

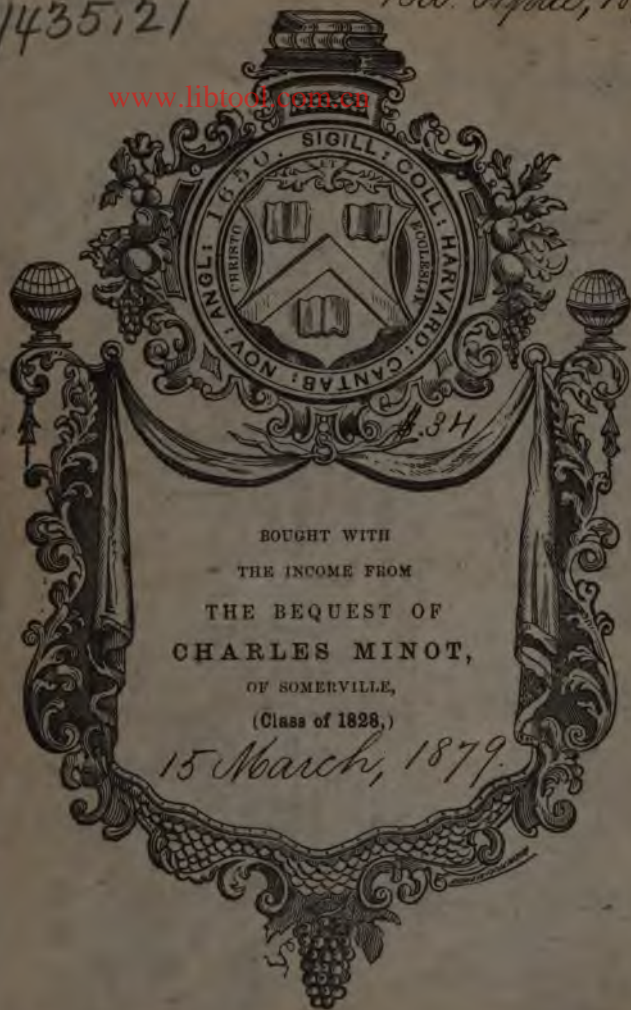
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*Prompt-Book of*  
*The Merchant* +  
+ *of Venice*

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*Edited by*

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William

Shakespeare's Comedy

of

The Merchant of Venice

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.



"A stage, where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one."

"If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him."

"A kinder gentleman treads not the earth."

"I will have the heart of him if he forfeit."

"Never did I know  
A creature that did bear the shape of man  
So keen and greedy to confound a man."

"We do pray for mercy,  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy."

"You take my life,  
When you do take the means whereby I live.  
I pray you give me leave to go from hence."



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## Preface.



*TO the reverential student of Shakespeare this version of "The Merchant of Venice" will seem little better than a mutilation. While, however, much has been omitted, nothing has been introduced. If the piece does not go as far as might be desired, it is, at least, faithful to Shakespeare, as far as it goes. The object sought has been the construction of an acting copy, suitable for the use of leading tragedians, in which the position of chief prominence is assigned to the character of Shylock. "The Merchant of Venice"—aside from some aspects of the treatment of the Jew—is pure comedy; and, when given entire, it should be acted by a company of excellent comedians. The part of Shylock would naturally fall to the "character" actor in such a company; but it would not largely overshadow its companion parts—supposing every portion of the piece to receive competent and careful treatment. When, on the other hand, this play is acted chiefly for the purpose of illustrating Shylock, a judicious compression of the scenes is found not only expedient but highly desirable. Such a compression—with this view, and for this reason—has been attempted here. It will be found, though, that the story, while told with brevity, has not been impaired in substance. The incidents of the bond and the caskets are duly displayed, and the poet's great skill in combining them is suitably exhibited. This version is in four acts, and it can be represented in two hours and a quarter.*

*"The Merchant of Venice" is mentioned by Meres [1598], and it was first published in 1600. The sources to which it*

is thought that Shakespeare resorted for the main incidents of its plot are: a collection of tales called "*Il Pecorone*," written by Ser Giovanni, a notary of Florence, about 1378, and first published in 1558, at Milan; and the popular collection of stories called the "*Gesta Romanorum*." The *Ballad of Gernutus*, which embodies the incident of the bond,—and which may be found in Percy's "*Reliques*," and in several modern collections of old poetry—was also, probably, extant in Shakespeare's day, and known to him. It is conjectured, too, that an earlier play, mentioned by Stephen Gosson [1579] as "*shewn at the Bull*," and as "*representing the greedyness of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers*," may have dealt with some of the old materials which served Shakespeare for his comedy. The savage, relentless Jew is one of the most ancient persons of fiction. "*The story of the caskets*," says Dowden, "*is first found in the mediæval Greek romance of 'Barlaam and Josaphat,' by Joannes Damascenus (about 800); in another form it is told by the English poet Gower, and the Italian novelist Boccaccio.*" These matters are solely or chiefly interesting as tending to direct study upon the wonderful genius with which Shakespeare transfigured all that he touched. His originality is not that of the maker of themes and bald facts, but that of the shaper and interpreter. "*In the management of the plot*," says Hallam, "*which is sufficiently complex without the slightest confusion or incoherence, I do not conceive that it has been surpassed in the annals of any theatre.*" "*The union of the two actions in one event*," says Dr. Johnson, "*is, in this drama, eminently happy. Dryden was much pleased with his own address in connecting the two plots of his 'Spanish Friar,' which yet, I believe, the critic will find excelled by this play.*"

The supremacy of Shakespeare as the poet of nature is conspicuously seen in any comparison between "*The Merchant of Venice*" and its popular predecessor on the old London stage, "*The Rich Jew of Malta*," by Christopher Marlowe [1594]. The Jew in Marlowe's piece, a thoroughly diabolical character, was acted by Alleyn, the founder of Dulwich College—still standing, with his tomb

in the middle of its hall of paintings—on the Surrey side of the Thames. An alteration of “*The Merchant of Venice*,” made by Lord Lansdowne, and first acted at Lincoln’s Inn Fields, was published in 1701; and this held the stage till 1741, when Macklin effected his restoration of *Shylock*. Lord Lansdowne’s piece begins with a prologue, in which the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden rise, crowned with laurel; and its second act contains a musical masque, called *Peleus and Thetis*. A banquet scene is also introduced, in which the Jew, seated at a separate table, drinks to his Money as his Only Mistress. *Shylock*, which in that version was acted by Thomas Doggett [— 1721], was made a comic character, and wore a red wig. Macklin’s great performance reinstated the part as one of tragical conception, and had the effect of banishing Lansdowne’s distortion forever from the stage. John Philip Kemble made an acting copy of “*The Merchant of Venice*,” in 1795. The original representative of *Shylock* was Burbage—who dressed it in a red wig and a false nose. *Shylock* has been greatly acted by Henderson, George Frederick Cooke, Edmund Kean, and Junius Brutus Booth. Of Kean in *Shylock*—in which part, at Drury Lane, he made his first great hit [January 26th, 1814], Douglas Jerrold used to say that he impressed his audience “like a chapter of Genesis.” “The elder Booth’s *Shylock*,” says Gould, “was the representative Hebrew,” “a type of the religion of the law;” and instinct with “the might of a people whom neither time, nor scorn, nor political oppression could subdue.” Bogumil Dawison, on the German stage, was famous as the Jew; and the *Shylock* of James W. Wallack, likewise, is memorable among the most affecting personations that have graced the stage in this century.

W. W.

New-York, October 30th, 1878.



*"She was a form of life and light  
That seen became a part of sight,  
And rose, where'er I turned mine eye,  
The morning-star of memory."*—BYRON.

*"Sweet pain of love, bind thou with fetters fleet  
The heart that on the dew of hope must pine."*—GOETHE.

*"O happy hour! and happier hours  
Await them. Many a merry face  
Salutes them,—maidens of the place,  
That pelt us in the porch with flowers."*—TENNYSON.

*"Wilt thou go on with me?  
The moon is bright, the sea is calm,  
And I know well the ocean paths \* \* \*  
Thou wilt go on with me?"*—SOUTHEY.

*"The hunted fox, the tortured wild-cat, loves its young—the despised and  
persecuted race of Abraham love their children \* \* \* When the day  
comes, and I ask my own, then what hear I but damned Jew, and the curse  
of Egypt on your tribe."*—SCOTT.

*"He hath his armour on—  
I am his sword, shield, helm; I but enclose  
Myself, and my own heart, and heart's blood, when  
I thus encompass him \* \* \*  
Each for the other thus,  
And in that other for his dearer self."*  
BANIM—IN "DAMON AND PYTHIAS."

*"And at the last ten thousand crowns  
They offered him to save:  
Gernutus said, 'I will no gold,  
My forfeit I will have.'"*  
THE BALLAD OF GERNUTUS.

*"Gentle deed  
Makes gentle bleid."*  
OLD SCOTTISH PROVERB.

*"Anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. \* \* \*  
I was sure that he could not live, after that he was fallen."*—II. SAMUEL,  
i. 9-10.







" *In Belmont is a lady richly left,  
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,  
Of wondrous virtues. Sometimes from her eyes  
I did receive fair speechless messages:  
Her name is Portia.*"

" *It was Bassanio; as I think, so was he called \* \* \* He, of all the  
men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.*"

" *My chief care  
Is to come fairly off from the great debts  
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,  
Hath left me gaged.*"

" *Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow,  
By taking nor by giving of excess,  
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of a friend  
I'll break a custom.*"

" *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.*"

" *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.*"

" *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 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!*"

" *The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
The best-conditioned and unwearied spirit  
In doing courtesies.*"

" *Repent not you that you shall lose your friend,  
And he repents not that he pays your debt;  
For, if the few do cut but deep enough,  
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.*"

" *He shall have merely justice, and his bond.*"



## Persons Represented.



DUKE OF VENICE.

ANTONIO, *the Merchant of Venice, Friend to Bassanio.*

BASSANIO, *Friend to Antonio.*

GRATIANO, )

LORENZO, )

SALARINO, )

SOLANIO, )

SALERIO, )

*Venetian Gentlemen, Friends to Antonio and Bassanio.*

SHYLOCK, *a Jew.*

TUBAL, *a Jew, Friend to Shylock.*

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, *Servant to Shylock.*

OLD GOBBO, *Father to Launcelot.*

LEONARDO, *Servant to Bassanio.*

BALTHAZAR, *Servant to Portia.*

PORTIA, *a rich Heiress.*

NERISSA, *her Friend and Companion.*

JESSICA, *Daughter to Shylock.*

MAGNIFICOES OF VENICE, OFFICERS OF THE COURT OF  
JUSTICE, LORDS, LADIES *and* ATTENDANTS.

## Place and Time.



SCENE.—*Partly in Venice, and partly at Portia's villa, named Belmont, on the adjacent main-land.*

PERIOD.—*The Sixteenth Century.*

TIME OF ACTION.—*A little more than three months.*

# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.



## Act first.

**Scene first.**—VENICE. A STREET.

[*Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Solanio.*]

*Ant.*

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad :  
It wearies me ; you say it wearies you :  
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
What stuff 't is 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  
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,  
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

*Solanio.*

Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,  
The better part of my affections would  
Be with my hopes abroad.

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*Ant.*

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

*Salarino.*

Why, then you are in love.

*Ant.*

Fie, fie !

*Salarino.*

Not in love neither ? Then let us say, you are sad  
Because you are not merry.

*Solanio.*

Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kinsman,  
Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare you well ;  
We leave you now with better company.

*Salarino.*

I would have stayed till I had made you merry, [*Crosses.*  
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

*Ant.*

Your worth is very dear in my regard.  
I take it your own business calls on you,  
And you embrace th' occasion to depart.

[*Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano* L. 3. E.

*Salarino.*

[*To them.*

Good-morrow, my good lords.

*Bass.*

Good signiors both, when shall we laugh ? Say, when ?  
You grow exceeding strange : Must it be so ?

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*Salarino.*

We'll make our leasures to attend on yours.

*Exeunt Salarino and Solanio* R. I. E.

*Lor.*

My lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,  
We two will leave you ; but at dinner-time  
I pray you have in mind where we must meet.

*Bass.*

I will not fail you.

*Gra.*

You look not well, signior Antonio ;  
You have too much respect upon the world :  
They lose it that do buy it with much care.  
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

*Ant.*

I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano ;  
A stage, where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one.

*Gra.*

Let me play the Fool :  
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come ;  
And let my liver rather heat with wine  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man whose blood is warm within  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster ?  
Sleep when he wakes, and creep into the jaundice  
By being peevish ? I tell thee what, Antonio,—  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,—  
There are a sort of men, whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond ;  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dressed 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 ! ”

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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 a while ;  
 I 'll end my exhortation after dinner.

*Lor.*

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

*Gra.*

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

*Ant.*

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

*Gra.*

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

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo R.*

*Ant.*

Is that any thing now ?

*Bass.*

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

*Ant.*

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

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*Bass.*

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

*Ant.*

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

*Bass.*

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,  
 I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
 The self-same way, with more advisèd watch  
 To find the other forth ; and, by adventuring both,  
 I oft found both : I urge this childhood proof,  
 Because what follows is pure innocence.  
 I owe you much ; and, like a wilful youth,  
 That which I owe is lost : but if you please  
 To shoot another arrow that self-way  
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both,  
 Or bring your latter hazard back again,  
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

*Ant.*

You know me well, and herein spend but time,  
 To wind about my love with circumstance ;

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And, out of doubt, you do me now more wrong  
 In making question of my uttermost,  
 Than if you had made waste of all I have.  
 Then do but say to me what I should do,  
 That in your knowledge may by me be done,  
 And I am prest unto it : therefore speak.

*Bass.*

In Belmont is a lady richly left,  
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,  
 Of wond'rous 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.  
 O, my Antonio ! had I but the means  
 To hold a rival place with one of them,  
 I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
 That I should questionless be fortunate.

*Ant.*

Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea ;  
 Neither have I money, nor commodity  
 To raise a present sum : therefore, go forth ;  
 Try what my credit can in Venice do ;  
 That shall be racked, 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, Antonio L., and Bassanio R.*

**Scene Second.**—BELMONT. A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE.

[*Enter Portia and Nerissa.*

*Por.*

*By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is a-weary of this great world.*

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*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

Good sentences, and well pronounced.

*Ner.*

They would be better, if well followed.

*Por.*

If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions. I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband:—O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

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

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*Ner.*

First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

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*Por.*

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

*Ner.*

Then, is there the County Palatine.

*Por.*

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

*Ner.*

How say you by the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

*Por.*

Heaven made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.

*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

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. An the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

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*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket: for, if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it.

*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

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

*Ner.*

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

*Por.*

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

*Ner.*

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

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*Por.*

I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise. [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn)

[*Enter Balthazar* L. I. E.

How now? what news?

[*To him.*

*Bal.*

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

*Por.*

If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good 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. [*To Balthazar.*

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt* L. I. E.

**Scene Third.**—VENICE. A STREET.

[*Enter Bassanio and Shylock* R. U. E.

*Shy.*

Three thousand ducats,—well.

*Bass.*

Ay, sir, for three months.

*Shy.*

For three months,—well.

*Bass.*

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

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*Shy.*

Antonio shall become bound,—well.

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*Bass.*

May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

*Shy.*

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

*Bass.*

Your answer to that.

*Shy.*

Antonio is a good man.

*Bass.*

Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

*Shy.*

O no, no, no, no;—my meaning in saying he is a good man is, to have you understand me that he is sufficient: yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves; I mean, pirates; and then, there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks: the man is, notwithstanding, sufficient;—three thousand ducats;—I think I may take his bond.

*Bass.*

Be assured you may.

*Shy.*

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

*Bass.*

*If it please you to dine with us.*

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*Shy.*

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

*Bass.*

This is signior Antonio.

[*Exit Bassanio* L. I. E.]

*Shy.*

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!

[*Re-enter Bassanio with Antonio* L. I. E.]

*Bass.*

Shylock, do you hear?

*Shy.*

I am debating of my present store:  
And, by the near guess of my memory,  
I cannot instantly raise up the gross  
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?  
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
Will furnish me. But, soft; how many months  
Do you desire?

Rest you fair, good signior:

[*To Antonio.*

Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

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*Ant.*

Shylock, albeit 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 possessed  
 How much you would? [To Bassanio.

*Shy.*

Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

*Ant.*

And for three months. [To Shylock.

*Shy.*

I had forgot,—three months; you told me so.  
 [To Bassanio.

Well then, your bond; and, let me see.  
 But hear you. [To Antonio.  
 Methought you said, you neither lend nor borrow  
 Upon advantage.

*Ant.*

I do never use it.

*Shy.*

When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep,—  
 This Jacob from our holy Abraham was  
 (As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)  
 The third possessor; ay, he was the third.

*Ant.*

And what of him? did he take interest?

*Shy.*

No, not take interest; not, as you would say,  
 Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.  
 When Laban and himself were compromised,  
 That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied  
 Should fall as Jacob's hire,  
 The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands,  
 And, in the doing of the deed of kind,

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He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,  
 Who, then conceiving, did in eaning-time  
 Fall parti-coloured lambs, and those were Jacob's.  
 This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;  
 And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

*Ant.*

This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;  
 A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
 But swayed and fashioned by the hand of Heaven.  
 Was this inserted to make interest good?  
 Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

*Shy.*

I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.

*Ant.*

Mark you this, Bassanio,  
 The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.  
 An evil soul, producing holy witness,  
 Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;  
 A goodly apple rotten at the heart.  
 O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!

*Shy.*

[*Aside.*

Three thousand ducats, — 't is a good round sum.  
 Three months from twelve, then let me see the rate.

*Ant.*

Well, Shylock, shall we be beholden to you?

*Shy.*

Signior Antonio, many a time, and oft  
 In the Rialto, you have rated me  
 About my monies, and my usances:  
 Still have I borne it with a patient shrug,  
 For *suff'rance* is the badge of all our tribe:

[*Showing his yellow cap.*

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You call me "misbeliever," "cut-throat dog,"  
 And spet upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
 And all for use of that which is mine own.  
 Well, then, it now appears you need my help :  
 Go to, then ; you come to me, and you say  
 "Shylock, we would have monies ;" You say so ;  
 You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
 And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur  
 Over your threshold ; monies 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 spet on me on Wednesday last ;  
 You spurned me such a day ; another time  
 You called me dog ; and for these courtesies  
 I'll lend you thus much monies ?"

*Ant.*

I am as like to call thee so again,  
 To spet 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 may'st with better face  
 Exact the penalties.

*Shy.*

Why, look you, how you storm !  
 I would be friends with you, and have your love ;  
 Forget the shames that you have stained me with ;  
 Supply your present wants, and take no doit  
 Of usance for my monies, and you'll not hear me :  
 This is kind I offer.

*Ant.*

*This were kindness.*

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*Shy.*

This kindness will I show :  
Go with me to a notary ; seal me there  
Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,  
If you repay me not on such a day,  
In such a place, such sum, or sums, as are  
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit  
Be nominated for an equal pound  
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken  
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

*Ant.*

Content, in faith ; I 'll seal to such a bond,  
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

*Bass.*

[*Coming down.*

You shall not seal to such a bond for me ;  
I 'll rather dwell in my necessity.

*Ant.*

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

*Shy.*

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

*Ant.*

Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

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*Shy.*

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

[*Going.*

*Ant.*

Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Antonio and Bassanio cross to R.*  
This Hebrew will turn Christian ; he grows kind.

*Bass.*

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

*Ant.*

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

[*Exeunt Antonio and Bassanio R. I. E. Shylock  
gazes after them. Picture.*

CURTAIN.



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## Act Second.

**Scene first.** { VENICE. A STREET, IN FRONT OF SHY-  
LOCK'S HOUSE.

[Enter Launcelot Gobbo from house R. 3. E.

*Laun.*

Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew, my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me; saying to me,—“Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.” My conscience says,—“No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo; or (as aforesaid) honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run: scorn running with thy heels.” Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. “Via!” says the fiend; “away!” says the fiend, “for the heavens; rouse up a brave mind,” says the fiend, “and run.” Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me,—“My honest friend, Launcelot, being an honest man’s son,” or rather an honest woman’s son;—for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste;—well, my conscience says, “Launcelot, budge not:” “Budge,” says the fiend; “Budge not,” says my conscience. Conscience, say I, you counsel well; fiend, say I, you counsel well: to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew, my master, who (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 incarnation: and, in

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my conscience, my conscience is a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel : I will run, fiend ; my heels are at your commandment ; I will run.

[Enter *Old Gobbo*, with a basket, R. I. E.]

*Gob.*

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

*Laun.* [Aside.]

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

*Gob.*

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

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

By sonties, 't will be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot that dwells with him dwell with him, or no ?

*Laun.*

Talk you of young master Launcelot ?—Mark me now—[Aside.]—now will I raise the waters : [To *Gobbo*.]—Talk you of young master Launcelot ?

*Gob.*

No master, sir, but a poor man's son : his father, though I say 't, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, heaven be thanked, well to live.

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*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

*Laun.*

But I pray you, *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech you, talk you of young master Launcelot?

*Gob.*

Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

*Laun.*

*Ergo*, master Launcelot; talk not of master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman (according to fates and destinies, and such odd sayings, the sisters three, and such branches of learning) is, indeed, deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to heaven.

*Gob.*

Marry, heaven forbid; the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

*Laun.*

[*Aside.*

Do I look like a cudgel, or a hovel-post, a staff, or a prop?—[*To Gobbo.*] Do you know me, father?

*Gob.*

Alack the day! I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy (heaven rest his soul!) alive or dead?

*Laun.*

Do you not know me, father?

*Gob.*

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

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*Laun.*

Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: Give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may; but, in the end, truth will out. [*Launcelot kneels with his back towards Gobbo.*]

*Gob.*

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

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

I cannot think you are my son.

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

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

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

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

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*Laun.*

Well, well; but for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew. Give him a present? give him a halter! I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries; if I serve not him, I will run as far as heaven 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 another Servant* R. U. E.

*Bass.* [ *To Servant.*

See these letters delivered: put the liveries to making; and desire Gratiano to come anon to my lodging.

[*Gives letters. Exit Servant.*

*Laun.*

To him, father.

*Gob.*

Heaven bless your worship! [ *To Bassanio.*

*Bass.*

Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

*Gob.*

Here's my son, sir, a poor boy——

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

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

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*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

His master and he (saving your worship's reverence) are scarce cater-cousins —

*Laun.*

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

*Gob.*

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

*Laun.*

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

*Bass.*

One speak for both :—What would you ?

*Laun.*

Serve you, sir.

*Gob.*

That is the very defect of the matter, sir.

*Bass.*

[*To Launcelot.*

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

*Laun.*

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

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*Bass.*

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

[*Bassanio and Leonardo retire up.*

*Laun.*

[To Gobbo.

Father, in :—I cannot get a service,—no!—I have  
ne'er a tongue in my head!—Well [*looking on his palm*];  
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 twink-  
ling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo into house R.*  
*Bassanio and Leonardo come down.*

*Bass.*

I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this ;  
These things being bought, and orderly bestowed,  
Return in haste, for I do feast to-night  
My best-esteemed acquaintance : hie thee, go.

[*Exit Bassanio* L. I. E.

*Leon.*

My best endeavours shall be done herein.

[*Enter Gratiano.*

*Gra.*

[To Leonardo.

Where 's your master ?

*Leon.*

Yonder, sir, he walks.

[*Exit Leonardo* R.

*Gra.*

Signior Bassanio—

[*Re-enter Bassanio* L.

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*Bass.*

Gratiano!

*Gra.*

I have a suit to you.

*Bass.*

You have obtained it.

*Gra.*

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

*Bass.*

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

*Gra.*

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

*Bass.*

Well, we shall see your bearing.

*Gra.*

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

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*Bass.*

No, that were pity ;  
I would entreat you rather to put on  
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends  
That purpose merriment. But fare you well,  
I have some business.

*Gra.*

And I must to Lorenzo and the rest ;  
But we will visit you at supper-time.

[*Exeunt Bassanio L. I. E., and Gratiano L. U. E.*

[*Enter Jessica and Launcelot from house R.*

*Jes.*

I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so ;  
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,  
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.  
But fare thee well : there is a ducat for thee :  
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see  
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :  
Give him this letter ; do it secretly,  
And so farewell ; I would not have my father  
See me in talk with thee.

*Laun.*

Adieu !—tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful  
Pagan,—most sweet Jew ! If a Christian did not play the  
knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu !  
these foolish drops do somewhat drown my manly spirit :  
adieu !

*Jes.*

Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*  
Alack, what heinous sin is it in me,  
To be ashamed to be my father's child !  
But though I am a daughter to his blood,  
I am not to his manners : O Lorenzo,  
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife ;  
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife.

[*Exit into house R.*

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**Scene Second.**—VENICE. A STREET.

[Enter Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Solanio  
L. I. E.]

*Lor.*

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

*Gra.*

We have not made good preparation.

*Salarino.*

We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.

*Solanio.*

'T is vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered;  
And better, in my mind, not undertook.

*Lor.*

'T is now but four o'clock; we have two hours  
To furnish us.—

[Enter Launcelot, with a letter, L. I. E.]  
Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

*Laun.*

An it shall please you to break up this, it shall seem to  
signify. [Delivers letter.]

*Lor.*

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.

*Gra.*

Love-news, in faith.

*Laun.*

By your leave, sir.

[Going.]

*Lor.*

Whither goest thou?

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*Laun.*

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

*Lor.* [*Giving a piece of money.*]

Hold here, take this :—tell gentle Jessica,  
I will not fail her ;—speak it privately :

Go.

[*Exit Launcelot R.*]

Gentlemen,

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night ?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.

*Salarino.*

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

*Solanio.*

And so will I.

*Lor.*

Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

*Salarino.*

'T is good we do so.

[*Exeunt Salarino and Solanio R. I. E.*]

*Gra.*

Was not that letter from fair Jessica ?

*Lor.*

I must needs tell thee all. She hath directed  
How I shall take her from her father's house ;  
What gold and jewels she is furnished with ;  
What page's suit she hath in readiness.  
If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,  
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake :  
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,

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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.

[*Excunt Gratiano and Lorenzo* L. I. E.]

**Scene Third.**—A STREET BEFORE SHYLOCK'S HOUSE.  
DUSK.

[*Enter Shylock and Launcelot from house R.*]

*Shy.*

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

*Laun.*

Why, Jessica!

*Shy.*

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

*Laun.*

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

[*Enter Jessica from house.*]

*Jes.*

Call you? What is your will?

*Shy.*

I am bid forth to supper, Jessica;  
There are my keys.—But wherefore should I go?  
I am not bid for love; they flatter me:

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But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon  
 The prodigal Christian. — Jessica, my girl,  
 Look to my house: — I am right loath to go;  
 There is some ill a brewing towards my rest,  
 For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

*Laun.*

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

*Shy.*

So do I his.

*Laun.*

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

*Shy.*

What! are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:  
 Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,  
 And the vile squeaking of the wry-necked fife,  
 Clamber not you up to the casements then,  
 Nor thrust your head into the public street,  
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnished 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; [*To Launcelot.*  
 Say, I will come.

[*Shylock crosses toward house.*

*Laun.*

I will go before, sir. —  
 Mistress, look out at window for all this; [*To Jessica.*  
 There will come a Christian by,  
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exit Launcelot R. I. E.*

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*Shy.*

What says that fool of Hagar's offspring? ha?

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*Jes.*

His words were, Farewell, mistress; nothing else.

*Shy.*

The patch is kind enough; but a huge feeder,  
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day  
 More than the wild cat: drones hive not with me;  
 Therefore I part with him, and part with him  
 To one that I would have him help to waste  
 His borrowed 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 Shylock* R. I. E.]

*Jes.*

[*Alone.*]

Farewell; and if my fortune be not crossed,  
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit into house.*]

[*Enter Gratiano and Salarino, masked,* L. U. E.]

*Gra.*

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

*Salarino.*

His hour is almost past.

*Gra.*

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

*Salarino.*

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly  
 To seal love's bonds new made, than they are wont  
 To keep obligèd faith unforfeited!

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That ever holds.

*Gra.*

*[Enter Lorenzo in Gondola, L. U. E.]*  
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*Salarino.*

Here comes Lorenzo.

*Lor.*

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

*[A song is sometimes introduced here.]*

*[Enter Jessica to window.]*

*Jes.*

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

*Lor.*

Lorenzo, and thy love.

*Jes.*

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

*Lor.*

Heaven, and my thoughts, are witness that thou art!

*Jes.*

Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.

*[Throwing casket.]*

*Lor.*

Come at once;  
For the close night doth play the runaway,  
And we are stayed for at Bassanio's feast.

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*Jes.*

I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.  
[*Exit from window.*]

*Gra.*

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

*Lor.*

Beshrew me, but I love her heartily :  
For she is wise, if I can judge of her ;  
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true ;  
And true she is, as she hath proved herself ;  
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,  
Shall she be placèd in my constant soul.

[*Enter Jessica.*]

What, art thou come? — On, gentlemen; away!  
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[*They embark in gondola. Music as it starts.*]

CURTAIN.



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Act Third.

**Scene First.** { BELMONT. A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE.  
THREE CASKETS,—GOLD, SILVER AND  
LEAD,—ON TABLE, C. BASSANIO, POR-  
TIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, AND ATTEND-  
ANTS DISCOVERED.

*Bass.*

I am enjoined by oath to observe three things :  
First, never to unfold to any one  
Which casket 't was I chose ; next, if I fail  
Of the right casket, never in my life  
To woo a maid in way of marriage ; lastly,  
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,  
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

*Por.*

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

*Bass.*

And so have I addressed me : Fortune now  
To my heart's hope !

*Por.*

I pray you, tarry ; pause a day or two,  
Before you hazard ; for, in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company ; therefore, forbear a while :  
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.

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I could teach you  
 How to choose right, but then I am forsworn ;  
 So will I never be : so may you miss me ;  
 But if you do, you 'll make me wish a sin,  
 That I had been forsworn.  
 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.

*Bass.*

Let me choose ;  
 For, as I am, I live upon the rack.  
 Come, let me to my fortune and the caskets !

*Por.*

Away then.  
 I am locked in one of them ;  
 If you do love me you will find me out.  
 Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof. [ *They retire.*  
 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.

[ *Music, while Bassanio speaks what follows.*

*Bass.*

Some good direct my judgment ! — I let me see. —  
 “ Who chooseth me shall gain }  
 What many men desire.” } [ *Reads on casket.*  
 That may be meant  
 Of the fool multitude that choose by show.  
 The world is still deceived with ornament.  
 In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,  
 But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,  
 Obscures the show of evil ? In religion,  
 What damnèd error, but some sober brow  
 Will bless it, and approve it with a text,  
 Hiding the grossness with fair ornament ?

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Thus ornament is but the guilèd shore  
 To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian beauty.  
 Therefore, thou gaudy gold,  
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee.  
 " Who chooseth me shall get }     [*Reads on second casket.*  
 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 ?  
 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!  
 And how much honour  
 Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times,  
 To be new varnished!  
 " Much as he deserves."  
 I'll not assume desert.  
 " Who chooseth me must give }     [*Reads on third casket.*  
 And hazard all he hath." }

I'll none of thee, thou pale and common drudge  
 'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre lead,  
 Which rather threat'nest than dost promise aught,  
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence,  
 And here choose I. Joy be the consequence !

*Por.*

How all the other passions fleet to air!  
 O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy;  
 I feel too much thy blessing; make it less,  
 For fear I surfeit !

*Bass.*

What find I here ?                     [*Opening the leaden casket.*  
 Fair Portia's counterfeit ?  
 Here 's the scroll,  
 The continent and summary of my fortune :

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“ 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.”

*Reads on scroll.*

A gentle scroll.— Fair lady, by your leave : [ *To Portia.*  
 I come by note, to give and to receive ;  
 Yet doubtful whether what I see be true,  
 Until confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

[ *He kneels and kisses her hand.—Music ceases.*

*Por.*

You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
 Such as I am : though, for myself alone,  
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
 To wish myself much better ; yet, for you,  
 I would be trebled twenty times myself ;  
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich ;  
 That, only to stand high in your account,  
 I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,  
 Exceed account. But 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.

*Bass.*

Madam, you have bereft me of all words ;  
 Only my blood speaks to you in my veins.

*Ner.*

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

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*Gra.*

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

*Bass.*

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

*Gra.*

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

*Por.*

Is this true, Nerissa ?

*Ner.*

Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

*Bass.*

And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith ?

*Gra.*

Yes, faith, my lord.

*Bass.*

Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

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*Gra.*

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

[*Enter Lorenzo and Jessica; after them Salerio,*  
L. I. E.

*Bass.*

Lorenzo, and Salerio, welcome hither;  
If that the youth of my new interest here  
Have power to bid you welcome:—By your leave,  
I bid my very friends and countrymen,  
Sweet Portia, welcome.

*Por.*

So do I, my lord;  
They are entirely welcome.

*Lor.*

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

*Salerio.*

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

*Bass.*

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

*Salerio.*

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

*Gra.*

Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.  
[Nerissa goes to Jessica.

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Your hand, Salerio. What's the news from Venice?  
 How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?  
 I know he will be glad of our success;  
 We are the Jasons; we have won the fleece.

*Salerio.*

I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost!

*Por.*

There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper  
 That steal 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 any thing  
 That this same paper brings you.

*Bass.*

O sweet Portia,  
 Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words  
 That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,  
 When I did first impart my love to you,  
 I freely told you, all the wealth I had  
 Ran in my veins,—I was a gentleman;  
 And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,  
 Rating myself at nothing, you shall see  
 How much I was a braggart. When I told you  
 My state was nothing, I should then have told you  
 That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,  
 I have engaged myself to a dear friend,  
 Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,  
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;  
 The paper as the body of my friend,  
 And every word in it a gaping wound,  
 Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio?  
 Have all his ventures failed? What, not one hit?  
 From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,  
 And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch  
 Of merchant-marring rocks?

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

*Salerio.*

Not one, my lord.  
Besides, it should appear that if he had  
The present money to discharge the Jew,  
He would not take it. Never did I know  
A creature that did bear the shape of man,  
So keen and greedy to confound a man.  
He plies the duke at morning, and at night,  
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,  
If they deny him justice: twenty merchants,  
The duke himself, and the magnificoes  
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him;  
But none can drive him from the envious plea  
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

*Por.*

Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?

*Bass.*

The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
The best conditioned and unwearied spirit  
In doing courtesies; and one in whom  
The ancient Roman honour more appears,  
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

*Por.*

What sum owes he the Jew?

*Bass.*

For me, three thousand ducats.

*Por.*

What, no more?  
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;  
Double six thousand, and then treble that,  
Before a friend of this description  
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.  
First, go with me to church, and call me wife,  
And then away to Venice to your friend;

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For never shall you lie by Portia's side  
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold  
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over;  
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along:  
 My maid Nerissa, and myself, meantime  
 Will live as maids and widows. Come, away;  
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:  
 But, let me hear the letter of your friend.

*Bass.*

[*Reads.*

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

*Por.*

O love, despatch all business, and be gone.

*Bass.*

Since I have your good leave to go away,  
 I will make haste; but, till I come again,  
 No bed shall ere be guilty of my stay,  
 Nor rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

[*Exeunt R.*

**Scene Second.** { BELMONT. A ROOM IN PORTIA'S  
 HOUSE. [FIRST GROOVES.]

[*Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo and Jessica R. I. E.*

*Lor.*

Madam, although I speak it in your presence,  
 You have a noble and a true conceit  
 Of godlike amity; which appears most strongly

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In bearing thus the absence of your lord.  
But, if you knew to whom you show this honour,  
How true a gentleman you send relief,  
How dear a lover of my lord, your husband,  
I know you would be prouder of the work,  
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

*Por.*

I never did repent for doing good,  
Nor shall not now :  
This comes too near the praising of myself ;  
Therefore, no more of it : hear other things.  
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands  
The husbandry and manage of my house,  
Until my lord's return : for mine own part,  
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow  
To live in prayer and contemplation,  
Only attended by Nerissa here,  
Until her husband and my lord's return :  
There is a monastery two miles off,  
And there we will abide. I do desire you  
Not to deny this imposition,  
The which my love, and some necessity,  
Now lays upon you.

*Lor.*

Madam, with all my heart,  
I shall obey you in all fair commands.

*Por.*

My people do already know my mind,  
And will acknowledge you and Jessica  
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself :  
And so, farewell, till we shall meet again.

*Lor.*

Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !

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*Jes.*

I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

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*Por.*

I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased  
To wish it back on you: fare you well, Jessica.

[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo* L. I. E. *Enter Balthazar* R. I. E.]

Now, Balthazar,

As I have ever found thee honest, true,  
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,  
And use thou all the endeavour of a man  
In speed to Padua; see thou render this  
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;  
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,  
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed  
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry  
Which trades to Venice;—waste no time in words,  
But get thee gone; I shall be there before thee.

*Balth.*

Madam, I go with all convenient speed. [*Exit* R. I. E.]

*Por.*

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

*Ner.*

Shall they see us?

*Por.*

They shall, Nerissa.  
But 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* L. I. E.]

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**Scene Third.**—VENICE. A STREET.

[www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn) [Enter Salarino and Solanio L. U. E.]

*Salarino.*

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

*Solanio.*

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

*Salarino.*

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.

*Solanio.*

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

*Salarino.*

Marry, well remembered : I reasoned with a Frenchman  
yesterday, who told me 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 carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as  
they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her  
word.

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*Solanio.*

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 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.

*Solanio.*

Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

*Salarino.*

I would it might prove the end of his losses!

*Solanio.*

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

[*They cross to R. Enter Shylock L. U. E.*

How now, Shylock? what news among the merchants?

*Shy.*

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

*Salarino.*

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

*Solanio.*

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

*Shy.*

She is damned for it.

*Salarino.*

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

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*Shy.*

My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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*Salarino.*

But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

*Shy.*

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

*Salarino.*

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

*Shy.*

To bait fish withal! if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

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*Solanio.*

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

[*Exeunt Solanio and Salarino* R. I. E. *Enter Tubal* L. I. E.]

*Shy.*

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

*Tub.*

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

*Shy.*

Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now:—two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels.—I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them?—Why, so:—and I know not what's spent in the search. Why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs, but o' my breathing; no tears, but o' my shedding.

*Tub.*

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

*Shy.*

What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

*Tub.*

Hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

*Shy.*

I thank God! I thank God! Is it true? is it true?

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*Tub.*

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

[www.libtool.com](http://www.libtool.com) *Shy.*

I thank thee, good Tubal;— Good news, good news! ha! ha! Where? in Genoa?

*Tub.*

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

*Shy.*

Thou stick'st a dagger in me!—I shall never see my gold again. Fourscore ducats at a sitting! fourscore ducats!

*Tub.*

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

*Shy.*

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

*Tub.*

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

*Shy.*

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

*Tub.*

But Antonio is certainly undone.

*Shy.*

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

[*Exeunt.*

CURTAIN.

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## Act Fourth.

**Scene First.** { VENICE. A COURT OF JUSTICE. THE  
DUKE, THE MAGNIFICOES, ANTONIO,  
BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALARINO, SO-  
LANIO, SALERIO, AND OTHERS DISCOV-  
ERED.

*Duke.*

What, is Antonio here ?

*Ant.*

Ready, so please your grace.

*Duke.*

I am sorry for thee ; thou art come to answer  
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch  
Uncapable of pity, void and empty  
From any dram of mercy.

*Ant.*

I have heard  
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify  
His rigorous course ; but since he stands obdurate,  
And that no lawful means can carry me  
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose  
My patience to his fury ; and am armed  
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,  
The very tyranny and rage of his.

*Duke.*

Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

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*Solanio.*

He's ready at the door : he comes, my lord.

[www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn) [*Enter Shylock R. I. E.*

*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,  
 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 lose the forfeiture,  
 But, touched 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,  
 Enough 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 trained  
 To offices of tender courtesy.  
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

*Shy.*

I have possessed 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 answered ?  
 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 answered yet ?  
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig ;  
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat :

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Now, for your answer :  
 As there is no firm reason to be rendered,  
 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 answered ?

*Bass.*

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

*Shy.*

I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

*Bass.*

Do all men kill the things they do not love ?

*Shy.*

Hates any man the thing he would not kill ?

*Bass.*

Every offence is not a hate at first.

*Shy.*

What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice ?

*Ant.*

I pray you, think you question with the Jew :  
 You may as well go stand upon the beach,  
 And bid the main flood bate his usual height ;  
 You may as well use question with the wolf,  
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;  
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines  
 To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,  
 When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven ;

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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 further means,  
 But, with all brief and plain conveniency,  
 Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

*Bass.*

For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

*Shy.*

If every ducat in six thousand ducats  
 Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,  
 I would not draw them,—I would have my bond.

*Duke.*

How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none?

*Shy.*

What judgment 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 seasoned 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 judgment: answer, shall I have it?

*Duke.*

Upon my power, I may dismiss this court,  
 Unless Bellario, a learnèd doctor,  
 Whom I have sent for to determine this,  
 Come here to-day.

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*Salarino.*

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

*Duke.*

Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

[*Exeunt Solanio and Salarino.*]

*Bass.*

Good cheer, Antonio! What, man! courage yet!  
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,  
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.

*Ant.*

I am a tainted wether of the flock,  
Meetest for death; the weakest kind of fruit  
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me:  
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,  
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

[*Re-enter Solanio and Salarino with Nerissa,  
who is dressed like a lawyer's clerk. Shylock  
kneels to whet his knife.*]

*Duke.*

[*To Nerissa.*]

Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

*Ner.*

From both, my lord: Bellario greets your grace.

[*Presents a letter, and then sits at table c.*]

*Bass.*

[*To Shylock.*]

Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

*Shy.*

To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

*Gra.*

Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou mak'st thy knife keen.  
Can no prayers pierce thee?

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*Shy.*

No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

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*Gra.*

O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!  
 And for thy life let justice be accused.  
 Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,  
 To hold opinion with Pythagoras,  
 That souls of animals infuse themselves  
 Into the trunks of men : thy currish spirit  
 Governed a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter  
 Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,  
 And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,  
 Infused itself in thee ; for thy desires  
 Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

*Shy.*

Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,  
 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud :  
 Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall  
 To cureless ruin.— I stand here for law.

*Duke.*

This letter from Bellario doth commend  
 A young and learnèd doctor to our court :  
 Where is he ?

*Ner.*[*Rises.*

He attendeth here hard by,  
 To know your answer, whether you 'll admit him.

*Duke.*

With all my heart :— Go, some of you,  
 And give him courteous conduct to this place.—

[*Exeunt Salarino, Solanio, and Gratiano* R. I. E.  
 Meantime, the court shall hear Bellario's letter. [*Reads.*

“Your grace shall understand that, at the receipt of  
 your letter, I am very sick : but in the instant that your

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

You hear the learned Bellario what he writes:

[*Re-enter Gratiano.*

And here, I take it, is the doctor come.—

[*Re-enter Salarino and Solanio, with Portia, who is dressed like a Doctor of Laws.*

Give me your hand: Came you from old Bellario?

*Por.*

I did, my lord.

*Duke.*

You are welcome: take your place. [*Portia goes to desk R.*  
Are you acquainted with the difference  
That holds this present question in the court?

*Por.*

I am informèd thoroughly of the cause.  
Which is the Merchant here, and which the Jew?

*Duke.*

Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.  
[*Antonio and Shylock advance.*

*Por.*

Is your name Shylock?

*Shy.*

*Shylock* is my name.

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*Por.*

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

*Ant.*

Ay, so he says.

*Por.*

Do you confess the bond ?

*Ant.*

I do.

*Por.*

Then must the Jew be merciful.

*Shy.*

On what compulsion must I ? tell me that.

*Por.*

The quality of mercy is not strained ;  
 It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven  
 Upon the place beneath : it is twice blessed ;  
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :  
 'T is mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes  
 The thronèd 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 scepterèd sway,  
 It is enthronèd 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 ;

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And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much,  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

*Shy.*

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

*Por.*

Is he not able to discharge the money?

*Bass.*

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;  
Yea, thrice the sum: if that will not suffice,  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,  
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:  
If this will not suffice, it must appear  
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,  
Wrest once the law to your authority:  
To do a great right, do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

*Por.*

It must not be; there is no power in Venice  
Can alter a decree established:  
'T will be recorded for a precedent;  
And many an error, by the same example,  
Will rush into the state:—it cannot be.

*Shy.*

A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!  
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!

*Por.*

*I pray you, let me look upon the bond.*

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*Shy.*

Here 't is, most reverend doctor ; here it is.

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[*Gives bond to Portia.*]

*Por.*

Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offered thee.

*Shy.*

An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven :

Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?

No, not for Venice.

*Por.*

Why, this bond is forfeit ;

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim

A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart : — Be merciful ;

Take thrice thy money ; bid me tear the bond.

*Shy.*

When it is paid according to the tenour.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge ;

You know the law ; your exposition

Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law,

Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,

Proceed to judgment : by my soul I swear,

There is no power in the tongue of man

To alter me : I stay here on my bond.

*Ant.*

Most heartily I do beseech the court

To give the judgment.

*Por.*

Why, then, thus it is :

You must prepare your bosom for his knife——

*Shy.*

O noble judge ! O excellent young man !

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*Por.*

For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty,  
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

*Shy.*

'T is very true: O wise and upright judge!  
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

*Por.*

Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

*Shy.* [*Takes bond from Portia.*

Ay, his breast:  
So says the bond;—Doth it not, noble judge?—  
Nearest his heart,—those are the very words.  
[*Returns bond to Portia.*

*Por.*

It is so. Are there balance here to weigh the flesh?

*Shy.*

I have them ready.

*Por.*

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

*Shy.* [*Takes bond from Portia.*

Is it so nominated in the bond?

*Por.*

It is not so expressed; but what of that?  
'T were good you do so much for charity.

*Shy.*

I cannot find it; 't is not in the bond.  
[*Returns bond to Portia.*

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*Por.*[*To Antonio.*]

Come, merchant, have you anything to say ?

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*Ant.*

But little ; I am armed, and well prepared.—  
Give me your hand, Bassanio ; fare you well !

[*Portia leaves desk, crosses to the Duke, confers with him, and shows bond.*]

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 ling'ring penance  
Of such a 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 not 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 instantly with all my heart.

*Bass.*

Antonio, I am married to a wife,  
Which is as dear to me as life itself ;  
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,  
Are not with me esteemed above thy life ;  
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all  
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

[*During this speech Portia returns to desk.*]

*Gra.*

I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love ;  
I would she were in heaven, so she could  
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

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*Shy.*

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

*Por.*

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

*Shy.*

Most rightful judge!

*Por.*

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

*Shy.*

Most learnèd judge!—

A sentence! come, prepare!

[*To Antonio, who advances to c. and kneels.*  
*All shrink back.*]

*Por.*

Tarry a little;—there is something else.—  
 This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;

[*All start.*]

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.

[*All express delight. Antonio rises and embraces*  
*Bassanio.*]

*Gra.*

O upright judge!—Mark, Jew!—O learnèd judge!

*Shy.*

Is that the law?

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*Por.*

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

*Gra.*

O learnèd judge ! — Mark, Jew ; — a learnèd judge !

*Shy.*

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

*Bass.*

Here is the money.

[*Gratiano interposes.*]*Por.*

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

*Gra.*

O Jew ! an upright judge, a learnèd judge !

*Por.*[*To Shylock.*]

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 tak'st more,  
 Or less, than a just pound, — be it but so much  
 As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance,  
 Or the division of the twentieth part  
 Of one poor scruple, — nay, if the scale do turn  
 But in the estimation of a hair, —  
 Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

*Gra.*

A second Daniel ; a Daniel, Jew !  
 Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

*Por.*

Why doth the Jew pause ? take thy forfeiture.

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*Shy.*

Give me my principal, and let me go.

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*Bass.*

I have it ready for thee; here it is.

*[Shylock takes a bag of money; Gratiano seizes and takes it from him.]*

*Por.*

He hath refused it in the open court;  
He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

*Gra.*

*[Pushing Shylock towards L.]*

A Daniel, still say I; a second Daniel!  
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

*Shy.*

Shall I not have barely my principal?

*Por.*

Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,  
*[Portia comes from desk, gives bond to Shylock, and goes to table c.]*  
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

*Shy.*

Why, then the devil give him good of it!  
I'll stay no longer question.

*[Going R. Gratiano stops him.]*

*Por.*

Tarry, Jew;  
The law hath yet another hold on you.  
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,—  
*If it be proved against an alien,*

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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 incurred  
 The danger formerly by me rehearsed.  
 Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

*Gra.*

*[Shylock is about to kneel; Gratiano holds him by the shoulder, during the rest of this speech, and then drops him.]*

Beg that thou may'st 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 hanged at the state's charge.

*Duke.*

That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,  
 I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:  
 For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;  
 The other half comes to the general state,  
 Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

*Por.*

Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

*Shy.*

Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:  
 You take my house, when you do take the prop  
 That doth sustain my house; you take my life,  
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

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*Por.*

What mercy can you render him, Antonio ?

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[*Shylock rises.*]

*Gra.*

A halter gratis ; nothing else, for heaven's sake !

*Ant.*

So please my lord the duke, and all the court,  
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,  
I am content, so he will let me have  
The other half in use, to render it,  
Upon his death, unto the gentleman  
That lately stole his daughter ;  
Two things provided more,—that, for this favour,  
He presently become a Christian ;  
The other, that he do record a gift,  
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,  
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

*Duke.*

He shall do this ; or else I do recant  
The pardon that I late pronouncèd here.

*Por.* [*Advances. To Shylock.*]

Art thou contented, Jew ; what dost thou say ?

*Shy.*

I am content.

*Por.*

[*Goes up.*]

Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

*Shy.*

I pray you give me leave to go from hence :  
I am not well. Send the deed after me,  
And I will sign it.

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*Duke.*

Get thee gone, but do it.

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*Gra.*

*[As Shylock is going, Gratiano seizes his left arm.]*

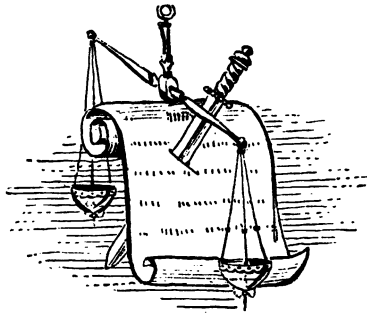
In christ'ning, thou shalt have two godfathers;  
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,  
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

*[Exit Shylock R. I. E]*

CURTAIN.



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## MERCHANT OF VENICE.

### APPENDIX.

#### I.—THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

“THE Helots of Sparta, the Pariahs of India, the Ghiaours of Turkey, the Negroes of America, have suffered less than the Jews in Christian Europe. This unhappy people have had to bewail their fate during centuries of prejudice, not extinguished even in our times, which renders the children responsible for the good or bad actions of their parents. In the eyes of Christian nations, this people was always the same populace who demanded of Pilate the murder of God in His mortality. Every Christian had against the Jew a personal grievance, and retained a feeling of enmity against him on account of the crime committed by Judas. The Israelite was thrust out from the pale of humanity; it was an act of piety to injure, molest, and ill-treat him. Different governments, far from checking the popular prejudice, encouraged and sanctioned it. From the year 615, the Council of Paris had declared the Jews to be incapable of performing any civil function; other Councils had forbidden them to work for Christians; royal edicts had interdicted them the right to possess landed property. Thus harassed by legislation, hunted away from trade, spurned from the paths of industry, excommunicated from the fields of labour, the Jew had to tax his ingenuity to be enabled to exist. He eluded by cunning that code that proposed to starve him; he converted all his property into ready money and traded in specie; he accumulated gold, monopolized the sale of it, and obtained whatever price he asked for it—he became an usurer. This degrading commerce, to which the Christian had forcibly reduced him, was used by him against the Christian, and the overflowings of the cup of his despair were employed as the instrument of his revenge. The Christian had forbidden him to obtain an honest livelihood; he made, at the expense of the Christian, an inordinate and unjust profit. The Christian would ruin him; he enriched himself by the ruin of the Christian.

“But this very success was fatal to the Israelites. The opulence of the *infidels* excited the cupidity of the faithful. Was a Catholic lord, prince,

or baron embarrassed in his finance, without having recourse to the form of any legal process, he seized some moneyed man from the tribe, and exacted money from him by torture. Thus, in the year 1210, John, King of England, *borrowed* (ten) thousand marks of a Hebrew, in Bristol, by causing ten of his teeth to be extracted. The Jew was as a princely and fertile farm that was well cultivated by the despot. According to Matthew Paris, this same John, being in want of ready money, lent on hire for several years, to his brother Richard, all the Jews on his estates, *ut quos rex excoriat, comes evisceraret*, so that, after being fleeced by the king, they should be stripped of what was left them by the earl; it was but a circumstance of the most trifling nature. In 1262, the lords revolted against Henry III., and only obtained the support of the people by promising them the pillage of the Jewish quarter in London. Three hundred houses were sacked, and seven hundred persons, men, women and children, were assassinated. The triumphant populace exercised during that year sovereign rights. France was not less tender to the Jews than England. In order to prevent their escaping confiscation by abjuration, St. Louis caused the Synod of Melun to confirm the edict which confiscated to the benefit of the *seigneur* the property of every converted Israelite. At the same time, with atrocious contradiction, the *pious king* permitted, in Paris and the provinces, the massacre of all the Israelites who refused to be converted. In Brie, Touraine, Anjou, Poitou, and Maine, two thousand five hundred Jews were massacred. This took place during the Easter week of the year of grace 1238—that is to say, if I am not mistaken, three hundred and thirty-four years before Saint Bartholomew. One thus sees that it is not only by date that Louis IX. is a predecessor of Charles IX. The Valois caused the Jews to be the victims of a skilful process of periodical depredation; every now and then they were exiled to be plundered, and then were recalled to be robbed. The Catholic kings turned the reprobates to account as ingeniously as the very Christian kings. They were dispossessed of their property, then allowed again to enrich themselves, to be again despoiled. The upright Torquemada put an end to this sanguinary system: he demanded of Ferdinand the perpetual banishment of all the Jews who had not abjured their faith at the expiration of four months. The Jews, informed of this, offered the king thirty thousand ducats for his consent to allow them to remain. Ferdinand hesitated to sign the decree, when the monk entered, crucifix in hand, exclaiming: ‘Judas Iscariot sold his God for thirty deniers; you—you would sell him for thirty thousand!’ The king signed, and according to Mariana’s calculation, eight hundred thousand Hebrews were expatriated. What became of them? Seek for

them in misery, in distress, in epidemics, in pestilence, in famine; seek for them in the tempests of the ocean; seek for them from the lions of Atlas; ask for them from the men of Portugal.

“Decimated by massacre at Lisbon, hunted by the edict of Charles VI. from France, from England by the statute of Edward I., from Germany by the rescript of Maximilian I., the circumcised crept their way to the north of Europe, to the furthest part of Bohemia, to Mecklenburg and Poland. Here and there, however, some liberal and sovereign states admitted them: Metz, Nuremburg, Florence, and Venice. Pontifical Rome, in permitting their sojourn, drew on them the enormous bolt of the Ghetto. But even in these tolerant cities the Israelites were compelled to wear the badge of infamy; they were obliged to be dressed in the degrading attire ordered by the Council of Basle; a rowel on the shoulder or the breast, and the yellow cap which everywhere distinguished them for the hootings of the children and the barkings of the dogs. For a moment the unfortunate race had a gleam of hope: they thought that the Reformation would release them from the anathema through which they were prostrated by Catholicism. They requested permission to enter those German States that had thrown off their allegiance to the Holy See. Luther opposed this. The excommunicated excommunicated the accursed. They implored of Queen Elizabeth their recall to England. Elizabeth refused, and her refusal increased her popularity. Protestantism, instead of allaying the prejudices then existing against the Jews, fanaticised them; Protestants sought to prove their orthodoxy in exaggerating the horror they entertained against the pretended murderers of Christ. Their zealous credulity lent additional strength to the old stories accusing the Jews of poisoning rivers and fountains, of communicating leprosy, and sacrificing at their Passover children stolen from Christians. The poets repeated in verse the calumnies that the preachers reiterated in prose. The stage-boards of the theatre echoed the pulpits of the church. In 1590 Christopher Marlowe caused the troop of the ‘Cockpit’ to perform a drama in which a certain Jew of Malta, called Barabbas (the name is well chosen), poisons all the inmates of a convent in order that he may assure the poisoning of his daughter Abigail, who has been recently converted.

\* \* \* \* \*

“In giving to the conduct of Shylock the motive that elevates heroes — patriotism — in furnishing him with excuses not only for his personal griefs but for the secular troubles of an entire people, Shakespeare has thereby amnestied the Jew. It is not Shylock who is impeached by the judgment of Portia; in reality that judgment condemns that law of

retaliation, that rigorous justice which is but a rigorous injustice, that vindictive legislation which had been promulgated in all edicts of sovereigns, and applied without mercy by all judicial constituted authorities — parliaments, special commissions, prevotal courts, assize courts, star chambers; it is directed against that system of reprisals which torments, racks, quarters, hangs, decapitates, assassinate the assassin, washes blood with blood, and punishes a fault by the commission of a crime. The condemned is not the Jew, it is Judaism. Such, in fact, is the actual import of the pronounced sentence. Shylock has gained what is better than his cause — he has gained the cause of an entire people. He has caused the unknown rights of his race to be recognized, and enabled them to prevail by the exemplary condemnation of that exterminatory code which hitherto had kept them in abeyance."

VICTOR HUGO.

## II.—THE CHARACTER OF SHYLOCK.

"When heaven sends a prophet like Shakespeare to an ignorant world, it commissions him not merely to teach us how to read. Shakespeare's mission was neither to preach nor to teach; and if ever he did desire to act the schoolmaster, it was to the Christians and not the Jews that he addressed the lesson of 'The Merchant of Venice.' Due respect to Shylock's Judaism! a morality that despises all trivial passions. But there is something grand and sublime in his nature, which looks down with haughty scorn upon his own meanness. Shylock is an exalted Jew and an avenging angel. He has reached such a height of sensibility that he is capable of doing a magnanimous deed — not in the way of mere usury, to increase his gains, but for the benefit of mankind. He desires to revenge his abused and down-trodden race upon its tormentors, the Christians. We despise in Shylock the devil of avarice; but the distressed and suffering man we pity; and we admire and even love the avenger of inhuman persecution. \* \* \* \* \* Who can say that Shylock would really have executed his threat? We do not forget the sacrifice that he is willing to make to his revenge. Shylock will give all, and more than all — that profit which, to the Jew, is more than possession — for his revenge. He has trusted to the gods of vengeance, to the wild winds and the cruel sea, and they have not deceived him. Nor must we be misled by Shylock's saying that he hates Antonio —

'For that in low simplicity,  
He lends out money gratis, and brings down  
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.'

Shylock did not hate Antonio for that. The Christian mercantile and commercial world of Venice, surely, was not composed of only good and noble Antonios; and one man, be he ever so rich, cannot reduce the value of money. No; Shylock is a Jew: he feels a secret shame in sacrificing money to a phantasy; he wants to excuse his conduct to himself — and the excuse that he finds is couched in the words we have quoted. He does not persecute the foe of usury in Antonio: but the foe of his faith he persecutes, and in his feverish infatuation he sacrifices wealth to an airy fancy. The actor who would personate Shylock may herein find the key to the character. The blood-thirsty hatred of the Jew should terrify us, as every mad fanaticism naturally does; but Shylock must not be so interpreted as to awaken disgust and aversion, as does a loathsome bodily disease. Shylock's execrable avarice, and the spasms into which self-interest hurls his soul, may revolt us; but the Jew must not herein be made ridiculous. In the presence of a very demon it is no time for laughter. Now, to show us the god in the demon, to pass through a desert of sin wherein, not far distant, murmurs concealed a well-spring of love — this, surely, is a sufficiently hard and great task for the actor. Shakespeare, unlike common men and common poets, who desire to make everything pleasant to their feelings and conformable to their notions of art, does not mingle elements like a chemist, representing clear characters, these lovely, those hateful, these attractive, those repulsive: this Shakespeare never does. He sides with no party. He ascribes the palm only to virtue. He lets his characters quarrel among themselves, and never mingles in the quarrel. He has explained the nature of the Jew's hatred of the Christian, and equally laid bare the springs of the Christian's hatred of the Jew. Why should not Shylock hate Antonio — hate him the more for his very nobility? Antonio is a good, noble, generous man, but not to the Jew. Him he abuses at all times. Even at the very moment of asking his aid he cannot conceal his contempt for Shylock. The good, the noble Antonio, who is willing to sacrifice everything upon the altar of friendship, cannot even speak a kind word to the Jew. After all this, a scapegrace of a Christian runs away with Shylock's daughter; and she, intending to become a Christian, enters upon conversion by despising her father because he is a Jew. Such injustice, such cruelty might well convert the nature of a dove into that of a dragon. In his hatred of the Christian, Shylock revenges upon himself insulted virtue. He throws away money to avenge his race, and he learns and teaches that gold is not, as the Jews would have it, the monarch of the world, but that love is mightier than avarice, even in a Jew.

*“Whenever I read Shakespeare it grieves me that he does not live in our age, to make it clear to us. Events seem unreal, when the gre*

master is wanting, to state them to us in a great manner. A character which that great poet has not described to us, because it was unknown to him, is like a book without a title, that we must read before we can know its subject. It often happens that great periods have no great historians, nor poets, nor artists, capable of worthily describing or representing them. The great events are too grand, too restless, or too busy to pose quietly before common artists. These can but briefly snatch their outlines, or must wait till the time be dead, in order to make a lifeless cast. But, before an artist like Shakespeare, times stand still, well knowing that nature owes its immortality to art. How would Shakespeare have described *our* Shylocks, the great Christian Shylocks with badges of their order upon their gaberdines? How would he have described those paper-flying Shylocks, without gaberdines, who hold in notes the flesh and blood of nations, and who do not make paper out of rags but rags out of paper? How would he have portrayed those profligates to whom God is a Minister of Finance, who said, 'Be created,' and lo! there was a world of paper; Adam the first banker; Paradise a blessed place of State papers; the Fall of Man the first fall of stocks; the Day of Judgment an ultimatum? A Shakespeare would have unveiled the mysterious ways of these great brokers of exchange between nature and art, who stake the gold of the one against the paper of the other. What did that Venetian Shylock do? He gave three thousand ducats for a poor pound of Christian flesh. That, at least, was dearly bought. But our Shylocks demand, for one small eighth, entire Hellas."

LUDWIG BÆRNE.

### III.—MACKLIN'S RESTORATION OF SHYLOCK.

"Macklin, being freed from all pecuniary engagements with his manager, found himself more at liberty to look after the theatrical concerns of the company, which at this time Fleetwood entirely committed to his care. In this pursuit he did not neglect his own reputation. He very properly considered he was then in a situation which, by assiduity and enterprise, might add something to his rising fame as an actor, which at no other time of his life before he had such an opportunity of attempting, and that 'there was no lucky minute after the *first* opportunity.' He therefore cast about in his mind what new part he should adopt, and to this purpose carefully looked over the stock list, as well as several *obsolete plays*, to find out one which he thought appropriate to his own powers and conception.

"Chance presented 'The Merchant of Venice' to his notice, which, however, strange now to conceive, had laid upon the shelf since the year 1701, to make room for an alteration from the same play, by Lord Lansdowne, called 'The Jew of Venice,' in which the celebrated Dogget performed the Jew almost in the style of broad farce. Macklin saw this part with other eyes, and very much to the credit of his taste and understanding, as well as a proper estimation of his own powers, he found he could build a reputation by reviving the original of Shakespeare, and playing the character of Shylock in a different manner. The attempt was arduous and subject to many miscarriages, and in particular to public prejudice; but a consciousness of being right will generally give great confidence. Macklin felt this consciousness, and was determined on the trial.

"As soon as resolved he communicated his design to the manager, who gave his consent to bringing it out merely as a revival piece, which might bring money to the treasury. The play was therefore announced to be in preparation, and Macklin, who always loved the character of a Theatrical Drill Sergeant, now entered into it with all his heart and mind, by casting the parts himself, ordering frequent rehearsals, etc., etc.; but when he came to affix to himself the character of Shylock and intimated his design to play it *seriously*, the laugh was universal. His best friends shook their heads at the attempt, whilst his rivals chuckled in secret, and flattered him with ideas of success, the surer to work out his destruction.

"His keen observation and suspicious temper clearly saw the train that was laying for him, which he not only seemingly overlooked, but so far assisted that at every rehearsal, whilst he enjoined the rest of the performers to do their best, he himself played both under his voice and general powers, carefully reserving his fire till the night of representation. His fellow performers were by this conduct completely trapped, insomuch that many of them threw off all reserve, and publicly said, 'that this hot-headed, conceited Irishman, who had got some little reputation in a few parts, had now availed himself of the manager's favour to bring himself and the Theatre into disgrace.'

"Fleetwood heard this, and seriously applied to Macklin to give up the part; but the latter was too conscious of his own excellence to lose such an opportunity. He frankly told the manager that he was deceiving a set of men who envied him, but that he would pledge his life on the success of the play, and that in the end it would be highly serviceable to them both.

"The long-expected night at last arrived, and the house was crowded from top to bottom with the first company in town. The two front rows

of the pit, as usual, were full of critics, 'Who, sir' (said the veteran), 'I eyed through the slit of the curtain, and was glad to see there, as I wished in such a cause to be tried by a *special jury*. When I made my appearance in the greenroom, dressed for the part, with my red hat on my head, my piqued beard, loose black gown, etc., and with a confidence which I never before assumed, the performers all stared at one another, and evidently with a stare of disappointment. Well, sir, hitherto all was right — till the last bell rung — then, I confess, my heart began to beat a little: however, I mustered up all the courage I could, and, recommending my cause to Providence, threw myself boldly on the stage, and was received by one of the loudest thunders of applause I ever before experienced.

"The opening scenes being rather tame and level, I could not expect much applause; but I found myself well listened to — I could hear distinctly in the pit the words, "Very well — very well, indeed. This man seems to know what he is about," etc., etc. These encomiums warmed me, but did not overset me. I knew where I should have the pull, which was in the third act, and reserved myself accordingly. At this period I threw out all my fire, and as the contrasted passions of joy for the merchant's losses and grief for the elopement of Jessica open a fine field for an actor's powers, I had the good fortune to please beyond my warmest expectations. The whole house was in an uproar of applause, and I was obliged to pause between the speeches to give it vent, so as to be heard. When I went behind the scenes after this act, the Manager met me and complimented me very highly on my performance, and significantly added: "Macklin, you was right at last." My brethren in the greenroom joined in his eulogium, but with different views. He was thinking of the increase of his treasury, they only for saving appearances, wishing at the same time that I had broke my neck in the attempt. The trial scene wound up the fulness of my reputation; here I was well listened to, and here I made such a silent yet forcible impression on my audience that I retired from this great attempt most perfectly satisfied.

"On my return to the greenroom, after the play was over, it was crowded with nobility and critics, who all complimented me in the warmest and most unbounded manner, and the situation I felt myself in, I must confess, was one of the most flattering and intoxicating of my whole life. No money — no title could purchase what I felt. And let no man tell me after this what fame will not inspire a man to do, and how far the attainment of it will not remunerate his greatest labours. By *G—d, sir, although I was not worth fifty pounds in the world at that time, yet, let me tell you, I was Charles the Great for that night.*"



"A few days afterwards, Macklin received an invitation from Lord Bolingbroke to dine with him at Battersea. He attended the rendezvous, and there found Pope, and a select party, who complimented him very highly on the part of Shylock, and questioned him about many little particulars relative to his getting up the play, etc. Pope particularly asked him why he wore a *red hat*? and he answered, because he had read that Jews in Italy, particularly in Venice, wore hats of that colour. 'And pray, Mr. Macklin,' said Pope, 'do players in general take such pains?'—'I do not know, sir, that they do; but as I had staked my reputation on the character, I was determined to spare no trouble in getting at the best information.' Pope nodded, and said, 'It was very laudable.'

"Macklin took this play for his benefit on the 19th night, and had an overflowing audience. Several noblemen of the first distinction took what is commonly called *gold* tickets; and Lord Bolingbroke made him a present of twenty guineas.

"The play had a successful run through the whole of the season, and for many seasons afterwards: it established his reputation as an actor, and not a little added to his discernment as a critic, in reviving a piece which, perhaps, except for his research, might have been lost to the stage forever."

COOKE'S LIFE OF MACKLIN.

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#### COSTUME FOR THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

The dresses suitable to be worn in representing "The Merchant of Venice" are Venetian, of the time of Shakespeare. The garments of the Duke of Venice, in the 16th century, according to Cæsar Vecellio, were usually composed of cloth of silver, cloth of gold, and crimson velvet. The cap, robe and mantle were of the same colour. On days sacred to the Holy Virgin, the Duke appeared in white. "He hath his head covered with a thin coif," says an old writer, "and on his forehead he wears a crimson kind of mitre, with a gold border, and, behind, it turns up in form of a horn; on his shoulders he carries ermine skins, to the middle; on his feet he wears embroidered sandals, tied with gold buttons, and about his middle a most rich belt, embroidered with costly jewels." Vecellio says that the Duke wore, not sandals, but slippers. The three chiefs of the Council of Ten wore red gowns, with long sleeves, either of cloth, camlet, or damask, according to the weather, with a flap of the same colour over their left shoulders; also red stockings and slippers. The rest of the Ten wore black camlet gowns, with long sleeves. The *young nobles* in general wore gowns of black cloth, faced with black

taffeta. Little black caps of felt were worn, without brims. The doublet — cut to fit closely to the body — was made of rich black taffeta, or satin, and trimmed with costly lace. The Knights of St. Mark wore red apparel under their black gowns. Young lovers," says Vecellio, "wear generally a doublet and breeches of satin, tabby, or other silk, cut or slashed in the form of crosses or stars, through which slashes is seen the lining, of coloured taffeta; gold buttons, a lace ruff, a bonnet of rich velvet or silk, with an ornamental band, a silk cloak, and silk stockings, Spanish morocco shoes, a flower in one hand, and their gloves and handkerchief in the other." This habit was commonly worn by young noblemen, previous to the time — in their eighteenth or twentieth year — when they put on the gown with sleeves, called "a comito." In the costume of the ladies of Venice, a distinguishing peculiarity was the veil, which was worn very long. Wives and widows wore black veils, and this custom was imitated by courtezans. Wives, however, also wore white veils, edged with lace. Maids wore thin silk veils, either white or yellowish. The veils of the Jewish women were yellow, but in other respects their costume was not exceptional. All Italian women, in this period, wore train dresses, of satin, silk, or other material, with high, pointed corsage, ruff, long puffed sleeves, and embroidered stomacher. The dress of a Doctor of Laws consisted of an upper-robe of black damask cloth, velvet, or silk, an under-robe of black silk, with a silk sash,— the ends of the sash hanging down to the middle of the leg,— stockings of black cloth or velvet, and a cap of velvet or silk. The Jews, according to Vecellio, wore dresses identical with those of the Venetians, but were distinguished by the yellow bonnet or cap — the badge of suffrance — which they were by law enjoined to carry as a mark of their disgraced condition. It is not known that the "Jewish gaberdine" differed from the Venetian gown. Strict accuracy in dressing this play — as in some other pieces — might lead to comical results. A tasteful license in these matters is not only allowable but necessary.

W. W.

NEW-YORK, November 1st, 1878.

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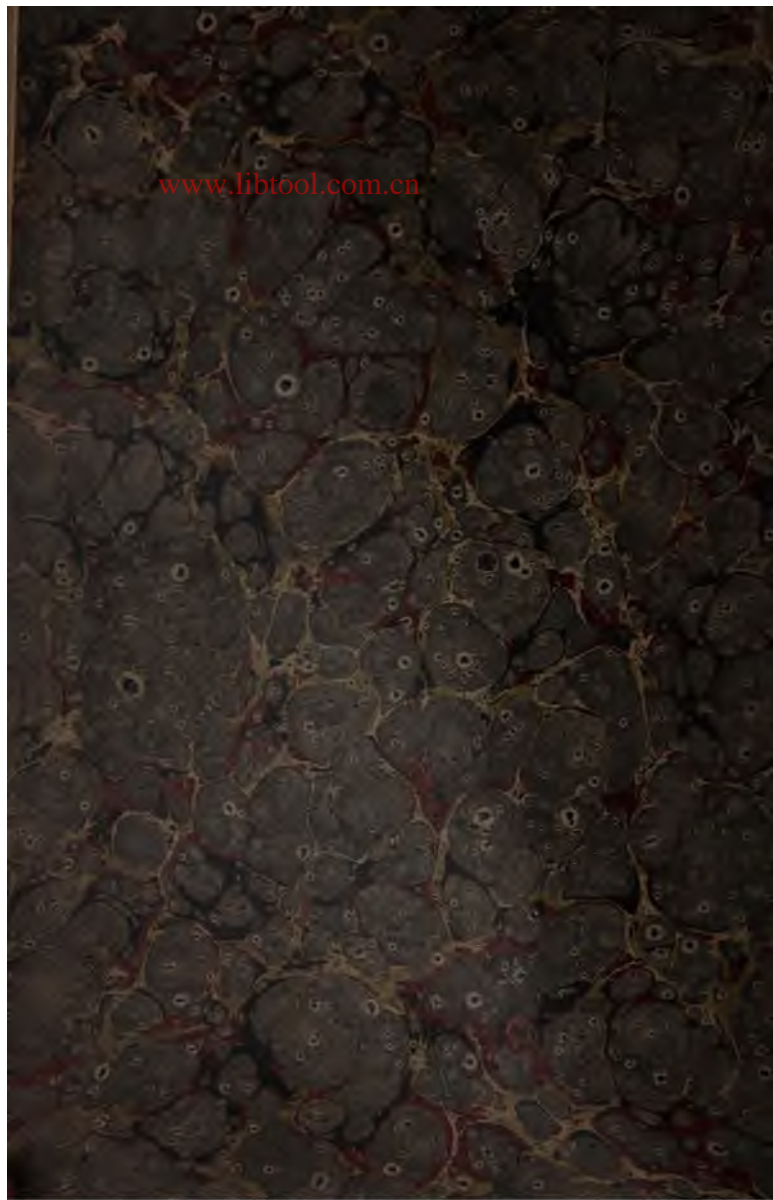


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