SHAKSPERE'S
MERCHANT OF VENICE
TWENTIETH CENTURY TEXT-BOOKS

EDITED BY

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

EDITED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

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PREFACE

In this edition of *The Merchant of Venice* there is given the customary linguistic explanatory matter, but the chief stress is laid upon the necessary question of the play, viz., the attitude toward Shylock that Shakspere intended the reader or spectator to take. The reader of *The Merchant of Venice* who has dipped here and there into the literature of comment on the play has doubtless been bewildered by the irreconcilable views of learned expositors as to all the characters in the play. An attempt is here made to suggest a clue, this clue being the difference in the attitude of these expositors toward Shylock and the effect of their attitude toward Shylock on their attitude toward all the other characters in the play—the theme so overwhelmingly, not to say crushingly, developed by Robert Browning in *The Ring and the Book*.

A treatment of the play such as is here given, on the part of young readers even, is suggested to preparatory schools by the character of the college-entrance examinations on this play often set, examples of which are given at the close of the Exercises in Interpretation, pages 165 to 174. It is hoped that the young reader will be taught answers for deliverance, or at least assisted thereto, by the discussion of this subject in the Introduction to the play here given, and that the Exercises in Interpretation will prove suggestive and stimulating in directing the young reader to a method of study suggested by colleges and universities to preparatory schools by the character of the
questions set at college-entrance examinations, and indeed directly encouraged, as for example by Harvard's recommendation, "Pupils should of course be made to understand what they read as they go along; but attention should be fixed, not on unimportant details of substance or of style, but on the significance and spirit of the whole. In studying a tragedy of Shakspere, for example, far less time should be given to the discussion of details than to the march of events, the play of character, the main lines of the plot, the significance of the whole as a work of genius."

Acknowledgments are due to the authors and publishers of the works quoted in the following pages, especially to the illustrious Shakspere scholar, of whose worth the wide world is not ignorant, whose Variorum editions (J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia) are an exhaustless treasure store to students and interpreters of Shakspere, a treasure store, which, like the wealth of the good Antonio, lies all unlocked to their occasions. The works of many others, referred to in the following pages, are also invaluable—stimulating to approval or disapproval. Every reader who is attempting a somewhat careful study of *The Merchant of Venice*, or of any other Shaksperean play, will have at hand, as a matter of course, if possible, a copy of Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar* (The Macmillan Company).
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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

INTRODUCTION

"Look Here, upon This Picture, and on This"

The cry of Hamlet to his mother in the closet-scene, "Look here, upon this picture, and on this," rises easily to the lips of one busied with the literature of comment on The Merchant of Venice. For interpreters of the play differ greatly in their attitude toward Shylock—and their attitude toward Shylock influences greatly, as a matter of course, their attitude toward the other characters of the play. Shylock is, indeed, according to the exposition of many learned judges, in reality the hero of the play—as he is, for example, to the editor of the great English Dictionary of National Biography, who has of late written, "For Shylock (not the merchant Antonio) is the hero of the play, and the main interest culminates in the Jew's trial and discomfiture."¹ While, on the contrary, Gervinus, in his Shakespeare Commentaries, has entered a vigorous protest against the 'lowness' and 'madness' that have gone so far as "to make on the stage a martyr and hero out of this outcast of humanity." So also to the most honored of Shaksperean scholars, of whose worth the wide world is not ignorant, Shylock is (up to a

certain point) "simply a cruel and vindictive creditor." And this incomparable Shakspere scholar is clearly convinced that "this is not a 'tendenz-drama,' wherein is infused a subtle plea of toleration for the Jews." ¹

So opposite, then, are the points of view from which the characters of the play are at times presented, both in literary criticism and upon the stage, that the reader—before making for himself a final choice, before declaring precipitately,

"Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!"—

might well, quite in accord with the spirit of Portia's plea to Bassanio, lest he do choose wrong, suffer himself to be detained 'some month or two' in a survey of the field of criticism concerning this play, with an open mind looking meanwhile here upon this picture and on this, and looking ever, as a matter of course, upon the text as well from which these pictures are, more or less justifiably, drawn.

**First Interpretation—Shylock a Wolfish, Bloody, Inexorable Dog**

Of the various interpretations of the character of Shylock one makes him throughout a mere bloodthirsty villain; a stony adversary, an inhuman wretch; a misbeliever, cut-throat dog; a dog Jew; the most impenetrable cur that ever kept with men. In the downfall of this 'damn'd, inexorable dog,' whose desires are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous, even though the downfall be brought about by means of a palpable legal quibble, they wholly rejoice, agreeing with Bassanio that to do this great

right it is quite justifiable to do a little wrong,\(^1\) if one may thereby curb this cruel devil of his will. And untroubled by any recognition of some right in wrong, of humanity in inhumanity, on the part of Shylock, they give their sympathies unreservedly to his antagonists in the play; they are content with the good Antonio’s ‘expectoratory method’ of manifesting his distaste for this particular member of the Hebrew race; they take unalloyed delight in Jessica’s marriage out of her race and religion, offering excuses for “the dry eyes—nay, laughing lips—with which she departs”; they even pass lightly over her robbery of her father’s jewels and the exchange of her dead mother’s betrothal ring for a monkey, and, protesting that she is daughter neither to his manners nor his blood, with Gratiano they exclaim admiringly, “by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.”

The readers who thus interpret the play pay little heed to the touches by which, to others, Shakspere has humanized the character of Shylock and made his desire for revenge, if not admirable, yet, fierce as it is, comprehensible at least. And, far from being offended by what some of the less rigorous souls of a debile age have dis-

\(^1\) "As long as Shylock was held to be a wolfish, bloody, inexorable dog, it made but little difference how he was defeated or his victim saved; a Jew had no rights which a Christian was bound to respect. Even charming, gentle Mrs. Inchbald believed that Shakspere’s purpose in writing the play was to ‘hold up the Jew to detestation,’ and such undoubtedly was the general impression created by the ‘snarling malignity’ of Macklin’s Shylock [1741].”—Furness, p. 403.

Mrs. Inchbald’s opinions in regard to dramatic literature were evidently esteemed by her contemporaries, as she edited with biographical and critical remarks three collections of plays, aggregating forty-two volumes, in addition to writing nineteen dramas of her own, some of which were for a time, according to the Encyclopædia Britannica, ‘very successful.’
praised as the contemptuously brutal treatment accorded to Shylock and his race by the good Antonio and his friends, they are like with Antonio to spit on him again and spurn him too, and with Gratiano to exclaim, "O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!"

**Second Interpretation—Shylock the Depositary of the Vengeance of a Race**

In striking contrast with this traditional interpretation is the more recent view of those who, passing lightly by or at least accounting for\(^1\) the pitilessness of Shylock's desire for revenge, cannot pass lightly by the injustice, indeed what appears to them the inhumanity, of the treatment of Shylock and his race by the Jew-hating but otherwise noble-minded Antonio, who took every opportunity to void his rheum upon Shylock's beard, to spurn

\(^1\) [In Shylock] "we see the remains of a great and noble nature, out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated injuries."—*Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters*, H. N. Hudson, Ginn and Company, Boston, p. 291.

"Chronologically, the earliest voice, as far as I know, which was raised in defence of Shylock and in denunciation of the illegality of his defeat is that of an Anonymous Contributor to a volume *Essays by a Society of Gentlemen at Exeter*, printed in 1792. The Essay is called 'An Apology for the Character and Conduct of Shylock,' and is signed 'T. O.' The Essayist's plea for Shylock is, that if his character is cruel it was made so by ill-treatment; that the derision with which his daughter's flight was treated was calculated to embitter the sweetest nature, let alone that of an outcast of society: that his Mosaic law authorized him to exact 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth'; that money-making was the sole occupation that the laws suffered him to follow," etc.—Furness, p. 403.

Professor Lounsbury refers in his *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, p. 214, to the contention, in 1777, of "a member of the University of Oxford" that *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* are really tragedies. It would appear, then, that, as early as 1777, to this member of the University of Oxford the treatment of Shylock in the trial-scene was not altogether satisfactory.
him and spit upon his Jewish gaberidine—as much for hate of Shylock's "sacred nation" as for use of what was his own. "Antonio," says Brandes,¹ for example, "has insulted and baited Shylock in the most brutal fashion on account of his faith and his blood." And Brandes adds further that with the treatment Shylock has suffered he could not but become what he is. "Is there any cause in nature," asks Hales,² "that makes these hard hearts?" And his reply in substance is that the Christian who looks frankly and faithfully at this work will not find matter for exultation but only for shame and sadness. Shylock has been made the hard, savage, relentless creature we see him by long and cruel oppression. He inherited a nature embittered by centuries of insult and outrage. 'Sufferance' had been and was the badge of all his tribe.

The character and deeds of Shylock looked on thus acquire to these interpreters new significance. He is no longer to them a mere individual, possessed by a fierce hate sprung from bargains thwarted or from individual wrongs—friends cooled, enemies heated. Again and again he is reviled as a dog Jew. He thus becomes the representative of a race—of a shamefully wronged race, as may perhaps appear to the interpreters under consideration.

"In the Shylock of Shakespeare," Professor Lounsbury of Yale has said,³ "is concentrated the wrath of a

³ Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, Thomas R. Lounsbury, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1901, p. 338.

The reader will not, as a matter of course, assume that the whole point of view of any commentator is given in a single quotation.

Professor Lounsbury's chief care here is not to justify Shylock,
race turning upon its oppressors—a race conscious of the importance of the part it has played in the past, with its long line of law-givers and prophets to which all nations turn, equally conscious of the misery it has endured and is continuing to endure in the present. As it has been great in suffering, so will it be great in vengeance. Entreaties are useless; threats are mere empty breath. Pity will not soften the heart nor obloquy cause it to yield."

Professor Boas of Oxford has written of Shylock, "The magnificent outburst in which he vindicates against a brutal fanaticism the essential equality of human conditions in Jew and Christian is born of the blood and tears of centuries of martyrdom: it is the exceeding bitter cry, not so much of the solitary usurer as of the entire Hebrew race turning on its bed of pain."¹

but to come fairly off in his purpose of illustrating the 'art' with which Shakspere makes us reconciled to the conclusion of the trial-scene—the greater the difficulty, the greater the art. In this case 'the task set before the poet was one of peculiar difficulty' . . . "For in spite of the evil repute in which the Jewish race had been held for centuries, Shakespeare could not but have felt that in following the story out to its conclusion—a conclusion which was probably as well known to the audience as to himself—he could hardly fail to outrage to a certain extent our latent natural sense of justice by a result which purports to be in strictest accordance with justice. Whatever may have been the guilt and bloodthirstiness of Shylock, one cannot get entirely over the impression that he is a hardly used man." The more noteworthy then is the art of the poet, who—though he shows us Shylock 'exalted by wrath,' 'the wrath of a race turning upon its oppressors,' and by "that sublimity of hate which awes us by its intensity, and gives to malignity a character almost of grandeur"—yet "reconciles us [and O the wonder of it, the art of it—it was a task of peculiar difficulty, requiring extraordinary skill']—yet the poet shows us that 'which alone reconciles us] to the result of the trial, which in one sense is an utter travesty of justice."

In the *Jahrbuch* of the Shakespeare Society of Germany, Herr Honigman has said, "Here it is that Shylock figures as the deputy and avenger of his whole shamefully maltreated race. In his tones we hear the protest, crying to heaven, of human rights trodden under foot, against the love of humanity paraded by the hypocritical mouths of his oppressors; and if his towering revenge mounts to fanaticism, it is verily of a different stamp to the fanaticism of usury and greed which the critics are fain to find in his character."

And a Frenchman, François Victor Hugo, a son of the author of *Les misérables*, has written in like manner of this scene, "This sublime imprecation is the most eloquent plea that the human voice has ever dared to utter for a despised race. Whatsoever be the dénouement, it is hereby justified. Let Shylock be as implacable as he may, assuredly he will no more than equal his instruction. Even granting that he obtains it, a pound of Antonio’s flesh will never outweigh, in the scales of reprisal, the millions of corpses heaped in the Christian shambles by a butchery ['] of thirteen centuries."

In a similar vein has expressed himself the celebrated song-writer and critic, Heine, whose literary work, begun in Germany, closed in France, and of whom we read in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "No German writer since

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1 "It was not very long since Jews had been forced to choose between kissing the crucifix and mounting the faggots; and in Strasbourg, in 1439, nine hundred of them had in one day chosen the latter alternative. It is strange to reflect, too, that just at the time when, on the English stage, one Mediterranean Jew was poisoning his daughter, and another whetting his knife to cut his debtor’s flesh, thousands of heroic and enthusiastic Hebrews in Spain and Portugal, who, after the expulsion of the three hundred thousand at the beginning of the century, had secretly remained faithful to Judaism, were suffering themselves to be tortured, flayed, burnt alive by the Inquisition, rather than forswear the religion of their race."—Brandes, p. 165.
Goethe and Schiller has excited so much interest throughout Europe." In regard to Shylock, Heine, himself of Hebrew descent, has written,

"When thou comest to Venice and wanderest through the Doge's palace, . . . far more than of all such historical persons, thou thinkest in Venice of Shakespeare's Shylock, . . .

"At least I, wandering hunter after dreams that I am, I looked round everywhere on the Rialto to see if I could not find Shylock. I could have told him something that would have pleased him—namely, that his cousin, Herr von Shylock in Paris, had become the mightiest baron in Christendom, invested by her Catholic Majesty with that Order of Isabella which was founded to celebrate the expulsion of the Jews and Moors from Spain. But I found him nowhere on the Rialto, and I determined to seek my old acquaintance in the Synagogue. The Jews were just then celebrating their Day of Atonement, and they stood enveloped in their white talars, with uncanny motions of the head, looking almost like an assemblage of ghosts. There the poor Jews had stood, fasting and praying, from earliest morning;—since the evening before they had taken neither food nor drink, and had previously begged pardon of all their acquaintances for any wrong they might have done them in the course of the year, that God might thereby also forgive them their wrongs—a beautiful custom, which, curiously enough, is found among this people, strangers though they be to the teaching of Christ.

"Although I looked all around the Synagogue, I nowhere discovered the face of Shylock. And yet I felt he must be hidden under one of those white talars, praying more fervently than his fellow-believers, looking up with stormy, nay frantic wildness, to the throne of Jehovah, the hard God-King. I saw him not. But towards evening, when, according to the Jewish faith, the gates of Heaven are shut, and no prayer can then obtain admittance, I heard a voice, with a ripple of tears that were never wept by eyes. It was a sob that could only come from a breast that held in it all the martyrdom which, for eighteen centuries, had been borne by a whole tor-
tured people. It was the death-rattle of a soul sinking down dead tired at heaven's gates. And I seemed to know the voice, and I felt that I had heard it long ago, when, in utter despair, it moaned out, then as now, 'Jessica, my girl!'

The interpretation put upon Shylock by the Jews of to-day is doubtless fairly stated by Rabbi Lewinthal,¹ "This is the wail of the Jew uttered for the centuries. This is the cry that went up from Egypt, from the Roman amphitheatre, from the dungeons of the Spanish Inquisition. We hear its echo all through the Dark Ages; and the genius of Shakspere voiced it as it had never been voiced before—or since. . . . Shylock is a man more sinned against than sinning, whom the inhumanity of the whole world has made inhuman. Long brooding over the shameful treatment of his people has marred his character and dried up the founts of tenderness in his bosom."

**Third Interpretation—Shylock conceived of essentially in the Anti-Jewish Spirit of Marlowe's Jew of Malta, but humanized**

Occupying middle ground between these two extremes is the interpretation which regards Shylock as essentially the conventional avaricious, bloodthirsty Jew, a neighbour and near bred to Marlowe's monster, the Jew of Malta, but humanized by what Boas has called Shakspere's 'almost superhuman, plastic power'—humanized sufficiently to win for him, in certain scenes especially, a measure—a large measure it may be—of the reader's sympathy, but not enough to justify the interpretation given above, which makes Shylock and not Antonio the hero of the play.

¹ Isidore Lewinthal, Rabbi Congregation Ohavai Sholom, Nashville, Tenn.
This interpretation, as given in Ward’s *History of English Dramatic Literature*,¹ is as follows,

“... that the two plays [The Merchant of Venice and The Jew of Malta] are, so far as their main subject is concerned, essentially written in the same spirit, I cannot hesitate in affirming. It is, I am convinced, only modern readers and modern actors who suppose that Shakspere consciously intended to arouse the sympathy of his audience in behalf of the Jew. The sympathy which, notwithstanding, is aroused, is in truth merely the adventitious result of the unconscious tact with which the poet humanised the character. In both Shakspere’s and Marlowe’s plays the view inculcated is, that on the part of a Jew fraud is the sign of his tribe, whereas on the part of Christians counter-fraud, though accompanied by violence, is worthy of commendation. This I cannot but regard as the primary effect of the whole of either play. . . .

“The artistic difference between the plays needs no comment. The psychological distinction in the conception of the two principal characters lies, not in the nature of the elements out of which they are compounded—avarice, cruelty, revengefulness, with no softening element but that of paternal love, and this only till it is quenched in the sense of a daughter’s desertion—but in the way in which these elements are combined. The art of Shakspere is immeasurably superior to that of Marlowe in not allowing either avarice or lust of vengeance to attain to such a pitch in his Jew as to take the character out of the range of human nature. In contrast with the unrelieved blackness of Barabas, the character of Shylock remains both truly human and within the limits of dramatic probability.”

**The Effect of the First and Second Interpretations on the Reader’s Attitude toward Shylock’s Antagonists**

That the attitude of the reader toward Shylock must affect his attitude toward the other characters in the play

¹ The Macmillan Company, New York.
is obvious. It evidently would be impossible for Rabbi Lewinthal, for example, who regards Shakspere's portrayal of Shylock as on the whole a vindication and not a vilification of the Jews, to feel toward Shylock's run-away daughter as does Gervinus, who expatiates at length regarding her 'lovely character,' or Mrs. Jameson, who has written of her, "This Jessica, though properly kept subordinate, is certainly

A most beautiful pagan—a most sweet Jew.

... In any other play, and in any other companionship than that of the matchless Portia, Jessica would make a very beautiful heroine in herself." 1 Whereas to Rabbi Lewinthal, who would doubtless readily accept the characterization of her as 'a most beautiful pagan,' but certainly not as 'a most sweet Jew,' she is far from being 'a very beautiful heroine in herself.' Rabbi Lewinthal, on the contrary, enlarges upon "her unnatural conduct, her deception of her father, her heartless abandonment and exploitation of him, her joining the camp of his enemies"—and all this, directed against a Jew, "becomes her exceeding merit and hope of salvation."

Likewise the editor of the Dictionary of National Biography has referred feelingly to the 'series of barefaced falsehoods' and the 'cruel deceptions' whereby the Jew's 'unworthy daughter' evaded her father's inquiries as to Launcelot's business with her—this reflection on Jessica coming in, as a matter of course, in a passage attempting to show that Shakspere portrayed in Shylock 'the humane side of the Jewish character,' 'a man more sinned against than sinning.' 2 But to Gervinus Shylock is not more sinned against than sinning. On the contrary, he is "this outcast of humanity." Gervinus can, then, with a good

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1 Characteristics of Women.
conscience speak glowingly of the fair daughter who quite justifiably abandoned a home which to her was 'hell.'

Inasmuch as Shylock is not to Charles W. Thomas an 'outcast of humanity,' he can speak of Jessica (Shakespearean, 1890) as "an unfilial daughter, who disgraced the memory of her dead mother, robbed her father of his money and jewels, and betrayed his confidence." "What," he asks, "can be said in praise of a young woman who could insult her father, abandon her people, steal her dead mother's gift to a betrothed—her father, and exchange it for a monkey?" Lloyd, however, has said, "Elopement, in Jessica's case, it must be said, is a virtue; and the elation at exchanging freedom for degraded oppression explains and excuses the dry eyes,—nay, laughing lips—with which she departs." And as to what Thomas is pleased to term the robbery of her father, Lloyd, though he evidently considers a defense unnecessary, yet lightly says, "If we care to apologize for the casket she carried off, we may say she helped herself, perhaps not exorbitantly, to her dowry." Nor is Gervinus troubled by Jessica's appropriation of the casket worth the pains, for he conceives of her as "an ethereal being, naïve, and inexperienced as a child, and perfectly unacquainted with the value of money." Moreover, is not the owner of the casket an 'outcast of humanity'? Lloyd's attitude toward the dry eyes—nay, laughing lips—with which the fair Jessica leaves her Jewish home as the torch-bearer of a Christian youth is easily understood when one reads his comment on "the maudlin sentimentality that has been bestowed on the murderous Jew," who is "the very impersonation of avarice, mean-ness, and cruelty, as Antonio of generous and sympathetic liberality," the Jew with his treacherous bond, 'the hellish intention' of which is 'already patent.' The poet Heine, apparently, is to some extent guilty of this
'maudlin sentimentality' toward 'the murderous Jew,' for he exclaims, "It was no unloving father whom she forsook, whom she robbed, whom she betrayed.—Shameful treachery!" Giles, also, appeals to 'those who have the care of families' whether he be not justified in his feeling toward the 'worthless minx,' 'the pert, disobedient hussy Jessica,' who "selfishly forgot the duty of a daughter when she should have most remembered it." "Why should she, a maiden of Israel, leave her poor old father, Shylock, alone in the midst of his Christian enemies? What if he was wrong? The more need he had of her. What if most wrong? Even then, even in the madness of defeated vengeance, in the misery of humbled pride, when regarded as most guilty, when there was nothing in the world for him but contempt without pity, the child of his home—his only child—should have had in her woman's heart a shelter for her scorned father."

But in the history of dramatic literature by the German university professor, Schlegel, one reads of Jessica as "the fugitive daughter of the Jew [reference having already been made by Schlegel to 'the selfish cruelty of the usurer Shylock'], in whom Shakspeare has contrived to throw a veil of sweetness over the national features."

And thus might the reader continue indefinitely looking here upon this picture and on this.

Upon the stage likewise there are two Jessicas presented according as the Shylock is the wolfish usurer or the representative of a race. Edwin Booth, whose conception of Shylock was in general the former, has no

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1 Not uniformly, however. Booth attempted a representation of the play in which Shylock was given more sympathetically, as the depositary of the vengeance of a race—indeed, announcing the play as Shylock, not as The Merchant of Venice. In a letter to Horace
word of blame for Jessica, holding that had Shylock shown some affection for his daughter she would not have ‘robbed and left him.’ "These [Jessica, my girl] are the only words," he says, "that Shylock speaks which in the least degree approach gentleness, and they mean nothing." "It has been said," he wrote to Furness, "that he is an affectionate father and a faithful friend. When, where, and how does he manifest the least claim to such commendation? Tell me that, and unyoke! 'Twas the money value of Leah's ring that he grieved over, not its associations with her, else he would have shown some affection for her daughter, which he did not, or she would not have called her home 'a hell,' robbed and left him. Shakespeare makes her do these un-Hebrew things to intensify the baseness of Shylock's nature. If we side with him in his self-defence, 'tis because we have charity, which he had not; if we pity him under the burden of his merited punishment 'tis because we are human, which he is not,—except in shape, and even that, I think, should indicate the crookedness of his nature."

Inasmuch as Sir Henry Irving regards Shylock as 'the type of a persecuted race,' the scene following the discovery of Jessica's flight will not be given by him in the spirit in which it was given by Edwin Booth, nor will the spectator entertain at the close of the scene so kindly a feeling toward Lorenzo's love, the sweet soul who did steal from the wealthy Jew And with an unthrift love did run from Venice As far as Belmont. In this scene, 'sustained by Sir Henry Irving with great power,' "his reason seems to reel under the heavy blow it has received, and the brief allusion to his dead wife is full of pathos

Howard Furness, quoted below, Booth refers to his attempt 'to view him in that light.'
and tenderness. The father is here more visible than the usurer." After such a presentation of the play the spectator may perhaps be somewhat bewildered in reading the glowing encomiums of Gervinus on the 'lovely character' of the gentle daughter, who was so 'naïve' in regard to money matters that she did not know that the casket she threw to Lorenzo was worth the pains.

The Poet Laureate "did not much approve Irving's 'Shylock,' 'He made you pity Shylock too much.'" ¹

This pity awakened for Shylock must inevitably affect the spectator's attitude toward the antagonists of Shylock, including the fair Jessica. Illustrations might be heaped up indefinitely showing how, as Browning has brought out so overwhelmingly in The Ring and the Book, the reader's attitude toward one character affects his attitude toward others. Indeed Professor Sherman, for example, states explicitly ² that, since Bassanio cannot be made much of as a hero, it would not do to make much of Portia, "or we shall regret the match." Professor Sherman would love Bassanio more, one may assume, did he love Shylock less. "The love part of the play," he says, "must of course be secondary, since Bassanio is a spendthrift, and cannot be made much of as a hero." This attitude toward Bassanio clearly affects his attitude toward Portia, for he adds, "Portia must be clever rather than—like her namesake in the Julius Caesar—great, or we shall regret the match." And his attitude toward Bassanio was presumably affected by his attitude toward Shylock. "In The Merchant of Venice," he says, "Shakespeare's interest appears to have centered in Shylock as the typic sixteenth century Jew. The

study shows remarkable insight into the Hebrew consciousness, and goes far toward alleviating various Christian prejudices against the race. To the superficial reader Shylock has too often seemed nothing but the impersonation of greed and malice."

**The Difficulty in the Third Interpretation—Shylock Humanized, but to What Extent?**

Could readers of *The Merchant of Venice* but agree as to the extent to which the conventional Jew monster has been humanized by Shakspere's 'unconscious tact,' then might they more easily find the way to master Jew's, which now, 'by God's sonties,' seems a hard way to hit. It is no mean happiness to be seated in the mean, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree, and the reader whose judgment approves of this interpretation of the play is indeed fortunate, if his brain is not compelled to devise laws for his blood and scant some excess of sympathy with the Hebrew father whose gentle daughter has been persuaded to abandon her home and the faith of her fathers; or with the aroused Jew's fierce passion for revenge, that 'swollen gush of elemental human passion,' whose intensity may perhaps seem to give to vengeance a character of grandeur, and to make of old Shylock a well-nigh tragic figure. It is not at all impossible for the reader whose deliberate choice is this third leaden casket of interpretation to find himself unhappily inclining at times toward the interpretation of the partisans of Shylock, the second given above, and that way madness lies for him, if his conscience hanging about the neck of his heart urges him to entertain toward Bassanio that warmth of affection he is persuaded he ought to entertain toward one who won the love of the fair Portia, of wondrous virtues, of whom it hath been said, with the full
consent of the world’s great Shaksperean scholar, 1 “the poor rude world hath not her fellow.”

The reader who holds the first interpretation given above passes lightly by the evidences of Shylock’s humanity; the reader committed to the second interpretation either passes over or accounts for and justifies the ferocity of Shylock’s desire for vengeance; for the reader whose judgment approves of the third interpretation, it is no mean happiness to remain seated in the mean.

But it were here easier to teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow one’s own teaching. By my troth, to remain consistently seated in the mean is difficult. Indeed, as Boas and Barrett Wendell and ten Brink say in substance, it appears to be well-nigh impossible—to the modern reader. Whereas Ward emphasizes the ‘art’ of Shakspere in “not allowing either avarice or lust of vengeance to attain to such a pitch in his Jew as to take the character out of the range of human nature,” Boas ventures in this connection to use the word ‘inconsistency,’ though he hastens to add that the inconsistency is the measure of Shakspere’s greatness. The general impression which the character of Shylock is intended to leave, he says, is that of a stony-hearted usurer. “Shakspere too [like Marlowe] was sufficiently a man of his time to gratify the popular taste by

1 “In my secret heart I like to believe that Shakespeare had fallen in love with Portia, as why should he not, with the most perfect of his creations?”—Horace Howard Furness, p. 224.

This is adduced as a possible reason why Shakspere suffers this play to end as ‘a Christian Comedy’ rather than ‘a Jewish Tragedy.’ The sentence following the above is, “and though he might have thought that as a work of art the play should be tragedy, yet that the vision of Portia’s troubled, agonised face was more than he could bear, and her streaming eyes were more intolerable to him than Anthonio’s streaming breast; it is to Portia, in more ways than one then, that I hope the Merchant owes his life.”
the spectacle of a Jewish villain." But Shakspere, 'as is the case with consummate genius,' was 'carried beyond himself by the irresistible sway of his own creation.' "Shylock is no automaton, but a being of flesh and blood, and the fierce pressure of his agony forces to the surface from depths still unpetrified by wrong done or suffered this swollen gush of elemental human passion."¹

But notwithstanding 'the magnificent outburst' in which Shylock 'vindicates against a brutal fanaticism the essential equality of human conditions in Jew and Christian,' in which he rises to the dignity of a well-nigh tragic figure, Shylock, with the entry of Tubal, 'sinks back into the stony-hearted usurer' again. The conclusion of Boas is, "Shylock stands at the bar of poetic justice 'half-way between a martyr and a criminal,' and in the unsatisfactory impression left on modern readers at the close of the trial-scene, Shakspere has suffered the nemesis which in the long run always overtakes the artist who from conviction or opportunism ministers to the prejudices of his age."

So Barrett Wendell, discussing this matter of the reader's sympathy in this play, concludes, "There are few facts in the Elizabethan drama which more strongly emphasize the remoteness from ourselves not only of Elizabethan England, but also of Shakspere, the Elizabethan playwright." In this play, he has said, we instinctively sympathize with everybody. Shylock's revenge 'if not admirable, is most comprehensible.' "Not so, to modern feeling, is the contumeliously brutal treatment which he receives from the charming people with whom we are expected to sympathize fully." 'About the only fault one

¹ The poet Swinburne is apparently altogether untouched by this swollen gush of elemental human passion. See his comment on this play quoted on p. 38 below.
can fairly find with Portia,' he insists, "is the fault she shares with all the other delightful people in the play. One and all, with whom our sympathy is clearly expected to go, treat Shylock, who nowadays is made almost equally sympathetic, in a manner which any modern temper must deem cruelly inhuman."

And not only does the treatment of Shylock by these charming people seem cruelly inhuman now, but "no rendering of Shylock which makes the man look noble enough to be seriously sympathetic could ever have failed to command sympathy." And yet 'as an artistic playwright,' Shakspere 'could not have meant our sympathy to go with Shylock.' Hence Barrett Wendell's conclusion, quoted above, as to the 'remoteness' from ourselves of Elizabethan England, and also of Shakspere.

To the illustrious scholar, the historian of English literature, whose students are found in college and university chairs of English in all English-speaking countries, the late Professor Bernhard ten Brink, was likewise denied the no mean happiness of remaining always happily seated in the mean. On the contrary he held\(^1\) that against a part of Shylock's treatment in the celebrated trial-scene our feelings 'justly rebel.' Professor ten Brink cannot properly be included among the partisans of Shylock. The first word he applies to him is the derogatory word 'sinister'—'the sinister but imposing figure of Shylock.' He characterizes him as 'a heartless father, a merciless usurer,' 'who hates all Christians, but above all Antonio, whose high-minded, humane sentiments are directly opposed to his own nature.' And yet this man nevertheless, in his way, 'clings to religion.' And Shy-

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lock's motives, says ten Brink, taken in connection with his religious motive, 'assume a certain justification.'

To the question then raised by ten Brink how Shakespeare could possibly have made such a man as Shylock appeal to us, how he could arouse our sympathies in his fate, his answer is that Shylock is more than a merciless usurer—he is a Jew. He belongs to a race which for centuries has been persecuted, robbed, tortured, trodden under foot. And Antonio hates his sacred nation, and spits upon his Jewish gaberdine. Therefore when Shylock cries, Hath not a Jew eyes? hands, organs, affections, passions? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?—Shylock here, says ten Brink, comes close to us humanly, we feel for him and with him.

The following extract gives in substance ten Brink's discussion—not final, as a matter of course, yet to many worth a Jewess' eye—of this matter of sympathy with Shylock, and also ten Brink's feeling on another necessary question of the play—one much discussed—the happy close with moonlight and music of the fifth act.

"It is above all on account of this feeling [because, that is, he comes close to us humanly, because we feel for him and with him] that the celebrated trial-scene in the fourth act strikes us as harshly discordant. If Shylock is prevented from carrying out his bloody intentions in regard to Antonio, even if he is remorselessly punished, mortally wounded in what he holds most dear, it is nothing more than poetic justice. It is only against his being forced to become a convert that our feelings justly rebel. The contemporaries of the poet doubtless attached no such importance to this point. But it is not merely poetic justice that our feelings demand. Shylock has come too close to us, we have learned to know too intimately the grounds of his hatred, of the intensity of his resentment, his figure has become too humanly significant, and the misfortune which overtakes him appeals too deeply to our sympa-
thies, to permit us to be reconciled to the idea that his fate, which moves us so tragically, should be conceived otherwise than as a tragedy. We are powerfully moved when this man who stands upon his right, who stakes all to gain it, who hour by hour is strengthened in the belief that his right will be granted him—when this man suddenly feels the ground give way beneath his feet, when, in the name and with the forms of law, he is cheated of his right. And we cannot dismiss the thought that this decision, brought about by a lucky accident, by the sophistical interpretation of a document, is not commensurate to Shylock's grand passion. We crave to feel the necessity of the fate which befalls him, the inevitableness of his ruin. Not only the higher moral motives of his judges, but also the legal motives of the sentence as such, we wish to feel to be justified and necessary.

"There is a discordance here which cannot be explained away. It was impossible for Shakspere to avoid it. The most essential feature of the tale—the suit about the pound of flesh—the real purpose, the gist of the whole, he could not and would not discard. It embraces, indeed, a symbolically profound thought: Summum jus, summa injuria; it is admirably adapted to satisfy upon Shylock, in the most pronounced form, the demands of poetic justice. Considered in the abstract, this feature satisfies our understanding, creates the pleasing impression which the spirited solution of a difficult problem is wont to produce. And in comedy we must often resort to abstraction in order to find unalloyed enjoyment. When we see the success of the plans in which the poet has specially aroused our interest, the favorable change of fortune of the persons who chiefly enlist our sympathies, we often dare not too vividly realize the moral relations and human individuality of those who, in the happy consummation, are deeply wounded and hurt. Few comedies would be enjoyable without abstraction of this kind. But Shakspere renders this abstraction so difficult for us because he himself was incapable of it, because all his characters are drawn with equal sympathy and with equal objectiveness; there is, consequently, often something unsatisfying in the dénouement of his comedies. The offense generally consists in this: that
for the sake of a happy solution the evil which appears too prominent in some of his personages is not wholly eradicated, the guilt not adequately atoned. In *The Merchant of Venice* we have an instance of the opposite: a comic [*'] solution and a tragic character; a tragic fate developed in a manner befitting comedy.”

A Method of Interpretation suggested—the Play to be interpreted by the Feeling toward one another of the Characters of the Play

There yet remains to consider a method of interpretation according to which the play must be read in the light of the feeling toward the characters of the play entertained by the other characters, and not in the light of the feeling entertained by a reader three centuries later, which may be quite different both toward the characters and the ‘Motivierung,’ that is, the motives given or the causes suggested for the course of the action.

For example, a number of comments have been quoted above respecting the conduct of Jessica—some of these extremely unfavorable to Jessica. Jessica’s conduct, that is, is to many modern readers wholly inexcusable. But there can be no doubt as to the attitude toward

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1 “And Shylock’s character is essentially tragic; there is none of the proper timber of comedy in him.”—Hudson, p. 295.

“As soon as Shylock’s fate is sealed in the Fourth Act, the public usually begins to arise and prepare to leave. To it Shylock’s case is the main interest of the play. In vain do the commentators cry that the Shylock business is only a great episode. The public heeds them not, but follows its own impression. And this impression rests on indisputable, aesthetic laws. The discord between the tone of the comedy and the tragic tone of Shylock’s fate cannot be denied. It cannot be denied that the deadly agony of that part of the play is not in accord with a Comedy; or that the Trial Scene, with its question of life and death, makes a far deeper impression than all the rest, and that a whole Act following thereon is, to the audience, intrusive and superfluous” (Oechelhäuser).
Jessica of the characters of the play. Rabbi Lewinthal, reading the play in the light of the twentieth century, and with some bias toward Shylock perhaps, whom he looks upon as the representative of an oppressed race, a man more sinned against than sinning, cannot overlook her abandonment of her father and her religion—but Portia could; and so could all the chief characters of the play—excepting, as a matter of course, Shylock. When the twentieth-century reader of the play, then, expresses the wish—as many have done—that the fair Jessica, when she left her Jewish home with a Christian lover, had left her father’s ducats and jewels behind, instead of holding a candle to her shames by gilding herself with some more ducats and with a casket worth the pains, he is, according to this interpretation, reading into the play a modern scruple of which there is not a hint in the play itself—that is, as entertained by Antonio and his friends, be it understood. The fair Jessica is, to all these characters, not only fair but also wise and true. She is entrusted by the lovely heroine—‘the most perfect’ of Shakspere’s creations says our Shakspere scholar—with the care of Belmont, while its owner is away on her errand of mercy. And about her and her Christian husband is thrown in the closing act a poetic atmosphere in which moonlight and music and ‘patines of bright gold’ and ‘young-eyed cherubins’ are a prophecy of the greater glory of the years to come.

When therefore our great Shakspere scholar asks in regard to Jessica, “Where is ‘die tragische Schuld’ of our German brothers, that relentless fate which pursues the guilty and ensures their downfall, here in Jessica’s career?” he is primarily concerned, not with introducing himself a modern scruple into this frankly anti-Jewish atmosphere, but with advising ‘our German brothers’ that their doctrine of ‘die tragische Schuld’
as to Shakspere in general and Jessica in particular 'needs patching.'

But though the chief concern of Furness here is to advise his German brethren that their doctrine of 'die tragische Schuld' needs patching, yet he himself shares somewhat in their feeling toward Jessica, and he does not altogether share the feeling of the lovely Portia of wondrous virtues, to him the most perfect of Shakspere's creations, toward this wise and true convert to Christianity. His own feeling, as indicated by comments here and elsewhere in his notes on the play, is that there is some 'Schuld' in the conduct of Jessica toward her father—which does not seem to him to reap its appropriate reward in accordance with the theories of our German brothers as to 'die tragische Schuld,' and poetic justice so-called. "From the hour of the cruel deception of her father onward," he says, "smooth success is strewed before her little feet, until they trip into bliss and Belmont under patines of bright gold. Why was a fate so different allotted to poor Desdemona, who yielded to her old father, after her first offence, all the tender devotion that a married daughter can bestow? I am afraid the doctrine of 'die tragische Schuld' in Shakespeare needs patching."

But according to the method of interpretation now under consideration there could be no discussion of 'die tragische Schuld' in connection with Jessica.

A 'tragische Schuld' in the conduct of the fair Jessica? It did not for a moment occur to Portia or to Bassanio or the good Antonio, "with whom," says Barrett Wendell, "our sympathy is clearly expected to go," that there was any guilt connected with Jessica's departure from a house which to her was 'hell,' even though in her departure she was 'gilded' with ducats and jewels, and took with her a casket 'worth the pains'—including,
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alas, the twentieth-century reader recalls, her dead mother's gift to her betrayed father, the betrothal ring sold in Genoa by the unfilial daughter for a monkey.

But of all this—that is, the feeling of the twentieth-century reader—there is in the play not a word. As Moulton ¹ has said, Jessica to the persons in the play is 'full of attractions.' "All with whom she comes into contact feel her spell: the rough Launcelot parts from her with tears he is ashamed of yet cannot keep down; Salarino—the last of men to take high views of women—resents as a sort of blasphemy Shylock's claiming her as his flesh and blood; while between Jessica and Portia there seems to spring in an instant an attraction as mysterious as is the tie between Antonio and Bassanio."

As to Jessica, then, the reader who puts himself in the place of Portia and her friends will exclaim with Lorenzo,

"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 placed in my constant soul."

And so likewise in regard to Bassanio, Antonio's 'most noble kinsman,' readers may turn o'er many books together in which are found the opinions of learned judges, setting forth his expedition to Belmont in no flattering terms—such as, for example, the following,

"The heiress-hunting Bassanio" (Rabbi Krauskopf).
"Bassanio is not too proud of his scheme" (Professor Gummere).
"An ignoble petition most charmingly put, winding about Antonio's love 'with circumstance'" (Professor Katherine Lee Bates).

“Though he gives Antonio to understand that there have been previous passages of love between them, and extols the lady's virtues and beauty, Bassanio's scheme, as he unfolds it, is rather too much of a financial enterprise to quite suit our taste. Like other speculations it needs capital, and for this he now appeals to Antonio, on the plea that it will be an investment which may recoup the merchant for former losses” (Professor Boas).

“Bassanio, hanging his velvet-capped head and finger- ing his gold buttons, says that he does not complain, not he, of his straitened circumstances, but he is anxious to rid himself of this burden of debt heaped up by his youthful extravagance. He owes the most to Antonio, and has the grace to hesitate a little in proposing that Antonio lend him another large sum with which he may equip himself handsomely and go heiress-hunting, so 'to get clear of all the debts' he owes” (Professor Bates).

“I think it by no means certain that 'pure innocence' does not here mean pure foolishness. Bassanio assuredly was aware how flimsy was the pretext for Anthonio to send more good money after bad, and that his best argument was drawn from childish games, and therefore does not attempt to disguise the 'innocence' (in its frequent meaning of childishness, foolishness) of his proposal. Moreover, the greater the folly of the risk, the greater the proof of Anthonio's friendship in assuming it” (Horace Howard Furness).

However correctly these expositors—the greatness of whose learning one cannot enough commend, whose trial shall better publish their commendation—have interpreted modern feeling in regard to Argonautic expeditions for the golden fleece of ladies 'richly left,' yet the advocate of the method of interpretation under consideration would reply, "These deeds must not be thought After these ways; so, it will make us mad"—"O, that way madness lies; let me shun that; No more of that."

These scruples as to the expedition of Bassanio are clearly 'modern instances.' To the good Antonio and
the fair Portia Bassanio still stands within the eye of honour. His method of getting clear of all the debts he owes is not in the least objectionable to them. Not once in the play is any reflection made on him, even by Shylock, for having gone on 'an heiress-hunting expedition.' Indeed, on the contrary, the poetry of the casket scene, where he makes his choice while music sounds, the glow, the warmth, the color, the ecstasy of the fair lady of wondrous virtues, her insuppressive cry, 'O, love be moderate; I feel too much thy blessing'—surely the reader is to feel with Portia's friend that holy men at their death have good inspirations, and he is to rejoice wholly that he who won the love of Antonio and of Portia, 'having such a blessing in his lady,' finds the joys of heaven here on earth.

As to Antonio, the good Antonio, the dearest friend, the kindest man—to all the persons in the play, excepting Shylock, a kinder gentleman did not tread the earth, a man with affection wondrous sensible, the most unwearied spirit in doing courtesies, who won the hate of the merciless usurer by delivering from his forfeitures many that did make moan to him, the royal merchant, the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, "O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!"

True, this kind-hearted gentleman had a custom which grievously offends many modern readers,¹ viz., that of

¹ This custom apparently did not offend Ruskin, who was yet a kind-hearted man who gave away a large fortune and died poor, to whom the Dean of Canterbury, F. W. Farrar, referred in glowing terms in October, 1898, as "almost the last supreme moral and spiritual teacher of this age who is still left among us."

"This inhumanity of mercenary commerce . . . this is the ultimate lesson which the leader of English intellect meant for us, . . . in the tale of The Merchant of Venice; in which the true and incorrupt merchant,—kind and free beyond every other Shakespearian conception of men,—is opposed to the corrupted merchant, or usurer; the lesson being deepened by the expression of the strange hatred which the
spitting upon Jewish gaberdines, Shylock's in particular, and voiding his rheum upon their beards, but this custom met with the entire approval of the English spectator or reader, just as did the custom of the gallant Harry Hotspur, which was, viz., to kill me some six or seven dozen of Scots at a breakfast and then to wash his hands and say to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work.' 'O my sweet Harry,' says she, 'how many hast thou killed to-day?' 'Give my roan horse a drench' [drink], says he; and answers, 'Some fourteen,' an hour after; 'a trifle, a trifle.'

A trifle also, to the persons in the play, was what Professor Barrett Wendell has called Antonio's 'expectoratory method' of manifesting distaste for the Hebrew race in general and for this dog Jew in particular. At the opening of the trial-scene the head of the Venetian State himself had much to say of the malice, the strange cruelty, of the stony adversary, the inhuman wretch, but nothing derogatory to say of Antonio's treatment of Shylock. And Portia's reference to Antonio, to the effect that being the bosom lover of her lord he needs must be like her lord, and if so, how little the cost bestowed in purchasing him 'from out a state of hellish cruelty,' assuredly does not indicate any feeling on her part that Antonio too needed to be taught the quality of mercy, or that it ever occurred to 'the most perfect' of Shaksper's creations, as it has to a modern commentator, that "Antonio has insulted and baited Shylock in the most brutal fashion on account of his faith and his blood." On the contrary, to all the persons in the play—Shylock excepted—Antonio is, as according to the interpretation under consideration he must still be understood to be, 'a perfect character.'

corrupted merchant bears to the pure one, mixed with intense scorn," etc.—Munera Pulveris, John Ruskin, Chapter iv, section 100.
As to Shylock, he has, it is true, been humanized—though far more to the modern reader than to the persons in the play. Salarino was silenced, as well he might be, by Shylock's unanswerable plea, Hath not a Jew eyes, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, as a Christian is? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? But however greatly this 'swollen gush of elemental human passion' may move the reader to-day, though it did—for the time—silence Salarino, yet it did not change his attitude toward the dog Jew. He felt no kindlier toward Shylock after this than before. The next time he saw him he stigmatized him as the most impenetrable cur that ever kept with men.

As to Antonio's treatment of Shylock, which as Barrett Wendell says, 'must seem cruelly inhuman to any modern temper'—of all this Salarino felt nothing, nor did any one else in the play of those with whom the reader's sympathy is clearly expected to go. Jessica's comment,—

"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:"—

is clearly introduced here for the purpose, not of making the reader think in silence "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child," but to make his heart go out to poor Antonio with whom it will go hard if this cruel devil be not curbed of his will.

And the quips and quirks of Launcelot—equine gambols though they be to those inclined to pity Shylock—are yet clearly presumed to please the reader through casting richly merited reproach upon the dog Jew, the very Devil incarnation—who is dismissed from
the play and from the reader's thoughts with Gratiano's jest,

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

while the thoughts of the reader are carried on to the sportive episode of the rings, and to a beautiful picture of moonlight and music, and 'patines of bright gold,' and 'young-eyed cherubins,' and noble lords and ladies in fair Belmont,—"among marble palaces, beneath roofs of fretted gold, o'er cedar floors and pavements of jasper and porphyry—amid gardens full of statues, and flowers and fountains, and haunting music" (Mrs. Jameson).

Many a reader, it is true, refuses to let his thoughts be thus carried on to the happy close oblivious of Shy-

1 See the comment of ten Brink, quoted on page 28, to the effect that Shakspere often makes it difficult for the reader to let his thoughts be thus carried on to a happy close oblivious of the sufferings of the comic victim—difficult because "all his characters are drawn with equal sympathy and equal objectiveness," because, as ten Brink says elsewhere, the spectator has become 'too vividly conscious' of the painful and hurtful side of the comic situation to be altogether satisfied with the comic dénouement. For an illuminating discussion of the subject, see the chapter in ten Brink, Shakspere as Comic Poet.

The poet Swinburne, however, has no difficulty, apparently, in yielding himself to the spirit of the play as described above.

"In this first group of four [The Merchant of Venice, Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, Twelfth Night]—wholly differing on that point from the later constellation of three—there is but very seldom, not more than once or twice at most, a shooting or passing gleam of anything more lurid or less lovely than 'a light of laughing flowers.' There is but just enough of evil or even of passion admitted into their sweet spheres of life to proclaim them living; and all that does find entrance is so tempered by the radiance of the rest that we retain but softened and lightened recollections even of Shylock and Don Juan when we think of The Merchant of Venice and Much Ado about Nothing; we hardly feel in As You Like It the presence or the
lock's sufferings—he refuses, that is, according to this interpretation, to yield himself to the spirit of the play.

Furthermore, according to this interpretation, cold indeed and labour lost is all protest in regard to any legal (or other) aspect of Portia's decisions—such as, for example, the following,

"Had Shakespeare been a Chancery lawyer he might have caused an injunction to be served on Shylock, and avoided the unsatisfactory and quibbling process by which Portia rescued the Merchant from the knife of the Jew" (Law in Shakespeare, C. K. Davis, St. Paul, 1884).

"Considerable latitude is to be allowed to the dramatist; but when I see Antonio saved by a species of construction, according to which, if a man contracted for leave to cut a slice of melon, he would be deprived of the benefit of his contract unless he had stipulated, in so many words, for the incidental spilling of the juice, one cannot help recognizing in the fiction of the immortal poet an intensified representation of the popular faith—

existence of Oliver and Duke Frederick; and in Twelfth Night, for all its name of the midwinter, we find nothing to remember that might jar with the loveliness of love and the summer light of life."—A Study of Shakespeare, Algernon Charles Swinburne, New York 1887, p. 149.

John Addington Symonds rejoices likewise in the happy close. "Shylock disappears together with the storm and passion he has stirred. And round him Shakspere grouped some of our dearest friends—noble Bassanio, devoted Antonio, witty Gratiano, the dignity of Portia, the tenderness of Jessica, the merriment of Nerissa. These remain, and over them, at last, is shed an atmosphere of peace and music in that moonlight act, the loveliest Shakspere ever wrote. Its beauty never dies. Jessica still sits upon the bank, and Lorenzo whispers to her of 'the young-eyed cherubin.' We hear the voices of Portia and Nerissa coming through the twilight of the garden. The music, sweeter by night than day, still lingers in our ears. The lovers' quarrel, so artfully contrived and so delightfully concluded, still enchants our sympathy. How different is the impression left by Marlowe's play!"—Shakspere's Predecessors in the English Drama, John Addington Symonds, London, 1884, p. 651.
that the law regarded the letter not the spirit” (Outlines of Equity, Haynes).

“. . . now it is generally agreed that up to a certain point he was the victim of a downright quibble, and that even on the third point, that of conspiracy, his conviction was, perhaps, of doubtful propriety” (Furness, reporting many opinions in regard to law in the trial scene, pp. 403–420).

“. . . but a persecuted Jew he is not [before Portia’s jot of blood judgment]; that, however, he at once becomes, and compels our sympathy, when the law, which ought to have supported him, crushes him” (Furness, giving his own opinion, p. 223).

“That the Jew, Shylock, is promised mercy if he will turn Christian, shocks the moral sense of the spectator, and he is probably not inclined to concede that it was a just judge who so decided” (Freytag, Technique of the Drama).

“Whatever may have been the guilt and bloodthirstiness of Shylock, one cannot get entirely over the impression that he is a hardly used man” (Lounsbury, p. 335).

“It is manifest that the agreement as to the pound of flesh, if it is to be recognized by a court of justice at all, cannot without the grossest perversion of justice be cancelled on the ground of its omitting to mention blood” (Moulton, p. 65).

“The tables are completely turned, and the dramatic effect is overwhelming. But the plea [Shed thou no blood] is so transparent a quibble that it has been by no means universally upheld in posterity’s court of appeal. To maintain that Shylock’s defeat is the triumph of Christian conciliatory love, of mediating mercy over law, is absurd” (Boas, p. 232).

“In the present case, while painting Shylock as a monster, he secures for him a hold upon our sympathies by representing him as a victim of intolerable ill-treatment and injustice. . . . Finally, our sense of deliverance in the Trial Scene cannot hinder a touch of compunction for the crushed plaintiff, as he appeals against the hard
justice meted out to him:— . . . By thus making us resent the harsh fate dealt to Shylock the dramatist recovers in our minds the fellow-feeling we have lost in contemplating the Jew himself. . . . So successful has Shakespeare been in the present instance that a respectable minority of readers rise from the play partisans of Shylock" (Moulton, pp. 59-61).

But no reader rises from the play a partisan of Shylock, it is held, who gives himself up to the spirit of the play and lets his sympathies go where they are clearly expected to go. At Portia’s words, “Tarry a little; there is something else,” the reader is certainly presumed to breathe a sigh of relief that a way has been found at last to curb this cruel devil of his will. And content that Shylock is presently to become a Christian he feels no more compunctions about any legal quibble than did the kindly heroine of wondrous virtues, who had attempted with her beautiful plea for mercy—in vain, alas, because of the very tyranny and rage of his spirit—to soften that—than which what’s harder?—Shylock’s Jewish heart; and the reader is clearly presumed to be wholly in sympathy with the Duke in his suggestion to Antonio, “gratify this gentleman, For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.”

That it is difficult for many a modern reader to read the play in this spirit, to make his sympathies go unre-ervedly, that is, where they are clearly expected to go, is undeniable—as witnesseth the perplexity of many learned judges referred to above, ten Brink as an example being quoted at some length. Professor Moulton also, who as an interpreter of literature is certainly a good divine, apparently does not succeed in this case even in following his own instructions. For, though he has said, on page 47 of his Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, that ‘we must read the play in the light of its age,’ that ‘intolerance was a mediæval virtue,’ and that ‘Antonio must be
understood as a perfect character; yet by the time he reaches page 64, having in the meantime been influenced perhaps by outdwelling his time on the 'intolerable ill-treatment and injustice' of which he says (page 59) Shylock was a victim, he now refers to a certain 'ignominy' as 'a fate which, it must be admitted, was no more than Antonio justly deserved.' "Again at the opening of the trial, the Duke gives expression to the universal opinion that Shylock's conduct was intelligible only on the supposition that he was keeping up to the last moment the appearance of insisting on his strange terms, in order that before the eyes of the whole city he might exhibit his enemy at his mercy, and then add to his ignominy [1] by publicly pardoning him; a fate which, it must be admitted, was no more than Antonio justly deserved."

But though the heart of Professor Moulton rebels, perhaps 'justly rebels,' to use the phrase of Professor ten Brink, against the laws of interpretation he has devised for his twentieth-century blood, yet these laws are, according to the method of interpretation now under consideration, altogether sound. To catch the spirit in which the play was written each character must be viewed in the light of the feeling entertained toward him

1"Does Shylock really intend to carry out the forfeiture of his bond? Hardly; he intends merely to humiliate, to torture his enemy, to see him at his feet, and then to heap coals of fire on his head by a magnanimous revenge. What a triumph for the 'dog' that to him, to the dog, the great man should owe his life. What a degradation, worse than death, for the 'royal merchant,' to drag ever after like a chain, the gift of his very life at the hands of a Jew!"—Dr. M. Jastrow. *Young Israel*, May 1876.

Jessica's flight and robbery changed Shylock's purpose, in the opinion of Dr. Jastrow, and of many others. Professor Moulton suggests here that it is because Shylock 'has been maddened by the loss of his daughter' that he now clings with a madman's tenacity to the idea of blood.
by the other characters of the play. So viewed, the good Antonio will be understood to be a perfect character, notwithstanding what appears to many modern readers to be the injustice and inhumanity of his treatment of Shylock—a treatment in no way displeasing to the author of that imperishable plea for mercy, nor to any other of ‘the delightful people in the play’—Jessica included—with whom, as Barrett Wendell has said, the reader’s sympathies are clearly expected to go.

The Play in the Light of its Age—Shylock in Shakspere’s Day

The treatment of Shylock by Antonio, and the attitude toward this treatment of his friends, especially of the kind-hearted Portia, is easily accounted for by one who reads the play in the light of its age—disregarding for the time at least the effect of this treatment on the reader of to-day. When thus read in the light of its age there can be no question as to the unsympathetic attitude of an Elizabethan spectator toward the Jew money lender. For, though there is no record of the interpretation put upon Shylock in Shakspere’s day in his Globe theatre, yet, on account of the ferocity of the anti-Jewish prejudice of the time, the first interpretation given above, tempered a very little if at all by the third, is, presumably, the only one consonant with the spirit of the age.

In 1594, about the time that The Merchant of Venice was written, or a year or two earlier, a Jewish physician, Roderigo Lopez, who had been physician to Lord Leicester and also to Queen Elizabeth herself, had been hanged on ‘Tyburn Tree’ for alleged complicity in a plot to poison the Queen. The publication of five official accounts of the alleged treason kept public interest at a high pitch. In this year, 1594, Marlowe’s Jew of Malta was given at least twenty times after the execution of
Lopez—a play in which the Jew is made an inhuman monster. Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse*, printed in 1579, refers to a play now lost, "The Jew, . . . showne at the Bull, . . . representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers, and bloody mindes of Usurers," which may possibly have suggested to Shakspere the point of view, or the point of departure at least, for a play containing a cruel and covetous Jew.

The attitude of the age toward the Jews is well illustrated by the feeling of Luther, who died but fifty years before the play was written,—"Know, then, thou dear Christian, that, next to the Devil, thou canst have no bitterer, fiercer foe than a genuine Jew, one who is a Jew in earnest. The true counsel I give thee is that fire be put to their synagogues, and that over what will not burn up, the earth be heaped and piled, so that no stone or trace of them be seen for evermore."

The Jew-hating audience of the day, then, it is held, would have hated Shylock with a hate equal to his own, and would have yelled with joy at the dog Jew's discomfiture and ruin—to the entire satisfaction of the author, whose conception of holding the mirror up to nature in the case of the Jews was expressed in the robust language of Gratiano, with whom the spectator was assumed to be in hearty sympathy. "In including this [the enforced conversion to Christianity] among the articles of Shylock's pardon," says Boas, "Shakspere has shown himself scarcely at all in advance of his age, whose average attitude is faithfully reflected in Gratiano's brutal jeers and suggestion of 'a halter gratis' as the only mercy fit for the Jew."

But without calling into question the 'joy' of an audience of Shakspere's day at the dog Jew's discomfiture and ruin at the close of the trial-scene, there has yet been much discussion as to whether Shylock was to the
audience—before the surprising sentence of the girl-judge—a comic character or one to be feared. The question at issue has been thus stated in a recent thesis on the Drama,

"And here the query intrudes itself: did Shakespeare mean the Shylock plot to be comic or not? It has, indeed, even now a grim kind of comic effect, but we must suspect that the Elizabethan audience laughed where we do not. Possibly Shakespeare meant him to be comic, and without purposing to do so lapsed occasionally into a sympathetic treatment simply because he could not help doing this with any character that he handled long. This would account on the one hand for the hardness of tone in the Jessica plot, and on the other hand for the sympathetic insight in such passages as Shylock's magnificent outburst in answer to Salarino: . . . [Hath not a Jew eyes? etc.].

"According to this interpretation, we see in Shylock, despite such passages, our familiar comic victim, grown indeed more formidable, and requiring, not the justice but the injustice of the law courts to overcome him, but the comic victim nevertheless, whose downfall, as in typical comedy of intrigue, brings with it the happiness of the lovers. Shakespeare's mistake, then, was in making us sympathize too keenly with Shylock, though, as we have said, this may not have been the case for his own day."

Gervinus, however, speaks of Shylock's 'frightful' exterior. He describes in some detail "this Jew, whom Burbadge in Shakespeare's time acted in a character of frightful exterior, with long nose and red hair, and whose inward deformity and hardened nature were far less the result of religious bigotry than of the most terrible of all fanaticism, that of avarice and usury,"—an account based, it will be understood, not on records but on tradition. But notwithstanding this lack of records, Brandes

1 The Drama, Its Law and its Technique, Elisabeth Woodbridge, Allyn and Bacon, Boston, pp. 157-8.
has not hesitated to say of Shylock (page 164), "there can be no doubt that he appeared to Shakespeare's contemporaries a comic personage,"

"The central figure of the play, however, in the eye of modern readers and spectators, is of course Shylock, though there can be no doubt that he appeared to Shakespeare's contemporaries a comic personage, and, since he makes his final exit before the last act, by no means the protagonist. In the humaner view of a later age, Shylock appears as a half-pathetic creation, a scapegoat, a victim; to the Elizabethan public, with his rapacity and his miserliness, his usury and his eagerness to dig for another the pit into which he himself falls, he seemed, not terrible, but ludicrous. They did not even take him seriously enough to feel any real uneasiness as to Antonio's fate, since they all knew beforehand the issue of the adventure. They laughed when he went to Bassanio's feast 'in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian'; they laughed when, in the scene with Tubal, he suffered himself to be bandied about between exultation over Antonio's misfortunes and rage over the prodigality of his runaway daughter; and they found him odious when he exclaimed, 'I would my daughter were dead at my foot and the jewels in her ear!' He was, simply as a Jew, a despised creature; he belonged to the race which had crucified God himself; and was doubly despised as an extortionate usurer."

Mabie in a recent treatise 1 has written, "For many years the part was played in a spirit of broad and boisterous farce, and the audience jeered at the lonely and tragic figure." Boas also is of the opinion that the audiences of the day showed little Christian pity to the dog Jew. "The groundlings were far more likely to yell with vociferous laughter as they listened to Salanio's account of the dog Jew flying through the streets, with all the boys of Venice at his heels," etc.

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But a consideration that must give the reader pause is the opinion of Furness (page 370), "We frequently hear it asserted that 'Shylock' was at one time acted as a comic part, an assertion which should not be made without qualification; it was not Shylock, but a thing called 'Shylock' in Lansdowne's Version. There is no ground for the belief that Shylock was ever presented on the stage in a comic light. To assert it is to imply that Lansdowne's 'Shylock' and Shakespeare's Shylock are identical."

And yet on page 1 of Furness there is given in the textual notes as the heading of the Quartos [1600], "The Comicall History of . . . Venice."

**Some Actors of Shylock**

Whatever, then, may have been the portrayal of Shylock in Shakspere's day—whether comic or fearful—in 1701 at any rate, in the version of the play by George Granville, later Earl Lansdowne, it became a distinctively 'low comedy' part. But in 1741 Macklin presented the text of Shakspere, making the Jew, not comic as in the Lansdowne version, but frightful. This portrayal, so unlike ¹ the conception that had prevailed for forty years, was complimented by Alexander Pope in the couplet, suggested as Macklin's epitaph,

"Here lies the Jew
That Shakespeare drew."

¹ "Although on the score of genius no comparison between the two actors [Macklin and Kean] can be made, yet the revival by Kean [in 1814] did not imply, perhaps, as great a revolution of popular feeling as the revival by Macklin. It is one thing to elevate and refine, to convert 'snarling malignity' into the 'depositary of the vengeance of a race,' but it is another and a bolder flight, I suggest, to transform a character, as Macklin transformed Shylock, from the grimacings of low Comedy to the solemn sweep of Tragedy. This was Macklin's achievement." . . .—Furness, p. 346.
In 1814 Edmund Kean presented a new¹ Shylock, ‘the depositary of the vengeance of a race,’ essentially the Shylock of the second interpretation above, in which Shylock at the conclusion of the trial-scene “retired, as Shakespeare intended he should retire, with the audience possessed in his favour.” This conception of the character has been given frequently² since.

No more like this conception than jet is to ivory, is,

¹ “When we first went to see Mr. Kean in Shylock, we expected to see what we had been used to see, a decrepit old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our ideas from other actors, not from the play.”—Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays, William Hazlitt, 1817, p. 276.

² “I think Macready was the first [1] to lift the uncanny Jew out of the darkness of his native element of revengeful selfishness into the light of the venerable Hebrew, the Martyr, the Avenger. He has had several followers, and I once tried to view him in that light, but he doesn’t cast a shadow sufficiently strong to contrast with the sunshine of the comedy,—to do which he must, to a certain extent, be repulsive, a sort of party that one doesn’t care to see among the

¹ An oversight apparently, unless the reference is to the elder Macready. William Charles Macready, famous in Shaksperean rôles, and famous also in connection with the ‘Astor Place riot,’ was born in 1783. Kean’s new Shylock was given in 1814.
or rather was, the portrayal of Shylock as 'the crudest Jew alive,' by Herr Ernst von Possart, now an official of the Government in the kingdom of Bavaria, in charge of the München (Munich) Hoftheater, under whose direction Munich questionless holds a rival place with Bayreuth in the adequate rendition of that concord of majestic sound, the music of Richard Wagner. Herr von Possart's Shylock is the revengeful Jew, portrayed with such power
dainty revellers of Venice in her prime.”—Edwin Booth's letter to Furness, Furness, p. 383.

“Irving evidently believes that Shakespeare intended to enlist our sympathies on the side of the Jew, and the conception is embodied in a manner altogether new to the stage. The fierceness associated with the character since Macklin appeared in it is not absent. Except in the scene with Tubal, where passion will out, the bearing of this Shylock is distinguished by a comparatively quiet and tranquil dignity,—perhaps we ought rather to say the superb dignity of the Arabian race. The whole force of an 'old, untainted religious aristocracy' is made manifest in his person. He feels and acts as one of a noble but long-oppressed nation, as a representative of Judaism against the apostate Galilean, as an instrument of vengeance in the hands of an offended God. In point of intelligence and culture he is far above the Christians with whom he comes into contact, and the fact that as a Jew he is deemed far below them in the social scale is gall and wormwood to his proud and sensitive spirit. . . . Exhibited in this light, not so much as a man grievously wronged in his own person as a representative of a great but oppressed tribe, Shylock acquires on the stage what Shakespeare evidently intended to impart to the character,—a sad and romantic interest, an almost tragic elevation and grace.”—The Theatre, December, 1879.

"Some years ago I witnessed a performance of one of Shakespeare’s plays. The late Lawrence Barrett played the title-rôle. . . . He was the embodiment of the whole Jewish people, driven by unending persecutions, by insufferable wrongs and insults and injuries, to a frenzied thirst for revenge. Round upon round of applause greeted his efforts, and what struck me as most noteworthy, was the fact, that though the audience was almost entirely non-Jewish, its sympathies seemed with Shylock. I saw there a most eloquent vindication of the Jew.”—Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf.
that when Shylock grasps his knife with the words, “A sentence! Come, prepare!” the spectator shudders even though he knows full well that Portia’s ‘Tarry a little,’ ‘no jot of blood,’ is to follow. But so resistless is that ‘swollen gush of elemental human passion,’ that ‘sublimity of hate which awes by its intensity and gives to malignity a character almost of grandeur,’ that when the face of his Shylock whitens with something akin to what has been described as ‘the boundless pale rage’ of Dante’s Vanni Fucci and he leaps toward his victim with the words, “A sentence! Come, prepare!” the spectator, finding it difficult to entertain the supposition that even in the anti-Jewish times of good Queen Bess the character could be viewed in a comic light, turns once more, as often before, to the judgment of ‘the master of those who know,’ firmly believing, for the time being at least, with Furness, “there is no ground for the belief that Shylock was ever presented on the stage in a comic light.”

**The Letter of Herr Ernst von Possart**

Herewith is the letter of Herr von Possart, new come from München:


*Hoftheater-Intendanz.*

**Sehr geehrter Herr Professor!**

Zur Veröffentlichung einer Schrift über Shakespeare’s Kaufmann von Venedig wünschen Sie meine Ansicht über die Auffassung des Shylock kennen zu lernen.

Meines Erachtens ist zur richtigen Beurtheilung dieser merkwürdigen Figur vor Allem daran festzuhalten, dass der Dichter in Shylock ein historisches Charakterbild aus dem christlichen Mittelalter geschaffen hat, wo der Jude die traurige Rolle eines rechtlos Pariah spielte; so erklärt sich seine in ihm gross gezogene Bosheit und Rachsucht, die durch die ganz ungewöhnliche Energie
und den scharfsinnigen stechenden Witz seiner Raisonnements in
dem interessanten Licht einer bedeutenden menschlichen Eigenart
erscheinen.

Da Sie im Winter 92-93 den Shylock von mir selbst gesehen
haben, so werden Sie aus eigener Anschauung wissen, dass meine
Auffassung des Juden mit meiner Verkörperung im Einklang
steht.

Ueber die Entstehung und die Quellen der Shakespeare'schen
Schöpfung des Juden finden Sie alles Wichtige in dem umfang-
reichen Werke „William Shakespeare“ von dem genialen Dänen
Georg Brandes.¹

Hochachtungsvollst

ERNST V. POSSART.

NOW MAKE YOUR CHOICE—SOME GOD DIRECT YOUR JUDGEMENT

There have been passed in review the following inter-
pretations of the character of Shylock,

(1) Shylock as the bloodthirsty miser, the cut-throat
dog, the dog Jew, in whose downfall the reader may
wholly rejoice.

(2) Shylock as the depositary of the vengeance of a
race, a man more sinned against than sinning, whose pas-
sion for revenge is accounted for by the century-long
brutal treatment accorded to a race proud of its past by
its Christian oppressors.

¹ For a correct interpretation of this noteworthy figure, this above
all must, in my judgment, be borne clearly in mind, that in the char-
acter of Shylock the poet created a historical picture out of the
Christian Middle Ages, where the Jew played the sorrowful rôle of an
outcast from society beyond the protection of the laws; and thus is
explained his intense hatred and passion for revenge, which, by
means of the unusual power and sharp piercing wit of his discourse,
show him in the interesting light of a great personality.

As to the origin and the sources of Shakespeare's conception of
the Jew you will find all that is of importance in the comprehensive
work William Shakespeare by the gifted Dane, George Brandes.
(3) Shylock as the conventional Jew miser and monster, but ‘humanized’ by Shakspere’s perhaps unconscious art—Antonio, however, and not Shylock being the hero of the play.

There has also been discussed the effect upon the reader’s sympathy with the other characters in the play of holding the second interpretation of Shylock rather than the first—particularly the effect upon the reader’s attitude toward the Jew’s fair daughter, the gentle Jessica, who now becomes the heartless, runaway daughter of an abandoned father, who, false to her father and the faith of her fathers, marries an enemy of her race, and gives her dead mother’s betrothal ring in exchange for a monkey.

There has been presented also the difficulty experienced by those whose judgment approves of the third interpretation of Shylock, as essentially Marlowe’s cruel miser, the Jew of Malta, but humanized—in certain scenes humanized to such an extent as to make the portrayal seem, to some of these interpreters, hardly consistent,—the inconsistency, however, if felt, being regarded as the measure of Shakspere’s greatness.¹

A method of interpretation has been illustrated at some length, according to which the play should be read in the light of the attitude toward Shylock of Portia and her friends, and in the light of the age—a method which results in justifying the first conception of Shylock rather than the second.

¹ “One characteristic above all belongs by indubitable birthmark to every Shakespearian character. It has a certain infinity about it—a vague word for a necessarily vague quality. I mean that it opens large vistas, and is not exhausted by the enumeration of a few simple attributes. There are so many sides to Othello and Macbeth,” etc.—*The Idea of Tragedy in Ancient and Modern Drama*, W. L. Courtney, Brentano’s, New York, 1900.
A few references have been made to the interpretation of Shylock given upon the stage.

The reader occupied with the literature of comment on *The Merchant of Venice*, looking here upon this picture and on this, will presumably find that his mind is for a time, like Antonio's, tossing on the ocean, but it may perhaps, like Antonio's ships, come safely into harbor at the last, if he but notes that the attitude of most commentators toward all the characters in the play is determined largely by their attitude toward Shylock. Those who hold to the first interpretation of Shylock, will, if consistent, wholly disagree with those who hold to the second—not only as to Shylock, but as to Jessica and all the other characters in the play. The reader of this comment finds it a hopeless task to attempt to reconcile these views. The only explanation needed in most cases is that the interpreters differ in regard to Shylock. Having once learned the attitude of a critic toward Shylock, the reader will in general find little difficulty in anticipating the critic's judgments in regard to all the persons in the play—and in agreeing with these judgments throughout, provided the reader and the critic hold to the same conception of Shylock. Does the learned expositor seem to entertain a kindly feeling toward the gentle daughter, whose home to her was 'hell'? He will then in all probability have a fling at her father, the dog Jew,—to the entire satisfaction of the reader whose conception of Shylock is his; otherwise, to the reader's entire dissatisfaction. Cold indeed and labour lost is all discussion as to Jessica by those who differ as to Shylock.

Thus though no learned Bellario, however urgently sent for, hath had or can have wit enough to decide to the satisfaction of all the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant, yet it is some answer to note that the attitude of most interpreters toward all
the other characters in the play is determined largely by their attitude toward the 'lodg'd hate' that Shylock bears to Antonio. It is some answer to observe that those who hold the conception of Shylock as a merciless dog Jew are in general oblivious to the faults of Antonio and his friends, and that those who on the contrary accept the interpretation of Shylock as more sinned against than sinning, laying stress on Antonio's fault in that he hates Shylock's sacred nation, excuse Shylock when he in return says, "I hate him for he is a Christian," and altogether ignore the 'But more' in Shylock's next statement, "But more that in low simplicity He lends out money gratis and brings down The rate of usance here with us in Venice."

Not many sympathize with both Shylock, the abandoned father, and with Jessica, the runaway daughter, with Shylock as the representative of a wronged race and with the good Antonio's custom of voiding his rheum on Jewish gaberdines. But should an interpreter appear to do so, he presumably holds to the third interpretation of Shylock, and there is then some uncertainty as to the extent of his sympathy with the humanized conventional Jew miser. The comment of this interpreter, either as to Jessica or as to Shylock, cannot be so easily anticipated. He will not make Shylock the hero of the play, and yet he may at times be so carried beyond himself in his sympathies that with Professor ten Brink his heart 'justly rebels' at some feature of the 'justice' meted out to the Jew, whom Shakspere has made 'come so close to us humanly' that the interpreter becomes 'too vividly conscious' of the suffering of the comic victim—a certain obliviousness to such suffering being essential to the enjoyment of comedy. Hence the dénouement or conclusion may not be to this interpreter altogether satisfactory,—the conclusion of the play being, as a matter of
course, altogether satisfactory to those who hold to the first interpretation of Shylock, altogether unsatisfactory to those who hold the second.

Another ‘necessary question of the play,’ viz., whether *The Merchant of Venice* ‘teaches the most comprehensive humanity’ or ‘caresses the narrowest bigotries of the age,’ also depends upon the interpretation adopted by the reader. Rabbi Krauskopf, indeed, who sees in the play ‘a most eloquent vindication of the Jew,’ predicts that “there will be a yet wider recognition of the play’s unhistoric and impossible parts, while its historic part, the ‘sufferance’ of the Jew, will stand as a constant witness to the outrages to which the Jew has been subjected, and as a constant summons for reparation.” Rabbi Lewinthal also is persuaded that “when Shakspere makes such coarse and savage handling come from the hero of the story, who is otherwise an ideal character, a gentleman, one of nature’s noblemen, the injustice of the world to the Jew is more distinctly brought out,”—a consummation devoutly to be wished. But that this is the spirit toward the Jew in which the play was conceived or that this was the attitude toward Shylock which the spectator of Shakspere’s day was expected to take cannot for a moment be allowed by those who read the play in the light of its age or who in reading let their sympathies go where they are clearly expected to go.

A situation, however, which appeals to one age as comic may be no longer comic to another age. Indeed of contemporary individuals the same situation provokes one to mirth and another to tears. “According to the standpoint of the observer,” says Professor ten Brink, “will an action or a situation appear pathetic or laughable—

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1 Joseph Krauskopf, Rabbi Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Philadelphia.
the question whether a certain failure or a certain evil appears ludicrous, depends not only upon the kind and degree of the evil and the extent of its influence, but very essentially upon the standpoint of those who happen to be the spectators at the time."

The passing away of the wretched mediasval prejudice against the Jews may indeed, then, affect the attitude of the modern reader toward the characters and the situation in The Merchant of Venice, though it cannot affect the spirit in which the play was conceived. To catch this spirit clearly is unquestionably the first task of literary criticism, when dealing with this play, the prime requisite for an interpretation of the meaning and significance of the play as a whole. The reader of the literature of comment on The Merchant of Venice who reads this comment to good purpose in the spirit of Bacon's advice, viz., to read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider, may possibly be so assisted thereby that at the last, his tormentors having taught him answers for deliverance, he will exclaim with Bassanio, and with a like happy result,

'And here choose I: joy be the consequence!'
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

The Duke of Venice.
The Prince of Morocco,
The Prince of Arragon, suitors to Portia.
Antonio, a merchant of Venice.
Bassanio, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.
Salanio,
Salarino, friends to Antonio and Bassanio.
Geatiano,
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 Portia.
Stephano,

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.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I.

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Salanio.

Antonio. 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.

Salarino. 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,

9. argosy (plural argosies). "A large merchant vessel, especially one carrying a rich freight" (The Century Dictionary). portly, swelling.
10. signiors, lords or gentlemen. Cf. "Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors," Othello, i. 3. 77. burghers, inhabitants of a burgh or borough, i. e., citizens.
11. pageants,—originally the stages or platforms drawn about the streets for the miracle plays—somewhat like the 'floats' in modern parades or street processions.
12. overpeer,—"look down with haughty superiority upon the vessels engaged in petty traffic, which bow with humility to them, as the signiors and rich burghers look down upon their humbler fellow-citizens, who doff their caps to them when meeting them in the street" (Deighton).
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

/Salanio. 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.

Salarino. 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?

13. curtsy. "Suggested by the rocking, ducking motion in the petty traffiquers caused by the wake of the argosie as it sails past them" (Furness).

17. still, constantly, ever.

28. Vailing, letting fall, lowering. Cf. from Marlowe's Jew of Malta,
"Now vail your pride, you captive Christians,
And kneel for mercy to your conquering foe."

29. her burial, i.e., her burial place, the sand bank in which she was 'docked.'

32. touching but, merely touching.
But tell not me; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Antonio. 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.

Salarino. Why, then you are in love.

Antonio. Fie, fie!

Salarino. 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.

Salanio. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble
kinsman,
Gratiano and Lorenzo. Fare ye well:
We leave you now with better company.
Salarino. I would have stay’d till I had made you
merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

Antonio. Your worth is very dear in my regard.

40. sad to think upon, i. e., sad in thinking upon. See Abbott, 356, for a statement as to how to came to be used “in other and more indefinite senses, ‘for,’ ‘about,’ ‘in,’ ‘as regards,’ and, in a word, for any form of the gerund as well as for the infinitive.”
52. peep through their eyes,—their eyes being half shut with laughter.
54. other,—a (proper) plural form. See Abbott, 12. aspect’.
61. prevented me, i. e., anticipated me.
I take it, your own business calls on you
And you embrace the occasion to depart.
Salarino. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bassanio. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh?
say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?
Salarino. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.]

Lorenzo. 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.
Bassanio. I will not fail you.
Gratiano. 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.
Antonio. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.

Gratiano. 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—

74. respect upon the world, i.e., regard for the world.
75. They lose it. "'It' refers to the opinion of the world" (Furness).
79. play the fool, i.e., play the part of Fool, or banisher of sadness, on
the stage of life. It will be remembered that Shakspere's Fools are not
mere buffoons. Celia said of Touchstone after the banishment of Rosalind
(in As You Like It), "He'll go along o'er the wide world with me"; and it was said of the Fool in Lear, "Since my young lady's
going into France, sir, the fool hath much pined away."
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.

Lorenzo. 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.

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

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

89. cream and mantle. Cf. "drinks the green mantle of the standing pool," Lear, iii. 4. 139.
90. And do, i.e., And who do. "The Elizabethan authors objected to scarcely any ellipsis, provided the deficiency could be easily supplied from the context" (Abbott, 382). a wilful stillness entertain, etc., i.e., maintain an obstinate silence in order to get a reputation ('an opinion') for wisdom and for profound thought ('conceit'), and all by saying nothing.
98. would damn, i.e., they would damn. See Matt. v: 22.
101. this melancholy bait, this bait of melancholy.
102. gudgeon, a small fish easily caught,—and not worth catching.
108. moe, more.
110. for this gear, 'for this particular occasion' (Eccles),—the dinner arranged for, that is; 'a colloquial expression perhaps of no very deter-
Gratiano. Thanks, i'faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried and a maid not vendible.

[Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.

Antonio. Is that anything now?

Bassanio. 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.

Antonio. 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?

Bassanio. '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

minate import' (Stevens); 'the sense demanded by the context must in each case be our guide' (Furness). Cf. ii. 2. 176.

112. neat's tongue, ox tongue. not vendible,—"for whose love no one would care to give anything" (Deighton).

124-5. something, somewhat (Abbott, 68). swelling port, imposing appearance, style of living. Cf. 'portly sail,' i. 1. 9; 'the name and port of gentleman,' 2 Henry VI. iv. 1. 19. continuance, continuance of.—i. e., "displaying to some extent a greater magnificence in my manner of living than my slender means would allow of my keeping up" (Deighton).

126. to be abridged, i. e., about being abridged. See foot-note to line 40 above.

129. my time, my life; or possibly the springtime of life, youth.

130. gaged, pledged.
To unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

Antonio. 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.

Bassanio. 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 advised 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.

Antonio. 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.

Bassanio. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,

137. Within the eye of honour, within the scope or range or limit of honour’s vision.
144. proof, experiment.
154. to wind about, in winding about (Abbott, 356). circumstance, circumlocution, ‘going about the bush’ (Furness).
160. prest, ready, prompt.
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!

Antonio. 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.

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

163. sometimes, formerly.
175. thrift, thriving, i. e., success. 'The relative is frequently omitted' (Abbott, 244).
183. presently, at once, immediately.
185. of, 'as a consequence of' (Abbott, 168). my trust, my credit (as a man of wealth).

1. "Portia, ... the most perfect of his creations."—Furness, p. 224. "Portia's nature is health, its utterance joy. Radiant happiness
Nerissa. 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.

Portia. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Nerissa. They would be better, if well followed.

Portia. 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

9. comes sooner by. Cf. i. 1. 3. but, “I cannot say that I see the force of this adversative ‘but;’ Hanmer changed it to and, which seems the more fitting word” (Furness).

11. Good sentences, good maxims.

is her element. She is descended from happiness, she has grown up in happiness, she is surrounded with all the means and conditions of happiness, and she distributes happiness with both hands. She is noble to the heart’s core. She is no swan born in the duck-yard, but is in complete harmony with her surroundings and with herself.”—Brandes, p. 162.

“Although Portia is heart-whole, yet she is not ‘fancy free.’ We learn from Nerissa that in her father’s time there was one visitor, a ‘Venitian, a scholar, and a soldier,’ whom Nerissa considered of all men the ‘best deserving a fair lady.’ Portia responds very briefly, but suggestively: ‘I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.’ Often, no doubt, has she wondered why he has not presented himself among her suitors. Unconsciously, perhaps, the languor of hope deferred speaks in these first words we hear from her. The one who she thought might possibly have been among the first comers, comes not at all” (Lady Martin).
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?

Nerissa. 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?

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

Nerissa. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Portia. 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.

Nerissa. Then there is the County Palatine.

Portia. He doth nothing but frown, as who should say

23. reasoning, conversation, talk. Cf. ii. 8. 27.
41. level at, aim at, guess.
44. colt, 'a witless, heady, gay youngster' (Johnson).
46. appropriation to, addition to.

30. holy men ... good inspirations. 'This word of simple faith from Nerissa lifts the casket lottery above the region of chance into that of divine guidance' (Katherine Lee Bates).

50. nothing but frown. "The frown of the County Palatine seems to say: 'If you will not have ME, Heaven can offer nothing further. Choose as you can where nothing is left worth the choosing'" (Katherine Lee Bates).
'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 to be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

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

_Portia_. 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 thrrostle 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.

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

_Portia_. 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 every where.

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

_Portia_. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him, for

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51. 'If you will not have me, choose.' For various interpretations, see Furness.

77. _proper_, handsome. Cf. "This Lodovico is a proper man.—A very handsome man."—_Othello_, iv. 3. 35.

79. _suited_, dressed.
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.

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

_Portia._ Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and most 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: and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

_Nerissa._ 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.

_Portia._ 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 any thing, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

_Nerissa._ 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.

_Portia._ 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.

89. sealed under for another, _i.e._, for another box on the ear to be given the Englishman in repayment.
100. you should (_i.e._, would) refuse to perform. See Abbott, 322.
114. your father's imposition, the conditions imposed by your father.
Nerissa. 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?

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

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

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

Enter a Serving-man.

How now! what news?

Servant. 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.

Portia. 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.

Shylock. Three thousand ducats; well.
Bassanio. Ay, sir, for three months.
Shylock. For three months; well.

143. the condition, the disposition.

127-133. “There is no hesitation, no coquetry in Portia’s words, although some actresses seem to think it in place. Nothing could be finer than the simplicity of ‘I remember him well’” (Gummere).
Bassanio. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

Shylock. Antonio shall become bound; well.

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

Shylock. Three thousand ducats, for three months, and Antonio bound.

Bassanio. Your answer to that.

Shylock. Antonio is a good man.

Bassanio. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

Shylock. 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.

Bassanio. Be assured you may.

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

Bassanio. If it please you to dine with us.

Shylock. 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?

7. May you, 'Can you' (Rolfe), 'Are you willing?' (Furness). stead me, assist me.
Enter Antonio.

Bassanio. This is Signior Antonio.

Shylock. [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!

Bassanio. Shylock, do you hear?

Shylock. 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.

Antonio. 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?

Shylock. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

Antonio. And for three months.

43. for, because.
46. usance, interest.
63. excess, interest, that is, the sum paid in excess of the amount loaned.
65. possess'd, informed. Cf. iv. 1. 35, "I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose."
Shylock. 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.

Antonio. I do never use it.

Shylock. 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—

Antonio. And what of him? did he take interest?

Shylock. 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 streaked 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 caning 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.

Antonio. 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?

Shylock. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.

Antonio. 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,

74. As his wise mother, for so his wise mother.
79. compromised, mutually agreed.
95. Was this inserted,—in Scripture, that is.
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

_Shylock._ Three thousand ducats; 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve; then, let me see; the rate—

_Antonio._ Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

_Shyllock._ 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 garb'dine,
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'd 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'?

_Antonio._ 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 of barren metal of his friend?
But lend it rather to thine enemy,
Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

Shylock. 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.

Bassanio. This were kindness.

Shylock. 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.

Antonio. Content, i’faith: I’ll seal to such a bond
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

Bassanio. You shall not seal to such a bond for me:
I’ll rather dwell in my necessity.

Antonio. 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.

Shylock. 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,

150. an equal pound, an exact pound.
156. dwell, remain, continue.
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.

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

Shylock. 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.

The Hebrew will turn Christian: he grows kind.

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

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

171. And, for my love, 'And as for my good will, my friendly motives,
I pray you wrong me not by your suspicions.'
176. fearful guard, untrustworthy guard.
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.

Morocco. 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 Phoebus’ 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.

Portia. 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

2. The shadow’d livery, “the dark livery put upon me by the bright sun; he speaks of himself as the retainer, servant, of the sun, and of his colour as the garb of his service” (Deighton).

7. blood is reddest,—red blood being considered an indication of courage, whereas cowards have ‘livers white as milk,’ iii. 2. 86.

9. fear’d, frightened.

14. nice, fastidious.

17. scanted, limited.

18. wit, wisdom, foresight.

78
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have look'd on yet
For my affection.

_Morocco._ 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 Sultán 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.

_Portia._ 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.

_Morocco._ Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.

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

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

_[Cornets, and exeunt._

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25. The Sophy, the 'Emperour,' i.e., the Shah, of Persia.
46. blest, 'the force of the superlative in cursed'st retroacts on blest' (Hudson). See Abbott, 398.
Scene II. Venice. A street.

Enter Launcelot.

Launcelot. 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

11. via, away.
23. to be ruled, i. e., if I were ruled or in being ruled. See Ab- bott, 356.
27. saving your reverence, i. e., if I may say so.
28. the very devil incarnal, i. e., incarnate.
more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

*Enter Old Gobbo, with a basket.*

**Gobbo.** Master young man, you, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew’s?

**Launcelot.** [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.

**Gobbo.** Master young gentleman, I pray you, which is the way to master Jew’s?

**Launcelot.** 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.

**Gobbo.** 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?

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

**Gobbo.** 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.

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

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37. *sand-blind, dim-sighted, purblind.* Cf. *stone-blind.* ‘Launcelot finds a blind between these’ (Capell).

47. *God’s sonties,* God’s saints, perhaps, or God’s sanctities.

51. *raise the waters,* i. e., ‘in his eyes’ (Deighton).

55. *well to live,* ‘with every prospect of a long life’ (Furness), ‘well off’ (Hudson). The latter interpretation is given by the German translators generally. “The old man is humorously made to contradict himself” (Hudson). Cf. Dogberry’s “most tolerable and not to be endured,” *Much Ado,* iii. 3. 37, and “condemned into everlasting redemption for this,” *ibid,* iv. 2. 58.

56. *what a’ will,* what he will. “*A’ for he* is common in the old dramatists, in the mouths of peasants and illiterate people” (Rolfe).
Gobbo. Your worship's friend and Launcelot, sir.

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

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

Launcelot. 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.

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

Launcelot. Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? Do you know me, father?

Gobbo. 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?

Launcelot. Do you not know me, father?

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

Launcelot. 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.

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

Launcelot. 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.

Gobbo. I cannot think you are my son.

Launcelot. 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.

Gobbo. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if

64. father,—formerly used as a title of respect to all old men.
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.

_Launcelot._ 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.

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

_Launcelot._ 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._

_Bassanio._ 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.

_Launcelot._ To him, father.

_Gobbo._ God bless your worship!

_Bassanio._ Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

97. _thou._ "Note Gobbo's respectful 'you,' until he recognizes Launcelot, and then his change to 'thou'" (Furness). See Abbott, 231.

99. _what a beard._ Launcelot is kneeling with his back to his sand-blind old father.

100. _fill-horse_, thill-horse.

110. _set up my rest_, determined.

128. _Gramercy_, many thanks.
Gobbo. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—
Launcelot. Not a poor boy, sir, but the rich Jew's man; that would, sir, as my father shall specify—
Gobbo. He hath a great infection, sir, as one would say, to serve,—
Launcelot. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, as my father shall specify—
Gobbo. His master and he, saving your worship's reverence, are scarce cater-cousins—
Launcelot. 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—
Gobbo. I have here a dish of doves that I would bestow upon your worship, and my suit is—
Launcelot. 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.
Bassanio. One speak for both. What would you? 150
Launcelot. Serve you, sir.
Gobbo. That is the very defect of the matter, sir.
Bassanio. 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. 157
Launcelot. 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.
Bassanio. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy son.

155. preferr'd, recommended; also promoted, hence preferment, promotion.
158. The old proverb, i. e., "He that hath the grace of God hath enough."
Take leave of thy old master and inquire
My lodging out. Give him a livery
More guarded than his fellows': see it done.

_Launcelot._ 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! eleven 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.

_Bassanio._ 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.

_Leonardo._ My best endeavours shall be done herein.

_Enter Gratiano._

_Gratiano._ Where is your master?
_Leonardo._ Yonder, sir, he walks. [Exit.

_Gratiano._ Signior Bassanio!
_Bassanio._ Gratiano!
_Gratiano._ I have a suit to you.
_Bassanio._ You have obtain'd it.
_Gratiano._ You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.

_Bassanio._ Why, then you must. But hear thee,

_Gratiano;' Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;

164. _more guarded_, more trimmed or ornamented.
167. _a fairer table,—_a table, in palmistry, is the palm of the hand.
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.

**Gratiano.** 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.

**Bassanio.** Well, we shall see your bearing.

**Gratiano.** Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not
gauge me
By what we do to-night.

**Bassanio.** 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.

**Gratiano.** And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time.     [Exeunt.

194. **liberal,** 'free and easy' (Furness).
202. **hood mine eyes.** "Hats were then worn at meals; and consistent Quakers early in this century kept on their hats when at table" (Gum-mere).
205. **studied,** 'a technical term of the theatre for having got up a part.'
**a sad ostent,** a grave air, manner, mien.
Scene III. The same. A room in Shylock's house.

Enter Jessica and Launcelot.

Jessica. 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.

Launcelot. 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.

Jessica. Farewell, good 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 Launcelot.]

Scene IV. The same. A street.

Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Salanio.

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

Gratiano. We have not made good preparation.
Salarino. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

Scene iv.—1. in, during, at (Abbott, 161).
Salanio. 'T is vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.
Lorenzo. 'Tis now but four o'clock: we have two hours
To furnish us.

Enter Launcelot, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Launcelot. An it shall please you to break up this, it
shall seem to signify.
Lorenzo. I know the hand: in faith, 't is a fair hand;
And whiter than the paper it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gratiano. Love-news, in faith.

Launcelot. By your leave, sir.
Lorenzo. Whither goest thou?
Launcelot. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to
sup to-night with my new master the Christian.
Lorenzo. Hold here, take this: tell gentle Jessica
I will not fail her; speak it privately.
Go.—Gentlemen,

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?
I am provided of a torch-bearer.

Salarino. Ay, marry, I '11 be gone about it straight.
Salanio. And so will I.
Lorenzo. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.
Salarino. 'T is good we do so.

[Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.

Gratiano. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
Lorenzo. 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,

6. quaintly, gracefully, tastefully, artistically.
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.  

Scene V. The same. Before Shylock's house.

Enter Shylock and Launcelot.

Shylock. 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!

Launcelot. Why, Jessica!


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

Enter Jessica.

Jessica. Call you? what is your will?

Shylock. 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.

38. faithless, i.e., unbelieving. "Shylock has far more faith than Lorenzo, but not faith in Christianity" (Katherine Lee Bates).
18. to-night, i.e., last night, "the phrase meaning merely 'for the night' may refer to the present, the past, or the future."
Launcelot. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth expect your reproach.  

Shylock. So do I his.  

Launcelot. 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.

Shylock. 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.

Launcelot. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at window, for all this;  

There will come a Christian by,  
Will be worth a Jewess’ eye.  

[Exit.  

37. of feasting, for feasting. See Abbott, 174.

43. worth a Jewess’ eye. “A slight alteration, for the nonce, of the proverbial expression, Worth a Jew’s eye” (Dyce); “that worth was the price which the persecuted Jews paid for immunity from mutilation and death. When our rapacious King John extorted an enormous sum from the Jew of Bristol by drawing his teeth, the threat of putting out an eye would have the like effect upon other Jews” (Knight). Cf. from Scott’s Ivanhoe, chap. xxii, “Seest thou, Isaac,” said Front-de-Bœuf, “the range of iron bars above the glowing charcoal?—on that warm couch shalt thou lie, stripped of thy clothes
Act II. Sc. vi.] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Shylock. What says that fool of Hagar’s offspring, ha? Jessica. His words were ‘Farewell, mistress’; nothing else.

Shylock. 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."

Jessica. 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.

Gratiano. This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo Desired us to make stand.

Salarino. His hour is almost past.

Gratiano. And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour, For lovers ever run before the clock.

Salarino. O, ten times faster Venus’ pigeons fly

46. patch, ‘a name given to the professional jester (probably from his patched or parti-coloured coat), and afterwards used as a term of contempt’ (Rolfe).

Scene vi.—5. Venus’ pigeons. The chariot of Venus was drawn by doves.

as if thou wert to rest on a bed of down. One of these slaves shall maintain the fire beneath thee, while the other shall anoint thy wretched limbs with oil, lest the roast should burn.—Now, choose betwixt such a scorching bed and the payment of a thousand pounds of silver; for, by the head of my father, thou hast no other option. “... Strip him, slaves, and chain him down upon the bars.”
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!

Gratiano. 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 chased than enjoy'd.
How like a younger or a prodigal
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embraced 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!

Salarino. Here comes Lorenzo: more of this hereafter.

Enter Lorenzo.

Lorenzo. 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.

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

Lorenzo. Lorenzo, and thy love.

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

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

Jessica. 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.

*Lorenzo.* Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

*Jessica.* 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.

*Lorenzo.* 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.

*Jessica.* I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[Exit above.]

*Gratiano.* Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.

*Lorenzo.* 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 placed 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.]

43. an office of discovery, etc., *i.e.*, "the duty you impose upon me is one of discovering myself (and my disgrace) instead of disguising myself, as I ought to do." 'A torch-bearer's office reveals the face, and mine ought to be hidden' (Abbott, 323).

47. close, secret,—*i.e.*, the secreting or concealing night is slipping away.

52. "But is not adversative, but means 'if not,' after 'beshrew me,' &c." (Abbott, 126).
Enter Antonio.

Antonio. Who's there?

Gratiano. Signior Antonio!

Antonio. 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.

Gratiano. 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.

Portia. Go draw aside the curtains and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince.
Now make your choice.

Morocco. 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?

Portia. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

Morocco. Some god direct my judgement! Let me sec;
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

12. yours withal, yours together with it.
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 thoroughfares 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

20. a golden mind, etc., i. e., a noble mind does not deign to concern itself with dross such as this base lead.
26. thy estimation, thy reputation.
27. deserve enough, deserve fairly or largely.
30. disabling, disparaging.
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
Stamped 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!

Portia. There, take it, prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [He unlocks the golden casket.

Morocco. 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.

50. too gross To rib her cerecloth, etc., i. e., lead would be too coarse or common to enclose her shroud in the darkness of the tomb.
53. undervalued to, i. e., in comparison with. See Abbott, 187.
71. "(As) young in limbs, (so) in judgment old" (Abbott, 275).
77. thus losers part, i. e., depart.
Portia. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exeunt.

Scene VIII. Venice. A street.

Enter Salario and Salanio.

Salario. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail:
With him is Gratiano gone along;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

Saliano. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

Salario. 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.

Saliano. 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.'

Salario. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Saliano. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salario. Marry, well remember'd.

12. passion, 'passionate outcry; the cause for the effect' (Hudson).
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
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.

_Salanio._ You were best to tell Antonio what you hear;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

_Salarino._ 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 chiepest 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.

_Salanio._ I think he only loves the world for him.

I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

_Salarino._ Do we so.  

_Exeunt._

27. _reason'd_, talked, conversed.
30. _fraught_, freighted.
42. _your mind of love_, your loving mind.
44. _ostents of love_, manifestations, indications, displays of love.
45. _conveniently_, suitably, properly.
48. _sensible_, sensitive.
52. _quicken his embraced heaviness_, 'enliven the sadness which he clings to or cherishes.'
Scene IX. Belmont. A room in Portia’s house.

Enter Nerissa with a Servitor.

Nerissa. 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.

Portia. 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.

Arragon. 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.

Portia. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.

Arragon. 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;

19. address’d me, prepared myself.
25. meant By, i.e., meant for.

L. of C.
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 undeserved 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:

30. force (power) and road of,—“perhaps equivalent to in vi et via, exposed to the attack of” (Allen, quoted by Furness).
32. jump with, agree with.
42. clear honour, bright, unsullied honour.
44. cover, etc., i.e., wear their hats as superiors, not take them off as inferiors.
46. low peasantry, etc., “How much meanness would be found among the great, and how much greatness among the mean” (Johnson).

41-49. Cf. from Tennyson’s Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,
Plowmen, Shepherds, have I found, and more than once, and still could find,
Sons of God, and kings of men in utter nobleness of mind,
Truthful, trustful, looking upward to the practised hustings-liar;
So the Higher yields the Lower, while the Lower is the Higher.
Here and there a cotter’s babe is royal-born by right divine;
Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.
‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.’
I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[He opens the silver casket.]

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

Arragon. 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 deserving!
‘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?

Portia. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposed natures.

Arragon. What is here?

[Reads] The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgement is,
That did never choose amiss.

61. To offend, and judge, etc., “That is, an offender cannot be the judge of his own case” (Rolfe).
“‘There is surely an obscurity in this reply. She seems to consider him as having offended by the injudicious choice he had made; and he ought not, therefore, to assume the character of a judge in deciding upon his own merits, which, indirectly, he may be said to do by this indignant reply’” (Eccles, quoted by Furness).
“Portia probably intends to imply that, by the terms of her father’s will, she has unintentionally been the means of offending Arragon, and that he must not ask her to be a judge of his deserts; his fate was the result of no judgment of hers” (Underwood).

53. “It is to me [an aside], beyond a peradventure. As addressed to Arragon these words have the sound of twitting him, which is not, to me, quite in character. To be sure, it may be said that Portia is so delighted at his failure that she cannot restrain her merriment, but the open expression of it, even to a deliberate fool, is not exactly in harmony with that sympathetic tenderness of hers which was like the gentle rain from heaven” (Furness).
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.

Portia. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Nerissa. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Portia. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here: what would my lord?

Servant. 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 regrets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love:

85. what would my lord, a sportive rejoinder to ‘my lady.’ “She is in a happy mood, and disposed to joke?” (Sprague).

89. sensible regrets, substantial greetings.

92. likely, ‘promising’ (Rolfe), ‘good-looking?’ (Furness), ‘pleasing, one who fits his office’ (Gummere).
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Portia. 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.

Nerissa. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be!

[Exeunt.

98. high-day wit, holiday wit, 'elegant and choice terms.'
100. post, postman, courier.
101. Bassanio, lord Love, etc. i. e., may it prove to be Bassanio, O lord Love, if it be thy will.
ACT III.

SCENE I. Venice. A street.

Enter Salanio and Salarino.

Salanio. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salarino. 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.

Salanio. 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!—

Salarino. Come, the full stop.

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

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

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

Enter Shylock.

How, now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

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

10. knapped ginger, 'nibbled ginger' (Furness).
Salarino. That's certain; I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.

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

Shylock. She is damned for it.

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

Shylock. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

Salanio. Out upon it, old carrion! rebels it at these years?

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

Salarino. 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?

Shylock. 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.

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

Shylock. 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, pas-

32. *complexion*, nature, natural disposition.
33. *red wine and rhenish*. Rhenish (Rhine) wines are called white wines.
34. *another bad match*, another bad bargain.
sions? 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.

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

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

Enter Tubal.

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

[Exeunt Salanio, Salarino and Servant.

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

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

72. humility, kindness, benevolence, i.e., 'what kind of humility (kindness, benevolence, humanity) does he show?'

76. better the instruction. "It is none the less astounding how much right in wrong, how much humanity in unhumanity, Shakespeare has succeeded in imparting to Shylock. The spectator sees clearly that, with the treatment he has suffered, he could not but become what he is. . . . With his calm humanity, Shakespeare makes Shylock's hardness and cruelty result at once from his passionate nature and his abnormal position; so that, in spite of everything, he has come to appear in the eyes of later times as a sort of tragic symbol of the degradation and vengefulness of an oppressed race."—Brandes, p. 166.
Shylock. 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.

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

Shylock. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tubal. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shylock. 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.

Portia. 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,

6. such a quality, such a manner.

7–8. "And yet, since a maiden may only think and not speak her thoughts, you will not understand me, however long you stay" (Clarendon); ‘Portia loved Bassanio, but felt restrained from telling him so by maidenly modesty and social conventionality’ (Shakespeariana, Dec. 1886). See Furness.

11. forsworn, perjured.
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 't is to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

Bassanio. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Portia. Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess
What treason there is mingled with your love.

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

Bassanio. Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

Portia. Well then, confess and live.

Bassanio. 'Confess' and 'love'

14. Beshrew your eyes,—an imprecation, but here spoken playfully or perhaps tenderly.
15. o'erlook'd me, bewitched me, cast a spell upon me,—a term in witchcraft.
20. Prove it so, etc., i.e., "If it should prove in the end that I who give myself to you am not to be yours, owing to your choosing wrong, let fortune pay the penalty for the mishap, not me on whom no blame can justly be laid" (Deighton).
22. peize, retard, prolong.
26. then confess,—'alluding to the devilish use of the rack to extort confessions' (Sprague).
28. None but, etc., i.e., "no treason at all, unless that cruel, hateful, feeling of doubt which disturbs my peace of mind, may be called treason" (Deighton).
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.

Portia. 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-crowned 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!

44. swan-like end,—an allusion to the old and long accepted belief ("from Plato to Luther," says Douce) that the swan never sang until just before its death, when it breathed out its life in one beautiful strain of music—'a favourite notion with Shakespeare' (Clarendon). "The closing part of the allusion supposes the bird to sing her life away while floating passively on the water" (Hudson).

52. bridegroom's ear,—"An allusion to the custom of playing music under the windows at the bridegroom's bedroom on the morning of his marriage" (Halliwell).

54. presence, dignity of bearing. much more love,—because Hercules (Alcides) rescued the maiden from the sea-monster, not for love, but for a reward promised.

59. bleared, i.e., dimmed with tears.
Live thou, I live: with much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest 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 nourished?
   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.

_Bassanio._ 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 damned 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

76. *season'd,*—carrying on the metaphor in 'tainted and corrupt.'
86. *livers white as milk.* Cf. ii. 1. 7.
87. *valour's excrement,* i.e., the external sign of valour—the beards of Hercules and of frowning Mars.
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 't is purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled 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!

Portia. [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 rein thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.

Bassanio. What find I here? [Opening the leaden casket.

88. redoubted, redoubtable, feared, dreaded.
91. Making them lightest, i. e., vainest (with a play upon the two meanings of the word light, the miracle in nature being that what is purchased by the weight should make lightest those that wear most of it).
97. guiled, beguiling, treacherous.
99. an Indian beauty. "'Indian' is used adjectively, in the sense of wild, savage, hideous,—just as we, at the present day, might say a 'Hottentot beauty'" (Brae). For various interpretations and emendations, see Furness.
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;

127. unfurnish'd,—with the other eye, that is.
131. continent, i. e., that which holds.
141. by note. by written warrant.
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

*Portia.* You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, 150
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 then in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,

158. *livings,* possessions, wealth.
161. *unpractised,* not having been taught by practice, inexperienced, not skilled. Cf. 'And skilless as unpractised infancy,' *Troilus and Cressida,* i. 1. 12.

160. **sum of something.** The reading of the Qq. The Ff. read, sum of nothing. "Whether we read 'something' or 'nothing,' I think a dash should precede it. Then the choice of the word will depend on the light in which we here regard Portia. If she is speaking with deliberation and choosing her words, she probably said 'sum of —something,' which clearly and rationally any sum whatever must imply. Nor does the expression lack a certain archness in keeping with the occasion. But if, on the other hand, we see Portia, brimming over with joy, and in wild, careless, exuberant exaggeration, wishing herself twenty times trebled, and a thousand fairer, and ten thousand times richer, and in virtues, beauties, livings, friends beyond all calculation, then, I think, we shall know of a surety that in such a mood Portia would exclaim that the full sum of her was the 'sum of—nothing'" (Furness).
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.

_Bassanio._ 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!

_Nerissa._ 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!

_Gratiano._ 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:

178. _Only my blood, i. e., 'his blood alone, in his happy blushes'_
(Furness).
192. _that you can wish, i. e., that you can wish for yourselves._
193. _can wish none from me, i. e., can wish none given by me; or possibly, can wish none taken from me._ See Furness, and Abbott, 158.

172. _this same myself Are yours, my lord._ "It is not Juliet's passionate self-abandonment, but the perfect surrender in tenderness of the wise and delicate woman."—Brandes, p. 161.
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.

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

_Gratiano._ 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 promised last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

_Portia._ Is this true, Nerissa?

_Nerissa._ Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

_Bassanio._ And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

_Gratiano._ Yes, faith, my lord.

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

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salanio?

_Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Salanio, a Messenger from Venice._

_Bassanio._ Lorenzo and Salanio, 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.

201. for intermission, etc., i. e., "for delay in such matters is no more characteristic of me than of you."
210. Achieved, secured, obtained.
Portia. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Lorenzo. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salanio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

Salianio. I did, my lord;
And I have reason for it. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives Bassanio a letter.

Bassanio. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.

Salianio. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind;
Nor well, unless in mind: his letter there
Will show you his estate.

Gratiano. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her
welcome.

Your hand, Salanio: 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.

Salianio. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.

Portia. 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.

Bassanio. 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, Salanio?
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?

Salanio. 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

262. state, estate.
265. his mere enemy, his absolute, unqualified enemy.
278. confound, ruin.
280. doth impeach the freedom of the state. Cf. iv. 1. 38.
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.

Jessica. 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.

Portia. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bassanio. For me three thousand ducats.

Portia. 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

283. Of greatest port. Cf. i. 1. 9.
284. the envious plea, the hateful, malicious plea.
295. The best-condition'd, i.e., the best disposed, having the kindliest disposition or nature. Cf. above "if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil." and unwearied spirit, i.e., and the most unwearied spirit.
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.

_Bassanio. [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 be-
tween 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.

_Portia._ O love, dispatch all business, and be gone!

_Bassanio._ 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._

_Elenter Shylock, Salario, Antonio, and Gaoler._

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

_Anthonyo._ Hear me yet, good Shylock.

_Shylock._ 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.

314. _merry cheer_, a merry countenance.
3. _Hear me yet_, hear me at least.
9. _naughty_, worthless, wicked. "This word, now banished to the
nursery, had formerly a wider meaning" (Clarendon). _fond_, foolish.
Antonio. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shylock. 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.

Salarino. It is the most impenetrable cur That ever kept with men.

Antonio. 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.

Salarino. I am sure the duke Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

Antonio. 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.

19. kept with men, lived with men.

27. For the commodity, etc. Commodity seems to mean 'the advantage which consists in equality before the law'; i.e., "the refusal of the usual facilities enjoyed by strangers in Venice will bring in serious question the justice of the state."

32. so bated me, so reduced me (in weight).

33. shall hardly spare, shall with difficulty spare.
Scene IV. Belmont. A room in Portia’s house.

Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthasar.

Lorenzo. 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.

Portia. 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.

2. conceit, conception, i. e., “you have a noble conception of the more than human love which binds Antonio and Bassanio together” (Deighton).
6. How true, i. e., to how true.
9. than customary bounty, etc., i. e., “than commonplace kindness can oblige you to be” (Withers); “I am sure you would feel more pride in what you are doing than you could possibly be made to feel by any act of ordinary kindness” (Deighton).
12. waste the time, spend the time.
20. the semblance, i. e., Antonio. of my soul, i. e., Bassanio.
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.

\textit{Lorenzo.} Madam, with all my heart;
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

\textit{Portia.} 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.

\textit{Lorenzo.} Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

\textit{Jessica.} I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

\textit{Portia.} I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.

[\textit{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.

25. \textit{husbandry and manage}, stewardship and control.
33. \textit{this imposition}, \textit{i.e.}, this office laid upon you.
52. \textit{with imagined speed}, with the speed of imagination.
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

_Balthasar._ Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

_[Exit._

_Portia._ Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
That you yet know not of: we 'll see our husbands
Before they think of us.

_Nerissa._ Shall they see us?

_Portia._ They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
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.
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._

_72. I could not do withal, I could not help it._
Scene V. The same. A garden.

Enter Launcelot and Jessica.

Launcelot. 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.

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

Launcelot. 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.

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

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

Jessica. 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.

Lorenzo. How every fool can play upon the word! 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.

Launcelot. That is done sir; they have all stomachs.

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

3. fear you, fear for you.
Launcelot. That is done too, sir; only 'cover' is the word.

Lorenzo. Will you cover then, sir?

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

Lorenzo. 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.

Launcelot. 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.

Lorenzo. 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?

Jessica. 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 mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match

56. cover. Launcelot is playing upon the two meanings of the word, viz., to lay a table for a meal and to put the hat on the head.

60. quarrelling with occasion, 'quibbling on every opportunity.'

74. garnish'd, 'equipped' (Rolfe); 'their brains furnished like his' (Clarendon).

75. Defy the matter, 'set the meaning at defiance.' How cheer'st thou, i.e., how farest thou.

82. mean it, i.e., 'to live an upright life.'
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.

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

_Jessica._ Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

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

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

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

_Jessica._ Well, I ’ll set you forth.             [Exeunt.

89. **Hast thou of** (in) **me.** See Abbott, 172.
ACT IV.

SCENE I. Venice. A court of justice.

Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salanio, and others.

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Antonio. 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.

Antonio. 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.

Salanio. 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 't is thought

7. qualify, temper, moderate.

18. but lead' st this fashion, etc., i. e., "that you are merely protract-ing your display of malice in this way to the latest possible minute, i. e., the minute when it will give way to pity" (Deighton).

128
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.

_Shylock._ 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; for affection,
Mistress of 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;
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?

_Bassanio._ This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

_Shylock._ I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
_Bassanio._ Do all men kill the things they do not love?
_Shylock._ Hates any man the thing he would not kill?
_Bassanio._ Every offence is not a hate at first.
_Shylock._ What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

_Antonio._ I pray you, think you question with the Jew: 70
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 any thing 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.

_Bassanio._ For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

70. think _you_ question _with_, remember that _you_ are arguing with, remonstrating with.
72. the _main flood_, the ocean tide.
Shylock. 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?

Shylock. 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; ’t is 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.

Salanio. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

Bassanio. 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.

Antonio. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death: the weakest kind of fruit

92. parts, employments.
104. Upon, ‘in accordance with’ (Abbott, 192).
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?
Nerissa. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

Bassanio. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shylock. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.
Gratiano. 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?
Shylock. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Gratiano. 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.
Shylock. 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?

131. To hold, so as to hold.
135. his fell soul fleet, his cruel soul take flight.
Act IV. Sc. i.] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE 133

Nerissa. 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 contro-
versy 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 im-
pediment 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, dressed like a doctor of laws.
Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Portia. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.170
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

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

162. be no impediment to let him lack, be no such impediment as to
let him lack, i.e., ‘be no hindrance to his receiving.’
165. whose trial, ‘for his trial’ (Abbott, 263).
171. the difference, the matter in dispute.
173. thoroughly, thoroughly.
Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portia. Is your name Shylock?

Shylock. Shylock is my name.

Portia. 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?

Antonio. Ay, so he says.

Portia. Do you confess the bond?

Antonio. I do.

Portia. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

Portia. 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:

'T is mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes

178. yet in such rule, etc., i.e., yet "so strictly according to form, that the law can detect no flaw in your procedure" (Clarendon).

180. within his danger, within his power.

184. the quality of mercy, i.e., "the nature of mercy is to act freely, not from constraint" (Hudson).

184. "It is worth observing how naturally this magnificent speech rises out of the ordinary level of the dialogue, and has not the least appearance of being a purpureus pannus. Shylock takes hold of the word 'must,' and gives it an emphasis and a meaning which it had not as used by Portia" (Clarendon).

"Does she virtually say, 'You are right, Shylock, in objecting to the word "must"; it is characteristic of mercy that it acts freely, not from constraint'?" (Sprague).

"There is a tendency, I think, in repeating this familiar line, to lay the chiefest emphasis on 'mercy.' Is this right? In reply to Shylock's demand for a proof of his compulsion to be merciful, Portia exclaims that the very characteristic of mercy is that there can be no compulsion in its exercise. Its very nature is to fall like the rain. Should not 'quality,' then, receive the greater, and 'mercy' a secondary, emphasis?" (Furness).
The throned 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 enthroned 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.

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

Portia. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'T will be recorded for a precedent,

191. attribute to awe and majesty, "'Awe,' properly, of the subject;
'majesty' of the king, the cause of 'awe.' By hendiadys, both might be
taken together, equivalent to awful majesty" (Allen, quoted by Furness).
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.

_Shylock._ A Daniel come to judgement! yea, a Daniel!
_O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!
_Portia._ I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
_Shylock._ Here 't is, most reverend doctor, here it is.
_Portia._ Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.
_Shylock._ An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice.

_Portia._ 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.

_Shylock._ 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.

_Antonio._ Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgement.

_Portia._ Why then, thus it is:
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

_Shylock._ O noble judge! O excellent young man!
_Portia._ For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

_Shylock._ 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

248. _full relation to the penalty_, _i. e._, 'the law relating to contracts is fully applicable in this case.'
Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shylock. Ay, his breast:

So says the bond: doth it not, noble judge?

'Nearest his heart': those are the very words.

Portia. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh

The flesh?

Shylock. I have them ready.

Portia. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shylock. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Portia. It is not so express'd: but what of that?

'T were good you do so much for charity.

Shylock. I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.

Portia. You, merchant, have you anything to say?

Antonio. 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.

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

Gratiano. 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.

Nerissa. ’T is well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make else an unquiet house.

Shylock. These be the Christian husbands. I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrabas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian. [Aside.
We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Portia. A pound of that same merchant’s flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shylock. Most rightful judge!

Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

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

Portia. 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.

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

Shylock. Is that the law?

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

*Gratiano.* O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!

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

*Bassanio.* Here is the money.

*Portia.* Soft!

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

*Gratiano.* O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

*Portia.* 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.

*Gratiano.* A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

*Portia.* Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

*Shylock.* Give me my principal, and let me go.

*Bassanio.* I have it ready for thee; here it is.

*Portia.* He hath refused it in the open court:

He shall have merely justice and his bond.

*Gratiano.* A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!

I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

*Shylock.* Shall I not have barely my principal?

*Portia.* Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

*Shylock.* Why, then the devil give him good of it!

I'll stay no longer question.

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328. *the substance*, the amount (Rolfe).
Portia. 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. Gratiano. 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. Portia. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio. Shylock. 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. Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio? 373. not for Antonio,—'Antonio's half cannot be so commuted.'
Gratiano. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

Antonio. 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 pronounced here.

Portia. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shylock. I am content.

Portia. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shylock. 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.

Gratiano. 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.

Portia. 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.]
Bassanio. 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.

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

Portia. 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.

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.

[To Antonio] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[To Bassanio] 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.

Bassanio. This ring, good sir, alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.

Portia. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bassanio. There's more depends on this than on the value.

412. cope, etc.,—"with three thousand ducats we gladly requite the trouble you have so courteously taken in our behalf."
421. of force, of necessity, i.e., 'compelled by a sense of what we owe you.'
429. in love, 'out of the love you profess.' shall not deny, will not deny or cannot possibly deny.
431. to give you this, i.e., by giving you this. See Abbott, 356.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,  
And find it out by proclamation:  
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.  

Portia. 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.  

Bassanio. 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.  

Portia. 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.  

Antonio. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:  
Let his deservings and my love withal  
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.  

Bassanio. 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.  

Portia. 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.  

456. in the morning early. Cf. iii. 2. 328.
Enter Gratiano.

Gratiano. 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.

Portia. 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.

Gratiano. That will I do.

Nerissa. Sir, I would speak with you.

[Aside to Portia]. I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

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 knowest where I will tarry.

Nerissa. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?

[Exeunt.

6. upon more advice, upon further consideration.
16. old swearing. "Old was a frequent intensive in colloquial speech; very much as huge is used now" (Hudson).
ACT V.

Scene I. Belmont. Avenue to Portia's house.

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Lorenzo. 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.

Jessica. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,
And ran dismay'd away.

Lorenzo. 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.

Jessica. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew

15. Jessica steal. "Could not Lorenzo have chosen a less suggestive word? But, after all, are there not two distinct, and utterly different, Jessicas? This Jessica, whose awakening soul can be saddened by sweet music, is not the Jessica of Venice, gilded with stolen ducats. In this growth of character is there one of Shakespeare's indications of Long Time lying perdue?" (Furness).
And with an unthrifft love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

Jessica. 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.

Lorenzo. In such a night
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

Jessica. I would out-night you, did no body come;
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

Enter Stephano.

Lorenzo. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Stephano. A friend!

Lorenzo. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

Stephano. 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.

Lorenzo. Who comes with her?

Stephano. None but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

Lorenzo. 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.

Launcelot. Sola, sola! wo ha, ho! sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Who calls?

Launcelot. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?

Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lorenzo. Leave hollaing, man: here.
Launcelot. Sola! where? where?
Lorenzo. Here.
Launcelot. 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.
Lorenzo. 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 Stefano.
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.
Jessica. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.
Lorenzo. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

57. Become the touches of, are in accord with the notes of.
59. patines,—small plates, often of gold, used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
62. quiring, 'choiring,' singing in concert with.
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.

Portia. 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.

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

Portia. 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!

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

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

99. without respect, 'without regard to circumstances,'—the circumstance in this case being that the music is heard in the stillness of the night.
Nerissa. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Portia. 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.

Lorenzo. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Portia. He knows me as the blind man knows the
cuckoo,
By the bad voice.

Lorenzo. Dear lady, welcome home.

Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' healths,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Lorenzo. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Portia. 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.

Lorenzo. Your husband is at hand; I hear his trumpet:
We are no tell-tales, madam; fear you not.

Portia. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 't is a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

103. attended, attended to. See Abbott, 200.
107. by season, etc. "Good things miss their final flavor of perfection unless they are well-timed."
Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers.

Bassanio. We should hold day with the Antipodes, If you would walk in absence of the sun.

Portia. 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.

Bassanio. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.

This is the man, this is Antonio, To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Portia. You should in all sense be much bound to him, For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Antonio. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:

It must appear in other ways than words,

Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

Gratiano. [To Nerissa] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

Portia. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?

Gratiano. 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.'

Nerissa. 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.

127. hold day, etc. "This is making Portia pretty luminous or radiant."
132. God sort all, God dispose all things.
141. this breathing courtesy, this courtesy mode of breath, words.
156. respective, careful, regardful, scrupulous.
Gave it a judge’s clerk! no, God’s my judge,
The clerk will ne’er wear hair on ’s face that had it.

   Gratiano. He will, an if he live to be a man.

   Nerissa. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

   Gratiano. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed 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.

   Portia. 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 ’t were to me, I should be mad at it.

   Bassanio. [Aside] Why, I were best to cut my left hand
off
And swear I lost the ring defending it.

   Gratiano. 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.

   Portia. What ring gave you, my lord?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

   Bassanio. 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.

162. scrubbed, stunted. Cf. scrub oak.
Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth.

Bassanio. 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.

Portia. 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.

Bassanio. 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;

201. contain, retain.

203. What man is there, etc. "Who is there so unreasonable (as to) have lacked good manners (to such an extent as) to press for a thing regarded by its owner as sacred?"

217. beset with shame and courtesy,—'shame' in refusing and 'courtesy' the desire to show gratitude, a sense of what courtesy demanded.
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.

Portia. 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 anything I have.

Antonio. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.

Bassanio. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong;
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

Portia. 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.

Bassanio. Nay, but hear me:
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Antonio. 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.

Portia. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this
And bid him keep it better than the other.

Antonio. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.
Bassanio. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!
Portia. I had it of him. You are all amaz'd:

249. for his wealth, for his weal, his well-being.
250. Which.—the loan, that is, not the 'wealth.'
253. advisedly, deliberately, knowingly.
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 chanced on this letter.

Antonio. I am dumb.
Bassanio. Were you the doctor and I knew you not?
Antonio. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Portia. How now, Lorenzo!
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.
Nerissa. 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.

Lorenzo. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.

Portia. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;

297. Let us go in. “Shylock and his machinations being dismissed from our thoughts, and the rest of the dramatis personae assembled together at Belmont, all our interest and all our attention are riveted on Portia, and the conclusion leaves the most delightful impression on the fancy. The playful equivoque of the rings, the sportive trick she puts on her husband, and her thorough enjoyment of the jest,
And charge us there upon inter’gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gratiano. Well, while I live I’ll fear no other-thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa’s ring.

[Exeunt.]

which she checks just as it is proceeding beyond the bounds of propriety, show how little she was displeased by the sacrifice of her gift, and all are consistent with her bright and joyous spirit. In conclusion, when Portia invites her company to enter her palace to refresh themselves after their travels, and talk over ‘these events at full,’ the imagination, unwilling to lose sight of the brilliant group, follows them in gay procession from the lovely moonlit garden to marble halls and princely revels, to splendour and festive mirth, to love and happiness!’ (Mrs. Jameson).
NOTES

ACT I.

Scene i.

Venice. "In perusing this play we should keep constantly in mind the ideas which prevailed in England in the time of Shakespeare of the magnificence of Venice. Now, the name calls up ideas only of glory departed—'Her long life hath reached its final day'; but in the age of the poet Venice was gazed on with admiration by the people of every country, and by none with more devotion than those of England. Her merchants were princes,—her palaces were adorned with the works of Titian, and she was, moreover, the seat of all pleasant delights—'The pleasure-place of all festivity, The revel of the world, the masque of Italy.' Lewkenor, Moryson, and other English travellers of the age of Shakespeare, have described Venice, including Coryat, who speaks of the palazzos of the merchants in the vicinity of the city, of the Rialto, and of the Ghetto, one of the islands on which the Jews lived, who were in number five or six thousand. He describes their dress; those born in Italy wearing red hats, while the Eastern or Levantine Jews wore yellow turbans. The impression which the magnificence of Venice made upon this simple-minded but observant traveller may be judged of by the following passage, which will at the same time serve to show how he became himself a butt for the sharp wits of his time, so that his merit as a traveller has been too much overlooked:—'This incomparable city, this most beautiful Queen, this untainted Virgin, this Paradise, this Tempe, this rich diadem and most flourishing garland of Christendom, of which the inhabitants may as proudly vaunt as I have read the Persians have done of their Ormus, who say that if the world were a ring then should Ormus be the gem thereof,—the same, I say, may the Venetians speak of their city, and much more truly'; and he concludes with saying that 'if four of the richest manors in Somersetshire, where he was born, should have been bestowed upon him if he never saw Venice, he would say that seeing Venice was worth them all'" (Hunter).

The Merchant of Venice was presumably written about 1596 (Dowden). It was published twice in 1600 in quarto form and again in 1623, in the Folio, edited by Heminge and Condell, intended to be a complete edition.
of Shakspere's plays. Upon these three texts, which do not always agree, are based the various modern composite, more or less amended, reading texts of the play.

The present edition follows in general the Cambridge text—the lines numbered as in the 'Globe' edition, which was used by Bartlett in his monumental Concordance to Shakespeare, the value whereof one cannot enough commend.

5. I am to learn. "Ellipsis of 'under necessity'" (Abbott, 405).

8. ocean,—here trisyllabic.

9. argosies. For the earlier forms of the word see the Century or Murray's New English Dictionary. "No reference to the ship Argo is traceable in the early use of the word."—New English Dictionary.

11. pageants. "The gild plays of England changed the station of the continental stage into a movable pageant, or platform, and instead of calling the population of a city to the stage, rolled the platform through the streets in orderly succession from audience to audience."—English Mystery Plays, Charles Davidson, printed by authority of Yale University, 1892, p. 76.

See also, for an account of the first 'pagiientes' and a description of the machinery of the 'high scafolds,' Ward's History of English Dramatic Literature, vol. i. p. 32.

See also Sir Walter Scott's Kenilworth, chapters xxx, xxxix.

15. forth. Cf. i. 1. 143, "To find the other forth," and ii. 5. 11, "I am bid forth to supper."

19. roads, 'road, a place near the shore where vessels may anchor, differing from a harbor in not being sheltered. Also called roadstead'—The Century Dictionary—Hampton Roads, Va., for example, or Yarmouth Roads, England. Cf. also v. 1. 260, "my ships Are safely come to road."

33-34. spices . . . silks. A sentence in Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe (ch. x) was doubtless a reminiscence of these lines. . . . "when in the Gulf of Lyons, I flung over my merchandise to lighten the ship,—robbed the seething billows in my choice silks—perfumed their briny foam with myrrh and aloes—" etc.

35-36. worth this, . . . worth nothing. "The meaning is here obscure and the construction abrupt, if 'this' refers to the spices and silks just mentioned. Perhaps, as Mr. Lettsom conjectured, a line has been lost after silks. As the text stands, the actor may be supposed to complete the sense by a gesture, extending his arms" (Clarendon).

41-45. Cf. i. 1. 177-179, and the letter to Bassanio, iii. 2. 317-321, "my creditors grow cruel," etc.

50. two-headed Janus,—"as the god of the sun's rising and setting he had two faces, one looking to the east and the other to the west. His temple at Rome was kept open in time of war, and was closed only in the rare event of universal peace."
55. in way of smile. "The was frequently omitted before a noun already defined by another noun, especially in prepositional phrases" (Abbott, 89).

56. Nestor,—famous as the oldest councilor of the Greeks at the siege of Troy—very old and wise and grave. A jest that appealed to Nestor as laughable must then be laughable indeed.

69. 'polysyllabic names often receive but one accent at the end of the line in pronunciation' (Abbott, 469).

"My lord' | Bassan' | io, since' | you have found' | Anto'nio.

78. A stage. Cf. the development of this thought in a later play, As You Like It, ii. 7. 139-166, "All the world's a stage," etc.

80. With,—'here used causatively' (Furness), because of; that is, let the wrinkles of old age come because of mirth. See Furness further for illustrations of the belief in Shakspeare's day that groans are 'mortifying,' death giving, and 'cool' the heart, 'a spendthrift sigh, that hurts by easing," Hamlet, iv. 7. 123. The antithetical expression, "It warms the heart," "It warms the very sickness in my heart," Hamlet, iv. 7. 56, is still in common use.

84. his grandsire cut in alabaster. Alabaster "was frequently used for tombs in the Elizabethan and Jacobean times. One magnificent specimen is in the north aisle of Stratford church, and may have suggested this simile to the poet."

96. reputed wise for saying nothing. Cf. Prov. xvii. 28, "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: When he shutteth his lips, he is esteemed as prudent."

116. You shall (may) seek all day. See Abbott, 315.

139. occasions,—here a quadrisyllable.

150. As, for so, i. e., for I will so watch the aim. See Abbott, 110.

170. a golden fleece. "The golden fleece was kept carefully guarded by the king of Colchos (properly Colchis), a country bordering on the Black Sea. A mythical Greek hero, Jason, with a band of brave men in his wonderful ship, the Argo, sailed in quest of it. By the aid of Medea, the daughter of the king, he succeeded in getting the treasure." See a classical dictionary.

Scene ii.

50. as who should say, 'like (one) who should say' (Abbott, 257).

53. the weeping philosopher, i. e., Heraclitus.

77. proper man's picture. Furness quotes Allen's suggestion that this should be printed 'proper man's picture,' and adds, "wherein I agree with him; in which case I think 'proper' is to be taken in the sense of very, just as it is in 'though our proper son stood in your action.'—Oth. I, iii, 84."

135. The four strangers. Six have been mentioned. Possibly two were added after the play was first given, and the number here left unchanged—forgotten.
Scene iii.

42. "A 'fawning publican' seems an odd combination. The Publicani or farmers of taxes under the Roman government were much more likely to treat the Jews with insolence than servility. Shakespeare perhaps only remembered that in the Gospels 'publicans and sinners' are mentioned together as objects of the hatred and contempt of the Pharisees" (Clarendon).

But Moulton would give this line to Antonio. See Moulton, p. 62.

ACT II.

Scene i.

19. His wife. 'His, her, &c. may stand as the antecedent of a relative' (Abbott, 218).

31. alas the while!—"a form of exclamation now obsolete, or nearly so. The speaker laments the circumstances in which he is placed at the present time. So Julius Cæsar, i. 3. 82: 'But, woe the while!'") Cf. Woe worth the day!

44. the temple,—"where the Prince was to take the oath. The mention of a temple instead of a church seems odd here. Perhaps Portia's Roman name led Shakespeare momentarily to forget that she was a Christian, or the mention of Hercules and Lichas may have given his thoughts a classical turn" (Clarendon).

Scene ii.

167. a fairer table. For various readings and interpretations, see Furness—if it seem worth the pains.

Scene iv.

40. shall be (i.e., is to be) my torch-bearer. See Abbott, 315.

Scene v.

25. Black-Monday. "'In the 34 Edw. III. (1360) the 14 of April, & the morrow after Easter-day, K. Edwarde, with his hoast, lay before the cittie of Paris; which day was full darke of mist & haile, & so bitter cold, that many men died on their horses backs with the cold. Wherefore unto this day it hath beene called the Blacke monday'" (Stow, Chronicles).

Scene vii.

22. her virgin hue. 'He says 'her' of silver because he had already in mind 'virgin' as its analogue' (Allen, quoted by Furness). virgin, 'pure, unsullied' (Deighton).

41. Hyrcanian deserts,—Hyrcania, 'a district of indefinite extent south of the Caspian Sea, famous for tigers.'
Scene viii.

33. You were best to tell. 'You' is a dative mistaken for a nominative. See Abbott, 230, on 'Ungrammatical remnants of ancient usage.' Cf. v. 1. 177.

ACT III.

Scene i.

62. affections. "'Affections,' when contrasted with 'passions,' seem to denote emotions produced through the senses by external objects. . . . Steevens quotes from Greene's Never Too Late: 'His heart was fuller of passions than his eyes of affections'" (Clarendon).

89. Frankfort. "There are two things which make this citie famous over all Europe. The one the election of the King of the Romanes, the other the two noble fayres kept heere twise a yeare, which are called the Martes of Franckford" (Coryat's Crudities).

Scene ii.

89. "If there is anything that Shakespeare hated with a hatred somewhat disproportionate to the triviality of the matter, a hatred which finds expression in every stage of his career, it is the use of rouge and false hair. Therefore he insists upon the fact that Portia's beauty owes nothing to art; with others the case is different:—

'Look on beauty, And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight.'" (Brandes, p. 160.)

102. Hard food for Midas. "Midas had prayed that everything he touched might turn to gold, and found himself likely to be famished by the literal fulfilment of his prayer."

222. Salanio, or possibly Salerio, as in the oldest texts.

Scene iv.

53. the tranect. "'Tranect,' which means nothing, is, of course, a misprint for 'traject,' an uncommon expression which the printers clearly did not understand. This, as Elze has pointed out, is simply the Venetian word traghetto (Italian tragitto). How should Shakespeare have known either of the word or the thing if he had not been on the spot?" (Brandes, p. 116).

ACT IV.

Scene i.


10. "Of Antonio we may say that in the main his life has been a practical embodiment of Mercy; now, in his present extremity, he deserves Mercy. But he does not get it; on the contrary, he hears the
cry, Revenge. Why? He has himself reared the avenger, it is his own deed coming back to him in that ominous shout.

"At this point we must mark the side on which the character of Antonio shows its limitation; inconsistency cuts it in twain, for, though generally merciful, he was unmerciful to the Jew, and thus wronged his own principle. The sight of the pitiless man, made him pitiless in requital; he has berated, kicked, spit on Shylock in public; he has educated the latter to vengeance. . . Thus Shylock’s deed is engendered of Antonio’s deed, which is now coming back to the latter armed with all the might of Venetian justice" (Snider, pp. 241-242).

26. moiety. In the early texts this was printed ‘moytie.’ "One of the many advantages of having the original text before us is that, as here, the spelling guides as to the scansion. We see at once that moiety is a dissyllable" (Furness).

149. shall (is to) understand. See Abbott, 315.

157. "Portia’s success as an advocate cannot be pleaded as encouraging to ladies to enter the legal profession. It will be observed that she gets not only her garments but her notes from her cousin Doctor Bellario at Padua."—Shakespeare: the Man, Goldwin Smith, New York, 1900, p. 45.

281. with all my heart. "A jest like this enhances the pathos. Men at the point of death have a natural tendency to beguile the misery of the time by playing upon words. Compare the death scene in King John, v. 7. So Shakespeare makes Gaunt jest on his name in Richard II. ii. 73 sqq. So also Sophocles makes Ajax ‘play nicely with his name,’ line 430" (Clarendon).

A C T V.

Scene i.

59. patines of bright gold. See Furness for an opinion that these ‘patines of bright gold’ are not the gold plates used in the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, but fleecy ‘broken clouds, like flaky disks of curdled gold which slowly drift across the heavens, and veil at times the brightness of the moon.’

1 Many references have been given to Abbott’s Shakespearian Grammar on the assumption that a copy of this indispensable work would be accessible to every student of the play.

The citations from Bates, Clarendon, Deighton, Gummere, and Rolfe are from the excellent editions of this play by Professor Katherine Lee Bates, of Wellesley College; Messrs. Clark and Wright, of Cambridge University; K. Deighton, late principal of Agra College, British India; Professor Gummere, of Haverford College; and Dr. William J. Rolfe. These editions are published respectively by Sibley & Ducker, the Clarendon Press, The Macmillan Company, Longmans, Green & Co., and The American Book Company.
Table of Acts and Scenes in which Each Character appears. Also, Number of Lines spoken by Each Character. Also, Grouping of Minor Characters to be read in a Reading Club by One Person. [Adapted from "How to Study Shakespeare," W. H. Fleming, New York, 1898.]

No. of Lines.

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<td>I, i, iii; II, vi; III, iii; IV, i; V, i.</td>
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<td>II, i, iii, iv, v; III, v; V, i.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gratiano</td>
<td>I, i; II, ii, iv, vi; III, ii; IV, i, ii; V, i.</td>
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<td>Salarino</td>
<td>I, i; II, iv, vi, viii; III, i, iii.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duke</td>
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<td>Portia</td>
<td>I, ii; II, vii, ix; III, ii, iv; IV, i, ii; V, i.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nerissa</td>
<td>I, ii; II, ix; III, ii, iv; IV, i, ii; V, i.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>II, iii, v, vi; III, ii, iv, v; V, i.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Grouping of Minor Characters to be read in a Reading Club by One Person.

- Morocco
- Salanio
- Arragon
- Duke
- Old Gobbo
- Tubal
- Musician
- Leonardo
- Balthasar
- Stephano
- All
- Servant
EXERCISES IN INTERPRETATION

i. 1. 1. In sooth, I know not why I am so sad.
What is the poetic atmosphere of this opening scene—tragic or divertingly comic? Is there or is there not a tragic key-note struck?
Do the friends of Antonio appear to take his 'sadness' seriously? or, on the contrary, as in reality due to the want of anything to be sad about—merely the care of the lavish gifts of fortune? Is Salarino sad or merry here?

"Why, then you are in love. . .
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."

Within the first hundred lines the madcap wit-snapper Gratiano—parts that become thee happily enough, says Bassanio a little later—is accusing Antonio of 'putting on' an appearance of melancholy, of 'fishing' for a reputation for wisdom with the bait of melancholy. What effect would these lines—spoken by a taking actor—have on the poetic atmosphere of the play? Does Gratiano's 'excellent foolery' intensify a presentiment of approaching disaster? or does it lighten the spirit of the play by attributing the marvellous change in Antonio to his 'wilful stillness' in fishing for a reputation for wisdom with this bait of melancholy?

Cf. the feeling of the poet Swinburne that in the play as a whole "there is but very seldom, not more than once or twice at most, a shooting or passing gleam of anything more lurid or less lovely than 'a light of laughing flowers'" with the opinion of Professor Lounsbury that the very first words of the opening scene sound "the ominous note of impending evil." Cf. also with the opinions of Boas, Brandes, and Furness.
"It is in reality one of those hypochondriacal seizures to which
the favourites of fortune are at times subject, though here it serves as
a presentiment of evil to come."—Boas, p. 220.

"In Antonio, the royal merchant, who, amid all his fortune and
splendour, is a victim to melancholy and spleen induced by forebod-
ings of coming disaster," etc.—Brandes, p. 159.1

"But this play is not a Tragedy; it is a Comedy, wherein a tragic
key-note would be falsely struck. Witches and a blasted heath, a
chilly rampart and a midnight ghost,—these are key-notes; but no
irretrievable disaster is impending here."—Furness, p. 2.

What, then, is the poetic atmosphere of this opening scene? At
the first reading of the play, would the reader at the close of the scene
anticipate a tale of woe? or a heart-stirring account of a successful
quest of the fair lady of wondrous virtues, who had already sent from
her eyes fair speechless messages to one who is introduced to the
reader as the most noble kinsman of the hero of the play?

i. 1. 1. I know not why I am so sad. In reading this line aloud
should the greater emphasis fall on 'why' or on 'sad'? Is this line,
that is, the first reference made in this group of friends to Antonio's
sadness or is it the continuation of a conversation on the subject? And
the sadness of Antonio being already known to his friends and com-
mented on ('You say it wearies you'), is he here simply saying in
conclusion, I know not why I am so sad? The scene is introduced in
this way, as a matter of course, to tell the reader about Antonio's
sadness? But is the reader chiefly interested in the fact of Antonio's
sadness or the cause?

For a presentation of the value of interpretative reading as a
means of literary interpretation, see The Voice and Spiritual Educa-
tion, by Professor Corson (The Macmillan Company). See also The
Atlantic Monthly, June, 1895.

i. 1. 62. Your worth is very dear in my regard.

"The melancholy and self-sacrificing magnanimity of Antonio is
affectingly sublime. Like a princely merchant, he is surrounded with
a whole train of noble friends."—Schlegel, p. 389.

"In the opening scene we see the dignified merchant-prince suf-
ferring under the infliction of frivolous visitors, to which his friend-
ship with the young nobleman exposes him; his tone throughout the

1 But Brandes also says, referring to the trial-scene, "They [the Elizabethan
audience] did not take him [Shylock] seriously enough to feel any real uneasi-
ness as to Antonio's fate, since they knew beforehand the issue of the adven-
ture." What, then, to an Elizabethan audience, was the significance of these
forebodings of coming disaster" in the opening scene, to which Brandes refers
above?
interview is that of the barest toleration, and suggests that his cour-
tesies are felt rather as what is due to himself than what is due to
those on whom they are bestowed.”—Moulton, p. 47.

To the reader does Antonio appear to be ‘surrounded by a whole
train of noble friends’ or ‘suffering under the infliction of frivolous
visitors’? Just what is there in the text, if anything; upon which the
reader can base an agreement either with Schlegel or with Moulton?

i. 3. 93. Was this inserted to make interest good?

“All these documents [described by Brandes] render it sufficiently
apparent that Shakespeare did not share the loathing of interest
which it was the fashion of his day to affect, and which Antonio, in
*The Merchant of Venice*, flauts in the face of Shylock. The taking
of interest was at that time regarded as forbidden to a Christian, but
was usual, nevertheless; and Shakespeare seems to have charged the
current rate, namely, ten per cent.”—Brandes, p. 154.

“This is the fool that lent out money gratis.”

“But Shakespeare himself did not belong to this class of fools.”—
Brandes, p. 160.

“In the matter of deriving profit from money lent, he [Shylock] is
a long way ahead of Antonio, who is nothing more than the ignorant
upholder of a sentimental notion about the taking of interest, the
prevalence of which produces the very evils it ostentatiously professes
to deplore.”—Lounsbury, p. 335.

But while reading the play is the reader presumed to feel the fool-
ishness of this ‘ignorant upholder’ of a ‘sentimental notion’ in
regard to the taking of interest? or, on the contrary, to appreciate
the kindness of heart which led him to deliver from the forfeitures
of the merciless usurer many that did at times make moan to the
Christian intercessor?

Is the effect of the comment quoted above to help the reader to
catch the spirit in which the play was written? to help him let his
sympathies go where they were clearly expected to go when the play
was written? Or does this comment, on the contrary, tend to support
the second conception of Shylock rather than the first as given in the
Introduction above?

The reader is presumed to read the play in the light of its age, but
—having done so—what is the effect upon his satisfaction with the
play, if he is required by the spirit of the play to sympathize with an
‘ignorant upholder’ of what are to him ‘sentimental notions’?

i. 3. 131. I am as like . . . To spit on thee again.

“Antonio must be understood as a perfect character: for we must
read the play in the light of its age, and intolerance was a mediaeval
virtue.”—Moulton, p. 47.
...,"despite the princely elevation of his nature, Antonio is by
no means faultless. He has insulted and baited Shylock in the most
brutal fashion on account of his faith and his blood. We realize the
ferocity and violence of the mediæval prejudice against the Jews when
we find a man of Antonio's magnanimity so entirely a slave to it.
And when, with a little show of justice, he parades his loathing and
contempt for Shylock's money-dealings, he strangely (as it seems to
us) overlooks the fact that the Jews have been carefully excluded
from all other means of livelihood, and have been systematically
allowed to scrape together gold in order that their hoards may always
be at hand when circumstances render it convenient to plunder
them."—Brandes, p. 160.

Was Antonio's treatment of Shylock displeasing to the lovely
heroine, the author of that immortal plea for mercy? to the Duke,
the head of the Venetian State? to the audience of Shakspere's
day? Which interpretation must be accepted, then, if the reader is
to read the play in the light of its age? But, though in this way
only the spirit in which the play was written can be caught, how
shall the play be read by the twentieth-century reader, to whom the
good Antonio's anti-Jewish prejudices are an offense?

ii. 1. 26. Sultan Solyma. This was Solyma the Magnificent, under
whose rule the Turkish Empire reached its highest point. His con-
quests over the Christian armies extended as far west as Hungary.
He was a patron of learning and the arts and one of the ablest rulers
of his country and his time.

Might not the wielder of a scimitar that slew a Persian prince
that won three fields of Solyma the Magnificent have easily, then,
had Shakspere chosen, been made to win the love of Portia for the
dangers he had passed through, as Othello won the love of Desde-
mona and the approbation of the Duke, and of the reader of the
play?

"His frank warmth of heart and luxuriance of fancy, no less than
his undisguised solicitude, not ill-founded, as to the effect of his
dusky complexion, enlist for him a certain sympathy; but he would
be no more a fitting mate for the high-bred lady of Belmont than
would that other splendid barbarian, 'Ligurje himself, the grete
king of Thrace,' for the gentle Emelye."—Katherine Lee Bates.

What justification is there in the text for this characterization of
the Prince of Morocco as a 'splendid barbarian'? In any case is he
more of a barbarian than 'the warlike Moor Othello'? And is not
the gentle Desdemona, daughter of a senator of Venice, as high-bred
a lady as the lady of Belmont? Yet the reader approves, or is pre-
sumed to approve, as does the Duke of Venice, of the marriage of
Othello and Desdemona?
Had Shakspere purposed to make the Prince of Morocco the successful suitor, would it have been necessary to change the portrayal of the Prince greatly? or merely to omit certain hints to the reader as to the predestined hero of the caskets?

Is there anything in the portrayal of the personal character of Bassanio, as thus far given, to win the reader's sympathy for him rather than for the Prince of Morocco?—aside from the fact that the reader recalls that the lovely heroine remembers him well and remembers him as worthy of praise, and also that he is a kinsman of the good Antonio.

Morocco is not wooing the heiress of Belmont merely because she is 'richly left'? Indeed, as to this Elze has written,

"In plain prose, Portia's father did not wish that she should become the prize of a wooer who should choose her for the sake of her gold and silver, one who should in marriage seek outward show not inward worth, one who should love her fortune not herself. And yet—strange contradiction!—Bassanio it was who set out for Belmont on purpose to win the 'Golden Fleece'; while to the Princes of Arragon and Morocco, with their royal wealth, this mercenary motive could not be imputed."

The love of the Prince of Morocco is properly brought out—"More than these in love I do deserve"? Is the reader, then, presumed to be touched by his simple adieu, "I have too grieved a heart To take a tedious leave"? or, on the contrary, is his situation throughout 'comic' to the reader as to Koenig?

"Portia's assurance that he stood as fair as any other of her suitors conveys to us, who know what her feelings toward these others are, a keen satire, which becomes extremely comic when Morocco thanks her for it."—Koenig.

Cf. the comment of ten Brink, given in the Introduction above, as to Shakspere's treatment of his characters in general—"all his characters are drawn with equal sympathy and with equal objectiveness"—and as to the reader's difficulty sometimes in maintaining "that obliviousness to the suffering of the comic victim so essential to the enjoyment of comedy."

ii. 7. 78. A gentle riddance. In view of the poetry of Morocco's description of the coming of suitors 'from the four corners of the earth' to 'kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint,' and the stress he lays on his love for her, and his evident deep feeling on his departure, "Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart To take a tedious leave," and in view of her assurance on his coming, "Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair As any com'er I have look'd on yet For my
affection"—in view of all this is not her "A gentle riddance... Let all of his complexion choose me so," a trifle unsympathetic? At least her great admirer, the great Shakspere scholar who looks upon her as the most lovely of Shakspere’s creations, could not well in this connection speak of "that sympathetic tenderness of hers which was like the gentle rain from heaven"?

iii. 1. 134. meet me at our synagogue.

"Shakespeare probably intended to add another shade of darkness to the character of Shylock, by making him still formally devout while meditating his horrible vengeance" (Clarendon).

"The Jew invokes the Ancient of Days, who spoke unto Moses aforetime: 'If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour; as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he hath caused a blemish in a man, so shall it be done to him again.' In entering his synagogue Shylock entrusts his hatred to the safeguard of his Faith. 'Henceforth his vengeance assumes a consecrated character. His bloodthirstiness against the Christian becomes sacerdotal. The expiation of Anthonio is but a holocaust offered to the Omnipotent Avenger. Shylock is bound by irrevocable vows. And when he appears before the tribunal his bearing is the indomitable impassiveness of a priest about to sacrifice an expiatory lamb to the God of Sabaoth."—François Victor Hugo.

Which of these interpretations is the better supported by the text and by the spirit of the play? Remembering that this line comes shortly after Shylock’s unanswerable plea, Hath not a Jew eyes? etc., that ‘swollen gush of elemental human passion,’ consider whether in this magnificent appeal Shakspere was, as Boas holds he was, somewhat ‘carried beyond himself by the irresistible sway of his own creation,’ so that his treatment of Shylock here is to some extent inconsistent in that, with the entry of Tubal, Shylock ‘sinks back into the stony-hearted usurer.’

If the reader feels with Boas that Shylock here sinks back into the stony-hearted usurer, he can also feel that Shakspere, in this scene with Tubal, is tickling the ears of the groundlings with a rehearsal of the dog Jew’s agony over the loss of his gold; he can feel that they were presumed to yell with vociferous laughter when Shylock exclaimed, "Thou stickest a dagger in me: I shall never see my gold again." In this case the spectators would not be presumed to feel any pathos in Shylock’s allusion to his dead wife, “it was my turquoise; I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor.”

What, then, was the effect intended by Shakspere in making Shylock say, “meet me at our synagogue”? See the Introduction, Shylock in Shakspere’s Day.
Furness holds that Shylock's oath is 'hollow.' Referring to Shylock's 'pause' toward the close of the trial-scene (Why doth the Jew pause?) Furness says, p. 223,

"In this 'pause' does Shakespeare intimate to us that the balance is trembling between Tragedy and Comedy? The choice between them lies in Shylock's power. Is he debating it? The end is not yet; he can yet make that end Tragic, and I am rash enough to say that I am not altogether sure he should not so make it. . . . Nothing convinces me more clearly that this is not a 'tendenz-drama,' wherein is infused a subtle plea of toleration for the Jews, than that, instead of a Jewish Tragedy, Shylock suffers it to end as a Christian Comedy. Shylock had sworn by his holy Sabbath to fulfil the bond, and, if the representative of a race, no perjury must taint his soul; curseless ruin has fallen on him; his life is gone, since there is no law for him in Venice; a Christian, worse than if of the stock of Barba- bas, claims his daughter; to his ancient grudge is added the curse of his nation; since his fall, then, is inevitable, let him redeem his vow and drag down Anthonio with him. Anthonio's gushing blood will hide all former stains on the Jewish gaberdine. When, therefore, after the 'pause' for making up his mind, Shylock drops the knife to clutch the money, we see that his oath was hollow, and that he is still willing to wear the badge of sufferance and to be footed over the threshold like a stranger cur. No one of course can say with assurance why at this dividing of the ways Shakespeare decided in favour of comedy. If he objected to the many corpses on the stage, he got well over that aversion by the time he had written Hamlet."

iii. 2. 32–33. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

"At the very time when Shakespeare's actors were repeating these words at the Black Friars, or on the Bankside, the secret chambers of the Tower were actually echoing the groans of suspected persons who were subjected to this unreasonable mode of extorting information. Shakespeare must have known this, and I hope that it was because he knew it that he sent the thrilling words through the crowds that re-sorted to his theatre."—Hunter.

"It is pleasant to find Shakespeare before his age in denouncing the futility of this barbarous method of extorting truth. He was old enough to remember the case of Francis Throckmorton in 1584; and that of Squires in 1598 was fresh in his mind" (Clarendon).

Is Shakspere here 'denouncing' the futility of this barbarous method of extorting truth? Did these words 'thrill' his audience with thoughts of the rack and the thumb-screw? On the contrary, are not Portia and Bassanio able to play with these terms because they do not vividly realize—here and now at least—their significance? Is the horror realized, visualized, either by them or by the audience?

Pleasant as it would be, then, to find Shakspere 'before his age'
in denouncing either the wretched mediæval prejudice against the Jews or the futility of the barbarous water-cure method of extorting untruth, 1 may it not well be questioned whether the denunciation of either is found in this play?

iii. 2. 107. And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

... "on the third [Act], where the two lovers stand trembling before the inevitable choice, which in one moment must unite or separate them forever, Shakspeare has lavished all the charms of feeling—all the magic of poesy. We share in the rapture of Portia and Bassanio at the fortunate choice: we easily conceive why they are so fond of each other, for they are both most deserving of love."—Schlegel.

"The love part of the play must of course be secondary, since Bassanio is a spendthrift, and cannot be made much of as a hero. Portia must be clever rather than—like her namesake in the Julius Caesar—great, or we shall regret the match. So, after Shylock, Antonio appears to hold the author's artistic attention, and furnishes the work its name."—Sherman.

"Bassanio's gift of language goes far to excuse his somewhat unheroic conduct" (Bates)—this conduct of Bassanio's that to Professor Katherine Lee Bates is somewhat unheroic being his enterprise in getting clear of all his debts by an expedition after the golden fleece of a lady 'richly left.'

Is there anything in the play or in the spirit of the play to justify any reflection on Bassanio's method of getting clear of all his debts? On the contrary, is not this reflection—wholly justifiable though it be according to the twentieth-century point of view—clearly a modern scruple, and wholly out of accord with the spirit of the play?

See the Introduction, p. 34.

iv. 1. 225. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

The reader who sees vividly with the eye of imagination the events here taking place will feel the lapse of a brief time after this line is spoken—intense moments "during which every spectator in court holds his breath and hears his heart beat as he follows the lawyer's eye down line after line." But, as Moulton has said, "It is of no avail; at the end she can only repeat the useless offer of thrice the loan, with the effect of drawing from Shylock an oath that he will not give way."

"An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:
    Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
    No, not for Venice."

1 Cf. George Eliot's opinion, in Romola, as to the value of the "confessions" wrung from Savonarola "by the agony of torture—agony that, in his sensitive frame, must quickly produce raving."—confessions retracted when the torture ceased but reiterated upon a renewal of the torture.
What does the reader or spectator now expect? Has he recognized in Portia ‘the signal of deliverance,’ and, knowing that in some way not yet anticipated deliverance is to come, does the lengthening of the crisis whilst sentence is pronouncing become ‘the dramatic beauty of suspense’? Or does he, on the contrary, feel that with the court’s award of a pound of flesh Antonio’s life is doomed? Does Bassanio appear to have yielded to the inevitable in his exclamation as to what he ‘would’ sacrifice—life, wife, and all the world—to deliver his friend? In short, does or does not the reader here anticipate a deliverance?

Cf. the comment of Dr. Lewinthal, “Shylock does not receive the forfeit of his bond—did we not know it beforehand? He does not receive even the principal loaned—we had anticipated this too.” Is it because Dr. Lewinthal knows so well the treatment meted out to the Jew in every age and clime that he anticipates correctly the result of the trial? Or should every careful reader anticipate the result equally well? Has he already recognized, that is, in Portia the signal of deliverance? or is her ‘Tarry a little,’ a thrilling surprise?

Cf. the opinion of Brandes, already quoted, that the Elizabethan audience did not feel ‘any real uneasiness’ as to Antonio’s fate. Cf. also the suggestion of Professor Lounsbury that the conclusion was presumably as well known to the audience as to the author—on account of previous treatments of the theme. But see the suggestion of Furness (p. 171 above) that the play might well have turned out a tragedy, and the feeling of ten Brink (quoted in the Introduction above) that the play ought to have turned out a tragedy.

v. i. 62. Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins.

Does the reader who yields himself wholly to the spirit of the play dwell disapprovingly upon the legal quibble whereby the threatened tragedy was averted? or, on the contrary, rejoice unreservedly in the happy close, indifferent to the harsh justice—or injustice—meted out to Shylock, accepting the happiness, as Professor Gummere does, “without asking too nicely how it all came to pass”? or as does Professor Brandl of the University of Berlin, who speaks of Portia’s Solomon-like sentence?

1 *Shakspere*, Alois Brandl, Berlin, 1894. Professor Brandl has emphasized the humanity of Shylock, his love for his daughter, his desire for revenge for her abduction—a desire dearer to him than his ducats. Yet, says Brandl, Shylock is no tragic hero—he yields to save his life, and Irving’s portrayal is clearly unjustified.
But how shall the play be read by the reader who is unable to let his sympathies altogether go where he sees they are clearly expected to go?

The proper attitude of the reader toward Shylock is, then, a 'necessary question' of the play.

The importance of this attitude is recognized in the questions on this play frequently set at college-entrance examinations. As for example the following, given in substance: "Give an opinion of the treatment Shylock receives throughout the play" (Harvard); "Does Shakspere make us pity Shylock at last?" (Wesleyan); "Point out the means by which our sympathies are turned for or against Shylock" (Teachers College, Columbia); "Are there any passages or scenes in which your sympathy is with Shylock rather than with Antonio and his friends? If so, where and why?" (Vanderbilt); "What is the dramatic purpose of Antonio's intercession with Shylock after the time of the bond has expired?" (Teachers College); "Discuss Shylock's position as one of a persecuted race and as a money lender, and show its effect upon his character" (College-Entrance Examination Board).

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