge was empowered to interpret them in the light of "equity"; and Portia's strictures here might well come under the heading of such an interpretation. But in a wider sense they are the least justifiable provisions of all, since they are in direct antagonism to common sense. Common sense tells us that to take a pound of flesh obviously involves the spilling of blood, just as it involves breaking the skin; and common sense ridicules the idea of a man being at fault if he takes *less* than the penalty to which he is entitled. Shylock, we feel, is too worthy an antagonist to be so meanly defeated. And it is all the more a tribute to Shakespeare's dramatic power to realise that he can make credible and impressive a "catastrophe" which rests on so weak a foundation. He was not responsible for these quibbles, since they are an essential part of the old story; and he has shown no small skill in making them plausible—at any rate, at first encounter.

But the third feature of this curious law is the most original of all. Up to the moment of Shylock's discomfiture we are convinced, despite ourselves, both that his bond is legal in itself, and that its fulfilment will be attended with no penalty to the Jew. We may, indeed, marvel at the law which would allow such a bond, but recognising that such sanction is necessary to the story we are not disposed to cavil at it. And it is abundantly clear—not only from the attitude of Shylock, but from the silence of his opponents—that he is at liberty to take his pound of flesh and go on his way rejoicing. Yet when he abandons his penalty—for though the motive is fear his act is legally a renunciation of what is owed to him—then at once the poor man is told that the law has another hold on him, and that his property and very life are forfeit because he has conspired against a Venetian citizen; whereas if he had persisted in that "conspiracy" the law would have been powerless to touch

him. Moreover if he had accepted Portia's first suggestion and accepted "thrice the money" one gathers he would have been given it; yet in the end he is not allowed the bare sum owing to him. Curious "justice" indeed. Clearly Shakespeare is not drawing from legal knowledge, since it is possible to state without fear of contradiction that no law in the world could ever have led to so ridiculous a situation. But dramatically this point is as essential as it is legally impossible; for Shylock must be punished, say the groundlings, and Shakespeare was too prudent a man to disappoint his audience in such a main issue. So the Law takes on another obliging twist, and all is well.

After this it is perhaps unreasonable to expect anyone to be surprised at the possibility of the duke "recanting" a pardon just pronounced in open court, which is only a fitting conclusion to the legal nightmare.

Antonio's Friends

We hear much of Antonio's many friends—What were they about, to let him come to such a pass? They talk with gravity and concern about the approach of the day of payment and his inability to meet it; they express suitable horror at the prospect of Shylock's taking the penalty; yet when it comes to providing a matter of 3000 ducats to buy him off they are helpless. Was Antonio the only rich man in Venice? The ducats are plentiful enough when it is too late; and even if these were Portia's we can hardly suppose that the idea of paying Antonio's debts while there was yet time was one beyond the combined intelligence of his friends—or that it was completely out of their power to raise the sum. They do not even tell Bassanio of his trouble till it is too late. And in the trial itself, although Shylock is criticised for not providing a surgeon, it apparently never occurred to his friends to do this themselves.

Disguises

In the matter of disguises we are concerned with a convention very popular with all dramatists, but especially with the Elizabethans. The convention is that a disguised person is *ipso facto* unrecognisable. It is a bad conven-

tion, since it runs counter to reality. The real thrill about disguises in life comes from the ever-present possibility of their being penetrated But your dramatist has only to write " enter Portia, for Balthasar," and her husband may sit for an hour within six feet of her, hear her talk, argue with her, and even be snubbed by her for being ready to sacrifice his wife for his friend's life—and yet he will not know her, and *may* not know her, for convention's sake. But of course we must not cavil at so innocent a piece of machinery, without which we should be robbed of the sweet perplexities of " Twelfth Night " and the happy triumph of Rosalind, as well as of Portia's great adventure. A heroine disguised delights the playgoers, who look ahead with an intimate pleasure to her blossoming forth in her own good time—but a disguised heroine unmasked, oh, the pity it would be!

Portia's Decision

It is often asked how far Bellario was responsible for Portia's decision. She never saw Bellario; all she has from him is a few " notes "; and his general acquaintance with the case would hardly admit of a judgement depending on so minute a study of the bond. It is true that he says she is " furnished with his opinion," but what is one lie the more in that amazing letter? Probably he merely indicated possible lines of attack, and emphasised the importance of not setting the law aside.

But, if we decide in Portia's favour, there is another point of no small interest. It is generally assumed that she comes to the court fully armed with her solution. On this theory the famous speech about mercy is usually taken to be a genuine and generous appeal to Shylock's better nature, and her ultimate verdict his just penalty for having refused to listen to it. If we could really think this, all would be well. But it is curious that she should be genuinely willing that he should not only escape scot-free but take " thrice the money," when afterwards she presses home her advantage with such ruthless vigour. If Portia had maintained the high ideals of her speech and been a little less vengeful when she had the upper hand, it would be easier to credit her with generosity. But, granted that she knew all the time how easily she could conquer him, and granted also

that she knew, from Jessica and Bassanio if from no one else, how obdurate Shylock was to such pleadings, does this speech about mercy ring quite so finely in our ears? Is she not, rather, practically certain that he will be unmoved by it, and is not her offer of "thrice the money" merely designed to induce him to refuse it "in open court" and so be defrauded of his debt afterwards? Are not, in fact, all her vigorous statements of his bond's validity and all her little manœuvres which delay the action designed to increase the disaster of his disillusionment? If so, she is surely more like a cat playing with a mouse than the incarnation of "perfect justice combined with perfect mercy" Indeed, however we try to palliate it, the contrast between her precept and her practice is an unpleasant one, and distressing in so fine a character as Portia. But Shakespeare was not writing a morality play, and we may excuse the drastic treatment of Shylock on many grounds; it is demanded by the situation, it is the fit answer to—

My deeds upon my head, I crave the law,

and, finally, it is certainly what would have happened in such a Venice, among such Christians. But it is hard that Portia should be a ringleader in the matter, after all her fine speeches; it would be intolerable to think her capable of making those speeches with her final course ready and decided upon

It is therefore chiefly to save Portia that it is worth considering the other alternative,—though in addition the dramatic value of the Act is certainly heightened if it be accepted. According to this theory Portia comes to the court unprepared in all except this, that her native wit, aided perhaps by Bellario's advice, is on the alert to find some flaw in the bond. Her cousin's experience would tell him that most difficulties can be wriggled out of by a little legal ingenuity; and knowing her as he did he was probably satisfied that her exceptionally quick mind would find the way of escape. All then follows as he foresaw. At first she tries the straightforward appeal to mercy—and mark how all this passage gains by such an interpretation. It is now no artificial or theatrical display, no giving of more rope to Shylock for him to hang himself with more

completely, but a desperate, almost a forlorn hope. When he asks what " compulsion " is to make him merciful, she raises the whole discussion on to a higher plane, and when she makes her last appeal—" Take thrice thy money , bid me tear the bond "—she wins our hearts, not because she is now master of the situation, but because her cause seems lost ; she has staked all on her eloquence and failed.

Then it is, and not till then, that she begins to examine the bond, which she saw for the first time about a minute ago. Apart from the dramatic propriety of this second interpretation, it is, of course, strongly supported by the fact that her verdict rests on an exact knowledge of the document which never leaves Shylock's possession until she asks for it after her speech about mercy. And now the dramatic tension is again acute. Her delays and needless questions are, on this reading, not merely designed to heighten expectation and to torture both Antonio and the Jew, but they are a skilful playing for time, postponements of the inevitable decision while her swift brain goes this way and that, seeking a way out It seems probable, and dramatically it would be more than fitting, that Shylock himself should show the solution For when she makes the suggestion that he provide a surgeon, he rejects it brutally with the words, " I cannot find it, 'tis not in the bond ! " Here at last is the clue for which she has been seeking ; and at once she gets Antonio talking, that she may have yet more time in which to follow it up. Shylock has again and again demanded the bond, the whole bond ; but now he goes further and says he will have nothing but the bond, and with these words he is delivered into the hands of the enemy. Moreover, the transition from the thought of " surgeon " to that of " blood " is swift to a brain so nimble as that of Portia, and once it is made there is no more hope for Shylock.

Nothing, of course, can reconcile us altogether to the way she presses home her victory, both as regards the terms themselves and the tone in which she utters them. Even Gratiano scarcely outdoes her in malice. But such behaviour is surely more natural and more pardonable if we regard it as the reaction after her great suspense, a very human repayment of her anguish to the cause of it ; and it is her relief which shows itself in vindictiveness. Even

the best of women tend towards malice at such times, especially when it is cruelty and meanness that they are attacking, and the *saeva indignatio*, which Shylock's conduct excites in the most sympathetic of us, must find some vent. But let us rather think of it as an impulse than a plot, a display of human feeling rather than of inhuman cunning, so that we may be able to take to our hearts again the radiant Portia of the Fifth Act.

APPENDIX B

1. The Life of Shakespeare

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, one of the leading citizens of the town, was a glover who also traded in agricultural produce and possibly did some farming. It is assumed that he gave his son the ordinary education of a boy of his class at the local grammar school. Nothing is definitely known of the early life of the dramatist, however, until his marriage at the age of eighteen to Anne Hathaway, a woman some eight years older than himself. About 1584 he left Stratford and came to London. Here he must soon have joined a company of players, but there is no record of his activities until 1592, in which year it appears from a satirical comment made on him by Robert Greene that he was becoming well known as a playwright. His first published work, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, appeared in 1593 ; it was followed by *Lucrece* in the next year. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. We next hear of him as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company of actors (who became " the King's men " after James's accession), and he probably remained in association with them for the rest of his working life From 1599 the company occupied the Globe Theatre on the Bankside in Southwark. As an actor Shakespeare is said to have taken the parts of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. As a playwright he was the mainstay of the company ; for about fifteen years he provided them on the average with two plays a year. His growing prosperity was indicated by his purchase, in 1597, of New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. About 1610 he left London and went to live as a retired gentleman at his Stratford home. He died there in 1616.

2. The Order of the Plays

In the collected edition of Shakespeare's plays published in 1623 no indication was given of the dates when they were first produced. Even in the case of the previously issued Quartos of some of the separate plays the dates on the title-pages are not to be taken as those of the earliest productions. The dating of Shakespeare's works is therefore a matter for conjecture based on such indirect evidence as is available. The following list gives an order which would be generally accepted :—

1590–1596

Henry VI, Pts. I, II, and III.
Richard III
Comedy of Errors
Titus Andronicus
Taming of the Shrew
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Love's Labour's Lost
Romeo and Juliet
Richard II
Midsummer Night's Dream

1596–1600

King John
Merchant of Venice
Henry IV, Pts. I and II.
Much Ado About Nothing
Henry V
Julius Caesar
Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

1600–1608

Hamlet
Troilus and Cressida
All's Well that Ends Well
Measure for Measure
Othello

Macbeth
King Lear
Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Timon of Athens

1608–1613

Pericles
Cymbeline
Winter's Tale
Tempest
Henry VIII
Two Noble Kinsmen

3. The Elizabethan Theatre

Shakespeare's plays were originally acted under conditions very different from those of to-day. Playhouses were new institutions—the first of them had been built in Shoreditch in 1576—and the technique of play-production was in its infancy. Moreover, as the first theatres were by no means like those we know in plan and construction, the dramatists necessarily employed methods that would seem strange to their present-day successors.

In general form the public theatres of Shakespeare's time resembled the galleried inn-yards in which companies of actors had previously set up a temporary stage for their performances. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting into the "yard," which was open to the sky There were no seats on the floor around the stage : the "groundlings" stood and enclosed the actors on three sides. More expensive accommodation was provided in tiers of galleries running right round the building The topmost gallery had a thatched roof. Fashionable young gallants were allowed seats on the stage itself. The plays were performed in daylight, usually in the afternoon. There were some differences between the "public" and the "private" theatres: the private theatres, like the Blackfriars, were roofed, used artificial light, and were attended by a better-class audience. No painted scenery was used ; but some indication of the place represented might be given by such movable properties



THE DE WITT DRAWING OF THE SWAN THEATRE

as a bed or a single small tree symbolising a wood. The stage itself was sheltered by a roof. In the floor there was a trap-door through which ghosts and apparitions rose and descended. This is the explanation of the stage direction " Descends " in connection with the apparitions in *Macbeth*, IV. 1. The main stage could not, of course, be curtained off.

At the back of the platform were two doors through which the actors entered. In the space between these doors was hung a curtain which, when drawn, revealed an inner stage. In this recess Ferdinand and Miranda would have been shown playing their game of chess, and the play-scene in *Hamlet* would have been performed. It could serve also for Lear's hovel, Prospero's cell, or the tomb of the Capulets.

Above the inner stage was a balcony forming part of the lowest gallery running round the house. This upper space could be used for the sleeping-rooms of Macbeth's castle, for Juliet's balcony, or the room in Shylock's house from which Jessica throws down the casket to Lorenzo. The stage direction " Enter Above " frequently found in the old texts means that the actors are to come on to this gallery.

The De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre, here reproduced, is the only clear contemporary pictorial evidence of what one of the Elizabethan playhouses looked like. Even this is probably incorrect in some of the details. The original rough sketch of the theatre made by John de Witt for his *Observationes Londinenses* is lost, but a copy of it made by Arend van Buchell of Utrecht survives.

With regard to the actors who performed on the Elizabethan stage, all that need be said is that they included no women in their companies. Female parts were played by boys. At one time a company consisting entirely of boys—members of the choir of the Chapel Royal—was very popular.

The peculiar conditions of the Elizabethan theatre must be taken into account when we are examining Shakespeare's stage-craft. They explain, for instance, the frequent change of scene which is a characteristic of the plays of the time. The audiences did not demand realism : they were prepared to use their imagination and accept the simplest symbolism as a means of suggesting the place of action. The extreme example of Shakespeare's free treatment of place and time is seen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where he has a

succession of very short scenes located in a variety of widely separated places. The typical modern dramatist would not deal with his material in this way. He works with the knowledge that a change in the supposed place demands a change in scenery, which takes time and may cause an undesirable break in the action. Moreover, every additional "set" required adds considerably to the expense of production. There is good reason, therefore, why a modern play should differ considerably in shape from an Elizabethan play.

The absence of scenery and lighting had other minor but interesting results. The dramatist was compelled, for example, to introduce into the dialogue indications of time and place that would now be superfluous. A famous instance occurs in *Julius Caesar*. In the Orchard Scene the audience is to suppose that it is night. Brutus therefore opens with the remark :—

> I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
> Give guess how near to day.

And throughout the scene the darkness of night is insisted on by the speakers. Similarly, the second act of *Macbeth* begins at night. Hence, when Banquo enters, he is preceded by a torch-bearer, and he talks about the moon and the stars. Again, the description of Macbeth's castle put into the mouth of Duncan and Banquo is introduced not merely for the sake of the lyrical touch very welcome at this point, but in order to give the spectators information which could not be conveyed to the eye by a stage-picture of a castle

Since the actors were playing on an open platform-stage, they had to aim at different effects of grouping from those obtained in the modern theatre, where the proscenium acts like a picture-frame entirely separating performers from spectators. Processions and dancing were freely introduced, and the elaborate costumes worn by the actors gave colour to the scene. The fact that the performers were immediately surrounded by spectators obviated to some extent the difficulty experienced nowadays in speaking the soliloquies and the asides that were a regular part of the old stage convention. There was an intimacy between players and audience

that made it seem not unnatural for a character to allow his private thoughts to be overheard.

Owing to the absence of a curtain for the main stage, the dramatist had to take special measures when he required a scene to end with a definite break in the action. He had to arrange for all his characters to leave the stage. The problem was most serious at the end of the play. The final scene of *Hamlet* illustrates the difficulty. A modern playwright would bring down the curtain at the climax, that is, when Horatio, bending over the body of his dead friend, says :—

> Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

But, on the Elizabethan stage, if the play had ended here, the dead would have had to rise and walk off. To obviate this absurdity, Fortinbras and the English ambassadors are brought in, and the scene is prolonged for Fortinbras to say :—

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage . . .

There is a dead march, and the soldiers carry the bodies of Hamlet and the other dead off the stage.

It may be noted, finally, that the first theatres were used not only for dramatic performances but also for bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and athletic contests. The public liking for exhibitions of bodily skill to some extent influenced the fare provided by the playwrights. Shakespeare, for example, indulged his audiences with the wrestling match in *As You Like It*. This was a genuine contest. Similarly, the broadsword fight at the conclusion of *Macbeth* was a real trial of skill between combatants accustomed to their weapons.