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**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
IN TWENTY VOLUMES**

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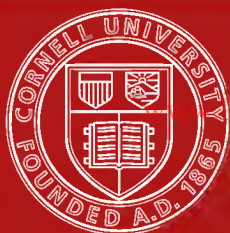
**LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST  
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

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***VOLUME II***

*The annotations at the foot of the page are intended to explain difficult phrases or allusions. Single words, which are no longer in common use, appear only in the glossary, which is printed in last volume.*

*The numbering of the lines follows that of the Cambridge Edition, the text of which is used in this edition.*



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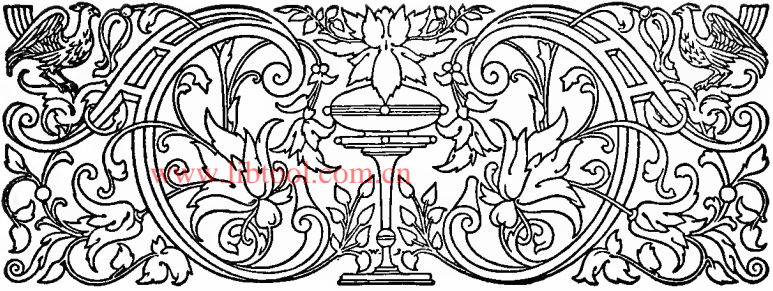


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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME II

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LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY SIDNEY LEE  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY I. L. GLOAG



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NEW YORK HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST BY SIR SIDNEY LEE . . . . .	ix
TEXT OF THE PLAY . . . . .	1

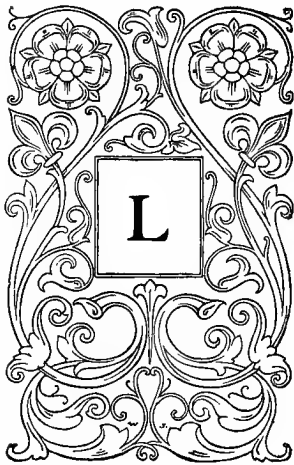
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## INTRODUCTION

### I



“LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST” may safely be regarded as the earliest of Shakespeare's plays. Its composition may be assigned without much fear of refutation to the year 1591, when its author was twenty-seven years old. He had probably arrived in London in search of a career five years before, and had at length gained a firm hold on the theatrical profession. He had made some progress in the reputation of an actor. Then, growing conscious of the possession of a playwright's capacity, he was ambitious to put that consciousness to a practical test.

In many respects “Love's Labour's Lost” belongs to a class of its own in Shakespearean drama. The plot stands almost alone in Shakespeare's work, in that it is

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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not known to have been borrowed. Subsequently it became Shakespeare's habit to adapt to his dramatic purposes stories and incidents of which other writers had treated already in printed books. But the slender chain of episode which constitutes the fable of Shakespeare's earliest play, though it is coloured by his reading, is substantially of his own invention.

The plot of the comedy is not above reproach. It is ingenious in motive and construction. In at least one scene, — in the last scene of Act IV., where the four lords are detected in breaking their oath against love, and each exposes in turn the perjury of the other — there is an efficiency of stagecraft which betrays full command of theatrical machinery. But elsewhere the piece is loosely jointed. The characters for the most part fall into detached groups which are not strongly knit together. The most distinctive feature of the plot is the transition from a frivolous to a pathetic situation in the concluding scene. The change bears bold testimony to the writer's unconventional originality, to his impatience of routine. With a surprising suddenness, with no preliminary hint, the action of careless banter and irresponsible merriment "begins to cloud." News of death silences the gaiety that has hitherto known no check. Light-hearted lovers are bidden at a moment's notice, when love's guerdon seems won, suspend all thoughts of love: one of them is condemned to face a year's life in

"Some forlorn and naked hermitage,  
Remote from all the pleasures of the world,"



## INTRODUCTION

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while another is sentenced to imprisonment in a hospital, there to "visit the speechless sick," and "enforce the pained impotent to smile." The wooing which is the burden of three-fourths of the piece, so far from ending with wedding bells "like an old play," is brought to a close by a funeral. Impressive in intention, as is this unforeseen passage from comic gaiety to tragic gravity, it is too abruptly contrived to achieve an effect that is quite satisfying.

The characterisation, too, falls below the most effective standards of dramatic art. It lacks complexity of detail or fulness of tone. The leading personages, — Biron, the Princess, and Rosaline — are brilliantly conceived sketches in outline; they are deficient in light or shadow. Of the lesser personages some are almost destitute of distinctive features, others are farcical embodiments of some marked eccentricity of speech or manner and approach the domain of caricature. Wit sways the conversation and provokes abundant merriment at the expense of fashionable foibles, but it rarely strikes the rich note of universal humour. The whole work is indeed a dramatic satire rather than a finished comedy — a satire of current social and political life. Such dramatic effectiveness as may justly be set to the play's credit depends rather on the shrewdness of insight and the good-natured frankness which it brings to the portrayal of contemporary society than on any sustained subtlety or delicacy of development in plot or character.

But despite much that is "overdone or come tardy off," "Love's Labour's Lost" offers unfaltering proof of

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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the handiwork of a master, albeit a young master, of dramatic language with a true ear for verbal harmony, of a dramatic poet who was first feeling his strength. The deliverances of the Princess and of Rosaline at the close of the play ring with the "elegance, facility, and golden cadence of poesie." But it is on the hero Biron that Shakespeare lavished the finest flower of his nascent skill. Biron alone of all the characters is worthy of admission to the great gallery of portraits which Shakespeare was subsequently to limn. The poetic glow of his panegyric on love (IV. iii. 289-365) is hardly to be matched outside Shakespeare's own mature work. Indeed there is scarcely any prolonged speech of Biron which does not "sparkle" with "the right Promethean fire."

### II

But poetic sentiment is not the staple fabric of the piece. The dramatist makes no endeavour to conceal the main source of his inspiration in the passing events and fashions of the day. Contemporary projects of academies for disciplining the young Elizabethan and checking his propensity to riotous living account for the central thread—the monastic vow of the French king and his court—round which the play revolves. The subsidiary embellishments of the plot are of like origin. Modes of speech and dress which were habitual to Elizabethan society are freely pressed by the dramatic satirist into his service. But he does not confine himself to

## INTRODUCTION

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any single social rank. The inefficiency of rural constables and the pedantry of village schoolmasters fall within the scope of his gently wielded lash as readily as the affectations of lords and ladies of the court.

The literalness of Shakespeare's transcript in this play from living history — from the circumstance of contemporary politics — has few parallels in the work of dramatists of the highest genius. Shakespeare never made quite so bold an experiment in topical drama elsewhere. The hero, the king of Navarre, in whose dominion the scene is laid, bears the precise title of the Huguenot leader in the civil war of France, which was in progress between 1589 and 1594. The true king of Navarre enjoyed on the battle-field the support of many English volunteers of social position, and his fortunes attracted, while Shakespeare was writing "Love's Labour's Lost," unceasing notice in England. The two chief lords in attendance on the king in the play, Biron and Longaville, bear the actual names of the two most active associates of the real king of Navarre across St. George's Channel. The name of the Lord Dumain in "Love's Labour's Lost" is a common anglicised version of the name of that Duc de Maine, or Mayenne, another French general and statesman, who was so frequently mentioned in popular accounts of current French affairs in connection with the king of Navarre's movements that Shakespeare loosely numbered him also among his supporters.

The bestowal on the *dramatis personæ* of the nomenclature of well-known living men extends beyond the

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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circle of the leading characters. Moth, the pretty ingenious page, was directly called after a French ambassador who was long popular in London; and, though he left England in 1583, he lived in the memory of players and playwrights long after "Love's Labour's Lost" was written. Armado, "the fantastical Spaniard," who haunts Navarre's court, and is dubbed by another courtier, "a phantasm, a Monarcho," is a transparent reminiscence of a half-crazed Spaniard known as "fantastical Monarcho," who for many years hung about Elizabeth's court. The name "Armado" was clearly adapted from that of the Spanish expedition of 1588.

Equally topical is the introduction into the comedy of allusion to recent attempts on the part of Elizabeth's government to negotiate with the Tsar of Russia. The scene (V. ii. 158-599) in which the Princess's lovers urge their suit in the disguise of Russians recalls the reception in 1584 by ladies of Elizabeth's court of Russian ambassadors who came to London to seek a wife for the Tsar among the daughters of the English nobility.<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that Shakespeare at the outset of his career of dramatist placed a very literal interpretation on that definition of the purpose of playing, which, in the form that he enunciated it later, became a household word. He soon modified, subtilised, idealised his dra-

<sup>1</sup> I believe I was the first to indicate by citation of such details as these the topical character of the play, in a paper that I wrote in my youth, "A new Study of Love's Labour's Lost," published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, October, 1880. The results of research which I there announced for the first time, have been widely adopted by subsequent writers on Shakespeare or by editors of this play.

## INTRODUCTION

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matic aims and practices, but in "Love's Labour's Lost" his method showed with unblushing realism "the very age and body of the time, his form and pressure."

### III

To the Shakespearean critic "Love's Labour's Lost" offers a singularly rich field of study. It abounds in suggestion regarding Shakespeare's past, present, and future. It illuminates firstly the seven-and-twenty years of preparation that lay behind him; secondly, the period of his life which was contemporaneous with the play's composition; and thirdly, the five-and-twenty years of glorious fulfilment that lay before him. On the one hand the piece sheds light on Shakespeare's early training and on the formative stage of his literary experience; on the other hand it supplies in embryo many a suggestion which emerges full-fledged in his later work.

No other of Shakespeare's compositions illustrates quite so vividly the character and influence of his education. The play summarily confutes the old-fashioned notion that Shakespeare knew nothing of any language but his own. The tags of Latin with which the conversation of the schoolmaster and the curate are interspersed are reminiscences of Shakespeare's school days, and are drawn from Latin grammar-books and phrase-books which were in use at Stratford-on-Avon Grammar School, and in all good Elizabethan schools. They clearly prove that Shakespeare acquired some knowledge of Latin liter-

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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ature at school at Stratford, and that that knowledge abided undiminished in his adult memory.

The schoolmaster panegyrises Ovid as the pattern of versifiers (IV. ii. 125-131). With scornful impatience he corrects a blunder in Latin grammar, to which he humorously applies the words "Priscian, a little scratched" (V. i. 32). He gives loud voice to his admiration of the work of Mantuanus, a noted Latin poet of the sixteenth century, and quotes a line from the "old Mantuan's" eclogues, which were exalted above Vergil's by professional teachers of the day (IV. ii. 96-102). Passages like these abound, and in all there was clearly at work the pen of one who had followed with alertness his early lessons in Latin, and still cherished familiarity with his school-books.

At the same time the play abundantly indicates that Shakespeare's studies had passed in the late years of his youth beyond the literary limits of a school curriculum. With that quick curiosity that marked his intellectual development, he had clearly explored much that was conspicuous in contemporary literature, and had learned something of legal phraseology.

Of the technical language of the law which in "Love's Labour's Lost" found admission for the first of many times to Shakespeare's dramatic vocabulary, it need only be said that legal terminology was a constant feature of Elizabethan literature, and Shakespeare's employment of it merely conformed to the literary usage of his day. It is quite possible to explain Shakespeare's resort to it without appeal to the theory that he spent a portion of

## INTRODUCTION

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his youth in a lawyer's office. Litigation was common to all classes of Elizabethan society; Shakespeare's father was no stranger to its pursuit. Intercourse with law students in London was freely open to literary aspirants, and lawyers were in especial sympathy with all grades of the theatrical profession. Shakespeare's readiness in assimilating technical information was peculiarly characteristic of his mental calibre. It receives its earliest illustration in "Love's Labour's Lost" where without apparent effort he adapts to his literary purposes legal expressions of very technical import, such, for example, as "taken with the manner" (I. i. 204) and "several" (II. i. 225-226).

In the sphere of contemporary literature, the play shows Shakespeare to have been recently interesting himself in the work of those two men whose reputation at the moment stood highest in the world of English letters, Sir Philip Sidney and John Lyly. As long ago as 1579 Sir Philip Sidney had written a fantastic masque called, "The Lady of the May." It was composed for the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth when at Wanstead, on May Day in that year, she visited the Earl of Leicester, Sidney's uncle. Since Sidney's death, in 1586, this masque with the rest of his literary work had enjoyed great vogue, and had circulated widely in manuscript. (It was not printed till 1598.) From a leading character in Sidney's "Lady of the May," — Rombus, a village schoolmaster, — Shakespeare largely drew both the pedantic speech of the village schoolmaster Holofernes, and the bombastic dialect of the braggart Armado.

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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Rombus, "fully persuaded of his own learned wisdom," talks in Latinised English of burlesque pomposity. His first address to the "Lady of the May"—the heroine in Sidney's masque—opens thus: "Now the thunder-thumping *Jove* transfund his dotes into your excellent formosities." When the lady replies, "Away, away you tedious fool," the schoolmaster retorts, "*O tempora, O mores!* In profession a child, in dignity a woman, in years a lady, in *cæteris* a maid! that she should thus turpify the reputation of my doctrine with the superscription of a fool!" Subsequently he delivers himself of many phrases like, "*O tace, tace*, for all the fat will be ignified"; or, "*Bene, bene, nunc de questione proposita*, that is as much as to say, 'Well, well, now to the proposed question.'"

Parallels to these expressions abound in utterances of both Holofernes and Armado in "Love's Labour's Lost." Armado, whose ambition it is to be "singled from the barbarous," tells his page in the dialect of Sidney's pedagogue that he calls him "tender juvenal as a congruent epitheton appertaining to thy young days, which we may nominate tender" (I. ii. 13-16). Of Armado himself, the rival pedant, the schoolmaster Holofernes remarks, also in Rombus's vein: "*Novi hominem tanquam te*; his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestic, and his general behaviour vain, ridiculous, and thrasonical" (V. i. 9-13).

Critics have detected in the affected language of Armado and of Holofernes a conscious effort on Shakespeare's part to parody with precision forms of speech



## INTRODUCTION

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which flourished in foreign literatures of the sixteenth century. The grandiloquent and hyperbolic diction of Spain, which was called at an early period "Guevarism" and at a later period "Gongorism" (after its chief practisers, Antonio de Guevara and Luis de Gongora), as well as the Latinist pedantry that was familiar in both Italy and Spain, have been freely quoted as sources of Shakespeare's inspiration. But it seems unnecessary to go far beyond the bounds of Sidney's masque and the extravagant language of its leading character Rombus to find the main suggestion of Shakespeare's linguistic mockeries.

Other opportunity was offered Shakespeare at home of studying pedantic speech, and of elaborating his verbal satire. The English author Lyly, who was a very active contemporary during forty-two years of Shakespeare's life, enjoyed a popularity which came to eclipse that of Sidney. Lyly's prose treatise, "Euphues," disseminated far and wide a style of classicised affectation which long held its own in England among unbalanced aspirants to fashionable culture. But the precise extent of Shakespeare's acquaintance with Lyly's didactic romance may be open to question. On the other hand there is no room for disputing his large debt to another branch of Lyly's literary work, — to his fantastic comedies. Two of these, "Campaspe" and "Sapho and Phao," had been published in 1584, and three, "Endimion," "Galathea," and "Midas," had been licensed for publication in 1591. In all these pieces Lyly adapted to the stage themes derived from classical mythology.

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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In that regard "Love's Labour's Lost" did not emulate Lyly's endeavours. Shakespeare first tried his hand at a mythological adaptation in the somewhat later effort of "Midsummer Night's Dream." But Lyly's dramatic work is even more notable for the abundance and artificiality of its jests and its inveterate air of conceited pedantry. It was these features which were directly reflected in Shakespeare's first essay in comedy. Many scenes and characters in "Love's Labour's Lost" were obviously inspired by Lyly. Sir Tophas, "a foolish braggart" in Lyly's play of "Endimion," was the father of Shakespeare's character of "Armado," while Armado's page-boy, Moth, is as filially related to Sir Tophas's page-boy "Epiton." The dialogues between Sir Tophas and Epiton in Lyly's "Endimion" practically reappear in the dialogues of Armado and Moth in Shakespeare's "Love's Labour's Lost." In other regards than characterisation or dialogue, Shakespeare's discipleship to Lyly declares itself in "Love's Labour's Lost." Lyly, following the Italian habit, regarded prose as the fit vehicle for comedy. In conformity with Lyly's practice, Shakespeare denied the ornament of verse to fully a third part of "Love's Labour's Lost." The lyrics with which Lyly's plays were interspersed are their most attractive features. Therein, too, Shakespeare accepted Lyly's instruction. But, Shakespeare alike in his lyrics, his prose, and his word-play, greatly improved on his model. He brought to his work even at the outset a fuller-blooded humanity than that which lay within Lyly's range.

## INTRODUCTION

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### IV

Interesting as is the examination of the various fields — school-books, fashionable literature of the day, current history — whence Shakespeare derived hints for this first play, of higher interest is it to trace in the work the steady reflection of its author's personality, at the era in his life when the piece came to birth. On every other page is visible a rare quickness of apprehension, a rare exuberance of imagination, but the quality is nearly always that peculiar to inspired youth, to a child of light, whose activity was not yet controlled by ripened judgment — the sole guarantee of artistic perfection. The smartness of great intellect that has not reached maturity characterises most of that "civil war of wits," in which all the persons of the drama at some time or other engage. "Snip, snap, quick and home" is the password of the verbal encounters, but the rapid repartee too often overshoots the mark alike of logic and propriety. The ladies' talk among themselves is at times defaced by an obscenity which Shakespeare seldom introduced into his later portrayal of feminine conversation. The Princess and her companions even impress the boor Costard with their coarseness of tongue. Their "greasy" merriment is one of many testimonies to the untamed insolence of the dramatist's youth. In other places the point of the jests has now been blunted by time; but in many more it is the "sweet smoke of rhetoric" — of youthful rhetoric that needs the restraint

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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of judgment — which obscures the issues of the conflict. Everywhere the dialogue moves buoyantly but it is with the buoyancy of an adolescence which awaits the burden of years. ~~It~~ ~~to~~ ~~give~~ ~~its~~ ~~speech~~ full balance and pertinence.

The versification bears like witness to the prentice hand. Shakespeare was endowed by nature with a feeling for the music of words, and nothing that came from his pen at any period of his career is without evidence of his mastery of the verbal harmonies. But the lyric vein dominated Shakespeare's youthful genius, and when he wrote "Love's Labour's Lost," it had not suffered effectual subordination to that dramatic instinct which ultimately swayed his being. He is unwilling in his earliest comedy to restrict himself to blank verse; rhyme is more congenial to him; he has resort to alternately rhyming lines and even to those rhyming six-line stanzas which he employed in his narrative poem — "the first fruit of his invention" — "Venus and Adonis." It may be possible to justify the rhyming couplet in drama, but all other rhyming forms are clearly in conflict with just principles of dramatic expression. Still more noticeable is the fascination that the sonnet exerted on Shakespeare when he wrote the play. The fourteen lines of peroration in Biron's long speech (I. i. 80-93) take the shape of a quatorzain. The king and his courtier Longville each turns a sonnet in his mistress's honour. Shakespeare's dominating lyric impulse swept the sonnet form as freely as other forms of lyric stanza into the current of the dramatic discourse.

## INTRODUCTION

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The many similarities of tone and expression between "Love's Labour's Lost" and Shakespeare's collected sonnets prove more completely than any other evidence how pervasive is the lyric tendency in this early dramatic work. Longville's regular sonnet (IV. iii. 60 *seq.*) closely catches the tone that is familiar to readers of Shakespeare's great collection. It begins with the rhetorical question, which is a common exordium in Shakespearean and other Elizabethan sonnets:—

"Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,  
'Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,  
Persuade my heart to this false perjury?  
Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment."<sup>1</sup>

Not only the syntactical and metrical form, but the imagery in "Love's Labour's Lost" is often identical with that in Shakespeare's sonnets.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Sonnet CXXXIX. :

"O, call me not to justify the wrong  
That thy unkindness lays upon my heart ;  
Wound me not with thine eye, but with thy tongue :  
Use power with power, and slay me not by art."

and Sonnet CLII. :

"In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn."

<sup>2</sup> The manner of the resemblance carries little doubt, too, that many of the sonnets belong to the same period in the dramatist's life as the comedy. The imagery of great poets suffers constant flow. Its stores are continually replenished in the course of their careers, and no internal evidence as to the chronological relation of two compositions from the same poet's pen is open to less dispute than that which is drawn from the tone and texture of the imagery. Whenever a substantial part of the imagery in two or more works is of identical tone and texture, no doubt seems permissible that they belong to the same epoch in the poet's career.

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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### The lyric image of sun worship in Sonnet VII. 1-4,

“Lo, in the Orient when the gracious light  
Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,  
Serving with looks his sacred majesty,”

reappears in heightened colour in Biron's speech in  
“Love's Labour's Lost” (IV. iii. 221-228):

“Who sees the heavenly Rosaline,  
That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,  
At the first opening of the gorgeous East,  
Bows not his vassal head, and stricken blind  
Kisses the base ground with obedient breast?  
What peremptory eagle-sighted eye  
Dares look upon the heaven of her brow,  
That is not blinded by her majesty?”

Another conceit which Shakespeare develops persistently, in almost identical language, in both sonnets and play, is that the eye is the sole source of love, the exclusive home of beauty, the creator, too, of strange delusions in the minds of lovers.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mr. C. F. McClumpha, of the University of Minnesota, in *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XV. No. 6, June, 1900, pp. 337-346, has collected a large number of suggestive parallelisms between the sonnets and the play. Cf. Sonnet XIV. 9 :

“But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive.”

L. L. L. IV. iii. 350 :

“From women's eyes this doctrine I derive,” etc.

Sonnet XVII. 5, 6 :

“If I could write the beauty of your eyes  
And in fresh numbers number all your graces.”

## INTRODUCTION

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Furthermore, the taunts which Biron's friends address to him on the black or dark complexion of his lady love, Rosaline, are in phrase and temper at one with Shakespeare's addresses to his dark lady in the sonnets. In his comedy and in his poems Shakespeare plays precisely the same fantastic variations on the conventional theme of Renaissance lyrics, that a black complexion, though often the sign of a sinful disposition, is not necessarily the negation of virtue.

More might be said of the play's irregularities and imperfections, of its breaches of metrical, moral, and artistic law. Such imperfections are all assignable to the dramatist's inexperience, and are inevitable in experimental work. It is pleasanter to dwell on the compensating features which are likewise inherent in poetic genius at its first stage of development. There is in the comedy something far more welcome and of nobler promise than aught which formal obedience to prescrip-

L. L. L. IV. iii. 322-323 :

“ Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
Of beauty's tutors have enriched you with.”

Sonnet CXIV. 2-7 :

“ Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,  
And that your love taught it this alchemy,  
To make of monsters and things indigest  
Such cherubims as your sweet self resemble,  
Creating every bad a perfect best,  
As fast as objects to his beams assemble ?”

L. L. L. VII. 750-753 :

“ As love is full of unbefitting strains,  
All wanton as a child, skipping and vain,  
Form'd by the eye, and, therefore, like the eye,  
Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms.”

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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tive rules of art could of itself in any circumstance achieve. There is the charm of freshness, the gusty relish for the stin of life, above all, the flashes of perfect vision, the intuitive apprehension of the essential conditions of human existence, which comes, when it comes at all, as often to poetic youth as to poetic age.

Through all the jesting and extravagance of the play there runs a serious argument, — an argument thoroughly sound and useful at the core, though it is liable to distortion through excess of emphasis. The central theme illustrates how the natural instincts of man are entitled to respect and not to scorn; how those instincts inevitably defy artificial or academic restraint; how life is more important to men and women than literature; how books and learning may become the objects of a false worship, and how an over-estimate of their value in the human economy ends in ludicrous disaster. The satire at the expense of study which finds repeated expression in the play has a philosophic significance and is of wide application. The “reasons” advanced “against reading” by the hero Biron are echoed by the rank and file of the *dramatis personæ*, who are of different and inferior calibre to him. The boy Moth and the clown Costard wax merry over the culture of their masters. But it is at the misuse, not at the true use, of culture and learning that Shakespeare tilts; it is the irrational exaltation of literature and of artificial styles of speech above natural wisdom and natural language that moves the young dramatist's disdain. The excessive concentration of energy in any one direction — be it intellectual or



## INTRODUCTION

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physical—is fatal to humanity's equilibrium. That is the illuminating truth which fired the mind of Shakespeare when he wrote "Love's Labour's Lost."

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### V

Powerful as is the light that "Love's Labour's Lost" casts alike on Shakespeare's training in youth, and on his attitude to his art and to his environment in those early years of manhood when he designed and wrote the play, there is a third point of view from which the work claims examination. It illustrates future developments in Shakespeare's artistic career as well as those which either were past or were contemporary with it. Some characters, some dramatic devices, some philosophic reflections which were lightly or crudely sketched with experimental pencil in "Love's Labour's Lost" dwelt in his mind, and when his powers had attained fuller vigour, he worked on them anew. The immature sketches came again from his hand as finished pictures, and a careful comparison of the sketches and the pictures offers us a somewhat precise measure of the rate at which Shakespeare's genius progressed.

In the lower grades of the *dramatis personæ* of "Love's Labour's Lost," Constable Dull was remoulded, and emerged again in the ampler figure of Constable Dogberry. The country wench, Jacquenetta, was redrawn with maturer humour as Audrey, in "As You Like It." A touch of Armado's wooing vein is traceable,

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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too, in Touchstone's mode of courting. The Princess's chamberlain, Boyet, whose personality Biron describes with exceptional vividness (Act V. ii. 316-335), adumbrates no less a figure than Polonius; for Boyet is a shadowy image of Polonius — of Polonius in the heyday of youth, when he was a self-conscious and licentious young wag to whom age had not yet brought its full weight of pomposity and tediousness.

Among characters of higher rank in "Love's Labour's Lost," the Princess and Rosaline might each be regarded as the preliminary sketch of the most spirited and self-reliant of all Shakespeare's youthful heroines: Beatrice, in "Much Ado about Nothing." Beatrice's type of womanhood clearly appealed to Shakespeare; it was his early ambition to depict it in drama and he did not rest satisfied until he had achieved the aim in perfection. No hero in the Shakespearean realm of subsequent days can be exactly described as a reincarnation of Biron. But some of his valiant spirit lived again in Romeo and some even in Hamlet.

Among dramatic devices which Shakespeare reproduced from "Love's Labour's Lost" when he had gained fuller mastery of his craft, the show of the nine worthies stands out conspicuously. That device reappears in ripened excellence in the moving tragi-comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe, in "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The "rude mechanicals" of Athens exhale in full measure that rude breath of life which only flickers uncertainly on the lips of the village actors in the earlier comedy. But the ground plan is there, and the later play re-

## INTRODUCTION

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veals the completed structure that growing experience and vigour has enabled the dramatist to rear upon it. In each case the rough but well-intentioned efforts of the rustic amateurs are watched with generous tolerance of crudities and imperfections by high-born and cultured spectators whom the simple performers seek to entertain. The gentleness of temper which the auditors exhibit seems to reflect the amiability of the author. The spectators' comment on the villagers' dramatic pastimes finds different modes of expression in the two pieces, and the difference is characteristic of the writer's growing grasp of life and art. The kindly speech of the Princess (in "Love's Labour's Lost"), who argues that honest zeal in any cause compensates for defects of accomplishment ("Love's Labour's Lost," V. ii. 517-521), gains in clearness, in dramatic movement, and in fertility of illustration, when it is re-enunciated by Theseus, who exalts the modesty and simplicity of honest and dutiful endeavour above the "rattling tongue of saucy and audacious eloquence." ("Midsummer Night's Dream," V. i., VI. 89-106.)

The opportunity which the play offers for exercise in the comparative criticism of Shakespeare's work is well-nigh inexhaustible. There is yet another point of view from which the subject may be approached. The typography and bibliography of the piece, as it is now accessible to us, offer some peculiarly detailed illustrations of the growth of Shakespeare's dramatic faculty.

"Love's Labour's Lost" was printed for the first time in quarto in Shakespeare's lifetime in 1598, some seven

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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years after it was first written. The title-page describes this original edition as "newly corrected and augmented," words which indicate that in the interval between composition and publication the work had undergone revision at its author's hand. The title-page, which not inappropriately bestows on the piece the description "A Pleasant Conceited Comedie," also states that it was printed "As it was presented before her Highnes (i. e. Queen Elizabeth) this last Christmas (i. e. 1597)." Doubtless it was owing to a revival of the play at court that it underwent "correction" and "augmentation." The quarto has the special interest of being the first printed book to bear on its title the name of Shakespeare ("W. Shakespeare") as dramatic author.

But the little volume claims its highest literary interest for Shakespearean scholars in the circumstance that the publisher or printer employed "copy" which brought together indifferently passages both in their original shape and in their revised form. It is clear from the condition of the extant text that Shakespeare frequently rewrote lines or speeches, intending to supplant his first draft by an improved version. The manuscript which reached the printer supplied the revised text; but some unrevised passages were not fully deleted, with the result that both first and second versions were admitted to the printed book side by side. This uncritical confusion offers us an opportunity of comparing the two versions which belong to very different years of Shakespeare's life. The comparison graphically illustrates the flowing current of Shakespeare's art.

## INTRODUCTION

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The places in the extant text where cancelled lines most obviously survive are three in number. Two appear in separate sections of Biron's long speech in Act IV. Sc. iii. and the third is in Rosaline's reply to her lover's final appeal to her in Act V. Sc. ii. In each of these three instances the first draft is very jejune, very constrained, very tame, very colourless, when contrasted with the expansive warmth and varied movement of the second.

In the first passage of Biron's speech with which we are concerned Shakespeare was content to write in the first draft (IV. iii. 299-301):

“For when would you, my lord, or you, or you,  
Have found the ground of study's excellence  
Without the beauty of a woman's face?”

For these lines Shakespeare afterwards substituted the more luxuriant sentences (ll. 320-333):

“For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,  
In leaden contemplation have found out  
Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?  
Other slow arts entirely keep the brain;  
And therefore, finding barren practisers,  
Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:  
But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,  
Lives not alone immured in the brain;  
But, with the motion of all elements,  
Courses as swift as thought in every power,  
And gives to every power a double power,

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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Above their functions and their offices.  
It adds a precious seeing to the eye ;” etc.

Again in the same speech of Biron (ll. 302–304) Shakespeare's first draft ran : —

“ From women's eyes this doctrine I derive ;  
They are the ground, the books, the academes,  
From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire.”

In the second version these lines were converted into (ll. 350–353) :

“ From women's eyes this doctrine I derive :  
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire ;  
They are the books, the arts, the academes,  
That show, contain and nourish all the world.”

Throughout, Shakespeare's second thoughts are ampler and require a larger number of words for their expression than his first thoughts. In Act V. Sc. ii. 827–832, Biron's brief appeal to Rosaline and her equally brief reply which together fill six lines, are replaced by more copious speeches which now occupy thirty-five lines (ll. 847–881). Rosaline's speech in its completed form is too long to quote here, but it is an admirable exercise for the critic to contrast it in detail with the first sketch as it survives, by virtue of a printer's error, a little higher up the page.

It is quite possible that, in other scenes than these, revised and unrevised passages still survive in conjunction. But the investigation elsewhere involves argument and conjecture. The irregular length of the several Acts

## INTRODUCTION

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is a notable feature of the piece and has been held to offer conspicuous evidence of re-casting, after it was first composed.<sup>1</sup> Acts II. and III., which run to no more than 260 lines and 207 lines respectively, are together far shorter than Act I., which reaches a total of 518 lines. Act IV. rises to as many as 710 lines, while Act V. altogether out-distances any of its predecessors. It numbers 1,104 lines, is almost a third of the whole play, and very slightly falls below the aggregate length of the three preceding acts. Critics have tried to explain the swollen proportions of Act V. by assuming that the greater part of it presents that augmentation to which the title-page directs attention. The same theory is held to apply in lesser degree to the Fourth Act, which is also disproportionately prolonged. But the last two Acts are the salt of the comedy. As originally designed they must have formed its chief centres of interest, and on them Shakespeare must from the first have lavished most of his energy. Whatever labour of revision was bestowed on them after they were first composed, the greater part must have figured in the first draft, and their exaggerated dimensions were, it may be fairly assumed, original defects of construction. Any process of augmentation and correction which they suffered subsequently, when the play renewed its life on the stage, and was first committed to the printing press, can hardly have touched their main drifts.

<sup>1</sup> The Acts were not numbered in the quarto of 1598 ; they were first indicated in the folio of 1623, but the dividing lines of the action, although not marked categorically, are plainly visible in the original impression.

## LOVE'S LABOUR 'S LOST

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Neither the plan nor the execution of "Love's Labour's Lost" allows it to rank, whether after or before revision, with the trophies of Shakespeare's maturity. The piece is essentially a memorial of Shakespeare's adolescence — but it proves that adolescence to have been alert and resourceful, fanciful and meditative, in a degree which knows no exact parallel in history.

SIDNEY LEE.



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# LOVE'S LABOUR 'S LOST

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

FERDINAND, king of Navarre.

BIRON,  
LONGAVILLE, } lords attending on the King.  
DUMAIN, }

BOYET, } lords attending on the Princess of France.  
MERCADÉ, }

DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO, a fantastical Spaniard.

SIR NATHANIEL, a curate.

HOLOFERNES, a schoolmaster.

DULL, a constable.

COSTARD, a clown.

MOTH, page to Armado.

A Forester.

The PRINCESS of France.

ROSALINE, } ladies attending on the Princess.  
MARIA, }  
KATHARINE, }

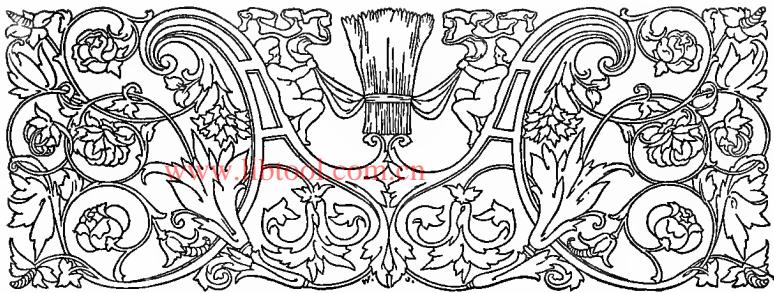
JAQUENETTA, a country wench.

Lords, Attendants, &c.

SCENE — *Navarre.*

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<sup>1</sup> This play was first printed in quarto in 1598. The quarto edition was reprinted with trifling changes in the First Folio of 1623. A second quarto edition of 1631 reprints the First Folio version. No list of *dramatis personæ* is given in any of the early editions. This was first supplied by Rowe in his edition of Shakespeare's works, 1709. The first quarto does not divide the play into either acts or scenes. The First Folio divides it into acts alone. Rowe first subdivided the acts into scenes.

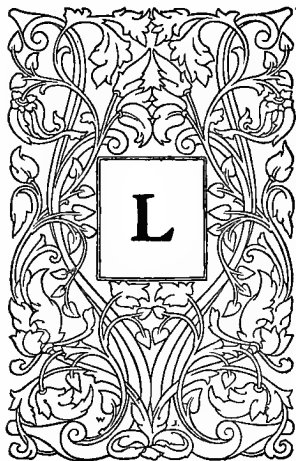


ACT FIRST—SCENE I—NAVARRE

*A PARK, NEAR A PALACE*

*Enter the KING, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN*

**KING**



**L**ET FAME, THAT ALL  
hunt after in their lives,  
Live register'd upon our brazen  
tombs,  
And then grace us in the disgrace  
of death ;  
When, spite of cormorant de-  
vouring Time,  
The endeavour of this present  
breath may buy  
That honour which shall bate his  
scythe's keen edge,  
And make us heirs of all eternity.  
Therefore, brave conquerors, — for so you are,  
That war against your own affections  
And the huge army of the world's desires, —  
Our late edict shall strongly stand in force :  
Navarre shall be the wonder of the world ;  
Our court shall be a little Academe,

10

Still and contemplative in living art.

You three, Biron, Dumain, and Longaville,  
 Have sworn for three years' term to live with me  
 My fellow-scholars, and to keep those statutes  
 That are recorded in this schedule here :

Your oaths are pass'd ; and now subscribe your  
 names,

That his own hand may strike his honour down

20

That violates the smallest branch herein :

If you are arm'd to do as sworn to do,

Subscribe to your deep oaths, and keep it too.

LONG. I am resolved ; 't is but a three years' fast :

The mind shall banquet, though the body pine :

Fat paunches have lean pates ; and dainty bits

Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits.

DUM. My loving lord, Dumain is mortified :

The grosser manner of these world's delights

He throws upon the gross world's baser slaves :

30

To love, to wealth, to pomp, I pine and die ;

With all these living in philosophy.

BIRON. I can but say their protestation over ;

So much, dear liege, I have already sworn,

That is, to live and study here three years.

But there are other strict observances ;

As, not to see a woman in that term,

Which I hope well is not enrolled there ;

And one day in a week to touch no food,

And but one meal on every day beside,

40

The which I hope is not enrolled there ;

And then, to sleep but three hours in the night,

And not be seen to wink of all the day, —  
 When I was wont to think no harm all night,  
 And make a dark night too of half the day, —  
 Which I hope well is not enrolled there :  
 O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep,  
 Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep !

KING. Your oath is pass'd to pass away from these.

BIRON. Let me say no, my liege, an if you please : 50  
 I only swore to study with your grace,  
 And stay here in your court for three years' space.

LONG. You swore to that, Biron, and to the rest.

BIRON. By yea and nay, sir, then I swore in jest.  
 What is the end of study ? let me know.

KING. Why, that to know, which else we should not  
 know.

BIRON. Things hid and barr'd, you mean, from com-  
 mon sense ?

KING. Ay, that is study's god-like recompence.

BIRON. Come on, then ; I will swear to study so,  
 To know the thing I am forbid to know : 60  
 As thus, — to study where I well may dine,

When I to feast expressly am forbid ;  
 Or study where to meet some mistress fine,  
 When mistresses from common sense are hid ;  
 Or, having sworn too hard a keeping oath,  
 Study to break it, and not break my troth.

43 *of all the day*] all the day long.

57 *common sense*] the light of nature ; cf. line 75, "the light of truth."

62 *feast*] Theobald's obviously correct emendation of the *fast* of the earlier editions.

If study's gain be thus, and this be so,  
 Study knows that which yet it doth not know :  
 Swear me to this, and I will ne'er say no.

KING. These be the stops that hinder study quite,      70  
 And train our intellects to vain delight.

BIRON. Why, all delights are vain ; but that most vain,  
 Which, with pain purchased, doth inherit pain :  
 As, painfully to pore upon a book

To seek the light of truth ; while truth the while  
 Doth falsely blind the eyesight of his look :

Light, seeking light, doth light of light beguile :  
 So, ere you find where light in darkness lies,  
 Your light grows dark by losing of your eyes.

Study me how to please the eye indeed,      80

By fixing it upon a fairer eye ;  
 Who dazzling so, that eye shall be his heed,  
 And give him light that it was blinded by.  
 Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,

That will not be deep search'd with saucy looks :  
 Small have continual plodders ever won,  
 Save base authority from others' books.

These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights,  
 That give a name to every fixed star,

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77-79 *Light, seeking . . . your eyes*] The sense is, that a man by too close study may read himself blind.

80-83 *Study me . . . blinded by*] When the eye has been dazzled or half-blinded by fixing its gaze on a "fairer eye," that "fairer eye" shall become its "heed," or lode-star, and give back to it the light of which it has been deprived. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, I, i, 183: "Your eyes are lode-stars."

Have no more profit of their shining nights 90

Than those that walk and wot not what they are.

Too much to know is to know nought but fame ;

And every godfather can give a name.

KING. How well he's read, to reason against reading!

DUM. Proceeded well, to stop all good proceeding!

LONG. He weeds the corn, and still lets grow the weeding.

BIRON. The spring is near, when green geese are a-breeding.

DUM. How follows that?

BIRON. Fit in his place and time.

DUM. In reason nothing.

BIRON. Something, then, in rhyme.

KING. Biron is like an envious sneaping frost, 100  
That bites the first-born infants of the spring.

BIRON. Well, say I am ; why should proud summer boast,

Before the birds have any cause to sing ?

Why should I joy in any abortive birth ?

At Christmas I no more desire a rose

Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled shows ;

But like of each thing that in season grows.

So you, to study now it is too late,

Climb o'er the house to unlock the little gate.

KING. Well, sit you out : go home, Biron : adieu. 110

---

95 *Proceeded*] A quibble upon the academic use of this word for graduating.

110 *sit you out*] stand out, take no part ; an expression used in connection with indoor games.

BIRON. No, my good lord ; I have sworn to stay with you :

And though I have for barbarism spoke more  
 Than for that angel knowledge you can say,  
 Yet confident I'll keep what I have sworn,  
 And bide the penance of each three years' day  
 Give me the paper ; let me read the same ;  
 And to the strict'st decrees I'll write my name.

KING. How well this yielding rescues thee from shame !

BIRON [*reads*]. "Item, That no woman shall come within a mile of my court," — Hath this been proclaimed ? 120

LONG. Four days ago.

BIRON. Let's see the penalty. [*Reads*] "on pain of losing her tongue." Who devised this penalty ?

LONG. Marry, that did I.

BIRON. Sweet lord, and why ?

LONG. To fright them hence with that dread penalty.

BIRON. A dangerous law against gentility !

[*Reads*] "Item, If any man be seen to talk with a woman within the term of three years, he shall endure such public shame as the rest of the court can possibly devise." 130

This article, my liege, yourself must break ;  
 For well you know here comes in embassy  
 The French king's daughter with yourself to speak, —  
 A maid of grace and complete majesty, —  
 About surrender up of Aquitaine  
 To her decrepit, sick, and bedrid father :  
 Therefore this article is made in vain,  
 Or vainly comes the admired princess hither.



KING. What say you, lords? why, this was quite forgot.

BIRON. So study evermore is overshot : 140  
While it doth study to have what it would,  
It doth forget to do the thing it should ;  
And when it hath the thing it hunteth most,  
'T is won as towns with fire, so won, so lost.

KING. We must of force dispense with this decree ;  
She must lie here on mere necessity.

BIRON. Necessity will make us all forsworn  
Three thousand times within this three years' space ;  
For every man with his affects is born,  
Not by might master'd, but by special grace : 150  
If I break faith, this word shall speak for me,  
I am forsworn on "mere necessity."

So to the laws at large I write my name : [*Subscribes.*]

And he that breaks them in the least degree  
Stands in attainder of eternal shame :

Suggestions are to other as to me ;  
But I believe, although I seem so loth,  
I am the last that will last keep his oath.  
But is there no quick recreation granted ?

KING. Ay, that there is. Our court, you know, is  
haunted 160

With a refined traveller of Spain ;  
A man in all the world's new fashion planted,

147-158 *Necessity . . . his oath*] These twelve lines are formed of two six-ains, or six-line stanzas, rhyming *ababcc* (cf. IV, iii, 210-215, *infra*). This is the metre of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, and of much narrative verse of the period. It is rarely used in drama.

That hath a mint of phrases in his brain ;  
 One whom the music of his own vain tongue  
 Doth ravish like enchanting harmony ;  
 A man of complements, whom right and wrong  
 Have chose as umpire of their mutiny :  
 This child of fancy, that Armado hight,  
 For interim to our studies, shall relate,  
 In high-born words, the worth of many a knight 170  
 From tawny Spain, lost in the world's debate.  
 How you delight, my lords, I know not, I ;  
 But, I protest, I love to hear him lie,  
 And I will use him for my minstrelsy.

BIRON. Armado is a most illustrious wight,  
 A man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight.

LONG. Costard the swain and he shall be our sport ;  
 And, so to study, three years is but short.

*Enter DULL with a letter, and COSTARD*

DULL. Which is the Duke's own person ?

BIRON. This, fellow : what wouldst ? 180

DULL. I myself reprehend his own person, for I am  
 his Grace's tharborough : but I would see his own  
 person in flesh and blood.

BIRON. This is he.

DULL. Signior Arme — Arme — commends you.  
 There's villany abroad : this letter will tell you more.

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182 *tharborough*] third-borough, constable. Thus the First Folio.  
 The first quarto reads *Farborough*, doubtless by way of reproduc-  
 ing the constable's mispronunciation.

SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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COST. Sir, the contempts thereof are as touching me.

KING. A letter from the magnificent Armado.

BIRON. How low soever the matter, I hope in God  
for high words.

LONG. A high hope for a low heaven : God grant us  
patience !

BIRON. To hear ? or forbear laughing ?

LONG. To hear meekly, sir, and to laugh moderately ;  
or to forbear both.

BIRON. Well, sir, be it as the style shall give us cause  
to climb in the merriness.

COST. The matter is to me, sir, as concerning Jaque-  
netta. The matter of it is, I was taken with the manner.

BIRON. In what manner ?

COST. In manner and form following, sir ; all those  
three : I was seen with her in the manor-house, sitting  
with her upon the form, and taken following her into the  
park ; which, put together, is in manner and form follow-  
ing. Now, sir, for the manner,— it is the manner of a man  
to speak to a woman : for the form, — in some form.

BIRON. For the following, sir ?

COST. As it shall follow in my correction : and God  
defend the right !

KING. Will you hear this letter with attention ?

BIRON. As we would hear an oracle.

---

199 *taken with the manner*] “in flagrante delicto.” According to Cowell’s  
Law Dictionary (1607), “Mainour alias manour . . . in a legal  
sense denoteth the thing that a thief taketh or stealeth ; as to be  
*taken with the mainour* is to be taken with the thing stolen about  
him.”

COST. Such is the simplicity of man to hearken after the flesh.

KING [*reads*]. "Great deputy, the welkin's vicegerent, and sole dominator of Navarre, my soul's earth's god, and body's fostering patron."—

COST. Not a word of Costard yet.

KING [*reads*]. "So it is,"—

COST. It may be so: but if he say it is so, he is, in telling true, but so. 220

KING. Peace!

COST. Be to me, and every man that dares not fight!

KING. No words!

COST. Of other men's secrets, I beseech you.

KING [*reads*]. "So it is, besieged with sable-coloured melancholy, I did commend the black-oppressing humour to the most wholesome physic of thy health-giving air; and, as I am a gentleman, betook myself to walk. The time when? About the sixth hour; when beasts most graze, birds best peck, and men sit down to that nourishment which is called supper: so much for the time when. Now for the ground which; which, I mean, I walked upon: it is ycleped thy park. Then for the place where; where, I mean, I did encounter that obscene and most preposterous event, that draweth from my snow-white pen the ebon-coloured ink, which here thou viewest, beholdest, surveyest, or seest: but to the place where, — it standeth north-north-east and by east from the west corner of thy curious-knotted garden: there did I see that low-spirited swain, that base minnow of thy mirth,"— 237

236 *curious-knotted*] with flower-beds intersecting one another with some complication. Cf. Lyly's *Euphues*, in *Works*, ed. R. W. Bond, i, 187: "Gardeiners who in their *curious knottes* mixe Hisoppe wyth Time."

COST. Me ?

KING [*reads*]. "that unlettered small-knowing soul," —

COST. Me ?

KING [*reads*]. "that shallow vassal," —

COST. Still me ?

KING [*reads*]. "which, as I remember, hight Costard," —

COST. O, me !

KING [*reads*]. "sorted and consorted, contrary to thy established proclaimed edict and continent canon, which with, — O, with — but with this I passion to say wherewith," —

COST. With a wench.

KING [*reads*]. "with a child of our grandmother Eve, a female ; or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman. Him I, as my ever-esteemed duty pricks me on, have sent to thee, to receive the meed of punishment, by thy sweet Grace's officer, Anthony Dull ; a man of good repute, carriage, bearing, and estimation."

DULL. Me, an't shall please you : I am Anthony Dull.

KING [*reads*]. "For Jaquenetta, — so is the weaker vessel called which I apprehended with the aforesaid swain, — I keep her as a vessel of thy law's fury ; and shall, at the least of thy sweet notice, bring her to trial. Thine, in all compliment of devoted and heart-burning heat of duty. DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO."

BIRON. This is not so well as I looked for, but the best that ever I heard,

KING. Ay, the best for the worst. But, sirrah, what say you to this ?

255, 256 *vessel*] The word is used as in the New Testament ; both the lines in which it figures echo scriptural phrases. Cf. "the weaker vessel" 1 *Peter*, i, 7 ; and "the vessels of wrath," *Rom.* ix, 22.

COST. Sir, I confess the wench.

KING. Did you hear the proclamation ?

COST. I do confess much of the hearing it, but little of the marking of it.

KING. It was proclaimed a year's imprisonment, to be taken with a wench.

COST. I was taken with none, sir : I was taken with a damsel. 271

KING. Well, it was proclaimed damsel.

COST. This was no damsel neither, sir ; she was a virgin.

KING. It is so varied too ; for it was proclaimed virgin.

COST. If it were, I deny her virginity ; I was taken with a maid.

KING. This maid will not serve your turn, sir.

COST. This maid will serve my turn, sir.

KING. Sir, I will pronounce your sentence : you shall fast a week with bran and water. 280

COST. I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge.

KING. And Don Armado shall be your keeper.

My Lord Biron, see him deliver'd o'er :

And go we, lords, to put in practice that

Which each to other hath so strongly sworn.

*[Exeunt King, Longaville, and Dumain.]*

BIRON. I'll lay my head to any good man's hat,

These oaths and laws will prove an idle scorn.

Sirrah, come on. 289

COST. I suffer for the truth, sir ; for true it is, I was

SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

taken with Jaquenetta, and Jaquenetta is a true girl ;  
and, therefore, welcome the sour cup of prosperity !  
Affliction may one day smile again ; and till then, sit  
thee down, sorrow !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — THE SAME

*Enter ARMADO and MOTH his Page*

ARM. Boy, what sign is it when a man of great spirit  
grows melancholy ?

MOTH. A great sign, sir, that he will look sad.

ARM. Why, sadness is one and the self-same thing,  
dear imp.

MOTH. No, no ; O Lord, sir, no.

ARM. How canst thou part sadness and melancholy,  
my tender juvenal ?

MOTH. By a familiar demonstration of the working,  
my tough senior.

ARM. Why tough senior ? why tough senior ?

MOTH. Why tender juvenal ? why tender juvenal ?

ARM. I spoke it, tender juvenal, as a congruent epi-  
theton appertaining to thy young days, which we may  
nominate tender.

MOTH. And I, tough senior, as an appertinent title to  
your old time, which we may name tough.

ARM. Pretty and apt.

MOTH. How mean you, sir ? I pretty, and my say-  
ing apt ? or I apt, and my saying pretty ?

ARM. Thou pretty, because little.

MOTH. Little pretty, because little. Wherefore apt ?

[ 15 ]

ARM. And therefore apt, because quick.

MOTH. Speak you this in my praise, master ?

ARM. In thy condign praise.

MOTH. I will praise an eel with the same praise.

ARM. What, that an eel is ingenious ?

MOTH. That an eel is quick.

ARM. I do say thou art quick in answers : thou heat-  
est my blood. 30

MOTH. I am answered, sir.

ARM. I love not to be crossed.

Moth. [*Aside*] He speaks the mere contrary ; crosses  
love not him.

ARM. I have promised to study three years with the  
Duke.

MOTH. You may do it in an hour, sir.

ARM. Impossible.

MOTH. How many is one thrice told ?

ARM. I am ill at reckoning ; it fitteth the spirit of a  
tapster. 41

MOTH. You are a gentleman and a gamester, sir.

ARM. I confess both : they are both the varnish of a  
complete man.

MOTH. Then, I am sure, you know how much the gross  
sum of deuce-ace amounts to.

ARM. It doth amount to one more than two.

MOTH. Which the base vulgar do call three.

ARM. True.

---

33 *crosses*] The pun here turns on the use of the word in the sense of  
money, *i. e.* coins stamped with a *cross*.



MOTH. Why, sir, is this such a piece of study? <sup>50</sup>  
 Now here is three studied, ere ye'll thrice wink: and  
 how easy it is ~~is to put years to~~ the word three, and study  
 three years in two words, the dancing horse will tell  
 you.

ARM. A most fine figure!

MOTH. To prove you a cipher.

ARM. I will hereupon confess I am in love: and as it  
 is base for a soldier to love, so am I in love with a base  
 wench. If drawing my sword against the humour of  
 affection would deliver me from the reprobate thought  
 of it, I would take Desire prisoner, and ransom him to <sup>60</sup>  
 any French courtier for a new-devised courtesy. I think  
 scorn to sigh: methinks I should outswear Cupid. Com-  
 fort me, boy: what great men have been in love?

MOTH. Hercules, master.

ARM. Most sweet Hercules! More authority, dear  
 boy, name more; and, sweet my child, let them be men  
 of good repute and carriage.

---

53 *the dancing horse*] A reference to a clever performing horse known  
 as *Marocco* or *Morocco*, which was for many years towards the end  
 of the sixteenth century exhibited in London and the chief cities  
 of England and the continent by its master, a Staffordshire man,  
 named Bankes. Numerous references to the animal's powers of  
 dancing and of solving arithmetical puzzles, to which allusion is  
 made in the text, figure in contemporary literature. Cf. Hall's  
*Satires*, Bk. IV, satire 2, "strange *Morocco's* dumb arithmetic," and  
*Bastard's Chrestoleros*, 1598, Bk. III, Epigram 17:

"Bankes hath an horse of wondrous qualitie,  
 For he can fight *and daunce* and lie."

MOTH. Samson, master : he was a man of good carriage, great carriage, for he carried the town-gates on his back like a porter ; and he was in love. 70

ARM. O well-knit Samson ! strong-jointed Samson ! I do excel thee in my rapier as much as thou didst me in carrying gates. I am in love too. Who was Samson's love, my dear Moth ?

MOTH. A woman, master.

ARM. Of what complexion ?

MOTH. Of all the four, or the three, or the two, or one of the four.

ARM. Tell me precisely of what complexion.

MOTH. Of the sea-water green, sir. 80

ARM. Is that one of the four complexions ?

MOTH. As I have read, sir ; and the best of them too.

ARM. Green, indeed, is the colour of lovers ; but to have a love of that color, methinks Samson had small reason for it. He surely affected her for her wit.

MOTH. It was so, sir ; for she had a green wit.

ARM. My love is most immaculate white and red.

---

76 *complexion*] Used in the double sense of "colour of the face" and "humour" or "temperament" of the body. The humours or temperaments were held in contemporary medicine to be *four* in number, *viz.* : the phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine, and melancholy, and all were credited with distinguishing hues. No complexion (in the sense of "humour") was, of course, of a "sea-water green" colour. But an ordinary symptom of chlorosis, or the "green sickness," from which young growing girls suffered, was a pale, greenish complexion.

86 *green wit*] There may be a punning reference here to the *green withes* wherewith Delilah bound Samson. Cf. *Judges* xvi, 7, 8.

MOTH. Most maculate thoughts, master, are masked under such colours.

ARM. Define, define, well-educated infant. 90

MOTH. My father's wit, and my mother's tongue, assist me!

ARM. Sweet invocation of a child; most pretty and pathological!

MOTH. If she be made of white and red,  
 Her faults will ne'er be known;  
 For blushing cheeks by faults are bred,  
 And fears by pale white shown:  
 Then if she fear, or be to blame,  
 By this you shall not know; 100  
 For still her cheeks possess the same  
 Which native she doth owe.

A dangerous rhyme, master, against the reason of white and red.

ARM. Is there not a ballad, boy, of the King and the Beggar?

MOTH. The world was very guilty of such a ballad some three ages since: but, I think, now 't is not to be found; or, if it were, it would neither serve for the writing nor the tune. 110

ARM. I will have that subject newly writ o'er, that I

106 *King . . . Beggar*] The ballad of King Cophetua's courtship of the beggar-maid figured in Richard Johnson's *The Crown-Garland*, 1612, under the title of "A Song of a Beggar and a King." The piece is included in Percy's *Reliques* (1877), I, 189-194. Shakespeare refers to the story again (*infra*, IV, i, 64 *seq.*); and in *Rom. and Jul.*, II, i, 14. King Cophetua is mentioned in *2 Hen. IV*, V, iii, 106.

may example my digression by some mighty precedent. Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind. Costard ; she deserves well.

MOTH. [*Aside*] To be whipped ; and yet a better love than my master.

ARM. Sing, boy ; my spirit grows heavy in love.

MOTH. And that's great marvel, loving a light wench.

ARM. I say, sing.

MOTH. Forbear till this company be past. 120

*Enter DULL, COSTARD, and JAQUENETTA*

DULL. Sir, the duke's pleasure is, that you keep Costard safe : and you must suffer him to take no delight nor no penance ; but a' must fast three days a week. For this damsel, I must keep her at the park : she is allowed for the day-woman. Fare you well.

ARM. I do betray myself with blushing. Maid.

JAQ. Man.

ARM. I will visit thee at the lodge.

JAQ. That's hereby.

ARM. I know where it is situate. 130

JAQ. Lord, how wise you are !

ARM. I will tell thee wonders.

JAQ. With that face ?

ARM. I love thee.

JAQ. So I heard you say.

ARM. And so, farewell.

JAQ. Fair weather after you !

DULL. Come, Jaquenetta, away !

*[Exeunt Dull and Jaquenetta.]*

ARM. Villain, thou shalt fast for thy offences ere thou be pardoned.

140

COST. Well, sir, I hope, when I do it, I shall do it on a full stomach.

ARM. Thou shalt be heavily punished.

COST. I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they are but lightly rewarded.

ARM. Take away this villain ; shut him up.

MOTH. Come, you transgressing slave ; away !

COST. Let me not be pent up, sir : I will fast, being loose.

MOTH. No, sir ; that were fast and loose : thou shalt to prison.

150

COST. Well, if ever I do see the merry days of desolation that I have seen, some shall see.

MOTH. What shall some see ?

COST. Nay, nothing, Master Moth, but what they look upon. It is not for prisoners to be too silent in their words ; and therefore I will say nothing : I thank God I have as little patience as another man ; and therefore I can be quiet.

[*Exeunt Moth and Costard.*]

---

149 *fast and loose*] A cheating game much practised by gipsies, and sometimes called "pricking at the belt." Separate strips of leather were so arranged on a table as to present the appearance of a belt in a single piece. The player was invited to thrust a skewer into the leather so as to attach it to the table on which it was placed, and bets were laid whether he would make the pretended belt fast or loose. Cf. *infra*, III, i, 97, and *Ant. and Cleop.*, IV, xii, 28. ["She, Like a right gipsy hath at *fast and loose* Beguiled me."]

ARM. I do affect the very ground, which is base, where her shoe, which is baser, guided by her foot, which is basest, doth tread. I shall be forsworn, which is a great argument of falsehood, if I love. And how can that be true love which is falsely attempted? Love is a familiar; Love is a devil: there is no evil angel but Love. Yet was Samson so tempted, and he had an excellent strength; yet was Soloman so seduced, and he had a very good wit. Cupid's butt-shaft is too hard for Hercules' club; and therefore too much odds for a Spaniard's rapier. The first and second cause will not serve my turn; the passado he respects not, the duello he regards not: his disgrace is to be called boy; but his glory is to subdue men. Adieu, valour! rust, rapier! be still, drum! for your manager is in love; yea, he loveth. Assist me some extemporal god of rhyme, for I am sure I shall turn sonnet. Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am for whole volumes in folio.

174

[Exit.

---

167 *first and second cause*] "Cause" was often used in the technical sense of ground for a challenge to a duel. The various "causes" which were formally recognized by duellists are described in "*Vincentio Saviolo His Practise, in two Bookes. The first intreating of the use of the Rapier and Dagger. The second, of honor and honorable quarrels.*" 1595. Touchstone in *As You Like It*, V, iv, 49, speaks of quarrelling upon "the seventh cause."



## ACT SECOND—SCENE I—THE SAME

*Enter the PRINCESS OF FRANCE, ROSALINE, MARIA, KATHARINE, BOYET, Lords, and other Attendants*

BOYET



OW, MADAM, SUMMON  
up your dearest spirits :  
Consider who the king your  
father sends ;  
To whom he sends ; and what 's  
his embassy :  
Yourself, held precious in the  
world's esteem,  
To parley with the sole inheritor  
Of all perfections that a man  
may owe,  
Matchless Navarre ; the plea of  
no less weight

Than Aquitaine, a dowry for a queen.  
Be now as prodigal of all dear grace,  
As Nature was in making graces dear,  
When she did starve the general world beside,  
And prodigally gave them all to you.

10

PRIN. Good Lord Boyet, my beauty, though but mean,

Needs not the painted flourish of your praise :  
 Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye,  
 Not utter'd by base sale of chapmen's tongues :  
 I am less proud to hear you tell my worth  
 Than you much willing to be counted wise  
 In spending your wit in the praise of mine.  
 But now to task the tasker : good Boyet, 20  
 You are not ignorant, all-telling fame  
 Doth noise abroad, Navarre hath made a vow,  
 Till painful study shall outwear three years,  
 No woman may approach his silent court :  
 Therefore to 's seemeth it a needful course,  
 Before we enter his forbidden gates,  
 To know his pleasure ; and in that behalf,  
 Bold of your worthiness, we single you  
 As our best-moving fair solicitor.  
 Tell him, the daughter of the King of France, 30  
 On serious business craving quick dispatch,  
 Importunes personal conference with his Grace :  
 Haste, signify so much ; while we attend,  
 Like humble-visaged suitors, his high will.

BOYET. Proud of employment, willingly I go.

PRIN. All pride is willing pride, and yours is so.

[*Exit Boyet.*]

Who are the votaries, my loving lords,  
 That are vow-fellows with this virtuous duke ?

FIRST LORD. Lord Longaville is one.

PRIN. Know you the man ?

MAR. I know him, madam : at a marriage-feast, 40

28 *Bold*] Confident.



SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

Between Lord Perigort and the beauteous heir  
 Of Jaques Falconbridge, solemnized  
 In Normandy, saw I this Longaville :  
 A man of sovereign parts he is esteem'd ;  
 Well fitted in arts, glorious in arms :  
 Nothing becomes him ill that he would well.  
 The only soil of his fair virtue's gloss,  
 If virtue's gloss will stain with any soil,  
 Is a sharp wit match'd with too blunt a will ;  
 Whose edge hath power to cut, whose will still wills 50  
 It should none spare that come within his power.

PRIN. Some merry mocking lord, belike ; is 't so ?

MAR. They say so most that most his humours know.

PRIN. Such short-lived wits do wither as they grow.  
 Who are the rest ?

KATH. The young Dumain, a well-accomplish'd  
 youth,  
 Of all that virtue love for virtue loved :  
 Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill ;  
 For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,  
 And shape to win grace, though he had no wit. 60  
 I saw him at the Duke Alençon's once ;  
 And much too little of that good I saw  
 Is my report to his great worthiness.

ROS. Another of these students at that time  
 Was there with him, if I have heard a truth.

42 *Jaques*] A dissyllable, with the accent on the first syllable : *sol-  
 emnized* is here a quadrisyllable, with accents on the second and  
 fourth syllables.

57 *Of all . . . loved*] Loved for virtue by all those who have regard  
 for virtue.

Biron they call him ; but a merrier man,  
 Within the limit of becoming mirth,  
 I never spent an hour's talk withal :  
 His eye begets occasion for his wit ;  
 For every object that the one doth catch,  
 The other turns to a mirth-moving jest,  
 Which his fair tongue, conceit's expositor,  
 Delivers in such apt and gracious words,  
 That aged ears play truant at his tales,  
 And younger hearings are quite ravished ;  
 So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

70

PRIN. God bless my ladies ! are they all in love,  
 That every one her own hath garnished  
 With such bedecking ornaments of praise ?

FIRST LORD. Here comes Boyet.

*Re-enter BOYET*

PRIN. Now, what admittance, lord ? 80

BOYET. Navarre had notice of your fair approach ;  
 And he and his competitors in oath  
 Were all address'd to meet you, gentle lady,  
 Before I came. Marry, thus much I have learnt :  
 He rather means to lodge you in the field,  
 Like one that comes here to besiege his court,  
 Than seek a dispensation for his oath,  
 To let you enter his unpeeled house.  
 Here comes Navarre.

---

69 *begets*] in the sense of "procures" ; see note on the dedication of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, "the only *begetter*."

## SCENE 1 LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

*Enter* KING, LONGAVILLE, DUMAIN, BIRON, *and* ATTENDANTS.

KING. Fair princess, welcome to the court of Navarre. 90

PRIN. "Fair" I give you back again; and "welcome"  
I have not yet: the roof of this court is too high to be  
yours; and welcome to the wide fields too base to be mine.

KING. You shall be welcome, madam, to my court.

PRIN. I will be welcome, then: conduct me thither.

KING. Hear me, dear lady; I have sworn an oath.

PRIN. Our Lady help my lord! he'll be forsworn.

KING. Not for the world, fair madam, by my will.

PRIN. Why, will shall break it; will, and nothing else.

KING. Your ladyship is ignorant what it is. 100

PRIN. Were my lord so, his ignorance were wise,  
Where now his knowledge must prove ignorance.  
I hear your grace hath sworn out house-keeping:  
'Tis deadly sin to keep that oath, my lord,  
And sin to break it.

But pardon me, I am too sudden-bold:  
To teach a teacher ill beseemeth me.  
Vouchsafe to read the purpose of my coming,  
And suddenly resolve me in my suit.

KING. Madam, I will, if suddenly I may. 110

PRIN. You will the sooner, that I were away;  
For you'll prove perjured, if you make me stay.

---

98-99 *will . . . will*] A quibble on two of the varied contemporary meanings of "will," which in line 98 is used synonymously with "free consent," as in "willingly," and in line 99, with the equally common signification of "sensual desire." In line 211 "will" is used in the sense of "strength of will," or resolve. Shakespeare makes abundant play with the word in his *Sonnets*, cxxxv-vi.

BIRON. Did not I dance with you in Brabant once ?

ROS. Did not I dance with you in Brabant once ?

BIRON. I know you did.

ROS. How needless was it, then, to ask the question !

BIRON. You must not be so quick.

ROS. 'Tis 'long of you that spur me with such questions.

BIRON. Your wit's too hot, it speeds too fast, 't will tire.

ROS. Not till it leave the rider in the mire.

BIRON. What time o' day ?

ROS. The hour that fools should ask.

BIRON. Now fair befall your mask !

ROS. Fair fall the face it covers !

BIRON. And send you many lovers !

ROS. Amen, so you be none.

BIRON. Nay, then will I be gone.

KING. Madam, your father here doth intimate  
The payment of a hundred thousand crowns ;

---

129 *a hundred thousand crowns*] Hunter first pointed out an authentic incident in fifteenth-century French history which somewhat resembles the negotiation described in this speech. Before his death in 1425, according to Monstrelet's Chronicle, Charles, King of Navarre, surrendered certain lands to Charles VII, King of France, in exchange for certain other lands and the payment of *two hundred thousand crowns*. In the play the hero is the son of the King of Navarre who made this bargain, and he claims the payment in full of the *two hundred thousand crowns*. The princess asserts that the whole debt is already discharged. Shakespeare very liberally adapts the historic episode to his dramatic purpose.

Being but the one half of an entire sum 130  
Disbursed by my father in his wars.

But say that he or we, as neither have,  
Received that sum, yet there remains unpaid  
A hundred thousand more ; in surety of the which,  
One part of Aquitaine is bound to us,  
Although not valued to the money's worth.  
If, then, the king your father will restore  
But that one-half which is unsatisfied,  
We will give up our right in Aquitaine, 140  
And hold fair friendship with his Majesty.

But that, it seems, he little purposeth,  
For here he doth demand to have repaid  
A hundred thousand crowns ; and not demands,  
On payment of a hundred thousand crowns,  
To have his title live in Aquitaine ;  
Which we much rather had depart withal,  
And have the money by our father lent,  
Than Aquitaine so gelded as it is.  
Dear princess, were not his requests so far  
From reason's yielding, your fair self should make 150  
A yielding 'gainst some reason, in my breast,  
And go well satisfied to France again.

PRIN. You do the king my father too much wrong,  
And wrong the reputation of your name,  
In so unseeming to confess receipt  
Of that which hath so faithfully been paid.

KING. I do protest I never heard of it ;  
And if you prove it, I 'll repay it back,  
Or yield up Aquitaine.

PRIN. We arrest your word.  
 Boyet, you can produce acquittances 160  
 For such a sum from special officers  
 Of Charles his father.

KING. Satisfy me so.

BOYET. So please your Grace, the packet is not  
 come,  
 Where that and other specialties are bound :  
 To-morrow you shall have a sight of them.

KING. It shall suffice me : at which interview  
 All liberal reason I will yield unto.  
 Meantime receive such welcome at my hand  
 As honour, without breach of honour, may  
 Make tender of to thy true worthiness : 170  
 You may not come, fair princess, in my gates ;  
 But here without you shall be so received  
 As you shall deem yourself lodged in my heart,  
 Though so denied fair harbour in my house.  
 Your own good thoughts excuse me, and farewell :  
 To-morrow shall we visit you again.

PRIN. Sweet health and fair desires consort your Grace !

KING. Thy own wish wish I thee in every place !

[*Exit.*

BIRON. Lady, I will commend you to mine own heart.

ROS. Pray you, do my commendations ; I would be  
 glad to see it. 181

BIRON. I would you heard it groan

ROS. Is the fool sick ?

BIRON. Sick at the heart.

ROS. Alack, let it blood.

BIRON. Would that do it good ?

ROS. My physics say " ay."

BIRON. Will you prick 't with your eye ?

ROS. No point, with my knife.

BIRON. Now, God save thy life !

190

ROS. And yours from long living !

BIRON. I cannot stay thanksgiving. [*Retiring.*]

DUM. Sir, I pray you, a word : what lady is that same ?

BOYET. The heir of Alençon, Katharine her name.

DUM. A gallant lady. Monsieur, fare you well. [*Exit.*]

LONG. I beseech you a word : what is she in the white ?

BOYET. A woman sometimes, an you saw her in the light.

LONG. Perchance light in the light. I desire her name.

BOYET. She hath but one for herself, to desire that were a shame.

LONG. Pray you, sir, whose daughter ?

200

BOYET. Her mother's I have heard.

LONG. God's blessing on your beard !

BOYET. Good sir, be not offended.

She is an heir of Falconbridge.

---

189 *No point*] A play on the French negative particle. Cf. Cotgrave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.*, 1611 : "*Point*, an adverbe, not, no one jote, by no meanes, in no manner, not at all." Characters speaking broken English on the Elizabethan stage freely used "no point" for "no."

198 *light in the light*] wanton in the light.

LONG. Nay, my choler is ended.  
 She is a most sweet lady.

BOYET. Not unlike, sir, that may be. [Exit Long.]

BIRON. What's her name in the cap?

BOYET. Rosaline, by good hap.

BIRON. Is she wedded or no? 210

BOYET. To her will, sir, or so.

BIRON. You are welcome, sir: adieu.

BOYET. Farewell to me, sir, and welcome to you.  
 [Exit Biron.]

MAR. That last is Biron, the merry mad-cap lord:  
 Not a word with him but a jest.

BOYET. And every jest but a word.

PRIN. It was well done of you to take him at his  
 word.

BOYET. I was as willing to grapple as he was to  
 board.

MAR. Two hot sheeps, marry.

BOYET. And wherefore not ships?  
 No sheep, sweet lamb, unless we feed on your lips.

MAR. You sheep, and I pasture: shall that finish the  
 jest? 220

211 *To her will*] see note on lines 98-99.

218 *sheeps . . . ships*] "Sheep" in Elizabethan English was pronounced "ship," as it often is in provincial English nowadays; for a like play upon the two words cf. *Two Gent.*, I, i, 72, 73, and *Com. of Errors*, IV, i, 94, 95 (The *Ship Street* of Oxford and of other inland English cities was originally *Sheep Street*). Boyet's query naturally issues from the nautical figure of "grapple" and "board" in his previous remark.



SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

BOYET. So you grant pasture for me. [*Offering to kiss her.*]

MAR. Not so, gentle beast :

My lips are no common, though several they be.

BOYET. Belonging to whom ?

MAR. To my fortunes and me.

PRIN. Good wits will be jangling; but, gentles,  
agree :

This civil war of wits were much better used

On Navarre and his book-men ; for here 't is abused.

BOYET. If my observation, which very seldom  
lies,

By the heart's still rhetoric disclosed with eyes,

Deceive me not now, Navarre is infected.

PRIN. With what ?

BOYET. With that which we lovers entitle affected.

PRIN. Your reason ?

BOYET. Why, all his behaviours did make their  
retire

To the court of his eye, peeping thorough desire ;

His heart, like an agate, with your print impress'd,

Proud with his form, in his eye pride express'd :

222 *My lips . . . be*] Maria jests carelessly with familiar legal terms — “common,” or land in public or common ownership, and “several,” or land in private or separate ownership — which the mention of “pasture” suggests. Maria says punningly that her lips are not common land open for everybody to pasture ; though they are more than one (*i. e.* several), they constitute a private or separate domain. For the antithesis between “common” and “several,” cf. *Sonnet cxxxvii*, 9–10.

235 *like an agate*] Little figures were often carved on agates set in rings or brooches.

His tongue, all impatient to speak and not see,  
 Did stumble with haste in his eyesight to be ;  
 All senses to that sense did make their repair,  
 To feel only looking on fairest of fair : 240  
 Methought all his senses were lock'd in his eye,  
 As jewels in crystal for some prince to buy ;  
 Who, tendering their own worth from where they were  
                     glass'd,

Did point you to buy them, along as you pass'd :  
 His face's own margent did quote such amazes,  
 That all eyes saw his eyes enchanted with gazes.  
 I'll give you Aquitaine, and all that is his,  
 An you give him for my sake but one loving kiss.

PRIN. Come to our pavilion : Boyet is disposed.

BOYET. But to speak that in words which his eye  
                     hath disclosed. 250

I only have made a mouth of his eye,  
 By adding a tongue which I know will not lie.

ROS. Thou art an old love-monger, and speakest  
                     skilfully.

MAR. He is Cupid's grandfather, and learns news of  
                     him.

---

237 *all impatient . . . see*] Thoroughly angry at only being able to speak, and at being unable to perform the function of eyes.

245 *margent*] In *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iii, 81-92, a lover's face is likened to a volume with comments "written in the margent of his eyes." The margins of books were often crowded with illustrative quotations.

249 *disposed*] *sc.* to merriment, as *infra*, V, ii, 466. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, iii, 87.

SCENE I    LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

ROS. Then was Venus like her mother ; for her father  
is but grim.

BOYET. Do you hear, my mad wenches ?

MAR. [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn) No.

BOYET. What then, do you see ?

ROS. Ay, our way to be gone.

BOYET. You are too hard for me.

*[Exeunt.]*



## ACT THIRD — SCENE I — THE SAME

*Enter ARMADO and MOTH*

ARMADO



WARBLE, CHILD; MAKE  
passionate my sense of hearing.

MOTH. Concolinel. [*Singing.*]

ARM. Sweet air! Go, ten-  
derness of years; take this key,  
give enlargement to the swain,  
bring him festinately hither: I  
must employ him in a letter to  
my love.

MOTH. Master, will you win  
your love with a French brawl?

ARM. How meanest thou?  
brawling in French?

3 *Concolinel*] Probably the refrain of the song sung by Moth. The sound of the word, coupled with the reference to a *French* brawl at line 7, suggests that the song was French. The word may be a corruption of "quand colinelle." Far-fetched endeavours have been made to identify it with an Irish air, — "Calen o Custure me," — which is frequently mentioned in Elizabethan literature, and is quoted by Pistol in *Hen. V*, IV, iv, 4.

7-8 a *French brawl*] a French dance resembling a cotillon.

SCENE I      LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

MOTH. No, my complete master: but to jig off a 10  
tune at the tongue's end, canary to it with your feet,  
humour it with turning up your eyelids, sigh a note and  
sing a note, sometime through the throat, as if you swal-  
lowed love with singing love, sometime through the  
nose, as if you snuffed up love by smelling love; with  
your hat penthouse-like o'er the shop of your eyes;  
with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet, like  
a rabbit on a spit; or your hands in your pocket, like a  
man after the old painting; and keep not too long in  
one tune, but a snip and away. These are complements,  
these are humours; these betray nice wenches, that 20  
would be betrayed without these; and make them men  
of note — do you note me? — that most are affected to  
these

ARM. How hast thou purchased this experience?

MOTH. By my penny of observation.

ARM. But O, — but O, —

MOTH. "The hobby-horse is forgot."

11 *canary*] dance the lively Spanish dance, which owed its name to the belief that it was derived from the aborigines of the Canary Islands.

15 *penthouse-like*] like an overhanging or projecting roof over a shop window.

26 "*The hobby-horse is forgot*"] Doubtless a quotation from a popular song lamenting the decay, under Puritan influence, of May-day or morris dances, in which the "hobby-horse" — a man or boy with a wicker frame resembling a horse's body fastened about his waist — played a prominent part. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 130: "For O, for O, the hobby-horse is forgot." The phrase is often found in the Elizabethan dramatists.

ARM. Callest thou my love "hobby-horse" ?

MOTH. No, master ; the hobby-horse is but a colt, and your love perhaps a hackney. But have you forgot your love ?

30

ARM. Almost I had.

MOTH. Negligent student ! learn her by heart.

ARM. By heart and in heart, boy.

MOTH. And out of heart, master : all those three I will prove.

ARM. What wilt thou prove ?

MOTH. A man, if I live ; and this, by, in, and with-out, upon the instant : by heart you love her, because your heart cannot come by her ; in heart you love her, because your heart is in love with her ; and out of heart you love her, being out of heart that you cannot 40 enjoy her.

ARM. I am all these three.

MOTH. And three times as much more, and yet nothing at all.

ARM. Fetch hither the swain : he must carry me a letter.

MOTH. A message well sympathized ; a horse to be ambassador for an ass.

ARM. Ha, ha ! what sayest thou ?

MOTH. Marry, sir, you must send the ass upon the horse, for he is very slow-gaited. But I go.

50

ARM. The way is but short : away !

28-29 *the hobby-horse . . . hackney*] "Hobby-horse" and "hackney" were both terms applied to a woman of loose character. "Colt" is here used in the sense of "lascivious fellow."

SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

MOTH. As swift as lead, sir.

ARM. The meaning, pretty ingenious?

Is not lead a metal heavy, dull, and slow?

MOTH. Minimè, honest master; or rather, master, no.

ARM. I say lead is slow.

MOTH. You are too swift, sir, to say so:

Is that lead slow which is fired from a gun?

ARM. Sweet smoke of rhetoric!

He reputes me a cannon; and the bullet, that's he:

I shoot thee at the swain.

MOTH. Thump, then, and I flee. [*Exit.* 60]

ARM. A most acute juvenal; volable and free of  
grace!

By thy favour, sweet welkin, I must sigh in thy face:

Most rude melancholy, valour gives thee place.

My herald is return'd.

*Re-enter* MOTH *with* COSTARD

MOTH. A wonder, master! here's a Costard broken  
in a shin.

ARM. Some enigma, some riddle: come, thy l'envoy;  
begin.

COST. No egma, no riddle, no l'envoy; no salve in  
the mail, sir: O, sir, plantain, a plain plantain! no  
l'envoy, no l'envoy; no salve, sir, but a plantain!

---

67-68 *no salve in the mail*] no curative ointment in the boy's wallet, or pack. The Quartos and First Folio read obscurely *in thee male*, for which the Second Folio substituted *in the male* (*i. e.*, mail, budget, wallet). Malone adopted the reading which is adopted here. Perhaps a simpler change would be *in them all*.

ARM. By virtue, thou enforcest laughter; thy silly 70  
 thought my spleen; the heaving of my lungs provokes  
 me to ridiculous smiling. O, pardon me, my stars!  
 Doth the inconsiderate take salve for l'envoy, and the  
 word l'envoy for a salve?

MOTH. Do the wise think them other? is not l'envoy  
 a salve?

ARM. No, page: it is an epilogue or discourse, to  
 make plain  
 Some obscure precedence that hath tofore been sain.  
 I will example it:

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,  
 Were still at odds, being but three.

There's the moral. Now the l'envoy.

MOTH. I will add the l'envoy. Say the moral again. 80

ARM. The fox, the ape, the humble-bee,  
 Were still at odds, being but three.

MOTH. Until the goose came out of door,  
 And stay'd the odds by adding four.

Now will I begin your moral, and do you follow with  
 my l'envoy.

The fox, the ape, and the humble-bee,  
 Were still at odds, being but three.

90

---

75 *l'envoy a salve*] "Envoy" is the concluding stanza of a ballade or short poem, and often took the form of a propitiatory address to a patron. Here it implies unctuous flattery. There is a quibble on the meaning of *salve*, which stands both for a "curative ointment" and the Latin greeting of welcome and farewell.

78-86] These nine lines are only found in the First Quarto; they are omitted from all the other early editions.



SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

ARM. Until the goose came out of door,  
 Staying the odds by adding four.

MOTH. A good l'envoy, ending in the goose: would  
 you desire more?

COST. The boy hath sold him a bargain, a goose,  
 that's flat.

Sir, your pennyworth is good, an your goose be fat.  
 To sell a bargain well is as cunning as fast and loose:  
 Let me see; a fat l'envoy; ay, that's a fat goose.

ARM. Come hither, come hither. How did this argu-  
 ment begin?

MOTH. By saying that a Costard was broken in a shin.  
 Then call'd you for the l'envoy. 101

COST. True, and I for a plantain: thus came your  
 argument in;

Then the boy's fat l'envoy, the goose that you bought;  
 And he ended the market.

ARM. But tell me; how was there a Costard broken  
 in a shin?

MOTH. I will tell you sensibly.

COST. Thou hast no feeling of it, Moth: I will speak  
 that l'envoy:

I Costard, running out, that was safely within, 110  
 Fell over the threshold, and broke my shin.

ARM. We will talk no more of this matter.

COST. Till there be more matter in the shin.

ARM. Sirrah Costard, I will enfranchise thee.

---

95 *sold him a bargain*] made a fool of him.

97 *fast and loose*] See note *supra*, I, ii, 149.

COST. O, marry me to one Frances: I smell some l'envoy, some goose, in this.

ARM. By my sweet soul, I mean setting thee at liberty, enfreedoming thy person: thou wert immured, restrained, captivated, bound.

COST. True, true; and now you will be my purgation, and let me loose. 121

ARM. I give thee thy liberty, set thee from durance; and, in lieu thereof, impose on thee nothing but this: bear this significant [*giving a letter*] to the country maid Jaquenetta: there is remuneration; for the best ward of mine honour is rewarding my dependents Moth, follow. [*Exit.*]

MOTH. Like the sequel, I. Signior Costard, adieu.

COST. My sweet ounce of man's flesh! my incony Jew! [*Exit Moth.* 128]

Now will I look to his remuneration. Remuneration! O, that's the Latin word for three farthings: three farthings — remuneration. — "What's the price of this inkle?" — "One penny." — "No, I'll give you a remuneration:" why, it carries it. Remuneration! why, it is a fairer name than French crown. I will never buy and sell out of this word.

*Enter BIRON*

BIRON. O, my good knave Costard! exceedingly well met.

128 *Jew*] Probably a colloquial abbreviation of jewel. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, III, i, 85, "most lovely *Jew*."

133 *French crown*] The slang term for venereal disease, which produced baldness.

COST. Pray you, sir, how much carnation ribbon may a man buy for a remuneration ?

BIRON. What is a remuneration ?

COST. Marry, sir, halfpenny farthing.

BIRON. Why, then, three-farthing worth of silk. 140

COST. I thank your worship : God be wi' you !

BIRON. Stay, slave ; I must employ thee :  
As thou wilt win my favour, good my knave,  
Do one thing for me that I shall entreat.

COST. When would you have it done, sir ?

BIRON. This afternoon.

COST. Well, I will do it, sir : fare you well.

BIRON. Thou knowest not what it is.

COST. I shall know, sir, when I have done it.

BIRON. Why, villain, thou must know first. 150

COST. I will come to your worship to-morrow morning.

BIRON. It must be done this afternoon. Hark, slave,  
it is but this :

The princess comes to hunt here in the park,  
And in her train there is a gentle lady ;  
When tongues speak sweetly, then they name her name,  
And Rosaline they call her : ask for her ;  
And to her white hand see thou do commend  
This seal'd-up counsel. There's thy guerdon ; go. 159

[Giving him a shilling.]

159 *guerdon*] In a tract *A health to the gentlemanly profession of serving men*, by I. M., which was published in 1598, there is the same anecdote of a servant receiving from one patron three farthings, which he calls *remuneration*, and from another patron a shilling, which he calls *guerdon*. The pamphleteer was probably echoing Shakespeare.

COST. Gardon, O sweet gardon! better than remuneration, a seven-pence farthing better: most sweet gardon! I will do it, sir, in print. Gardon! Remuneration! [Exit.

BIRON. And I, forsooth, in love! I, that have been love's whip;

A very beadle to a humorous sigh;  
 A critic, nay, a night-watch constable;  
 A domineering pedant o'er the boy;  
 Than whom no mortal so magnificent!  
 This wimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy;  
 This senior-junior, giant-dwarf, Dan Cupid;  
 Regent of love-rhymes, lord of folded arms,  
 The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans,  
 Liege of all loiterers and malcontents,  
 Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,  
 Sole imperator and great general  
 Of trotting paritors: — O my little heart! —  
 And I to be a corporal of his field,  
 And wear his colours like a tumbler's hoop!  
 What! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!  
 A woman, that is like a German clock,  
 Still a-repairing, ever out of frame,  
 And never going aright, being a watch,  
 But being watch'd that it may still go right!

170

165 *beadle*] A beadle's functions included that of whipping offenders.

174 *plackets . . . codpieces*] men and women, from distinctive features of their attire.

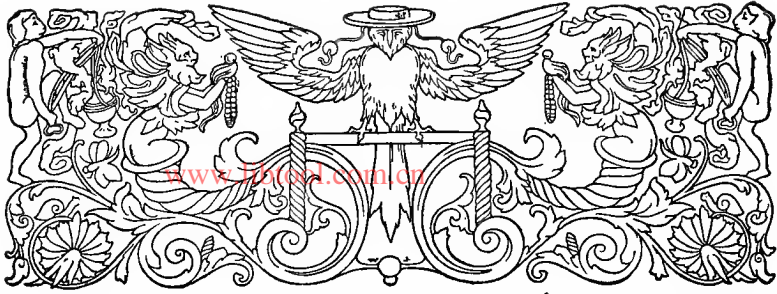
178 *colours . . . hoop*] A tumbler's hoop was ornamented with coloured ribbons.

Nay, to be perjured, which is worst of all ;  
And, among three, to love the worst of all ;  
A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,  
With two pitch-balls stuck in her face for eyes ;  
Ay, and, by heaven, one that will do the deed,  
Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard :  
And I to sigh for her ! to watch for her !  
To pray for her ! Go to ; it is a plague  
That Cupid will impose for my neglect  
Of his almighty dreadful little might.  
Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue and groan :  
Some men must love my lady, and some Joan.    [Exit.

190

---

186 *whitely*] The first Quarto and First Folio read *whitly*, which stands apparently for "whitely," *i. e.*, whitish pale, pasty-faced. The epithet does not seem very appropriate to the dark complexion, with which Biron's lady love is credited. The suggested reading *mightly*, *i. e.*, witchlike, freakish, nimble, is worth considering.



## ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—THE SAME

*Enter the PRINCESS, and her train, a FORESTER, BOYET, ROSALINE, MARIA, and KATHARINE*

PRINCESS



AS THAT THE KING, THAT  
spurr'd his horse so hard  
Against the steep uprising of the  
hill ?

BOYET. I know not ; but I  
think it was not he.

PRIN. Whoe'er a' was, a' showed  
a mounting mind.

Well, lords, to-day we shall have  
our dispatch :

On Saturday we will return to  
France.

Then, forester, my friend, where  
is the bush

That we must stand and play the murderer in ?

FOR. Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice ;

A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.

10

10 *stand*] A technical term in hunting for the huntsmen's station or  
hiding-place in the bushes, from which he takes aim at the quarry.

SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

PRIN. I thank my beauty, I am fair that shoot,  
And thereupon thou speak'st the fairest shoot.

FOR. Pardon me, madam, for I meant not so.

PRIN. What, what? first praise me, and again  
say no?

O short-lived pride! Not fair? alack for woe!

FOR. Yes, madam, fair.

PRIN. Nay, never paint me now:

Where fair is not, praise cannot mend the brow.

Here, good my glass, take this for telling true:

Fair payment for foul words is more than due.

FOR. Nothing but fair is that which you inherit.

20

PRIN. See, see, my beauty will be saved by merit!

O heresy in fair, fit for these days!

A giving hand, though foul, shall have fair praise.

But come, the bow: now mercy goes to kill,

And shooting well is then accounted ill.

Thus will I save my credit in the shoot:

Not wounding, pity would not let me do't;

If wounding, then it was to show my skill,

That more for praise than purpose meant to kill.

And, out of question, so it is sometimes,

30

Glory grows guilty of detested crimes,

When, for fame's sake, for praise, an outward part,

We bend to that the working of the heart;

As I for praise alone now seek to spill

The poor deer's blood, that my heart means no ill.

---

Cf. *M. Wives*, V, v, 221-222, "I am glad, though you have ta'en a special stand to strike at me, that your arrow hath glanced."

BOYET. Do not curst wives hold that self-sovereignty  
Only for praise sake, when they strive to be  
Lords o'er their lords?

PRIN. Only for praise: and praise we may afford  
To any lady that subdues a lord.

40

BOYET. Here comes a member of the commonwealth.

*Enter COSTARD*

COST. God dig-you-den all! Pray you, which is the  
head lady?

PRIN. Thou shalt know her, fellow, by the rest that  
have no heads.

COST. Which is the greatest lady, the highest?

PRIN. The thickest and the tallest.

COST. The thickest and the tallest! it is so; truth is  
truth.

An your waist, mistress, were as slender as my wit,  
One o' these maids' girdles for your waist should  
be fit.

50

Are not you the chief woman? you are the thickest  
here.

PRIN. What's your will, sir? what's your will?

COST. I have a letter from Monsieur Biron to one  
Lady Rosaline.

PRIN. O, thy letter, thy letter! he's a good friend of  
mine:

---

36-38 *Do not curst wives . . . lords?*] Do not shrewish wives regard  
the display of self-control merely as a pretence, as a way of win-  
ning the good opinion of onlookers, while they are striving to  
bring their husbands into subjection?



Stand aside, good bearer. Boyet, you can carve ;  
Break up this capon.

BOYET. I am bound to serve.  
This letter is mistook, it importeth none here ;  
It is writ to Jaquenetta.

PRIN. We will read it, I swear.  
Break the neck of the wax, and every one give ear.

BOYET [*reads*]. By heaven, that thou art fair, is most infal- 60  
libile ; true, that thou art beauteous ; truth itself, that thou art  
lovely. More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer  
than truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal ! The  
magnanimous and most illustrious king Cophetua set eye upon the  
pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenelophon ; and he it was that  
might rightly say, Veni, vidi, vici ; which to annothanize in the  
vulgar, — O base and obscure vulgar ! — videlicet, He came, saw,  
and overcame : he came, one ; saw, two ; overcame, three. Who  
came ? the king : why did he come ? to see : why did he see ? to  
overcome : to whom came he ? to the beggar : what saw he ? the  
beggar : who overcame he ? the beggar. The conclusion is victory : 70  
on whose side ? the king's. The captive is enriched : on whose  
side ? the beggar's. The catastrophe is a nuptial : on whose side ?  
the king's : no, on both in one, or one in both. I am the king ;  
for so stands the comparison : thou the beggar ; for so witnesseth  
thy lowliness. Shall I command thy love ? I may : shall I enforce  
thy love ? I could : shall I entreat thy love ? I will. What shalt

56 *capon*] love-letter, in the sense of the French "pullet." Cf. Cot-  
grave, *Fr.-Engl. Dict.* : "Pullet, a chicken, also a love letter or  
love message." "Break up" was often used in the sense of  
"carve."

64 *Cophetua*] See note *supra*, I, ii, 106. In the ballad the beggar's  
name is given as "Penelophon."

thou exchange for rags? robes; for tittles? titles; for thyself? me. Thus, expecting thy reply, I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thy every part. Thine, in the dearest design, of industry, DON ADRIANO DE ARMADO. 80

Thus dost thou hear the Nemean lion roar  
 'Gainst thee, thou lamb, that standest as his prey.  
 Submissive fall his princely feet before,  
 And he from forage will incline to play:  
 But if thou strive, poor soul, what art thou then?  
 Food for his rage, repasture for his den.

PRIN. What plume of feathers is he that indited this letter?  
 What vane? what weathercock? did you ever hear better?

BOYET. I am much deceived but I remember the style.

PRIN. Else your memory is bad, going o'er it erewhile. 90

BOYET. This Armado is a Spaniard, that keeps here in court;

A phantasime, a Monarcho, and one that makes sport  
 To the prince and his bookmates.

---

92 *a Monarcho*] A half-witted Italian, who frequented Queen Elizabeth's court at this period, was known by this name. Thomas Churchyard in his poetic miscellany, *A pleasaunte Laborinth called Churchyardes Chance* (1596), has a poem, headed "The Phantasticall Monarkes Epitaphe," which quaintly describes the man's pompous speech and carriage. According to Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, p. 54, "the Italian whom we call in England *the Monarch*" laboured under the delusion that he owned all the ships arriving in the port of London.

PRIN. Thou fellow, a word :  
Who gave thee this letter ?

COST. I told you ; my lord.

PRIN. To whom shouldst thou give it ?

COST. From my lord to my lady.

PRIN. From which lord to which lady ?

COST. From my lord Biron, a good master of mine,  
To a lady of France that he call'd Rosaline.

PRIN. Thou hast mistaken his letter. Come, lords,  
away.

[*To Ros.*] Here, sweet, put up this : 't will be thine an-  
other day. [*Exeunt Princess and train.* 100

BOYET. Who is the suitor ? who is the suitor ?

ROS. Shall I teach you to know ?

BOYET. Ay, my continent of beauty.

ROS. Why, she that bears the bow.

Finely put off !

BOYET. My lady goes to kill horns ; but, if thou  
marry,

Hang me by the neck, if horns that year miscarry.

Finely put on !

ROS. Well, then, I am the shooter.

BOYET. And who is your deer ?

ROS. If we choose by the horns, yourself come not near.

Finely put on, indeed !

MAR. You still wrangle with her, Boyet, and she  
strikes at the brow. 110

101 *sutor*] All the early copies read *Shooter*, which Steevens first changed to *sutor*. The verbal quips which follow depend on the similarity in pronunciation of these two words.

BOYET. But she herself is hit lower: have I hit her now?

ROS. Shall I come upon thee with an old saying, that was a man when King Pepin of France was a little boy, as touching the hit it?

BOYET. So I may answer thee with one as old, that was a woman when Queen Guinover of Britain was a little wench, as touching the hit it.

ROS. Thou canst not hit it, hit it, hit it,  
Thou canst not hit it, my good man.

BOYET. An I cannot, cannot, cannot, 120  
An I cannot, another can.

*[Exeunt Ros. and Kath.]*

COST. By my troth, most pleasant: how both did fit it!

MAR. A mark marvellous well shot, for they both did hit it.

BOYET. A mark! O, mark but that mark! A mark, says my lady!

Let the mark have a prick in 't, to mete at, if it may be.

MAR. Wide o' the bow-hand! i' faith, your hand is out.

COST. Indeed, a' must shoot nearer, or he'll ne'er hit the clout.

BOYET. An if my hand be out, then belike your hand is in.

---

125-129 *prick . . . clout . . . pin*] These words all refer to the centre or bull's eye of the target. The "clout" seems to have been a square white mark, kept in position by a "pin" or wooden nail.

SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

COST. Then will she get the upshoot by cleaving the pin.

MAR. Come, come, you talk greasily ; your lips grow foul.

COST. She's too hard for you at pricks, sir : challenge her to bowl. 130

BOYET. I fear too much rubbing. Good night, my good owl. [*Exeunt Boyet and Maria.*]

COST. By my soul, a swain ! a most simple clown !  
 Lord, Lord, how the ladies and I have put him down !  
 O' my troth, most sweet jests ! most incony vulgar wit !  
 When it comes so smoothly off, so obscenely, as it were, so fit.

Armado o' th' one side, — O, a most dainty man !  
 To see him walk before a lady and to bear her fan !  
 To see him kiss his hand ! and how most sweetly a' will swear !

And his page o' t' other side, that handful of wit ! 140

Ah, heavens, it is a most pathological nit !

Sola, sola !

[*Shout within.*  
 [*Exit Costard, running.*]

SCENE II — THE SAME

*Enter HOLOFERNES, SIR NATHANIEL, and DULL*

NATH. Very reverend sport, truly ; and done in the testimony of a good conscience.

HOL. The deer was, as you know, sanguis, in blood ;

*3 in blood*] in perfect condition. Cf. *1 Hen. VI*, IV, ii, 48 :

If we be English deer, be then *in blood*.

ripe as the pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of caelo, the sky, the welkin, the heaven; and anon falleth like a crab on the face of terra, the soil, the land, the earth.

NATH. Truly, Master Holofernes, the epithets are sweetly varied, like a scholar at the least: but, sir, I assure ye, it was a buck of the first head.

HOL. Sir Nathaniel, haud credo. 10

DULL. 'T was not a haud credo; 't was a pricket.

HOL. Most barbarous intimation! yet a kind of insinuation, as it were, in via, in way, of explication; facere, as it were, replication, or, rather, ostentare, to show, as it were, his inclination, after his undressed, unpolished, uneducated, unpruned, untrained, or, rather, unlettered, or, ratherest, unconfirmed fashion, to insert again my haud credo for a deer.

DULL. I said the deer was not a haud credo; 't was a pricket.

HOL. Twice-sod simplicity, bis coctus! 20

O thou monster Ignorance, how deformed dost thou look!

NATH. Sir, he hath never fed of the dainties that are bred in a book;

---

9 a buck of the first head] Here, as in ll. 11, 19, and 46 ("pricket"), ll. 55-59 ("sore"), and ll. 56-58 ("sorel"), allusion is made to the various appellations applied to deer according to their ages. Cf. *The Return from Parnassus*, 1602, ed. Macray, Act II, Sc. v, p. 107: "A Bucke of the first yeare is a fawne; the second yeare, a Pricket; the third year, a Sorell; the fourth yeare, a Sore; the fift, a Buck of the first head; the sixth yeare, a compleat Buck."

SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

he hath not eat paper, as it were ; he hath not drunk ink :  
his intellect is not replenished ; he is only an animal, only  
sensible in the duller parts :

And such barren plants are set before us, that we thankful  
should be,

Which we of taste and feeling are, for those parts that  
do fructify in us more than he.

For as it would ill become me to be vain, indiscreet, or  
a fool,

So were there a patch set on learning, to see him in a  
school :

But omne bene, say I ; being of an old father's mind, 30  
Many can brook the weather that love not the wind.

DULL. You two are book-men : can you tell me by  
your wit

What was a month old at Cain's birth, that's not five  
weeks old as yet ?

HOL. Dictynna, goodman Dull ; Dictynna, goodman  
Dull.

DULL. What is Dictynna ?

NATH. A title to Phœbe, to Luna, to the moon.

HOL. The moon was a month old when Adam was  
no more,

And raught not to five weeks when he came to five-  
score.

The allusion holds in the exchange.

---

34 *Dictynna*] A name bestowed by Ovid on Diana. Cf. *Metamorphoses*,  
II, 441, translated by Golding thus : —

“ Dictynna garded with her traine and prou'd of killing Deere.”

DULL. 'Tis true indeed ; the collusion holds in the exchange 40

HOL. God comfort thy capacity ! I say, the allusion holds in the exchange.

DULL. And I say, the pollution holds in the exchange ; for the moon is never but a month old : and I say beside that, 't was a pricket that the princess killed.

HOL. Sir Nathaniel, will you hear an extemporal epitaph on the death of the deer ? And, to humour the ignorant, call I the deer the princess killed a pricket.

NATH. Perge, good Master Holofernes, perge ; so it 50 shall please you to abrogate scurrility.

HOL. I will something affect the letter, for it argues facility.

The preylful princess pierced and prick'd a pretty pleasing pricket ;

Some say a sore ; but not a sore, till now made sore with shooting.  
The dogs did yell : put L to sore, then sorel jumps from thicket ;

Or pricket sore, or else sorel ; the people fall a-hooting.

If sore be sore, then L to sore makes fifty sores one sorel.

Of one sore I an hundred make by adding but one more L.

NATH. A rare talent!

60

DULL. [*Aside*] If a talent be a claw, look how he claws him with a talent.

HOL. This is a gift that I have, simple, simple ; a foolish extravagant spirit, full of forms, figures, shapes,

52 *affect the letter*] employ alliteration.

60 *a rare talent*] A play on the words "talent" and "talon." The latter was often spelt "talent." Cf. Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse*, 1595, Sig. F 4: "The Lion without tongue, taile or talents."



SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

objects, ideas, apprehensions, motions, revolutions : these are begot in the ventricle of memory, nourished in the womb of *piamater*, and delivered upon the mellowing of occasion. But the gift is good in those in whom it is acute, and I am thankful for it.

NATH. Sir, I praise the Lord for you : and so may my 70  
parishioners ; for their sons are well tutored by you, and  
their daughters profit very greatly under you : you are a  
good member of the commonwealth.

HOL. Mehercle, if their sons be ingenuous, they shall  
want no instruction ; if their daughters be capable, I will  
put it to them : but *vir sapit qui pauca loquitur* ; a soul  
feminine saluteth us.

*Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD*

JAQ. God give you good morrow, master Parson.

HOL. Master Parson, quasi pers-on. An if one  
should be pierced, which is the one ? 80

COST. Marry, master schoolmaster, he that is likest  
to a hogshead.

HOL. Piercing a hogshead ! a good lustre of conceit  
in a turf of earth ; fire enough for a flint, pearl enough  
for a swine : 'tis pretty ; it is well.

JAQ. Good master Parson, be so good as read me  
this letter : it was given me by Costard, and sent me  
from Don Armado : I beseech you, read it.

---

79-80 *Master Parson . . . the one ?*] "Parson" was commonly spelt and pronounced "person." "Pierced" was pronounced "perst" ; in New England the surname "Perse" is still pronounced "Pierce." "One" was pronounced "un" or "on."

HOL. Fauste, precor gelida quando pecus omne sub umbra Ruminat, — and so forth. Ah, good old Mantuan! I may speak of thee as the traveller doth of Venice;

Venetia, Venetia,

Chi non ti vede non ti pretia.

Old Mantuan, old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not. Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa. Under pardon, sir, what are the contents? or rather, as Horace says in his — What, my soul, verses?

NATH. Ay, sir, and very learned.

HOL. Let me hear a staff, a stanze, a verse; lege, domine.

NATH. [*reads*].

If love make me forsworn, how shall I swear to love? 100

Ah, never faith could hold, if not to beauty vow'd!

Though to myself forsworn, to thee I'll faithful prove;

Those thoughts to me were oaks, to thee like osiers bow'd.

Study his bias leaves, and makes his book thine eyes,

89-90 *Fauste, precor . . . good old Mantuan*] The Latin words are the opening words of the first of the eclogues of the Latin poet, Baptista Mantuanus (1448-1516). Mantuanus' Latin poetry was popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth century, and his eclogues were widely used as a school book. Shakespeare probably studied them at the grammar school of Stratford-on-Avon. An English translation by George Turberville appeared in 1567, and was reprinted many times.

92-93 *Venetia . . . pretia*] An often quoted Italian proverb ("Venice, Venice, who doth not see thee, doth not value thee"). It appears in James Sandford's *Garden of Pleasure*, 1573, and in John Florio's *First Frutes*, 1578, and in his *Second Frutes*, 1591.

## SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

Where all those pleasures live that art would comprehend :  
 If knowledge be the mark, to know thee shall suffice ;  
 Well learned is that tongue that well can thee commend  
 All ignorant that soul that sees thee without wonder ;  
 Which is to me some praise that I thy parts admire :  
 Thy eye Jove's lightning bears, thy voice his dreadful thunder, 110  
 Which, not to anger bent, is music and sweet fire.  
 Celestial as thou art, O, pardon love this wrong,  
 That sings heaven's praise with such an earthly tongue.

HOL. You find not the apostrophas, and so miss the  
 accent : let me supervise the canzonet. Here are only  
 numbers ratified ; but, for the elegance, facility, and  
 golden cadence of poesy, caret. Ovidious Naso was the  
 man : and why, indeed, Naso, but for smelling out the  
 odoriferous flowers of fancy, the jerks of invention ?  
 Imitari is nothing : so doth the hound his master, the  
 ape his keeper, the tired horse his rider. But, damosella  
 virgin, was this directed to you ? 122

100-113] This sonnet, together with Longaville's sonnet *infra*, IV,  
 iii, 57-70, and Dumain's verses to Katharine in IV, iii, 97-116,  
 are included in Jaggard's poetic miscellany, *The Passionate Pilgrim*.  
*By W. Shakespeare*, 1599. They fill respectively the 5th, 3rd,  
 and 16th places in that collection. The promiscuous order in  
 which Jaggard printed these three pieces, coupled with the  
 textual variations, suggest that he did not derive them direct  
 from the printed text of the play, but employed copies which,  
 in accordance with the practice of the time, were circulating  
 in manuscript among collectors of transcripts of contemporary  
 verse. See introduction to Oxford University Press' facsimile of  
*The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1905.

121 *tired horse*] Usually explained as "attired with trappings." But  
 from the context and from the use of the word in Sonnet 1, 5,

JAQ. Ay, sir, from one Monsieur Biron, one of the strange queen's lords.

HOL. I will overglance the superscript: "To the snow-white hand of the most beauteous Lady Rosaline." I will look again on the intellect of the letter, for the nomination of the party writing to the person written unto: "Your ladyship's in all desired employment, BIRON." Sir Nathaniel, this Biron is one of the votaries with the king; and here he hath framed a letter to a sequent of the stranger queen's, which accidentally, or by the way of progression, hath miscarried. Trip and go, my sweet; deliver this paper into the royal hand of the king: it may concern much. Stay not thy compliment; I forgive thy duty: adieu.

JAQ. Good Costard, go with me. Sir, God save your life!

COST. Have with thee, my girl. [*Exeunt Cost. and Jaq.*]

NATH. Sir, you have done this in the fear of God, very religiously; and, as a certain father saith, — 139

HOL. Sir, tell not me of the father; I do fear colourable colours. But to return to the verses: did they please you, Sir Nathaniel?

NATH. Marvellous well for the pen.

HOL. I do dine to-day at the father's of a certain pupil of mine; where, if, before repast, it shall please you to gratify the table with a grace, I will, on my

---

"The beast that bears me, *tired* with my woe," one must infer the simple sense that fatigue in the horse sympathetically reflects that of his rider.

140-141 *colourable colours*] plausible pretexts or arguments (of papist, priestly Fathers).

SCENE III LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

privilege I have with the parents of the foresaid child or pupil, undertake your ben venuto; where I will prove those verses to be very unlearned, neither savouring of poetry, wit, nor invention: I beseech your society. 150

NATH. And thank you too; for society, saith the text, is the happiness of life.

HOL. And, certes, the text most infallibly concludes it. [*To Dull*] Sir, I do invite you too; you shall not say me nay: pauca verba. Away! the gentles are at their game, and we will to our recreation. [*Exeunt.* 160

SCENE III — THE SAME

*Enter BIRON, with a paper*

BIRON. The king he is hunting the deer; I am coursing myself: they have pitched a toil; I am toiling in a pitch, — pitch that defiles: defile! a foul word. Well, set thee down, sorrow! for so they say the fool said, and so say I, and I the fool: well proved, wit! By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax: it kills sheep; it kills me, I a sheep: well proved again o' my side! I will not love: if I do, hang me; i' faith, I will not. O, but her eye, — by this light, but for her eye, I would not love her; yes, for her two eyes. Well, I do nothing in the world<sup>10</sup> but lie, and lie in my throat. By heaven, I do love:

1-17] The whole of Biron's speech is in the precise vein of the prose style of Lyly's comedies.

2 *a pitch*] A probable allusion to the dark complexion with which Lady Rosaline is credited.

and it hath taught me to rhyme, and to be melancholy ;  
 and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy.  
 Well, she hath one o' my sonnets already : the clown  
 bore it, the fool sent it, and the lady hath it : sweet  
 clown, sweeter fool, sweetest lady ! By the world, I  
 would not care a pin, if the other three were in. Here  
 comes one with a paper : God give him grace to groan !  
 [*Stands aside.*]

*Enter the KING, with a paper*

KING. Ay me !

BIRON. [*Aside*] Shot, by heaven ! Proceed, sweet Cu-  
 pid : thou hast thumped him with thy bird-bolt under 20  
 the left pap. In faith, secrets !

KING [*reads*].

So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not  
 To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,  
 As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote  
 The night of dew that on my cheeks down flows :  
 Nor shines the silver moon one half so bright  
 Through the transparent bosom of the deep,  
 As doth thy face through tears of mine give light ;  
 Thou shinest in every tear that I do weep :  
 No drop but as a coach doth carry thee ; 30  
 So ridest thou triumphing in my woe.  
 Do but behold the tears that swell in me,  
 And they thy glory through my grief will show :  
 But do not love thyself ; then thou wilt keep  
 My tears for glasses, and still make me weep.  
 O queen of queens ! how far dost thou excel,  
 No thought can think, nor tongue of mortal tell.

SCENE III LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

How shall she know my griefs? I'll drop the paper:—  
Sweet leaves, shade folly. Who is he comes here?

What, Longaville! and reading! listen, ear. [Steps aside. 40

BIRON. Now, in thy likeness, one more fool appear!

*Enter LONGAVILLE, with a paper*

LONG. Ay me, I am forsworn!

BIRON. Why, he comes in like a perjure, wearing papers.

KING. In love, I hope: sweet fellowship in shame!

BIRON. One drunkard loves another of the name.

LONG. Am I the first that have been perjured so?

BIRON. I could put thee in comfort. Not by two  
that I know:

Thou makest the triumvir, the corner-cap of society,  
The shape of Love's Tyburn that hangs up simplicity. 50

LONG. I fear these stubborn lines lack power to move.  
O sweet Maria, empress of my love!  
These numbers will I tear, and write in prose.

BIRON. O, rhymes are guards on wanton Cupid's hose:  
Disfigure not his slop.

---

43 *a perjure, wearing papers*] a perjurer, a part of whose punishment was to stand in a public place wearing papers specifying his offence; see *infra*, l. 121. Cf. Hall's *Chronicle*, 59: "He [*i. e.* Cardinal Wolsey] so punyshed periurye with open punyshment & open papers werynge, that in his tyme it was lesse vsed."

49-50 *the corner-cap . . . Tyburn*] the old-fashioned three-cornered hat. The gallows at Tyburn were in the form of a triangle.

55 *slop*] wide-kneed breeches, or loose trousers; Theobald's ingenious emendation for the meaningless *shop* of the early editions.

LONG. This same shall go. [*Reads.*]

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,  
Gainst whom the world cannot hold argument,

Persuade my heart to this false perjury ?

Vows for thee broke deserve not punishment.

A woman I forswore ; but I will prove,

Thou being a goddess, I forswore not thee :

My vow was earthly, thou a heavenly love ;

Thy grace being gain'd cures all disgrace in me.

Vows are but breath, and breath a vapour is :

Then thou, fair sun, which on my earth dost shine,

Exhalest this vapour-vow ; in thee it is :

If broken then, it is no fault of mine :

If by me broke, what fool is not so wise

To lose an oath to win a paradise ?

60

BIRON. This is the liver-vein, which makes flesh a  
deity,

70

A green goose a goddess : pure, pure idolatry.

God amend us, God amend ! we are much out o' the  
way.

LONG. By whom shall I send this ? — Company ! stay.  
[*Steps aside.*]

BIRON. All hid, all hid, an old infant play.  
Like a demigod here sit I in the sky,

56-69] See note on IV, ii, 100-113.

70 *liver-vein*] The liver was commonly held to be the seat of the passion of love. Cf. Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron Walden* (1595): "All liver am I."

74 *All hid, all hid*] The cry of children playing hide-and-seek.



SCENE III LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

And wretched fools' secrets heedfully o'er-eye.  
More sacks to the mill! O heavens, I have my wish!

*Enter DUMAIN, with a paper*

Dumain transform'd! four woodcocks in a dish!

DUM. O most divine Kate!

BIRON. O most profane coxcomb!

80

DUM. By heaven, the wonder in a mortal eye!

BIRON. By earth, she is not, corporal, there you lie.

DUM. Her amber hairs for foul hath amber quoted.

BIRON. An amber-colour'd raven was well noted.

DUM. As upright as the cedar.

BIRON. Stoop, I say;

Her shoulder is with child.

DUM. As fair as day.

BIRON. Ay, as some days; but then no sun must  
shine.

DUM. O that I had my wish!

LONG. And I had mine!

KING. And I mine too, good Lord!

BIRON. Amen, so I had mine: is not that a good  
word?

90

DUM. I would forget her; but a fever she  
Reigns in my blood, and will remember'd be.

BIRON. A fever in your blood! why, then incision  
Would let her out in saucers: sweet misprision!

DUM. Once more I'll read the ode that I have writ.

BIRON. Once more I'll mark how love can vary wit.

---

77 *More sacks to the mill*] A proverb, being a variant of "More grist to the mill."

DUM. [*reads.*]

On a day — alack the day! —  
 Love, whose month is ever May,  
 Spied a blossom passing fair  
 Playing in the wanton air : 100  
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,  
 All unseen, can passage find ;  
 That the lover, sick to death,  
 Wish himself the heaven's breath.  
 Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow ;  
 Air, would I might triumph so :  
 But, alack, my hand is sworn  
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn ;  
 Vow, alack, for youth unmeet,  
 Youth so apt to pluck a sweet ! 110  
 Do not call it sin in me,  
 That I am forsworn for thee ;  
 Thou for whom Jove would swear  
 Juno but an Ethiope were ;  
 And deny himself for Jove,  
 Turning mortal for thy love.

This will I send and something else more plain,  
 That shall express my true love's fasting pain.  
 O, would the king, Biron, and Longaville,  
 Were lovers too ! Ill, to example ill, 120  
 Would from my forehead wipe a perjured note ;  
 For none offend where all alike do dote.

LONG. [*advancing*]. Dumain, thy love is far from  
 charity,

97-116] See note on IV, ii, 100-113.

121 *perjured note*] See note on l. 43, *supra*.

SCENE III LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

That in love's grief desirest society :  
 You may look pale, but I should blush, I know,  
 To be o'erheard and taken napping so.

KING [*advancing*]. Come, sir, you blush ; as his your  
 case is such ;  
 You chide at him, offending twice as much ;  
 You do not love Maria ; Longaville  
 Did never sonnet for her sake compile, 130  
 Nor never lay his wreathed arms athwart  
 His loving bosom, to keep down his heart.  
 I have been closely shrouded in this bush  
 And mark'd you both and for you both did blush :  
 I heard your guilty rhymes, observed your fashion,  
 Saw sighs reek from you, noted well your passion :  
 Ay me ! says one ; O Jove ! the other cries ;  
 One, her hairs were gold, crystal the other's eyes :  
 You would for paradise break faith and troth ; [*To Long.*  
 And Jove, for your love, would infringe an oath. [*To Dum.* 140  
 What will Biron say when that he shall hear  
 Faith infringed, which such zeal did swear ?  
 How will he scorn ! how will he spend his wit !  
 How will he triumph, leap and laugh at it !  
 For all the wealth that ever I did see,  
 I would not have him know so much by me.

BIRON. Now step I forth to whip hypocrisy. [*Advancing.*  
 Ah, good my liege, I pray thee, pardon me !  
 Good heart, what grace hast thou, thus to reprove

---

138 *One, her*] Sidney Walker suggested *One's*, a somewhat more intel-  
 ligible and metrically correct reading.

These worms for loving, that art most in love ? 150  
 Your eyes do make no coaches ; in your tears  
 There is no certain princess that appears ;  
 You 'll not be perjured, 't is a hateful thing ;  
 Tush, none but minstrels like of sonneting !  
 But are you not ashamed ? nay, are you not,  
 All three of you, to be thus much o'ershot ?  
 You found his mote ; the king your mote did see ;  
 But I a beam do find in each of three.  
 O, what a scene of foolery have I seen,  
 Of sighs, of groans, of sorrow and of teen ! 160  
 O me, with what strict patience have I sat,  
 To see a king transformed to a gnat !  
 To see great Hercules whipping a gig,  
 And profound Solomon to tune a jig,  
 And Nestor play at push-pin with the boys,  
 And critic Timon laugh at idle toys !  
 Where lies thy grief, O, tell me, good Dumain ?  
 And, gentle Longaville, where lies thy pain ?  
 And where my liege's ? all about the breast :  
 A caudle, ho !

KING. Too bitter is thy jest. 170  
 Are we betray'd thus to thy over-view ?

BIRON. Not you to me, but I betray'd by you :  
 I, that am honest ; I, that hold it sin  
 To break the vow I am engaged in ;

151 *coaches*] reference to the king's sonnet, l. 30, *supra* : "No drop but as a *coach*," etc. The old reading is *couches*.

162 *gnat*] used to convey the notion of insignificance. Cf. *Matthew* xxiii, 24 : strain at a *gnat*.

I am betray'd, by keeping company  
 With men like you, men of inconstancy.  
 When shall you see me write a thing in rhyme?  
 Or groan for love? or spend a minute's time  
 In pruning me? When shall you hear that I  
 Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,  
 A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,  
 A leg, a limb? —

180

KING. Soft! whither away so fast?  
 A true man or a thief that gallops so?

BIRON. I post from love: good lover, let me go.

*Enter JAQUENETTA and COSTARD*

JAQ. God bless the king!

KING. What present hast thou there?

COST. Some certain treason.

KING. What makes treason here?

COST. Nay, it makes nothing, sir,

KING. If it mar nothing neither,  
 The treason and you go in peace away together.

JAQ. I beseech your Grace, let this letter be read:  
 Our parson misdoubts it; 't was treason, he said.

190

KING. Biron, read it over. [*Giving him the paper.*]  
 Where hadst thou it?

JAQ. Of Costard.

KING. Where hadst thou it?

COST. Of Dun Adramadio, Dun Adramadio.

[*Biron tears the letter.*]

KING. How now! what is in you? why dost thou  
 tear it?

BIRON. A toy, my liege, a toy : your Grace needs not  
fear it.

LONG. It did move him to passion, and therefore let's  
hear it.

DUM. It is Biron's writing, and here is his name.

[*Gathering up the pieces.*]

BIRON. [*To Costard*] Ah, you whoreson loggerhead!  
you were born to do me shame. 200

Guilty, my lord, guilty ! I confess, I confess.

KING. What ?

BIRON. That you three fools lack'd me fool to make  
up the mess :

He, he, and you, and you, my liege, and I,  
Are pick-purses in love, and we deserve to die.

O, dismiss this audience, and I shall tell you more.

DUM. Now the number is even.

BIRON. True, true ; we are four.

Will these turtles be gone ?

KING. Hence, sirs ; away !

COST. Walk aside the true folk, and let the traitors stay.

[*Exeunt COSTARD and JAQUENETTA.*]

BIRON. Sweet lords, sweet lovers, O, let us embrace ! 210

As true we are as flesh and blood can be :

The sea will ebb and flow, heaven show his face ;

203 *to make up the mess*] to make up the company of four which constituted the number of persons ordinarily dining at one table at the Inns of Court and at other formal convivial gatherings. Cf. *infra*, V, ii, 361.

210-215 *Sweet . . . forsworn*] Again Biron speaks in the six-line stanza of *Venus and Adonis*, as at I, i, 147-158, *supra*.

Young blood doth not obey an old decree :  
 We cannot cross the cause why we were born ;  
 Therefore of all hands must we be forsworn.

KING. What, did these rent lines show some love of  
 thine ?

BIRON. Did they, quoth you ? Who sees the heavenly  
 Rosaline,  
 That, like a rude and savage man of Inde,  
 At the first opening of the gorgeous east,  
 Bows not his vassal head and stricken blind 220  
 Kisses the base ground with obedient breast ?  
 What peremptory eagle-sighted eye  
 Dares look upon the heaven of her brow,  
 That is not blinded by her majesty ?

KING. What zeal, what fury hath inspired thee now ?  
 My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon ;  
 She an attending star, scarce seen a light.

BIRON. My eyes are then no eyes, nor I Biron :  
 O, but for my love, day would turn to night !  
 Of all complexions the cull'd sovereignty 230  
 Do meet, as at a fair, in her fair cheek ;  
 Where several worthies make one dignity,  
 Where nothing wants that want itself doth seek.

---

220 *Bows . . . head*] This beautiful image from sun worship is also  
 found in *Sonnet* vii, 1-4 :

“ Lo ! in the orient when the gracious light  
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye  
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,  
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty.”

Cf. the reference to “the worshipped sun,” *Rom. and Jul.*, I, i, 116-117.

Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues, —  
 Fie, painted rhetoric ! O, she needs it not :  
 To things of sale a seller's praise belongs,  
 She passes praise ; then praise too short doth blot.

A wither'd hermit, five-score winters worn,  
 Might shake off fifty, looking in her eye :  
 Beauty doth varnish age, as if new-born 240  
 And gives the crutch the cradle's infancy :  
 O, 't is the sun that maketh all things shine.

KING. By heaven, thy love is black as ebony.

BIRON. Is ebony like her ? O wood divine !  
 A wife of such wood were felicity.

O, who can give an oath ? where is a book ?  
 That I may swear beauty doth beauty lack,  
 If that she learn not of her eye to look :  
 No face is fair that is not full so black.

KING. O paradox ! Black is the badge of hell, 250  
 The hue of dungeons and the school of night ;  
 And beauty's crest becomes the heavens well.

BIRON. Devils soonest tempt, resembling spirits of light.  
 O, if in black my lady's brows be deck'd,  
 It mourns that painting and usurping hair

249 *black*] The significance of a black complexion is a frequent theme of Renaissance poetry in western Europe. Shakespeare further develops it in his *Sonnets*, cxxvii and cxxxii.

255 *usurping hair*] Shakespeare makes numerous references to the wearing of false hair. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 92, and *Sonnet* lxxviii, 5-7 :

“ Before the golden tresses of the dead,  
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,  
 To live a second life on second head.”



Should ravish doters with a false aspect;

And therefore is she born to make black fair.

Her favour turns the fashion of the days,

For native blood is counted painting now ;

And therefore red, that would avoid dispraise,

Paints itself black, to imitate her brow.

260

DUM. To look like her are chimney-sweepers black.

LONG. And since her time are colliers counted bright.

KING. And Ethiopes of their sweet complexion crack.

DUM. Dark needs no candles now, for dark is light.

BIRON. Your mistresses dare never come in rain,

For fear their colours should be wash'd away.

KING. 'T were good, yours did ; for, sir, to tell you plain,

I'll find a fairer face not wash'd to-day.

BIRON. I'll prove her fair, or talk till doomsday here. 270

KING. No devil will fright thee then so much as she.

DUM. I never knew man hold vile stuff so dear.

LONG. Look, here's thy love: my foot and her face see.

BIRON. O, if the streets were paved with thine eyes,

Her feet were much too dainty for such tread !

DUM. O vile ! then, as she goes, what upward lies

The street should see as she walk'd overhead.

KING. But what of this ? are we not all in love ?

BIRON. Nothing so sure ; and thereby all forsworn.

KING. Then leave this chat ; and, good Biron, now prove 280

Our loving lawful, and our faith not torn.

DUM. Ay, marry, there ; some flattery for this evil.

LONG. O, some authority how to proceed ;

Some tricks, some quilllets, how to cheat the devil.

DUM. Some salve for perjury.

BIRON.

'T is more than need.

Have at you, then, affection's men at arms.  
 Consider what you first did swear unto,  
 To fast, to study, and to see no woman ;  
 Flat treason 'gainst the kingly state of youth.  
 Say, can you fast ? your stomachs are too young ;  
 And abstinence engenders maladies.  
 And where that you have vow'd to study, lords,  
 In that each of you have forsworn his book,  
 Can you still dream and pore and thereon look ?  
 For when would you, my Lord, or you, or you,  
 Have found the ground of study's excellence  
 Without the beauty of a woman's face ?  
 From women's eyes this doctrine I derive ;  
 They are the ground, the books, the academes  
 From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire. 300  
 Why, universal plodding prisons up  
 The nimble spirits in the arteries,  
 As motion and long-during action tires  
 The sinewy vigour of the traveller.

292-293 *And where that you . . . book*] This speech was clearly rewritten by Shakespeare after he had first drafted it, and the printed text combines together many revised and unrevised passages. The two lines quoted reappear with slight textual variations in ll. 314-315, *infra*. It will be noticed that the three lines, 295-297 ("For when would you . . . woman's face?") are similarly repeated in lines 316-319 ("For when would you . . . with?"), while ll. 298-300 ("From women's eyes," etc.) are again repeated in ll. 346-349. In each case the lines which figure in the earlier part of speech present the first or unrevised version. Cf. *infra*, V, ii, 805-810 and note.

301 *prisons*] Theobald's emendation of *poysons* in the original editions.

Now, for not looking on a woman's face,  
 You have in that forsworn the use of eyes  
 And study too, the causer of your vow;  
 For where is any author in the world  
 Teaches such beauty as a woman's eye?  
 Learning is but an adjunct to ourself, 310  
 And where we are our learning likewise is,  
 Then when ourselves we see in ladies' eyes,  
 Do we not likewise see our learning there?  
 O, we have made a vow to study, lords,  
 And in that vow we have forsworn our books.  
 For when would you, my liege, or you, or you,  
 In leaden contemplation have found out  
 Such fiery numbers as the prompting eyes  
 Of beauty's tutors have enrich'd you with?  
 Other slow arts entirely keep the brain; 320  
 And therefore, finding barren practisers,  
 Scarce show a harvest of their heavy toil:  
 But love, first learned in a lady's eyes,  
 Lives not alone immured in the brain;  
 But, with the motion of all elements,  
 Courses as swift as thought in every power,  
 And gives to every power a double power,  
 Above their functions and their offices.  
 It adds a precious seeing to the eye;  
 A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind; 330  
 A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound,

318-319 *Such fiery numbers . . . with ?* ] Cf. *Sonnet xvii*, 5-6 :

" If I could write the *beauty* of your *eyes*  
 And in fresh *numbers* number all your *graces*."

When the suspicious head of theft is stopp'd :  
 Love's feeling is more soft and sensible  
 Than are the tender horns of cockled snails ;  
 Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste :  
 For valour, is not Love a Hercules,  
 Still climbing trees in the Hesperides ?  
 Subtle as Sphinx ; as sweet and musical  
 As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair ;  
 And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods  
 Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.  
 Never durst poet touch a pen to write  
 Until his ink were temper'd with Love's sighs ;  
 O, then his lines would ravish savage ears,  
 And plant in tyrants mild humility.  
 From women's eyes this doctrine I derive :  
 They sparkle still the right Promethean fire ;  
 They are the books, the arts, the academes,

340

332 *the suspicious head of theft*] This seems equivalent to "the head suspicious of theft." The general meaning is that the hearing of the lover is more alert and sharper than that of the owner of treasure who lives in dread of thieves. Speed talks similarly of watching "like one that fears robbing" (*Two Gent.*, II, i, 22).

337 *Hesperides*] In Greek mythology the nymphs, who guard the golden apples in the isles of the blest, are known as the *Hesperides*, being daughters of Hesperus. Here the name is applied to the islands themselves. The transference is common in Elizabethan literature. Cf. Gabriel Harvey, *Pierce's Supererogation*, ed. 1593, p. 167: "The occidental islands of the ocean, called *Hesperides*."

346 *From women's eyes . . . derive*] Cf. *Sonnet* xiv, 9 :

"But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive."

That show, contain and nourish all the world :  
 Else none at all in aught proves excellent. 350

Then fools you were these women to forswear ;  
 Or keeping what is sworn, you will prove fools.  
 For wisdom's sake, a word that all men love ;  
 Or for love's sake, a word that loves all men ;  
 Or for men's sake, the authors of these women ;  
 Or women's sake, by whom we men are men ;  
 Let us once lose our oaths to find ourselves,  
 Or else we lose ourselves to keep our oaths.

It is religion to be thus forsworn,  
 For charity itself fulfils the law, 360  
 And who can sever love from charity ?

KING. Saint Cupid, then ! and, soldiers, to the field !

BIRON. Advance your standards, and upon them,  
 lords ;

Pell-mell, down with them ! but be first advised,  
 In conflict that you get the sun of them.

LONG. Now to plain-dealing ; lay these glozes by :  
 Shall we resolve to woo these girls of France ?

KING. And win them too : therefore let us devise  
 Some entertainment for them in their tents.

BIRON. First, from the park let us conduct them  
 thither ; 370

Then homeward every man attach the hand

354 *loves all men*] "Loves" is explained by Capell as "is a friend to."  
 Hanmer reads *moves*, which suggests the requisite sense.

365 *get the sun*] An allusion to the archer's anxiety to shoot with the  
 sun at his back instead of in his face.

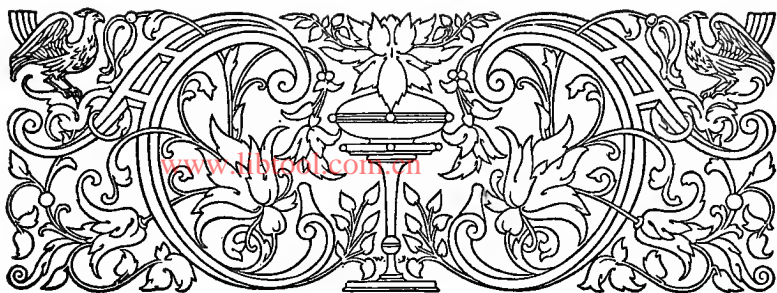
Of his fair mistress : in the afternoon  
 We will with some strange pastime solace them,  
 Such as the shortness of the time can shape ;  
 For revels, dances, masks and merry hours  
 Forerun fair Love, strewing her way with flowers.

KING. Away, away ! no time shall be omitted  
 That will betime, and may by us be fitted.

BIRON. Allons ! allons ! Sow'd cockle reap'd no corn ;  
 And justice always whirls in equal measure : 380  
 Light wenches may prove plagues to men forsworn ;  
 If so, our copper buys no better treasure. [*Exeunt.*]

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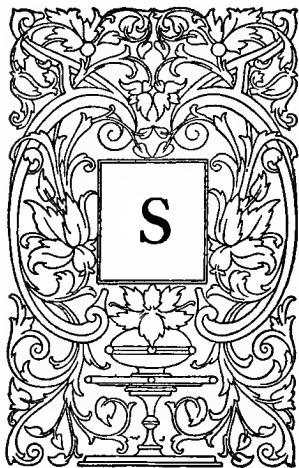
379 *Sow'd cockle*] A proverbial expression, implying here that the ladies  
 will be won only if the preliminary measures be adequate.



## ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — THE SAME

*Enter HOLOFERNES, NATHANIEL, and DULL*

HOLOFERNES



STATIS QUOD SUFFICIT.

NATH. I praise God for you, sir: your reasons at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection, audacious without impudency, learned without opinion, and strange without heresy. I did converse this quondam day with a companion of the king's, who is intituled, nominated, or called, Don Adriano de Armado.

HOL. *Novi hominem tanquam te*: his humour is lofty, his discourse peremptory, his tongue filed, his eye ambitious, his gait majestical, and his general behaviour vain, 10

9 *Novi hominem tanquam te*] This phrase occurs in Lily's school grammar (1527), a standard educational manual of the day.

ridiculous, and thrasonical. He is too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it.

NATH. A most singular and choice epithet.

[*Draws out his table-book.*

HOL. He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument. I abhor such fanatical phantasimes, such insociable and point-devise companions; such rackers of orthography, as to speak dout, fine, when he should say doubt; det, when he should pronounce debt,—d, e, b, t, not d, e, t: he clepeth a calf, cauf; half hauf, neighbour vocatur<sup>20</sup> nebour; neigh abbreviated ne. This is abhominable,—which he would call abhominable: it insinuateth me of insanie: ne intelligis, domine? to make frantic, lunatic.

NATH. Laus Deo, bene intelligo.

HOL. Bon, bon, fort bon! Priscian a little scratched; 't will serve.

NATH. Videsne quis venit?

HOL. Video, et gaudeo.

21 *abhominable*] This was the common orthography in the sixteenth century, probably from the mistaken notion that the word was derived from "ab homine" and not from "ab omine." Holofernes champions the popular error.

25 *Priscian a little scratched*] These Latin phrases are derived from conversation books frequently used in Elizabethan schools. Cf. *Familiares colloquendi formulae in usum scholarum concinnatae*: "He speaks false Latin, diminuit Prisciani caput. 'Tis barbarous Latin, olet barbariem." The last phrase suggested "I smell false Latin," l. 67, *infra*.



SCENE I LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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*Enter ARMADO, MOTH, and COSTARD*

ARM. Chirrah ! [*To Moth.*]

HOL. Quare chirrah, not sirrah ? 30

ARM. Men of peace, well encountered.

HOL. Most military sir, salutation.

MOTH. [*Aside to Costard*] They have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps.

COST. O, they have lived long on the alms-basket of words. I marvel thy master hath not eaten thee for a word ; for thou art not so long by the head as honorificabilitudinitatibus : thou art easier swallowed than a flap-dragon.

MOTH. Peace ! the peal begins.

ARM. [*To Hol.*] Monsieur, are you not lettered ? 40

MOTH. Yes, yes ; he teaches boys the horn-book.

What is a, b, spelt backward, with the horn on his head ?

HOL. Ba, pueritia, with a horn added.

MOTH. Ba, most silly sheep with a horn. You hear his learning.

HOL. Quis, quis, thou consonant ?

MOTH. The third of the five vowels, if you repeat them ; or the fifth, if I.

HOL. I will repeat them, — a, e, i, —

MOTH. The sheep : the other two concludes it, — o, u. 50

38-39 *honorificabilitudinitatibus*] This long word, which is frequently met with in medieval Latin, is cited by Dante in his *De vulgari eloquentia* (1300?) as a word difficult to employ in poetry. Elizabethan writers often employ it derisively. Cf. Nashe's *Lenten Stufte*, 1599 (Nashe's Works, ed. McKerrow, Vol. III, p. 176).

ARM. Now, by the salt wave of the Mediterranean, a sweet touch, a quick venue of wit, — snip, snap, quick and home! it rejoiceth my intellect: true wit!

MOTH. Offered by a child to an old man; which is wit-old.

HOL. What is the figure? what is the figure?

MOTH. Horns.

HOL. Thou disputest like an infant: go, whip thy gig.

MOTH. Lend me your horn to make one, and I will whip about your infamy circum circa, — a gig of a cuckold's horn.

COST. An I had but one penny in the world, thou 60 shouldst have it to buy gingerbread: hold, there is the very remuneration I had of thy master, thou halfpenny purse of wit, thou pigeon-egg of discretion. O, an the heavens were so pleased that thou wert but my bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me! Go to; thou hast it ad dunghill, at the fingers' ends, as they say.

HOL. O, I smell false Latin; dunghill for unguem.

ARM. Arts-man, preambulate, we will be singled from the barbarous. Do you not educate youth at the charge-house on the top of the mountain? 70

52 *venue*] a thrust in fencing. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, Act I, Sc. iv, Bobadill uses the word as synonymous with "stoccata," a more technical term for the fencer's thrust or lunge.

67 *I smell false Latin*] See note on l. 25, *supra*.

*ad unguem*] Another phrase from Lily's Grammar. Cf. l. 8, *supra*. It is classical Latin, and means "to the nail," "polished." Cf. Hor. Sat. 1. 5. 31-32, "*ad unguem factus homo*."

70 *charge-house*] Affected periphrase for a "school" where the charge of youth is undertaken.

HOL. Or mons, the hill.

ARM. At your sweet pleasure, for the mountain.

HOL. I do, sans question.

ARM. Sir, it is the king's most sweet pleasure and affection to congratulate the princess at her pavilion in the posteriors of this day, which the rude multitude call the afternoon.

HOL. The posterior of the day, most generous sir, is liable, congruent and measurable for the afternoon: the word is well culled, chose, sweet and apt, I do assure you, 80  
sir, I do assure.

ARM. Sir, the king is a noble gentleman, and my familiar, I do assure ye, very good friend: for what is inward between us, let it pass. I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy; I beseech thee, apparel thy head: and among other important and most serious designs, and of great import indeed, too, but let that pass: for I must tell thee, it will please his Grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder, and with his royal finger, thus, dally with my excrement, with my mustachio; but, sweet heart, let that pass. By the 90  
world, I recount no fable; some certain special honours it pleaseth his greatness to impart to Armado, a soldier, a man of travel, that hath seen the world; but let that

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84-85 *remember thy courtesy*] Holofernes having removed his hat is bidden by Armado replace it. He reminds the pedant that to replace one's hat on one's head after raising it satisfies all requirements of courtesy. Cf. Ben Jonson, *Every Man in his Humour*, I, ii, 49-51: *Knowell* (to servant). "Pray you *remember your courtesy* . . . nay, *pray be covered*."

pass. The very all of all is, — but, sweet heart, I do implore secrecy, — that the king would have me present the princess, sweet chuck, with some delightful ostentation, or show, or pageant, or antique, or firework. Now, understanding that the curate and your sweet self are good at such eruptions and sudden breaking out of mirth, as it were, I have acquainted you withal, to the end to crave your assistance. 101

HOL. Sir, you shall present before her the Nine Worthies. Sir, as concerning some entertainment of time, some show in the posterior of this day, to be rendered by our assistants, at the king's command, and this most gallant, illustrate, and learned gentleman, before the princess; I say none so fit as to present the Nine Worthies.

NATH. Where will you find men worthy enough to present them? 109

HOL. Joshua, yourself; myself and this gallant gentleman, Judas Maccabæus; this swain, because of his great limb or joint, shall pass Pompey the Great; the page, Hercules, —

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102 *Nine Worthies*] According to the tradition of medieval literature, these were three pagans, Hector, Alexander, and Julius Cæsar; three Jews, Joshua, David, and Judas Maccabæus; three Christians, Arthur, Charlemagne, and Godfrey of Bouillon. The show actually presented *infra*, at V, ii, 535 *seq.*, includes no more than five worthies, of which three alone belong to the traditional list, namely, Alexander, Judas Maccabæus, and Hector. The other two, Pompey and Hercules, who there accompany them, are without literary authority.

ARM. Pardon, sir; error: he is not quantity enough for that Worthy's thumb: he is not so big as the end of his club.

HOL. Shall I have audience? he shall present Hercules in minority: his enter and exit shall be strangling a snake; and I will have an apology for that purpose.

MOTH. An excellent device! so, if any of the audience hiss, you may cry, "Well done, Hercules! now thou crushest the snake!" that is the way to make an offence gracious, though few have the grace to do it.

121

ARM. For the rest of the Worthies? —

HOL. I will play three myself.

MOTH. Thrice-worthy gentleman!

ARM. Shall I tell you a thing?

HOL. We attend.

ARM. We will have, if this fadge not, an antique. I beseech you, follow.

HOL. Via, goodman Dull! thou hast spoken no word all this while.

130

DULL. Nor understood none neither, sir.

HOL. Allons! we will employ thee.

DULL. I'll make one in a dance, or so; or I will play On the tabor to the Worthies, and let them dance the hay.

HOL. Most dull, honest Dull! To our sport away!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — THE SAME

*Enter the Princess, KATHARINE, ROSALINE and MARIA*

PRIN. Sweet hearts, we shall be rich ere we depart,  
 If fairings come thus plentifully in :  
 A lady wall'd about with diamonds !  
 Look you what I have from the loving king.

ROS. Madam, came nothing else along with that ?

PRIN. Nothing but this ! yes, as much love in rhyme  
 As would be cramm'd up in a sheet of paper,  
 Writ o' both sides the leaf, margent and all,  
 That he was fain to seal on Cupid's name.

ROS. That was the way to make his godhead wax, 10  
 For he hath been five thousand years a boy.

KATH. Ay, and a shrewd unhappy gallows too.

ROS. You'll ne'er be friends with him ; a' kill'd your  
 sister.

KATH. He made her melancholy, sad, and heavy ;  
 And so she died : had she been light, like you,  
 Of such a merry, nimble, stirring spirit,  
 She might ha' been a grandam ere she died :  
 And so may you ; for a light heart lives long.

12 *gallows*] In Sidney's *Arcadia*, Bk. I, c. 16, p. 165 (1590), Cupid is called a hangman, *i. e.* executioner. Here "gallows" seems used in the same sense. But it has also been interpreted "gallowsbird," which has contemporary authority, and also as "mischievous imp," which is not uncommon in provincial dialect use.

15 *light*] In the quibbles which follow, this word is employed in the varied senses of *without weight, luminous, nimble, frivolous, wanton, merry.*

ROS. What's your dark meaning, mouse, of this light word?

KATH. A light condition in a beauty dark. 20

ROS. We need more light to find your meaning out.

KATH. You'll mar the light by taking it in snuff;  
Therefore I'll darkly end the argument.

ROS. Look, what you do, you do it still i' th' dark.

KATH. So do not you, for you are a light wench.

ROS. Indeed, I weigh not you, and therefore light.

KATH. You weigh me not? — O, that's you care not  
for me.

ROS. Great reason; for "past cure is still past care."

PRIN. Well bandied both; a set of wit well play'd.

But, Rosaline, you have a favour too: 30

Who sent it? and what is it?

ROS. I would you knew:

And if my face were but as fair as yours,

My favour were as great; be witness this.

Nay, I have verses too, I thank Biron:

The numbers true; and, were the numbering too,

I were the fairest goddess on the ground:

I am compared to twenty thousand fairs.

O, he hath drawn my picture in his letter!

PRIN. Any thing like?

ROS. Much in the letters; nothing in the praise. 40

PRIN. Beauteous as ink; a good conclusion.

22 *taking it in snuff*] The verbal play is on the two meanings of the word "snuff," namely: "candle-ash" and "anger."

29 *bandied . . . set*] terms used in tennis.

KATH. Fair as a text B in a copy-book.

ROS. 'Ware pencils, ho ! let me not die your debtor,  
My red dominical, my golden letter :  
O that your face were not so full of O's !

KATH. A pox of that jest ! and I beshrew all shrows.

PRIN. But, Katharine, what was sent to you from fair  
Dumain ?

KATH. Madam, this glove.

PRIN. Did he not send you twain ?

KATH. Yes, madam, and, moreover,  
Some thousand verses of a faithful lover, 50  
A huge translation of hypocrisy,  
Vilely compiled, profound simplicity.

MAR. This and these pearls to me sent Longaville :  
The letter is too long by half a mile.

PRIN. I think no less. Dost thou not wish in heart  
The chain were longer and the letter short ?

MAR. Ay, or I would these hands might never part.

PRIN. We are wise girls to mock our lovers so.

ROS. They are worse fools to purchase mocking so.  
That same Biron I'll torture ere I go : 60  
O that I knew he were but in by the week !  
How I would make him fawn, and beg, and seek,  
And wait the season, and observe the times.  
And spend his prodigal wits in bootless rhymes,

44 *red . . . letter*] The "dominical" letter used to denote Sundays in old almanacs was printed in red, which was reckoned the colour of gold. Cf. *Macb.*, II, iii, 136, "*golden blood.*"

45 *O's*] pockmarks.

61 *in by the week*] hired by the week, in servitude or bondage, enslaved.



And shape his service wholly to my hests,  
 And make him proud to make me proud that jests !  
 So perttaunt-like would I o'ersway his state,  
 That he should be my fool, and I his fate.

PRIN. None are so surely caught, when they are  
 catch'd,

As wit turn'd fool: folly, in wisdom hatch'd, 70  
 Hath wisdom's warrant and the help of school,  
 And wit's own grace to grace a learned fool.

ROS. The blood of youth burns not with such excess  
 As gravity's revolt to wantonness.

MAR. Folly in fools bears not so strong a note  
 As foolery in the wise, when wit doth dote ;  
 Since all the power thereof it doth apply  
 To prove, by wit, worth in simplicity.

PRIN. Here comes Boyet, and mirth is in his face.

*Enter* BOYET

BOYET. O, I am stabb'd with laughter ! Where 's her  
 Grace ?

PRIN. Thy news, Boyet ?

BOYET. Prepare, madam, prepare !  
 Arm, wench, arm ! encounters mounted are

67 *perttaunt-like*] This reading of the early editions is puzzling. The most popular emendations are *portent-like* and *potent-like*, *i. e.* tyrant-like or tyrannically. But neither is satisfactory. There was a verb "pert," "to behave *pertly*, briskly, resolutely"; and it is possible that Shakespeare may have formed from it the adverb "perting-like," *i. e.* *pertingly*, *pertly*, *briskly*. Biron is called "pert" (in the different sense of "saucy") at 272, *infra*.

Against your peace : Love doth approach disguised,  
 Armed in arguments ; you 'll be surprised :  
 Muster your wits ; stand in your own defence ;  
 Or hide your heads like cowards, and fly hence.

PRIN. Saint Denis to Saint Cupid ! What are they  
 That charge their breath against us ? say, scout, say.

BOYET. Under the cool shade of a sycamore  
 I thought to close mine eyes some half an hour ; 90  
 When, lo ! to interrupt my purposed rest,  
 Toward that shade I might behold address  
 The king and his companions : warily  
 I stole into a neighbour thicket by,  
 And overheard what you shall overhear ;  
 That, by and by, disguised they will be here.  
 Their herald is a pretty knavish page,  
 That well by heart hath conn'd his embassy :  
 Action and accent did they teach him there ;  
 " Thus must thou speak," and " thus thy body bear : " 100  
 And ever and anon they made a doubt  
 Presence majestic would put him out ;  
 " For," quoth the king, " an angel shalt thou see ;  
 Yet fear not thou, but speak audaciously."  
 The boy replied, " An angel is not evil ;  
 I should have fear'd her, had she been a devil."  
 With that, all laugh'd, and clapped him on the shoulder,  
 Making the bold wag by their praises bolder :  
 One rubb'd his elbow thus, and flier'd and swore  
 A better speech was never spoke before ; 110  
 Another, with his finger and his thumb,  
 Cried, " Via ! we will do 't, come what will come ; "

The third he caper'd, and cried, "All goes well ;"  
 The fourth turn'd on the toe, and down he fell.  
 With that, **they all did tumble** on the ground,  
 With such a zealous laughter, so profound,  
 That in this spleen ridiculous appears,  
 To check their folly, passion's solemn tears.

PRIN. But what, but what, come they to visit us ?

BOYET. They do, they do ; and are apparell'd thus, 120  
 Like Muscovites or Russians, as I guess.  
 Their purpose is to parle, to court and dance ;  
 And every one his love-feat will advance  
 Unto his several mistress, which they'll know  
 By favours several which they did bestow.

PRIN. And will they so ? the gallants shall be task'd ;  
 For, ladies, we will every one be mask'd ;  
 And not a man of them shall have the grace,  
 Despite of suit, to see a lady's face.

Hold, Rosaline, this favour thou shalt wear, 130  
 And then the king will court thee for his dear ;  
 Hold, take thou this, my sweet, and give me thine,  
 So shall Biron take me for Rosaline.  
 And change you favours too ; so shall your loves  
 Woo contrary, deceived by these removes.

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121 *Muscovites or Russians*] The chronicler Hall relates how, at a royal banquet in the first year of Henry VIII (1510), two English courtiers came fancifully arrayed in barbaric richness "after the fashion of Russia or Russland." But in all probability Shakespeare had in mind the more recent appearance of ambassadors from Russia at Queen Elizabeth's court with a view to selecting from English-women a wife for the Tsar. See Introduction.

ROS. Come on, then ; wear the favours most in sight.

KATH. But in this changing what is your intent ?

PRIN. The effect of my intent is to cross theirs :  
 They do it but in mocking merriment ;  
 And mock for mock is only my intent. 140  
 Their several counsels they unbosom shall  
 To loves mistook, and so be mock'd withal  
 Upon the next occasion that we meet,  
 With visages display'd, to talk and greet.

ROS. But shall we dance, if they desire us to 't ?

PRIN. No, to the death, we will not move a foot :  
 Nor to their penn'd speech render we no grace ;  
 But while 't is spoke each turn away her face.

BOYET. Why, that contempt will kill the speaker's heart,  
 And quite divorce his memory from his part. 150

PRIN. Therefore I do it ; and I make no doubt  
 The rest will ne'er come in, if he be out.  
 There's no such sport as sport by sport o'erthrown ;  
 To make theirs ours, and ours none but our own :  
 So shall we stay, mocking intended game,  
 And they, well mock'd, depart away with shame.

[*Trumpets sound within.*]

BOYET. The trumpet sounds : be mask'd ; the maskers  
 come. [The Ladies mask.]

*Enter Blackmoors with music ;* MOTH ; *the King, BIRON, LONGAVILLE,*  
*and DUMAIN, in Russian habits, and masked*

MOTH. All hail, the richest beauties on the earth ! —

BOYET. Beauties no richer than rich taffeta.

159 *rich taffeta*] The masks of the ladies were of rich taffeta silk.

MOTH. A holy parcel of the fairest dames 160

*[The Ladies turn their backs to him.]*

That ever turn'd their — backs — to mortal views!

BIRON. *[Aside to Moth]* Their eyes, villain, their eyes.

MOTH. That ever turn'd their eyes to mortal views! —  
Out —

BOYET. True; out indeed.

MOTH. Out of your favours, heavenly spirits, vouchsafe  
Not to behold —

BIRON. *[Aside to Moth]* Once to behold, rogue.

MOTH. Once to behold with your sun-beamed eyes,  
— with your sun-beamed eyes —

BOYET. They will not answer to that epithet; 170  
You were best call it “daughter-beamed eyes.”

MOTH. They do not mark me, and that brings me  
out.

BIRON. Is this your perfectness? be gone, you rogue!  
*[Exit Moth.]*

ROS. What would these strangers? know their minds,  
Boyet:

If they do speak our language, 't is our will  
That some plain man recount their purposes:  
Know what they would.

BOYET. What would you with the princess?

BIRON. Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROS. What would they, say they? 180

BOYET. Nothing but peace and gentle visitation.

ROS. Why, that they have; and bid them so be gone.

BOYET. She says, you have it, and you may be gone.

KING. Say to her, we have measured many miles  
To tread a measure with her on this grass.

BOYET. They say, that they have measured many a  
mile

To tread a measure with you on this grass.

ROS. It is not so. Ask them how many inches  
Is in one mile : if they have measured many,  
The measure then of one is easily told. 190

BOYET. If to come hither you have measured  
miles,

And many miles, the princess bids you tell  
How many inches doth fill up one mile.

BIRON. Tell her, we measure them by weary steps.

BOYET. She hears herself.

ROS. How many weary steps,  
Of many weary miles you have o'ergone,  
Are number'd in the travel of one mile ?

BIRON. We number nothing that we spend for you :  
Our duty is so rich, so infinite,  
That we may do it still without accompt. 200  
Vouchsafe to show the sunshine of your face,  
That we, like savages, may worship it.

ROS. My face is but a moon, and clouded too.

KING. Blessed are clouds, to do as such clouds do !  
Vouchsafe, bright moon, and these thy stars, to  
shine,

Those clouds removed, upon our watery eyne.

ROS. O vain petitioner ! beg a greater matter ;  
Thou now request'st but moonshine in the water.

KING. Then, in our measure do but vouchsafe one  
change.

Thou bid'st me beg : this begging is not strange. 210

ROS. Play, music, then! Nay, you must do it soon.

[*Music plays.*]

Not yet! no dance! Thus change I like the moon.

KING. Will you not dance? How come you thus estranged?

ROS. You took the moon at full, but now she's changed.

KING. Yet still she is the moon, and I the man.

The music plays; vouchsafe some motion to it.

ROS. Our ears vouchsafe it.

KING. But your legs should do it.

ROS. Since you are strangers, and come here by chance,

We'll not be nice: take hands. We will not dance.

KING. Why take we hands, then?

ROS. Only to part friends:

Curtsey, sweet hearts; and so the measure ends. 221

KING. More measure of this measure; be not nice.

ROS. We can afford no more at such a price.

KING. Prize you yourselves: what buys your company?

ROS. Your absence only.

KING. That can never be.

ROS. Then cannot we be bought: and so, adieu;

Twice to your visor, and half once to you.

KING. If you deny to dance, let's hold more chat.

ROS. In private, then.

KING. I am best pleased with that.

[*They converse apart.*]

---

227 *Twice to your visor*] She bids a double adieu to his disguise, not wishing to see it again; but only half a farewell to himself, as she has no wish of making the parting permanent.

BIRON. White-handed mistress, one sweet word with thee. 230

PRIN. Honey, and milk, and sugar; there is three.

BIRON. Nay then, two treys, an if you grow so nice,  
 Metheglin, wort, and malmsey: well run, dice!  
 There's half-a-dozen sweets.

PRIN. Seventh sweet, adieu:  
 Since you can cog, I'll play no more with you.

BIRON. One word in secret.

PRIN. Let it not be sweet.

BIRON. Thou grievest my gall.

PRIN. Gall! bitter.

BIRON. Therefore meet.  
[*They converse apart.*]

DUM. Will you vouchsafe with me to change a word?

MAR. Name it.

DUM. Fair lady,—

MAR. Say you so? Fair lord,—  
 Take that for your fair lady.

DUM. Please it you, 240  
 As much in private, and I'll bid adieu.

[*They converse apart.*]  
 KATH. What, was your vizard made without a  
 tongue?

232 *treys*] throws of threes at dice.

233 *Metheglin, wort, and malmsey*] three sweet liquors: metheglin was made from honey; wort was unfermented beer; malmsey a sweet wine originally made in Greece, which Chaucer knew as *malvesie* from the French *malvoisie*; cf. Italian *malvasia*. The word is said to be formed from the name of the modern Greek city Monembasia, a Laconian seaport.



LONG. I know the reason, lady, why you ask.

KATH. O for your reason! quickly, sir; I long.

LONG. You have a double tongue within your mask,  
And would afford my speechless vizard half.

KATH. Veal, quoth the Dutchman. Is not "veal" a  
calf?

LONG. A calf, fair lady!

KATH. No, a fair lord calf.

LONG. Let's part the word.

KATH. No, I'll not be your half:

Take all, and wean it; it may prove an ox. 250

LONG. Look, how you butt yourself in these sharp  
mocks!

Will you give horns, chaste lady? do not so.

KATH. Then die a calf, before your horns do grow.

LONG. One word in private with you, ere I die.

KATH. Bleat softly, then; the butcher hears you cry.

*[They converse apart.]*

BOYET. The tongues of mocking wenches are as keen  
As is the razor's edge invisible,

Cutting a smaller hair than may be seen;

Above the sense of sense; so sensible

Seemeth their conference; their conceits have wings 260

Fleeter than arrows, bullets, wind, thought, swifter  
things.

---

247 *Veal, quoth the Dutchman*] A joke on the common mispronunciation by Germans of "veal" or "vell" for "well." In the *Wisdom of Doctor Doddypoll*, 1600, a German doctor, who uses the word "veale," which he corrects to "vell," is said by his interlocutor to "make a calf of" him.

ROS. Not one word more, my maids; break off,  
break off.

BIRON. By heaven, all dry-beaten with pure scoff!

KING. Farewell, mad wenches; you have simple wits.

PRIN. Twenty adieus, my frozen Muscovits.

[*Exeunt King, Lords, and Blackamoors.*]

Are these the breed of wits so wonder'd at?

BOYET. Tapers they are, with your sweet breaths  
puff'd out.

ROS. Well-liking wits they have; gross, gross; fat, fat.

PRIN. O poverty in wit, kingly-poor flout!

Will they not, think you, hang themselves to-night? 270

Or ever, but in vizards, show their faces?

This pert Biron was out of countenance quite.

ROS. O, they were all in lamentable cases!

The king was weeping-ripe for a good word.

PRIN. Biron did swear himself out of all suit.

MAR. Dumain was at my service, and his sword:

No point, quoth I; my servant straight was mute.

KATH. Lord Longaville said, I came o'er his heart;  
And trow you what he call'd me?

PRIN. Qualm, perhaps.

KATH. Yes, in good faith.

PRIN. Go, sickness as thou art! 280

ROS. Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps.  
But will you hear? the king is my love sworn.

263 *dry-beaten*] beaten with blows which bruise but do not draw blood.

281 *statute-caps*] By Statute 13 Eliz. 1571 all, except persons of high

PRIN. And quick Biron hath plighted faith to me.

KATH. And Longaville was for my service born.

MAR. Dumain is mine, as sure as bark on tree.

BOYET. Madam, and pretty mistresses, give ear :

Immediately they will again be here

In their own shapes ; for it can never be

They will digest this harsh indignity.

PRIN. Will they return ?

BOYET.                    They will, they will, God knows,

And leap for joy, though they are lame with blows :      291

Therefore change favours ; and, when they repair,

Blow like sweet roses in this summer air.

PRIN. How blow ? how blow ? speak to be understood.

BOYET. Fair ladies mask'd are roses in their bud ;

Dismask'd, their damask sweet commixture shown,

Are angels vailing clouds, or roses blown.

PRIN. Avaunt, perplexity ! What shall we do,

If they return in their own shapes to woo ?

Ros. Good madam, if by me you 'll be advised,      300

Let's mock them still, as well known as disguised :

Let us complain to them what fools were here,

Disguised like Muscovites, in shapeless gear ;

And wonder what they were and to what end

rank, were bound to wear, on Sundays and holidays, thick woollen caps made in England. The text means that better wits may be found among the humbler class of citizens.

296-297 *damask . . . blown*] The display of the "damasked" (*i. e.* variegated) mingling of red and white in the ladies' features is compared to the appearance of angels when clouds fall from before them, or to that of roses in full bloom. "Vail" means let fall, lower.

Their shallow shows and prologue vilely penn'd,  
 And their rough carriage so ridiculous,  
 Should be presented at our tent to us.

BOYET. Ladies, withdraw : the gallants are at hand.

PRIN. Whip to our tents, as roes run o'er land.

[*Exeunt Princess, Rosaline, Katharine, and Maria.*]

*Re-enter the King, BIRON, LONGAVILLE, and DUMAIN, in their proper habits.*

KING. Fair sir, God save you ! Where 's the princess ?

BOYET. Gone to her tent. Please it your Majesty 311  
 Command me any service to her thither ?

KING. That she vouchsafe me audience for one word.

BOYET. I will ; and so will she, I know, my lord. [*Exit.*]

BIRON. This fellow pecks up wit as pigeons pease,  
 And utters it again when God doth please :

He is wit's pedler, and retails his wares

At wakes and wassails, meetings, markets, fairs ;

And we that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,

Have not the grace to grace it with such show. 320

This gallant pins the wenches on his sleeve ;

Had he been Adam, he had tempted Eve ;

A' can carve too, and lisp : why, this is he

That kiss'd his hand away in courtesy ;

323 *carve*] The word is constantly used of unctuously complimentary phrases or gestures, and is commonly associated with the fantastically elaborate method of carving meat for guests at table by way of showing hospitality. Cf. *M. Wives*, I, iii, 48, where Falstaff says of Ford's wife : " She discourses, she *carves*, she gives the leer of invitation."

This is the ape of form, monsieur the nice,  
 That, when he plays at tables, chides the dice  
 In honourable terms: nay, he can sing  
 A mean most meanly; and in ushering,  
 Mend him who can: the ladies call him sweet;  
 The stairs, as he treads on them, kiss his feet:  
 This is the flower that smiles on every one,  
 To show his teeth as white as whale's bone;  
 And consciences, that will not die in debt,  
 Pay him the due of honey-tongued Boyet.

330

KING. A blister on his sweet tongue, with my heart,  
 That put Armado's page out of his part!

BIRON. See where it comes! Behaviour, what wert  
 thou

Till this madman show'd thee? and what art thou now?

*Re-enter the PRINCESS, ushered by BOYET; ROSALINE, MARIA,  
 and KATHARINE.*

KING. All hail, sweet madam, and fair time of day!

PRIN. "Fair" in "all hail" is foul, as I conceive. 340

KING. Construe my speeches better, if you may.

PRIN. Then wish me better; I will give you leave.

KING. We came to visit you, and purpose now  
 To lead you to our court; vouchsafe it then.

PRIN. This field shall hold me; and so hold your vow:  
 Nor God, nor I, delights in perjured men.

---

340 "Fair" in "all hail"] The quibble on "hail" (*i. e.*, storm of hail) reappears in *Two Noble Kinsmen*, III, v; Beaumont and Fletcher's *Faithful Friends*, III, ii; and Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, ed. Pearson, p. 113.

KING. Rebuke me not for that which you provoke :  
The virtue of your eye must break my oath.

PRIN. You nickname virtue ; vice you should have  
spoke ; [btool.com.cn](http://btool.com.cn)

For virtue's office never breaks men's troth. 350  
Now by my maiden honour yet as pure

As the unsullied lily I protest,  
A world of torments though I should endure,  
I would not yield to be your house's guest ;  
So much I hate a breaking cause to be  
Of heavenly oaths, vow'd with integrity.

KING. O, you have lived in desolation here,  
Unseen, unvisited, much to our shame.

PRIN. Not so, my lord ; it is not so, I swear ;  
We have had pastimes here and pleasant game : 360  
A mess of Russians left us but of late.

KING. How, madam ! Russians !

PRIN. Ay, in truth, my lord ;  
Trim gallants, full of courtship and of state.

Ros. Madam, speak true. It is not so, my lord :  
My lady, to the manner of the days,  
In courtesy gives undeserving praise.  
We four indeed confronted were with four  
In Russian habit : here they stay'd an hour,  
And talk'd apace ; and in that hour, my lord,  
They did not bless us with one happy word. 370  
I dare not call them fools ; but this I think,  
When they are thirsty, fools would fain have drink.

---

361 *mess*] See note on IV, iii, 203, *supra*.

BIRON. This jest is dry to me. Fair gentle sweet,  
 Your wit makes wise things foolish : when we greet,  
 With eyes ~~best seeing,~~ heaven's fiery eye,  
 By light we lose light : your capacity  
 Is of that nature that to your huge store  
 Wise things seem foolish and rich things but poor.

ROS. This proves you wise and rich, for in my eye, —

BIRON. I am a fool, and full of poverty. 380

ROS. But that you take what doth to you belong,  
 It were a fault to snatch words from my tongue.

BIRON. O, I am yours, and all that I possess !

ROS. All the fool mine ?

BIRON. I cannot give you less.

ROS. Which of the vizards was it that you wore ?

BIRON. Where ? when ? what vizard ? why demand  
 you this ?

ROS. There, then, that vizard ; that superfluous case  
 That hid the worse, and show'd the better face.

KING. We are descried ; they'll mock us now  
 downright.

DUM. Let us confess, and turn it to a jest. 390

PRIN. Amazed, my lord ? why looks your highness sad ?

ROS. Help, hold his brows ! he'll swoond ! Why  
 look you pale ?

Sea-sick, I think, coming from Muscovy.

BIRON. Thus pour the stars down plagues for perjury.  
 Can any face of brass hold longer out ?

Here stand I : lady, dart thy skill at me ;

Bruise me with scorn, confound me with a flout ;  
 Thrust thy sharp wit quite through my ignorance ;

Cut me to pieces with thy keen conceit ;  
 And I will wish thee never more to dance, 400  
 Nor never more in Russian habit wait.  
 O, never will I trust to speeches penn'd,  
 Nor to the motion of a schoolboy's tongue ;  
 Nor never come in vizard to my friend ;  
 Nor woo in rhyme, like a blind harper's song !  
 Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
 Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
 Figures pedantical ; these summer-flies  
 Have blown me full of maggot ostentation :  
 I do forswear them ; and I here protest, 410  
 By this white glove, — how white the hand, God  
 knows ! —

Henceforth my wooing mind shall be express'd  
 In russet yeas, and honest kersey noes :  
 And, to begin, wench, — so God help me, la ! —  
 My love to thee is sound, sans crack or flaw.

Ros. Sans sans, I pray you.

BIRON. Yet I have a trick  
 Of the old rage : — bear with me, I am sick ;  
 I 'll leave it by degrees. Soft, let us see :  
 Write, " Lord have mercy on us " on those three ;  
 They are infected ; in their hearts it lies ; 420  
 They have the plague, and caught it of your eyes ;  
 These lords are visited ; you are not free,

409 *blown*] Used as in " fly blown " of infected meat.

416 *Sans sans*] Without sans, *i. e.* avoid French phrases.

419 " *Lord have mercy on us* "] These words were placarded on houses  
 of which inmates were stricken by the plague.



SCENE II      LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

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For the Lord's tokens on you do I see.

PRIN. No, they are free that gave these tokens to us.

BIRON. Our states are forfeit : seek not to undo us.

ROS. It is not so ; for how can this be true,  
That you stand forfeit, being those that sue ?

BIRON. Peace ! for I will not have to do with you.

ROS. Nor shall not, if I do as I intend.

BIRON. Speak for yourselves ; my wit is at an end. 430

KING. Teach us, sweet madam, for our rude trans-  
gression

Some fair excuse.

PRIN.                      The fairest is confession.

Were not you here but even now disguised ?

KING. Madam, I was.

PRIN.                      And were you well advised ;

KING. I was, fair madam.

PRIN.                      When you then were here,  
What did you whisper in your lady's ear ?

KING. That more than all the world I did respect her.

PRIN. When she shall challenge this, you will reject  
her.

KING. Upon mine honour, no.

PRIN.                      Peace, peace ! forbear :

Your oath once broke, you force not to forswear. 440

KING. Despise me, when I break this oath of mine.

PRIN. I will : and therefore keep it.      Rosaline,

423 *Lord's tokens*] plague spots. There is a pun here on the gifts  
given by the lords to the ladies.

440 *force not*] do not mind or hesitate, make no matter.

What did the Russian whisper in your ear ?

ROS. Madam, he swore that he did hold me dear  
As precious eyesight, and did value me  
Above this world ; adding thereto, moreover,  
That he would wed me, or else die my lover.

PRIN. God give thee joy of him ! the noble lord  
Most honourably doth uphold his word.

KING. What mean you, madam ? by my life, my  
troth, 450  
I never swore this lady such an oath.

ROS. By heaven, you did ; and to confirm it plain,  
You gave me this : but take it, sir, again.

KING. My faith and this the princess I did give :  
I knew her by this jewel on her sleeve.

PRIN. Pardon me, sir, this jewel did she wear ;  
And Lord Biron, I thank him, is my dear.  
What, will you have me, or your pearl again ?

BIRON. Neither of either ; I remit both twain.  
I see the trick on't : here was a consent, 460  
Knowing aforehand of our merriment,  
To dash it like a Christmas comedy :  
Some carry-tale, some please-man, some slight zany,  
Some mumble-news, some trencher-knight, some Dick,  
That smiles his cheek in years, and knows the trick  
To make my lady laugh when she 's disposed,  
Told our intents before ; which once disclosed,

465 *in years*] into years, old age. Laughter was commonly said to  
bring on wrinkles prematurely. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, I, i, 80 :  
"With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come."

466 *disposed*] *sc.* to merriment. See note *supra*, II, i, 249.

SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

The ladies did change favours ; and then we,  
 Following the signs, woo'd but the sign of she.  
 Now, to our perjury to add more terror, 470  
 We are again forsworn, in will and error.  
 Much upon this it is : and might not you [To Boyet.  
 Forestall our sport, to make us thus untrue ?  
 Do not you know my lady's foot by the squier,  
 And laugh upon the apple of her eye ?  
 And stand between her back, sir, and the fire,  
 Holding a trencher, jesting merrily ?  
 You put our page out : go, you are allow'd ;  
 Die when you will, a smock shall be your shroud.  
 You leer upon me, do you ? there's an eye 480  
 Wounds like a leaden sword.

BOYET. Full merrily

Hath this brave manage, this career, been run.

BIRON. Lo, he is tilting straight ! Peace ! I have done.

*Enter COSTARD*

Welcome, pure wit ! thou part'st a fair fray.

COST. O Lord, sir, they would know

Whether the three Worthies shall come in or no.

BIRON. What, are there but three ?

COST. No, sir ; but it is vara fine,

For every one pursents three.

BIRON. And three times thrice is nine.

468 *change favours*] exchange masks.

474 *squier*] square, rule. He knows the length of his lady's foot, he knows how to humour her.

475 *laugh . . . eye*] laugh responsively to the slightest movement of her eye.

COST. Not so, sir ; under correction, sir ; I hope it is not so.

You cannot beg us, sir, I can assure you, sir ; we know what we know :

490

I hope, sir, three times thrice, sir, —

BIRON. Is not nine.

COST. Under correction, sir, we know whereuntil it doth amount.

BIRON. By Jove, I always took three threes for nine.

COST. O Lord, sir, it were pity you should get your living by reckoning, sir.

BIRON. How much is it ?

COST. O Lord, sir, the parties themselves, the actors, sir, will show whereuntil it doth amount : for mine own <sup>500</sup> part, I am, as they say, but to perfect one man in one poor man, Pompion the Great, sir.

BIRON. Art thou one of the Worthies ?

COST. It pleased them to think me worthy of Pompion the Great : for mine own part, I know not the degree of the Worthy, but I am to stand for him.

BIRON. Go, bid them prepare.

COST. We will turn it finely off, sir ; we will take some care. [Exit.]

KING. Biron, they will shame us : let them not approach.

490 *beg us*] apply for the guardianship of us, as if we were imbeciles incapable of taking care of ourselves and our property.

501 *perfect*] The clown, absorbed by anxiety to be perfect in his part, uses the word "perfect" when he means to say "present," and mispronounces Pompey ; "Pompion" is a word meaning pumpkin.

BIRON. We are shame-proof, my lord : and 't is some  
policy

To have one show worse than the king's and his company.

510

KING. I say they shall not come.

PRIN. Nay, my good lord, let me o'errule you now :  
That sport best pleases that doth least know how :

Where zeal strives to content, and the contents

Dies in the zeal of that which it presents :

Their form confounded makes most form in mirth,

When great things labouring perish in their birth.

BIRON. A right description of our sport, my lord.

*Enter ARMADO*

ARM. Anointed, I implore so much expense of thy  
royal sweet breath as will utter a brace of words.

*[Converses apart with the King, and delivers him a paper.]*

PRIN. Doth this man serve God ?

BIRON. Why ask you ?

PRIN. He speaks not like a man of God's making.

ARM. That is all one, my fair, sweet, honey monarch ;  
for, I protest, the schoolmaster is exceeding fantastical ;  
too too vain, too too vain : but we will put it, as they  
say, to fortuna de la guerra. I wish you the peace of  
mind, most royal couplement !

*[Exit.]*

---

513-518 The princess means that that sport pleases best where the actors are least skilful, and where their over-anxiety to please kills the true import of the performance, and has the unintended effect of provoking mirth. A more sympathetic sentiment is expressed by Theseus and Hippolyta in *Mids. N. Dr.*, V, i, 81-105, where Bottom and his incompetent allies, following the example of Holofernes and his friends, give a dramatic performance at court.

KING. Here is like to be a good presence of Worthies. He presents Hector of Troy; the swain, Pompey the Great; the parish curate, Alexander; Armado's page, Hercules; the pedant, Judas Maccabæus:

533

And if these four Worthies in their first show thrive, These four will change habits, and present the other five.

BIRON. There is five in the first show.

KING. You are deceived; 't is not so.

BIRON. The pedant, the braggart, the hedge-priest, the fool and the boy:—

Abate throw at novum, and the whole world again Cannot pick out five such, take each one in his vein.

540

KING. The ship is under sail, and here she comes amain.

*Enter COSTARD, for Pompey*

COST. I Pompey am, —

BOYET. You lie, you are not he.

COST. I Pompey am, —

BOYET. With libbard's head on knee.

BIRON. Well said, old mocker: I must needs be friends with thee.

COST. I Pompey am, Pompey surnamed the Big, —

DUM. The Great.

COST. It is, "Great," sir:—

535] See note on V, i, 102, *supra*.

540 *Abate throw at novum*] "Novum," or more properly "Novem Quinque," was a game at dice, in which throws of nine or five were essential to victory. "Abate" here means "omit" or "bar." Biron says in effect, "bar a throw (of the *five*) at the game of novem quinque," and one will not find a more fortunate quintet.

SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

Pompey surnamed the Great ;  
That oft in field, with targe and shield, did make my foe to sweat :  
And travelling along this coast, I here am come by chance, 550  
And lay my arms before the legs of this sweet lass of France.

If your ladyship would say, "Thanks, Pompey," I had done.

PRIN. Great thanks, Great Pompey.

COST. 'T is not so much worth ; but I hope I was perfect : I made a little fault in "Great."

BIRON. My hat to a halfpenny, Pompey proves the best Worthy.

*Enter SIR NATHANIEL, for Alexander*

NATH. When in the world I lived, I was the world's commander ;  
By east, west, north, and south, I spread my conquering might ;  
My scutcheon plain declares that I am Alisander, — 560

BOYET. Your nose says, no, you are not ; for it stands too right.

BIRON. Your nose smells "no" in this, most tender-smelling knight.

PRIN. The conqueror is dismay'd. Proceed, good Alexander.

NATH. When in the world I lived, I was the world's commander, —

---

561-562 *Your nose says, . . . knight*] Plutarch, in his life of Alexander, which Shakespeare read in North's translation, points out, like Biron, that the hero's head was fixed obliquely on his shoulders, and that his body exhaled a sweet savour.

BOYET. Most true, 't is right ; you were so, Alisander.

BIRON. Pompey the Great, —

COST. Your servant, and Costard.

BIRON. Take away the conqueror, take away Alisander.

568

COST. [*To Sir Nath.*] O, sir, you have overthrown Alisander the conqueror ! You will be scraped out of the painted cloth for this : your lion, that holds his poll-axe sitting on a close-stool, will be given to Ajax : he will be the ninth Worthy. A conqueror, and afeared to speak ! run away for shame, Alisander. [*Nath. retires.*] There, an 't shall please you ; a foolish mild man ; an honest man, look you, and soon dashed. He is a marvellous good neighbour, faith, and a very good bowler : but, for Alisander, — alas, you see how 't is, — a little o'erparted. But there are Worthies acoming will speak their mind in some other sort.

PRIN. Stand aside, good Pompey.

580

*Enter HOLOFERNES for Judas ; and MOTH for Hercules*

HOL. Great Hercules is presented by this imp,  
 Whose club kill'd Cerberus, that three-headed canis ;  
 And when he was a babe, a child, a shrimp,  
 Thus did he strangle serpents in his manus.  
 Quoniam he seemeth in minority,  
 Ergo I come with this apology.

Keep some state in thy exit, and vanish. [*Moth retires.*]

Judas I am, —

572 *Ajax*] a punning quibble on "a jakes."



DUM. A Judas !

HOL. Not Iscariot, sir.

590

Judas I am, ycliped Maccabæus.

DUM. Judas Maccabæus clipt is plain Judas.

BIRON. A kissing traitor. How art thou proved Judas ?

HOL. Judas I am,—

DUM. The more shame for you, Judas.

HOL. What mean you, sir ?

BOYET. To make Judas hang himself.

HOL. Begin, sir ; you are my elder.

BIRON. Well followed : Judas was hanged on an elder.

HOL. I will not be put out of countenance.

600

BIRON. Because thou hast no face.

HOL. What is this ?

BOYET. A cittern-head.

DUM. The head of a bodkin.

BIRON. A Death's face in a ring.

LONG. The face of an old Roman coin, scarce seen.

BOYET. The pommel of Cæsar's falchion.

DUM. The carved-bone face on a flask.

BIRON. Saint George's half-cheek in a brooch.

DUM. Ay, and in a brooch of lead.

610

BIRON. Ay, and worn in the cap of a tooth-drawer.

And now forward ; for we have put thee in countenance.

---

603 *cittern-head*] the grotesquely carved head which often figured at the end of the keyboard of a cithern or guitar.

HOL. You have put me out of countenance.

BIRON. False : we have given thee faces.

HOL. But you have out-faced them all.

BIRON. An thou wert a lion, we would do so.

BOYET. Therefore, as he is an ass, let him go.

And so adieu, sweet Jude ! nay, why dost thou stay ?

DUM. For the latter end of his name.

BIRON. For the ass to the Jude ; give it him :—

Jud-as, away !

620

HOL. This is not generous, not gentle, not humble.

BOYET. A light for Monsieur Judas ! it grows dark,  
he may stumble. [*Hol. retires.*]

PRIN. Alas, poor Maccabæus, how hath he been  
baited !

*Enter ARMADO for Hector*

BIRON. Hide thy head, Achilles : here comes Hector  
in arms.

DUM. Though my mocks come home by me, I will  
now be merry.

KING. Hector was but a Trojan in respect of this.

BOYET. But is this Hector ?

KING. I think Hector was not so clean-timbered.

630

LONG. His leg is too big for Hector's.

DUM. More calf, certain.

BOYET. No ; he is best indued in the small.

BIRON. This cannot be Hector.

DUM. He's a god or a painter ; for he makes faces.

ARM. The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,  
Gave Hector a gift, —

DUM. A gilt nutmeg.

BIRON. A lemon.

LONG. Stuck with cloves.

DUM. No, cloven.

ARM. Peace!—

640

The armipotent Mars, of lances the almighty,  
 Gave Hector a gift, the heir of Ilion ;  
 A man so breathed, that certain he would fight ye,  
 From morn till night, out of his pavilion.  
 I am that flower, —

DUM. That mint.

LONG. That columbine.

ARM. Sweet Lord Longaville, rein thy tongue.

LONG. I must rather give it the rein, for it runs  
 against Hector.

650

DUM. Ay, and Hector's a greyhound.

ARM. The sweet war-man is dead and rotten ; sweet  
 chucks, beat not the bones of the buried : when he  
 breathed, he was a man. But I will forward with my  
 device. [*To the Princess*] Sweet royalty, bestow on me  
 the sense of hearing.

PRIN. Speak, brave Hector : we are much delighted.

ARM. I do adore thy sweet Grace's slipper.

BOYET. [*Aside to Dum.*] Loves her by the foot.

DUM. [*Aside to Boyet*] He may not by the yard.

ARM. This Hector far surmounted Hannibal,—

660

COST. The party is gone, fellow Hector, she is gone ;  
 she is two months on her way.

ARM. What meanest thou ?

COST. Faith, unless you play the honest Trovan, the poor wench is cast away : she's quick ; the child brags in her belly already : 't is yours.

ARM. Dost thou infamozize me among potentates ? thou shalt die.

COST. Then shall Hector be whipped for Jaquenetta that is quick by him, and hanged for Pompey that is dead by him. 670

DUM. Most rare Pompey !

BOYET. Renowned Pompey !

BIRON. Greater than great, great, great, great Pompey ! Pompey the Huge !

DUM. Hector trembles.

BIRON. Pompey is moved. More Ates, more Ates ! stir them on ! stir them on !

DUM. Hector will challenge him.

BIRON. Ay, if a' have no more man's blood in 's belly than will sup a flea. 680

ARM. By the north pole, I do challenge thee.

COST. I will not fight with a pole, like a northern man : I'll slash ; I'll do it by the sword. I bepray you, let me borrow my arms again.

DUM. Room for the incensed Worthies !

COST. I'll do it in my shirt.

DUM. Most resolute Pompey !

MOTH. Master, let me take you a button-hole lower.

682 *pole*] a quarterstaff, about six feet in length, and tipped with iron, in the difficult use of which the Northern peasantry held a high reputation.

688 *take you a button-hole lower*] take you down a peg.

Do you not see Pompey is uncasing for the combat ?  
 What mean you ? You will lose your reputation. 690

ARM. Gentlemen and soldiers, pardon me ; I will not  
 combat in my shirt.

DUM. You may not deny it : Pompey hath made  
 the challenge.

ARM. Sweet bloods, I both may and will.

BIRON. What reason have you for 't ?

ARM. The naked truth of it is, I have no shirt ; I go  
 woolward for penance. 698

BOYET. True, and it was enjoined him in Rome for  
 want of linen : since when, I'll be sworn, he wore none  
 but a dish-clout of Jaquenetta's, and that a' wears next  
 his heart for a favour.

*Enter MERCADE*

MER. God save you, Madam !

PRIN. Welcome, Mercade ;

But that thou interrupt'st our merriment.

MER. I am sorry, madam ; for the news I bring  
 Is heavy in my tongue. The king your father —

PRIN. Dead, for my life !

MER. Even so ; my tale is told.

BIRON. Worthies, away ! the scene begins to cloud. 710

ARM. For mine own part, I breathe free breath. I

---

698 *woolward*] wearing only woollen instead of linen garments. Lodge  
 in *Wits Miserie*, 1596 (Hunterian Club, p. 63), and Rowland's *Let-  
 ting of Humours Blood*, 1600, Satyre 5, both describe in like phrase  
 a fashionable loafer, who, when "his shirt's a washing," "must go  
*woolward* for a time."

have seen the day of wrong through the little hole of discretion, and I will right myself like a soldier.

[*Exeunt Worthies.*]

KING. How fares your majesty ?

PRIN. Boyet, prepare ; I will away to-night.

KING. Madam, not so ; I do beseech you, stay.

PRIN. Prepare, I say. I thank you, gracious lords,  
 For all your fair endeavours ; and entreat,  
 Out of a new-sad soul, that you vouchsafe  
 In your rich wisdom to excuse, or hide, 720  
 The liberal opposition of our spirits,  
 If over-boldly we have borne ourselves  
 In the converse of breath : your gentleness  
 Was guilty of it. Farewell, worthy lord !  
 A heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue :  
 Excuse me so, coming too short of thanks  
 For my great suit so easily obtain'd.

KING. The extreme parts of time extremely forms  
 All causes to the purpose of his speed ;  
 And often, at his very loose, decides 730  
 That which long process could not arbitrate :  
 And though the mourning brow of progeny

---

728-731 *The extreme . . . arbitrate*] The meaning seems to be, "When little time remains, events fall out at the last minute, so as to make the available time quite sufficient for the pending purpose, and at the very last moment things get finished off with a readiness that the long and regular processes of business could not allow." "At his very loose" means at the very moment of losing or parting, at the eleventh hour ; it may be a metaphor from the letting loose of the arrow in archery shooting.

Forbid the smiling courtesy of love  
The holy suit which fain it would convince ;  
Yet, since love's argument was first on foot,  
Let not the cloud of sorrow justle it  
From what it purposed ; since, to wail friends lost  
Is not by much so wholesome-profitable  
As to rejoice at friends but newly found.

PRIN. I understand you not : my griefs are double. 740

BIRON. Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief ;  
And by these badges understand the king.  
For your fair sakes have we neglected time,  
Play'd foul play with our oaths : your beauty, ladies,  
Hath much deform'd us, fashioning our humours  
Even to the opposed end of our intents :  
And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous, —  
As love is full of unbefitting strains ;  
All wanton as a child, skipping, and vain ;  
Form'd by the eye, and therefore, like the eye, 750  
Full of strange shapes, of habits and of forms,  
Varying in subjects as the eye doth roll  
To every varied object in his glance :  
Which parti-coated presence of loose love  
Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,  
Have misbecomed our oaths and gravities,  
Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,

740 *double*] This is the original reading. *Dull* is often substituted.  
The princess probably means that she has more griefs than her  
father's death to occupy her. She possibly regrets her recent  
frivolity while her father lay dying.

751 *strange*] Capell's emendation for the original *straying*.

Suggested us to make. Therefore, ladies,  
 Our love being yours, the error that love makes  
 Is likewise yours: we to ourselves prove false, 760  
 By being ~~once false for ever~~ to be true  
 To those that make us both, — fair ladies, you:  
 And even that falsehood, in itself a sin,  
 Thus purifies itself, and turns to grace.

PRIN. We have received your letters full of love;  
 Your favours, the ambassadors of love;  
 And, in our maiden council, rated them  
 At courtship, pleasant jest and courtesy,  
 As bombast and as lining to the time:  
 But more devout than this in our respects 770  
 Have we not been; and therefore met your loves  
 In their own fashion, like a merriment.

DUM. Our letters, madam, show'd much more than  
 jest.

LONG. So did our looks.

ROS. We did not quote them so.

KING. Now, at the latest minute of the hour,  
 Grant us your loves.

PRIN. A time, methinks, too short  
 To make a world-without-end bargain in.  
 No, no, my lord, your grace is perjured much,  
 Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this: —  
 If for my love, as there is no such cause, 780  
 You will do aught, this shall you do for me:

777 *world-without-end*] This epithet, doubtless derived from the liturgy,  
 is used by Shakespeare once again — in *Sonnet lvii*, 5.



SCENE II LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

Your oath I will not trust ; but go with speed  
 To some forlorn and naked hermitage,  
 Remote from all the pleasures of the world ;  
 There stay until the twelve celestial signs  
 Have brought about the annual reckoning.  
 If this austere insociable life  
 Change not your offer made in heat of blood ;  
 If frosts and fasts, hard lodging and thin weeds  
 Nip not the gaudy blossoms of your love, 790  
 But that it bear this trial, and last love ;  
 Then, at the expiration of the year,  
 Come challenge me, challenge me by these deserts,  
 And, by this virgin palm now kissing thine,  
 I will be thine ; and till that instant shut  
 My woeful self up in a mourning house,  
 Raining the tears of lamentation  
 For the remembrance of my father's death.  
 If this thou do deny, let our hands part,  
 Neither intitled in the other's heart. 800

KING. If this, or more than this, I would deny,  
 To flatter up these powers of mine with rest,  
 The sudden hand of death close up mine eye !  
 Hence ever then my heart is in thy breast.

BIRON. And what to me, my love ? and what  
 to me ?

---

805-810] These six lines, which Theobald put between brackets, were omitted by many subsequent editors. They present the first bald draft of lines 825-859, which Shakespeare alone intended to retain in the revised version of the piece. It is clear that they are redundant. Cf. *supra*, IV, iii, 292-293 and note.

Ros. You must be purged too, your sins are rack'd,  
 You are attaint with faults and perjury :  
 Therefore if you my favour mean to get,  
 A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,  
 But seek the weary beds of people sick.

810

DUM. But what to me, my love ? but what to me ?  
 A wife ?

KATH. A beard, fair health, and honesty ;  
 With three-fold love I wish you all these three.

DUM. O, shall I say, I thank you, gentle wife ?

KATH. Not so, my lord ; a twelvemonth and a day  
 I'll mark no words that smooth-faced wooers say :  
 Come when the king doth to my lady come ;  
 Then, if I have much love, I'll give you some.

DUM. I'll serve thee true and faithfully till then.

KATH. Yet swear not, lest ye be forsworn again.

820

LONG. What says Maria ?

MAR. At the twelvemonth's end  
 I'll change my black gown for a faithful friend.

LONG. I'll stay with patience ; but the time is long.

MAR. The liker you ; few taller are so young.

BIRON. Studies my lady ? mistress, look on me ;  
 Behold the window of my heart, mine eye,  
 What humble suit attends thy answer there :  
 Impose some service on me for thy love.

Ros. Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,  
 Before I saw you ; and the world's large tongue  
 Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks,  
 Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,  
 Which you on all estates will execute

830

SCENE II      LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

---

That lie within the mercy of your wit.  
 To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,  
 And therewithal to win me, if you please,  
 Without the which I am not to be won,  
 You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day  
 Visit the speechless sick, and still converse  
 With groaning wretches ; and your task shall be,      840  
 With all the fierce endeavour of your wit  
 To enforce the pained impotent to smile.

、 BIRON. To move wild laughter in the throat of  
 death ?

It cannot be ; it is impossible :  
 Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.

Ros. Why, that 's the way to choke a gibing spirit,  
 Whose influence is begot of that loose grace  
 Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools :  
 A jest's prosperity lies in the ear  
 Of him that hears it, never in the tongue      850  
 Of him that makes it : then, if sickly ears,  
 Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,  
 Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,  
 And I will have you and that fault withal ;  
 But if they will not, throw away that spirit,  
 And I shall find you empty of that fault,  
 Right joyful of your reformation.

BIRON. A twelvemonth ! well ; befall what will befall,  
 I 'll jest a twelvemonth in an hospital.

PRIN. [*To the King*] Ay, sweet my Lord ; and so I  
 take my leave.      860

KING. No, madam ; we will bring you on your way.

BIRON. Our wooing doth not end like an old play ;  
 Jack hath not Jill : these ladies' courtesy  
 Might well have made our sport a comedy.

KING. Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,  
 And then 't will end.

BIRON. That's too long for a play.

*Re-enter ARMADO*

ARM. Sweet Majesty, vouchsafe me, —

PRIN. Was not that Hector ?

DUM. The worthy knight of Troy.

789

ARM. I will kiss thy royal finger, and take leave. I  
 am a votary ; I have vowed to Jaquenetta to hold the  
 plough for her sweet love three years. But, most es-  
 teemed greatness, will you hear the dialogue that the  
 two learned men have compiled in praise of the owl and  
 the cuckoo ? it should have followed in the end of our  
 show.

KING. Call them forth quickly ; we will do so.

ARM. Holla ! approach.

*Re-enter HOLOFERNES, NATHANIEL, MOTH, COSTARD, and others.*

This side is Hiems, Winter, this Ver, the Spring ; the one  
 maintained by the owl, the other by the cuckoo. Ver,  
 begin.

880

THE SONG

SPRING. When daisies pied and violets blue  
 And lady-smocks all silver-white  
 And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue  
 Do paint the meadows with delight,

The cuckoo then, on every tree,  
 Mocks married men ; for thus sings he,  
 Cuckoo ;  
 Cuckoo, cuckoo : O word of fear,  
 Unpleasing to a married ear !

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws, 890  
 And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,  
 When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,  
 And maidens bleach their summer smocks,  
 The cuckoo then, on every tree,  
 Mocks married men ; for thus sings he,  
 Cuckoo ;  
 Cuckoo, cuckoo : O word of fear,  
 Unpleasing to a married ear !

WINTER. When icicles hang by the wall, 900  
 And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,  
 And Tom bears logs into the hall,  
 And milk comes frozen home in pail,  
 When blood is nipp'd and ways be foul,  
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
 Tu-whit ;  
 Tu-who, a merry note,  
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow, 910  
 And coughing drowns the parson's saw,  
 And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
 And Marion's nose looks red and raw,

---

900 *the shepherd blows his nail*] Cf. *3 Hen. VI*, II, v, 3: "the shepherd blowing of his nail."

When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,  
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,  
[www.libtool.com](http://www.libtool.com) Tu-whit;  
 Tu-who, a merry note,  
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

ARM. The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs <sup>920</sup>  
 of Apollo. You that way, — we this way. [*Exeunt.*]

912 *roasted crabs*] roasted crab apples. Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 47:

“And sometime lurk I in a gossip’s bowl,  
 In very likeness of a *roasted crab*.”

916 *keel*] Cf. Marston’s *What you will* (1607): “Faith, Dorsicus, my  
 brain boils. *Keel* it, *keel* it, or all the fat’s in the fire,” *i. e.* stir,  
 skim, or pour in something cold in order to prevent the pot from  
 boiling over.

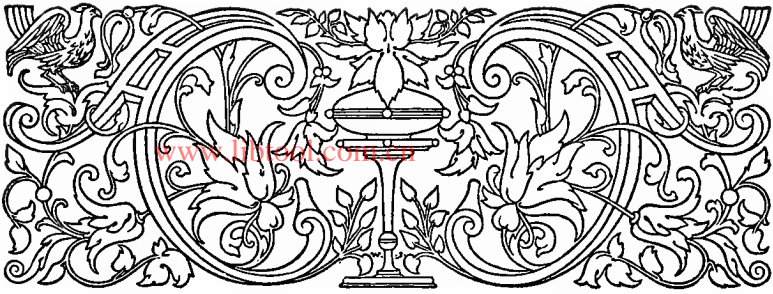
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**THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME II

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**THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY J. WALTER WEST



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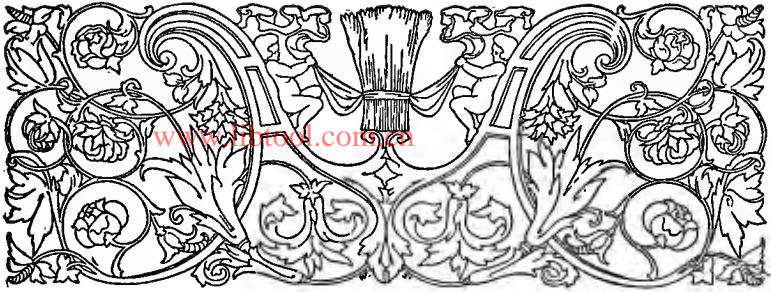
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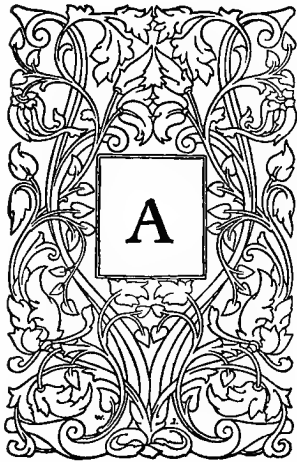
## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO THE MERCHANT OF VENICE BY THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON . . . . .	ix
TEXT OF THE PLAY . . . . .	1

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## INTRODUCTION



**A****FTER** Nature had conceived and brought forth the suzerain of all poetical kings, came Chance and the Genius of Blunder to preside over the birth of the printed text. The malignity of these two powerful foes, however, was relaxed in favour of a few plays. Of these "The Merchant of Venice" was certainly one. The first edition was a quarto published in 1600. This was followed in the same year by another quarto. Between them and the text of the first folio the differences are not sufficiently important to detain us here. That the play existed in 1598 is clear from its figuring in the "Palladis Tamia" of Francis Meres. How much of the plot, and how much of the central idea of a play are invented by a dramatist are not, by any means, such un-

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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important questions as many Shakespearean critics are in the habit of assuming. For, as the present writer has remarked in a treatise upon poetry, "an artist's power of thought is properly shown, not in the direct enunciation of ideas, but in mastery over *motif*." Whether Shakespeare could or could not have invented plots in the same way that Ben Jonson invented plots, or in the same way that Victor Hugo invented the plot of "Le Roi s'Amuse," we have but little means of guessing, for, with the exception of "The Tempest," there is, perhaps, no play of his that shows that he ever tried to do so. As a successful caterer for the public taste he knew that his clients wanted dramatic renderings of familiar plots. He gave them what they wanted, and in doing this brought into play, and developed to perfection, a dramatic faculty above that of any other poet. But it is surely wrong to say that if he had invented all the superb stories (the common property of the legendary lore of the world) which he turned into superb plays, his genius would not have appeared more gigantic than it even now appears. Although it is matter of familiar knowledge, however, that no part of the plot of "The Merchant of Venice" was invented by him, this fact does not prevent certain German critics from writing long treatises upon the plot of the play — treatises in which the mere story is discussed as though it were a great symbolical invention of Shakespeare's charged with profound generalisations on "the spirit of the law," "the letter of the law," and other subjects equally interesting to the frequenters of the old Blackfriars and Globe theatres. Like all wild tales of



## INTRODUCTION

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this kind — tales conceived not by allegorising philosophers, but by a popular imagination with wide wings and no feet, — the story of the bond came from the East. I fail myself to see, as some do, its connection with the story in the “Mahábhárata” of the trial of King Usinára. But there is another Eastern story — a story told in a Persian manuscript (first brought forward in England in 1793), which is really the story of Shylock’s bond, except that the Jew’s cruelty is inspired by lust instead of revenge. As, however, the lost leaves at the beginning and the end of the MS. have never been found, the age of this Persian story remains still uncertain. The first appearance of “The Bond Story” in European literature seems to have been in the “Gesta Romanorum.” In English it first appeared in a translation of the “Cursor Mundi,” made towards the end of the thirteenth century, but first published by the admirable “Early English Text Society” about a quarter of a century ago. In it the prototype of Shylock appears, but not that of Portia. Afterwards came the first English translation of the “Gesta Romanorum,” which gives us the Jew but not the Belmont lady. It was, however, from the story in the “Pecorone,” a fourteenth century collection of stories, by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, that the full plot of “The Merchant of Venice” was taken. Here the Ansaldo of the Italian story evidently suggested the Antonio of Shakespeare. The Jew of this story is a mere money-lender, having no personal animosity against the borrower, and the forfeiture of the pound of Ansaldo’s flesh is inserted by the Jew in the bond, not to “feed fat any ancient grudge,”

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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but apparently to give the lender a free hand for usurious exaction in case the principal should, by chance, remain unpaid at the Feast of St. John. As to Shakespeare's own share in the plot it is even doubtful whether the original blending of the story of the bond with the old story of the caskets was his, for the allusion in Stephen Gosson's "School of Abuse" to the double plot of a play called "The Jew," acted at "The Bull Inn," seems to show that so early as 1579 these two stories had been blended in one play. As to the old ballad of "Gernutus," there is no need to touch upon it here, for, whether it preceded or succeeded "The Jew" mentioned by Gosson, no critic can doubt that "The Bond Story" was an extremely familiar one in England when "The Merchant of Venice" was produced, and this is the all-important fact to consider in the present study of this play.

In discussing dramas whose dramatic action moves in fairyland, like "The Tempest" and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," or plays like "As You Like It," where the action moves in a world of pure fancy, the word "improbable" is, of course, out of place. But a very different kind of play is "The Merchant of Venice," inasmuch as it has the real world for scene. Its main situation of a man signing a bond, the forfeiture of which is the loss of a pound of flesh to be cut from his own bosom, — a situation which even in the Italian story, where the impulse is that of a childless old man's boundless affection for an adopted son, is improbable enough, and it is improbable enough in the Persian story, where the impulse is that of a poverty-stricken Mussulman eager

## INTRODUCTION

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to save from starvation his beloved and beautiful wife. But in Shakespeare's play it becomes more improbable still. Perhaps it may be said, indeed, that of all the Shakespearean dramas "The Merchant of Venice" is the most notable for improbability of *idée mère* and improbability of incident. And yet the unhesitating way in which Shakespeare grapples with the extravagant theme shows the confidence he felt in his power of breathing into any plot, howsoever wild, the breath of dramatic life. Fancy such a story (though commanding as it does the authority of popular legend), being handled by any other dramatist than Shakespeare! But he whose imagination, blowing upon the soul of man as the wind blows upon the Eolian harp, striking an answering music that comes to his touch alone, felt that he could make his audience forget even such improbabilities as these. No doubt it may be said that the minds of Elizabethan playgoers were steeped in stories more or less improbable. And no doubt it may be said that, as regarded the imaginative belief they accorded to a play, those playgoers were deeply influenced by considerations as to whether the story embodied by it was invented by the dramatist, or whether it came to him clothed with the authority of historic chronicle or of familiar tradition. And no doubt it may be said that, just as in old Athens it was always considered that, a dramatist's function being to give a dramatic rendering to familiarly known stories, his dramatic imaginings, moving within a ring of recognised decrees of Fate, must needs be sheltered from incredulous criticism as

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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to the probability of the incidents governed by those decrees, so in England in the time of Shakespeare, when the dramatist went to legendary lore or chronicle lore for his story, the plot was sheltered by the authority of tradition which took the place of the obsolete authority of Fate's awards. And no doubt it may be said that when Ben Jonson boasted of having a kind of special gift of inventing plots, he intended to imply that the *ἀπάτη* sought by him in his new plots was entirely different from the *ἀπάτη* sought by those whose plots were old. Still, it must be said that a play like "The Merchant of Venice," in which real men and women — men and women as full of life as any of those that figure in "Much Ado about Nothing" or "Henry IV" — move in a web of improbabilities such as make the adventures of Oberon, Titania, and "Bully" Bottom in the "wood near Athens" seem almost ordinary, stands by itself even in Elizabethan drama. The same canons of criticism could not be applied to this play that are applied to "A Midsummer Night's Dream" or "The Tempest" because the location of the story is in no haunted wood, in no enchanted isle, but in a city that was as familiar to the English imagination then as it is now. "Every Man in His Humour" is not more firmly fixed in real London than this play is fixed in real Venice — this play where the bond round which the entire dramatic action revolves was signed by a man of affairs — signed by him, not because he was impelled thereto by love of an adopted son, as in the story in "Il Pecorone," or love of a lovely wife in need, as in the story of the Persian MS.,

## INTRODUCTION

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but merely in order to enable a spendthrift friend to go on spending—merely in order to enable a bankrupt Venetian “man about town” to retrieve his fortunes by marrying an heiress. Even had the bond been given to a Venetian and a Christian—a fellow merchant on the Rialto—the inadequacy of the cause of such a compact would have been grotesque enough, as any weaker dramatist than Shakespeare would only too soon have made us see. But it is to a Jew—it is to a member of one of those proscribed races of Europe which must needs cherish hatred towards the proscribing communities among whom they dwell—that Antonio gives the bond. More, it is to a known personal enemy of his that this amazing merchant thus binds himself “in a merry sport”—an enemy who, before even the bond was signed, had done his very best to proclaim his “merry sport” by exhibiting his hatred of the merchant—a hatred that was special and implacable. Even had there been some pretence on the part of Bassanio (who is simply the Giannetto of the Italian story, but more mean) that by entering into this compact Antonio would be succouring a friend devoured by the love-passion, the improbability of the situation would have been startling, but, perhaps, not quite so startling as it is now. In the Italian story Bassanio’s prototype, Giannetto, is deeply in love with the Belmont lady: indeed his love for her is the very *vis matrix* of the dramatic movement, inasmuch as it impels him to countenance his foster-father’s running the monstrous risk of binding himself to the Jew. But nothing that could possibly by any stretch of language be called

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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love, unadulterated by meaner impulses, is brought forward by the man for whose behoof the bond is given in "The Merchant of Venice." Indeed from the lips of a man who knew what the word love means, Bassanio's dawdling talk about love for the "richly left" lady, no genuine words of love could ever have fallen. And this story is worked out by incidents to match the improbable *motif*—such, for instance, as a Jew daring to play the part Shylock plays, even had he been for a moment suffered by the Christians of Venice to attempt to play it—daring to push his way with knife and scales through a Venetian mob in order to cut and weigh the flesh of a Venetian patrician in a Christian court of law. And then the law-court itself—this law-court where a girl disguised as an advocate—(disguised so effectually that although she does not, like the Belmont lady in the Italian story, stain her face, the husband who has just left her recognises neither her face nor her voice) acts and speaks at one moment as an advocate, at another as a judge—this law court of dreamland is supposed to flourish in a city so famous as Venice—a city looming so largely in the eyes of Englishmen. Now, seeing that the appeal of every work of dramatic art must be not merely to the soul of man, but also to the dry light of his intelligence—seeing that it must finally be accepted by the *Verstand* as well as by the *Vernunft*,—seeing, in a word, that it must be based upon what may, for convenience, be called "dramatic logic," what kind of criticism did Elizabethan audiences apply to this play? There was, we may be sure, as much criticism of drama

## INTRODUCTION

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then as now — perhaps more — only it was oral, not written. It was expressed by “the understanding gentlemen of the ground,” as Ben Jonson calls the “groundlings”; it was expressed by the critics and wits from their shilling stools on the stage; it was expressed over cups of flowing sack at the “Mermaid” and the “Falcon.” Here we come to a very interesting point that we must glance at before passing on. Dramatic logic is and must be of two kinds. Just as the dramatists of Greece felt that if the incidents of any drama, howsoever strange and even improbable, had the authenticity of legend, or of Fate’s award, these incidents could not be challenged, — just as Æschylus and Sophocles felt that the only dramatic logic required in such a drama was the logic of truthful characterisation — the logic of a true psychology, — so the workers of the great period of English drama all felt with regard to a play founded upon received tradition, even though its incidents were as improbable as those of “The Merchant of Venice.” Authenticity of legendary incident being granted, the dramatist’s entire attention was focused upon another kind of authenticity — the authenticity of the rendering through true characterisation of the circumstances — circumstances that, as they were marshalled by legend, were acknowledged to be beyond challenge. Only when a dramatist invented his plot was he expected to justify the logical authenticity of the circumstances. Every spectator whom “The Merchant of Venice” enthralled on the occasion when it was first produced knew well enough that Shakespeare was not answerable for the im-

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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probability of the story — knew well enough that, long before it had been worked upon by him, or by the writer, whoever he was, of the earlier drama acted at “The Bull,” this story of the bond and the Jew’s pound of flesh had won the saving sanction of legendary authority. All that the audience asked was that the situations of this well-known tale, howsoever wild they might be found to be when challenged by reason, should be realised by the dramatist with as much truth of characterisation as though the story and the incidents were unimpeachable by the challenge of common-sense. It seems necessary to make these preliminary remarks before dealing with the characterisation in “The Merchant of Venice.”

But even yet there is something to say before the characters in this drama can be adequately discussed. For in order fully to appraise the characterisation in any play, a very important thing to consider is the kind of theatric structure to which the play belongs. Shakespeare had no idea of drama save as acting drama. To him a play was first and foremost a structure, either a closely built structure or a loosely built one. To him all characters in all plays were divisible into those where the structure allows the characters to exhibit themselves untrammelled, or but slightly trammelled, by conditions of plot, and those whom the structure compels to act largely and speak largely in order to carry on the story. In what the present writer on a previous occasion called flexible drama, including the loose-woven comedy and the chronicle play, there is a freedom which gives



## INTRODUCTION

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room for a large amount of characterisation not demanded by the action. In this kind of drama the painter of character, disporting himself at his own sweet will, without giving much attention to the action, is enabled to give us delineations of Falstaff, of Jacques, of Malvolio, of Bobadil, such as are only less elaborate and free than are the characters in prose fiction as it was represented in Shakespeare's time by the "Bachelor's Banquet" of Dekker. Of this kind of character-painting no one was so great a master as Shakespeare. But at the same time no man knew better than he that even in flexible drama the proper definition of the word "play" is still "a story told by action and dialogue." And this is one cause of the immense superiority of his flexible dramatic work to that of Ben Jonson. But there is another kind of drama of which Shakespeare was equally a master, the drama where the *peripeteia* is so powerful and so important — where the expectance of the audience is from the first so keen that elaborate and deliberate characterisation is out of place — out of place because it cools the imagination of the spectator, makes him feel that the dramatist himself is, as mere story teller, losing his interest in the climax of his own story. Now, of this latter kind of drama "The Merchant of Venice" is the very type. As regards any play in which a striking and absorbing *peripeteia* is kept constantly in sight, it is pertinent to ask, "How many characters here are of necessity plot-ridden? — and which are they?" In the case of "The Merchant of Venice" the answer is, "All are more or less plot-ridden but one — Shylock." Almost as untram-

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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melled by plot as Hamlet himself is Shakespeare's wonderful Jew.

About ~~the other characters~~ in the play we have not room to say much. Yet a word or two must be said about Antonio and that "sadness" of his which he and his friends are at so much pains to bring prominently into notice as soon as the play begins. In the fancy-land of "As You Like It" we do not expect the melancholy of Jacques to have anything to do with the plot, but it is quite otherwise with the melancholy of Antonio in this play.

"In sooth, I know not why I am so sad,"

he begins by saying. But the student of Shakespeare never doubts the cause of that sadness. Inasmuch as this kind of descriptive character painting properly belongs to flexible drama — to loose comedies and chronicle plays — and not to plays like "The Merchant of Venice," the student of Shakespeare asks at once why Antonio's sadness is here introduced with such emphasis by a great master of stage-craft except for some purposes of plot. Although at first sight this sadness may seem not to be needed for moving on the mechanism of the story, the dramatic student knows that it will soon be found working very vigorously towards that end, for the work is the work of Shakespeare. He expects that in the theatric mechanism about to unfold itself, these characteristics (which are so pronounced as to be actual idiosyncrasies) have some special and peculiar function or they would not be introduced in a play of this kind. He expects, in a word,

## INTRODUCTION

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that the melancholy of Antonio so elaborately dwelt upon in the opening lines of a play like this—a play with a *vis matrix* so powerful—would not be introduced by a great master of theatric means and ends save for the purpose of the plot. And when he remembers that the dramatist is Shakespeare, he never doubts that the sadness is an indication that the merchant is going to be a plot-ridden character upon whom the protagonist is to act. For it is one of the specialities of Shakespeare's art that in order to understand the character of the protagonist and his springs of action you must also understand the other characters upon whom his energies are to exert themselves. It is this, indeed, which knits Shakespeare's dramatic world into one web—it is this which makes that web immortal. For instance, when Macbeth stood before Duncan's chamber door, had his design been merely to stab one of the sleeping grooms, that air-drawn dagger of his would have seemed out of place, out of proportion in the tragic situation.

And consider the colossal character of the protagonist in "The Merchant of Venice"—this Jew, panting for revenge, turned into a fearless, raging wolf by the abduction, and (to him) prostitution of his only child whose love he prized even more than the stolen ducats. Suppose that the merchant upon whom he was to act had been of the same light strain as Gratiano, as Lorenzo, as Bassanio, or even as Portia, what worthy and adequate material would there have been for the tremendous worker of the tragic mischief to work upon? If Antonio, the victim of Shylock's rage, were like these airy Venetian

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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patricians, would not the Jew's mighty malice have lost half its effect? In such a case, would it not have appeared that the semi-tragic intensity of the dramatic action had been set a-working in order to break upon a wheel one of the feckless butterflies of pleasure-loving Venice? The fact, then, seems to be that Shakespeare felt that another serious character besides Shylock was needed — imperatively demanded — to give the proper importance to the protagonist Shylock himself. He felt that the Jew's figure was too tragic to be sent alone into this playful country of comedy where the language was that of badinage, the atmosphere that of the dalliance and amusement of Belmont's moonlit banks. Hence the merchant is sad by compulsion of plot. And in delineating that sadness, there seems to have been nothing left to the dramatist but to treat him as he might have been treated in flexible drama or in a prose sketch by Dekker, delineate him in a leisurely way as a melancholy man and set the characters talking about his sadness — delineate him thus for the reason that an ordinary light-hearted Venetian would not have made a sufficiently important anvil for Shylock's tremendous hammer to fall upon. It has seemed necessary to discuss the questions rather fully, because many explanations of this sadness, all very profound and all very superfluous, have been advanced and are still being advanced by critics, each one showing that criticism may be too acute and too profound for Truth, may sound with too heavy and pretentious a plummet her well. If we will only leave subtleties and consider those simple laws of cause and effect in dramatic

## INTRODUCTION

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art which alone seem to have occupied Shakespeare's mind when at work upon a play, we shall not go far wrong. Some have actually asked whether Antonio's sadness was not a premonition of the dangers and troubles in store for him, forgetting that such a premonition must have prevented his signing that bond, if nothing else did.

And if the mainspring of the play—the terrible revenge of the Jew—compelled Antonio to be plot-ridden, what about the other characters? What about Portia, Fanny Kemble's beloved Portia—Portia whom our great actress, Ellen Terry, has made a living personality for all English-speaking peoples of our time? Is she a plot-ridden character too? Not entirely plot-ridden, perhaps, yet in many ways so trammelled that even she is too often found acting and speaking for no other purpose than to carry on the story. Even she does not always show that freedom and *abandon* of nature which makes Desdemona, Ophelia, Cordelia, Imogen, living women—more living than most of the women surrounding us in real life. Fascinating as is the sweet lady of Belmont, in whom we seem sometimes to get a foretaste of many another sweet lady since born into the world of imagination, even she is weighted as regards thorough characterisation by heavy conditions of plot—the heaviest of all being that she has to marry Bassanio in order that the comedy, which had already become too serious, should end with the marriage bells. Although Antonio speaks of his friend as standing ever “within the eye of honour,” we must needs ask, Can a man really marry

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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a girl because she is "richly left" and yet be a fit lover for a heroine — and such a heroine as in her essence is Portia? The selfishness of Bassanio's prototype, Giannetto, towards Ansaldo in "Il Pecorone" was as nothing when compared with Bassanio's selfishness in letting his friend enter into such a bond in order to marry a girl because she is "richly left." Giannetto, in the Italian story, as we have seen, really loved "the lady of Belmont," and might have been — perhaps was, — a gentleman. His selfishness had, at least, the sacred sanction of a burning passion.

As regards those worldly-wise apothegms, after the manner of Polonius, in which Portia delights, they give us no insight into her character — they are so little dramatic, indeed, that it is difficult to distinguish them from the worldly-wise sayings of her companion Nerissa. There seems to be no dramatic distinction whatever between Portia's apothegm, "The brain may devise laws for the blood; but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree," and Nerissa's two sayings that "They are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing"; "Superfluity comes sooner by white hairs; but competency lives longer."

Shylock, then, seems to be the one character in this play who acts and speaks, in the main, untrammelled by the chains of plot. Upon Shakespeare's delineation of this character an entire book might be written. In a treatise on poetry in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" the present writer ventured to divide dramatic imagination into two

## INTRODUCTION

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kinds. One he called absolute dramatic vision because it seems to be unconditioned by the personal or lyrical impulse of the poet. The other he called relative dramatic vision because it shows itself to be more or less conditioned by the poet's personal or lyrical impulse. When the former of these two kinds of vision is at work we get such perfect truth of dramatic representation that the dramatist's personality may be said to disappear. The "divinity" which Iamblichus speaks of seems to "seize for the time the soul" of the dramatist, "and guide it as he will." Various poems and other imaginative writings were on that occasion indicated, such as "The Iliad," "The Oresteia," "The Volsunga Saga," and especially certain plays of Shakespeare's, where instances are to be found of both absolute and relative dramatic vision. Although there is a deal in the body of Shakespeare's work where only relative dramatic vision is to be found, this is because in rendering the dramatic scenes, not even his marvellous forces are always aroused to the full focus, and because when they are not so aroused, even he is unable to conquer the lyrical or egoistical impulse, or else unable to conquer the anti-dramatic suggestions of the legendary or historic substance upon which he is at work. But the moment his forces are so aroused and focused, as in the great passages in Hamlet, Othello, and Macbeth, then "the divinity seizes for the time his soul and guides it as he will." On these happy occasions the character that he is creating insists upon speaking for himself, whether his creator wills it or not, and regardless of the web of plot in which he is moving.

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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Now let us for a few minutes subject "The Merchant of Venice," as regards Shylock, to this test. It will be interesting.

His first appearance is as the Jew of the popular imagination—the Jew as Marlowe might have painted him. But, as the play goes on the character seems to be struggling with his creator, and at last conquers him, seems to tear through the web of the plot and speak for himself. At the opening of the play it is evident that when Shakespeare set to work upon some old play, probably "The Jew" at "The Bull," his feeling about Shylock was not very distinguishable from Marlowe's feeling about Barabas. At first, before his imagination is thoroughly aroused, it is dominated by reminiscences either of Barabas or of some other Jew in some earlier play.

"How like a fawning publican he looks!  
I hate him for he is a Christian."

To say this is not to impeach Shakespeare's goodness of heart—not to impeach his moral nature. To us in these days it seems, no doubt, that among all the spectacles of human wickedness, malignity, and folly which have been making "the angels weep" for ages upon ages, the most ghastly of all, the most humiliating of all, and yet the most grotesque of all is that long record of the persecution of the Jews the monstrous scripture of which is traced in the past by the idiot fingers of Superstition in letters of blood and fire. To us, no doubt, it seems that, grievous as were the wrongs of Europe's other *races maudites*, the crowning martyrs of man's cruelty, folly,



## INTRODUCTION

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and wickedness were Shylock's brethren — the race, that is, from whose loins sprang He whom their crazy persecutors called — even while they heaped the fagots for the *auto-da-fe* — “The Saviour of the World.” But we must remember that, although to the honour of our country History must declare that England's cruelty to the Jews was less hideous than that of any other country in Europe, it was still, in Shakespeare's time, hideous beyond words — shameful beyond words. Scarcely any atrocity was so great that it would not be charged against a Jew — scarcely any cruelty would be considered excessive as a punishment for the crime of being a Jew. “A man is more like the age in which he lives than he is like his own father and mother,” says the Chinese aphorism, and it would be surprising, indeed, if we were to find even Shakespeare to be uninfluenced by the wicked folly of anti-semitism which was in the very air he breathed. The popular idea of a Jew in England was still the idea of Marlowe. The Jew, as he represented antichrist and all that was hostile to human kind, had no rights at all. Shakespeare was influenced by these prejudices when he sat down to write “The Merchant of Venice” as every line in the opening of the play shows. But mark the Nemesis which comes to him who allows personal bias to cripple the wings of his imagination! In consequence of this anti-semitism Shakespeare makes mistakes in the opening scenes — mistakes which show a failure of vision such as he could never have made had he given full play to his imagination and allowed himself to live for the time being in the character he was

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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delineating. Whenever this bias of the period declares itself in the play we get a failure in dramatic vision. Before his imagination had free play, — before the “divinity” had seized his soul and bent it to his will, he gives us relative vision only. Let one instance of this suffice. It is made evident that the idea of utilising the loan as a means of revenge flashed across the mind of Shylock the moment that the bondman’s name was suggested by Bassanio. This being so, the last thing that so wary a dealer as he would do would be to let the proposed borrowers know his murderous feelings about Antonio. He would wait until he should get them well into his net, for these borrowers were no children, as he well knew; they were accomplished men of the world — one of them a successful and therefore an acute merchant on the Rialto. But the absolute vision of his creator is not yet awake. Consequently this is what Shylock is made to say to the borrowers (or rather this is what he is made to yell to them in a frenzy of passion, if we are to believe the actors who take this part) —

“ You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.  
What should I say to you? Should I not say  
‘Hath a dog money? is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?’ or  
Shall I bend low and in a bondman’s key,  
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,  
Say this, —

## INTRODUCTION

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‘ Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last ;  
You spurn’d me such a day ; another time  
You call’d me dog ; and for these courtesies  
I’ll lend you thus much moneys ? ’ ”

Unless these words were intended to be uttered in the pretended playful way which might possibly come to so subtle a mind as Shylock’s before proposing the bond “in sport” they seem to be so extremely undramatic as uttered at such a moment that, were it not for Antonio’s reply we might be almost inclined to suspect that Shakespeare originally wrote them to be muttered aside. We feel that Bassanio and Antonio, not being idiots, could not have believed the bond to be given “in a merry sport,” and up to this point we refuse to give the dramatist our entire imaginative belief. But whatever Shakespeare might have intended when he began to delineate Shylock he ended by almost making him the representative of a great race wronged. Not that the spectator sees less clearly than he saw before the cruelty of Shylock’s yearning for the pound of his enemy’s flesh ; but by that instinct of universal sympathy which in Shakespeare, when his imagination is fully aroused, seems sometimes unconscious and involuntary, he made the spectator at the same time see and understand another cruelty — a cruelty greater than Shylock’s own — that of the race to which his persecuting bondman belonged. And as the dramatic action goes on, the marvellous imagination of the dramatist becomes more and more aroused as scene after scene comes up in which the wrongs done to Shylock by his Christian foes accumulate.

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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And why is Jessica made such an impossible Jewess? Why is this daughter of a race with whom filial affection is a religion ~~— this representative~~ of Jewish girls in whose mouths the words “old man and old woman” are not words of contemptuous tolerance, as with the girls of the Gentiles, but words of honour and reverence, — why is she painted as a burglarious young ingrate who lacks all feeling of filial affection, whose callousness for her living father is equalled by her callousness for the memory of her dead mother? It is because the dramatist has subtle uses for her that he makes her the most plot-ridden character of the entire play. She forsakes her father and the religion of her race in order that Shylock’s awful malice may be, if not justified, at least explained. When we hear her say to her abductor, as she hands him the stolen ducats, —

“I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some mo’ ducats, and be with you straight,”

and when afterwards we hear Venice ring with gibes at Shylock because he is so wronged, so forsaken and so lonely, — when we hear how

“All the boys in Venice follow him,  
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats!”

we sympathise with him even while we rejoice to see his vengeance frustrated. From this point there are in the play no more failures of vision as regards Shylock. The Jew makes us feel as we would have felt had we been that wronged father. By the very ring of the words, in

## INTRODUCTION

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his great invective in the third act we are captured, our reason is made to stand convinced.

“ He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million ; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies ; and what’s his reason ? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes ? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is ? If you prick us, do we not bleed ? if you tickle us, do we not laugh ? if you poison us, do we not die ? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge ? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility ? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example ? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute ; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.”

And when the news is forced upon the old man that his beloved child is so lost to all womanliness as to have bartered her dead mother’s turquoise for a monkey, and we hear the father’s pitiful exclamation, —

“ 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 ; ” —

then at last the triumph of the rageful Jew is complete, — the creature of the poet’s own genius has conquered the poet. “ When I saw this play at Drury Lane,” says Heine, speaking of Kean’s impersonation, “ there stood behind me in the box a pale fair Briton, who at the end

## MERCHANT OF VENICE

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of the fourth act fell a-weeping passionately, several times exclaiming, ‘The poor man is wronged!’”

Although “The Merchant of Venice,” then, for the reasons given above, does not as a whole rank among Shakespeare’s great dramas, it is made by Shylock as important as any one of the greatest in aiding us to gauge the range of the dramatist’s sympathetic vision. Not more surely does Hamlet show us the unique intelligence of Shakespeare trying in vain to solve the insoluble problem of the universe — not more surely does Othello show the same intelligence confronting the direst of all the soul’s conflicts, when

“To be wroth with one we love  
Doth work like madness in the brain,”

than “The Merchant of Venice” shows that same intelligence confronting another spectacle as wonderful as these — the spectacle of the human race immeshed — strangled in the web of racial and social sophisms which it has been weaving for itself ever since civilisation began. Had this play never been written — were there no Shylock in the varied roll of Shakespearean characters, the sweep of the “oceanic mind” could not have been revealed to us as fully as now it stands revealed.

THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON.

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# **THE MERCHANT OF VENICE**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

The DUKE OF VENICE.

The PRINCE OF MOROCCO, }  
The PRINCE OF ARRAGON, } suitors to Portia.

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.

SALANIO, }

SALARINO, } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.

GRATIANO, }

SALERIO,<sup>2</sup> }

LORENZO, in love with Jessica.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.

BALTHASAR, }

STEPHANO, } servants to Portia.

PORTIA, a rich heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-maid.

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler,  
Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

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

<sup>1</sup> DRAMATIS PERSONÆ] This play was originally printed separately in quarto in 1600, when two editions appeared. The second edition was reprinted in the collective First Folio of 1623. A third issue, in quarto, of 1637, introduced a list of "dramatis personæ," omissions in which have been supplied by later editors. The quartos do not divide the play into either acts or scenes. The First Folio indicates the acts only. Nicholas Rowe in 1709 first indicated the scenes.

<sup>2</sup> *Salerio*] See note on III, ii, 221, *infra*.

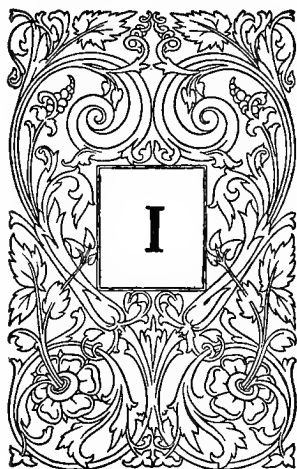




ACT FIRST — SCENE I — VENICE

A STREET

ANTONIO *Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*



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.

SALAR. Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;  
There, where your argosies with portly sail,  
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,

10

11 *pageants*] An allusion to the huge, towering machines in the shape of castles, dragons, giants, and the like, which formed part of ancient shows, and were drawn on ceremonial occasions through the streets.

Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
 That curt'sy to them, do them reverence,  
 As they fly by them with their woven wings.

SALAN. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,  
 The better part of my affections would  
 Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still  
 Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind ;  
 Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads ;  
 And every object, that might make me fear  
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt  
 Would make me sad.

20

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

30

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29 *kiss her burial*] touch her burial place, sink.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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But tell not me ; I know, Antonio  
Is sad to think upon his merchandise. 40

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

SALAR. Why, then you are in love.

ANT. Fie, fie !

SALAR. Not in love neither ? Then let us say you  
are sad,

Because you are not merry : and 't were as easy  
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry,  
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus, 50  
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time :  
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,  
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper ;  
And other of such vinegar aspect,  
That they 'll not show their teeth in way of smile,  
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

*Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO*

SALAR. Here comes Bassanio, your most noble kins-  
man,

Gratiano, and Lorenzo. Fare ye well :  
We leave you now with better company.

SALAR. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry, 60  
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

---

49 *laugh, and leap*] Cf. *Sonnet* xcvi, 4: "That heavy Saturn *laugh'd*  
*and leap'd* with him."

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

SALAR. Good morrow, my good lords.

BASS. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh ? say,  
when ?

You grow exceeding strange : must it be so ?

SALAR. We 'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*]

LOR. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found  
Antonio,

We two will leave you : but, at dinner-time,

70

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.

80

67 *You grow exceeding strange*] You are become quite strangers.

74 *respect upon the world*] worldly care, anxiety.

78 *A stage . . . part*] This familiar figure Shakespeare developed most completely in the well-known passage in *As you like it*, II, vii, 139-166: "All the world 's a stage."

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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, 90  
 With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
 Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;  
 As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,  
 And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!"  
 O my Antonio, I do know of these,  
 That therefore only are reputed wise  
 For saying nothing; when, I am very sure,  
 If they should speak, would almost damn those  
     ears,  
 Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.  
 I'll tell thee more of this another time: 100  
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait,  
 For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.

---

84 *cut in alabaster*] an effigy on an alabaster tomb.

89 *Do cream . . . pond*] Acquire the cream-like mantle or coating  
 which gathers on a stagnant pool.

90-92 *And do a wilful stillness entertain . . . conceit*] And maintain an  
 obstinate silence with a view to acquiring a reputation for wisdom,  
 gravity, and deep thought.

98-99 *damn . . . fools*] a reference to the Scriptural admonition,  
 "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hellfire,"  
*Matt. v, 22.*

101 *melancholy bait*] bait of melancholy.

Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile :  
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

ANT. Farewell : I'll grow a talker for this gear. 110

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

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*]

ANT. Is that 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, 120  
That you to-day promised to tell me of ?

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

---

110 *gear*] stuff, business, used colloquially in a contemptuous sense.  
Here *for this gear* seems equivalent to "after this idle talk." The  
expression is repeated in II, ii, 152, *infra*, in the sense "for this  
sort of business."

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

Is, to come fairly off from the great debts,  
 Wherein my time, something too prodigal,  
 Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio, 130  
 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 unlock'd to your occasions.

BASS. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft, 140  
 I shot his fellow of the self-same flight  
 The self-same way with more advised watch,  
 To find the other forth ; and by adventuring both,  
 I oft found both : I urge this childhood proof,  
 Because what follows is pure innocence.  
 I owe you much ; and, like a wilful youth,  
 That which I owe is lost : but if you please  
 To shoot another arrow that self way  
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,  
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both, 150  
 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 ;

---

141 *of the self-same flight*] of the same capacity of flight. Cf. Ascham's *Toxophilus* (ed. Arber, p. 131): "You must have divers shafts of one flight."

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.

160

BASS. In Belmont is a lady richly left ;  
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,  
 Of wondrous virtues : sometimes from her eyes  
 I did receive fair speechless messages :  
 Her name is Portia ; nothing undervalued  
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia :  
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth ;  
 For the four winds blow in from every coast  
 Renowned suitors : and her sunny locks  
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece ;  
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strond,  
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
 O my Antonio, had I but the means  
 To hold a rival place with one of them,  
 I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
 That I should questionless be fortunate !

170

ANT. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea ;

160 *prest*] ready. French, *prêt*. Cotgrave's *French-English Dictionary* gives the French word as "prest" and includes the identical word among its English synonyms. The word is found only once elsewhere in Shakespeare's plays — in *Pericles*, Act IV, Prol. 45.

161 *richly left*] left well off, an heiress.

175 *such thrift*] such thriving, good success. Cf. *Hamlet*, III, ii, 70 :  
 "Where *thrift* may follow fawning."



## SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

Neither have I money, nor commodity  
To raise a present sum : therefore go forth ;  
Try what my credit can in Venice do : 180  
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,  
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.  
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,  
Where money is ; and I no question make,  
To have it of my trust, or for my sake. [Exeunt.]

### SCENE II — BELMONT

#### A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

POR. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is awearry  
of this great world.

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

POR. Good sentences, and well pronounced.

NER. They would be better, if well followed. 10

POR. If to do were as easy as to know what were

---

SCENE II. Of this scene *Two Gent.*, Act I, Scene ii, seems to form the  
rough draft.

9 sentences] maxims (Latin, *sententiae*). Cf. *Tw. Night*, III, i, 10-11 :  
“ A sentence is but a cheveril glove to a good wit.”

good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood; but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word "choose"! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none? 20

NER. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men, at their death, have good inspirations: therefore, the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead,—whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you,—will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these 30 princely suitors that are already come?

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

21-22 *will . . . will*] Shakespeare rarely misses an opportunity of punning on the word "will." For the present form of the jest cf. *M. Wives*, III, iv, 58: "What is your *will*?" On the various developments of the pun in Shakespeare, see Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Appendix VIII, "The 'Will' Sonnets," 5th edition, pp. 432 seq.

54 *level at*] aim at, guess at.

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

NER. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

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

NER. Then there is the County Palatine. 40

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

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

POR. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but, he! — why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a

---

40 *the County Palatine*] The rank of Count Palatine, which dated from the Roman Empire, was held by many great landed proprietors in various parts of middle and eastern Europe, though it was commonly held to belong exclusively to the Pfalzgraf or Count Palatine of the Rhine. Here, as elsewhere in this scene, Shakespeare is doubtlessly making playful allusion to distinguished foreigners who had lately visited England. In 1583 a Polish nobleman, Albert Alasco, Count Palatine of Seradia, spent much time in the country, and attracted much popular attention.

43-44 *weeping philosopher*] An allusion to the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, who is usually contrasted with Democritus, "the laughing philosopher."

better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine : he is every man in no man ; if a throstle sing, he falls straight a capering : he will fence with his own shadow : if I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me, I would forgive him ; for if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

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

60

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

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

POR. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him ; 70 for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able : I think the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another.

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

73 *sealed under*] A legal expression implying that the bond or surety was entered into vicariously, in behalf of some other person who was responsible. Similar phraseology appears in *Sonnet* cxxxiv, 7, 8. "Your single bond" (cf. I, iii, 140, *infra*) is a bond of a more stringent kind which allow no devolution of responsibility.

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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. 80

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

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

NER. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these jords : 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. 90

POR. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable ; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence ; and I pray God grant them a fair departure. 99

95 *Sibylla*] An obvious reference to the story of Sibylla, the Cumæan Sibyl, in Ovid, *Met.*, XIV, 130 *seq.*, where Apollo promises her as many years of life as the grains of sand she holds in her hand. Cf. *Othello*, III, iv, 70-71.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT I

---

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

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

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

POR. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

*Enter a Serving-man*

How now! what news?

109

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

POR. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.

Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another  
knocks at the door.

*[Exeunt. 120]*

---

110 *The four strangers*] Portia has already described the suitors who are about to take leave of her as six in number. "Four," which is repeated in line 115, is either a misprint for *six*, or this passage may present an unrevised relic of a first draft of the play.

SCENE III THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

SCENE III — VENICE

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A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK*

SHY. Three thousand ducats ; well.

BASS. Ay, sir, for three months.

SHY. For three months ; well.

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

SHY. Antonio shall become bound ; well.

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

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

BASS. Your answer to that.

SHY. Antonio is a good man.

BASS. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary ?

SHY. Ho, 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 un-

1 *Three thousand ducats*] "Ducat" was the name of a Venetian coin cast both in gold and silver. The gold ducat was worth about ten shillings, and the silver ducat under five shillings. Like other Elizabethan writers, Shakespeare seems to use the term here to mean a coin of great worth without attaching to it a very precise value. As the story is told in the *Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni, the Jew's loan amounts to ten thousand ducats of gold. "Double ducats," twice the value of single ducats, were also coins in common use at Venice. Cf. II, viii, 19, *infra*.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT I

---

derstand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men : there be land-rats and water-rats, water-thieves and land-thieves, I mean pirates ; and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats ; I think I may take his bond.

BASS. Be assured you may.

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

BASS. If it please you to dine with us.

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

*Enter ANTONIO*

BASS. This is Signior Antonio.

SHY. [*Aside*] How like a fawning publican he looks !

---

18 *Rialto*] Cf. Florio's *Italian Dict.*: "An eminent place in Venice, where the Marchants commonly meete, as on the Exchange at London." The famous bridge at Venice, called after the Exchange, Ponte di Rialto, was not built until 1591.

30 *Nazarite*] a native of Nazareth, as in early translations of the Bible. Cf. *Matt.*, ii, 23, where the A. V. of 1611 substitutes "Nazarene." In the Old Testament "Nazarite" is exclusively applied to persons who have vowed to follow a rigidly simple mode of life, and is in no way connected with the city of Nazareth.



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. 40  
 If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.  
 He hates our sacred nation ; and he rails,  
 Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
 On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,  
 Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe,  
 If I forgive him !

BASS. Shylock, do you hear ?

SHY. I am debating of my present store ;  
 And, by the near guess of my memory,  
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross 50  
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that ?  
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
 Will furnish me. But soft ! how many months  
 Do you desire ? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior ;  
 Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

ANT. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow,  
 By taking nor by giving of excess,  
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
 I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd  
 How much ye would ?

SHY. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats. 60

ANT. And for three months.

---

57 *excess*] interest, that which when the loan is repaid is in excess of the sum lent.

SHY. I had forgot ; three months, you told me so.  
Well then, your bond ; and let me see ; but hear you ;  
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow  
Upon advantage.

ANT. I do never use it.

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

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

70

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 eanings which were streak'd and pied  
Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,  
In the end of Autumn turned to the rams ;  
And when the work of generation was  
Between these woolly breeders in the act,  
The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands,  
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,  
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,  
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time  
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.  
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest :  
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

80

ANT. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for ;  
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.

66 *seq.*] Shakespeare here paraphrases and interprets on original lines  
the passage from *Genesis*, xxx, 37 *seq.*

Was this inserted to make interest good ?  
 Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams ?

90

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

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

SHY. 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 beholding to  
 you ?

100

SHY. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
 In the Rialto you have rated me  
 About my moneys and my usances :  
 Still have I borne it with a patient shrug ;  
 For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.  
 You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,  
 And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
 And all for use of that which is mine own.  
 Well then, it now appears you need my help :  
 Go to, then ; you come to me, and you say  
 “ Shylock, we would have moneys : ” you say so ;

110

---

104 *shrug*] Cf. Marlowe's earlier description of Barabas in *The Jew of Malta*, II, iii, 23-24 :

“ I learned in Florence how to kiss the hand,  
 Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog.”

You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
 And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
 Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.  
 What should I say to you? Should I not say  
 "Hath a dog money? is it possible  
 A cur can lend three thousand ducats?" or  
 Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,  
 With bated breath and whispering humbleness,  
 Say this, —

120

"Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;  
 You spurn'd me such a day; another time  
 You call'd me dog; and for these courtesies  
 I'll lend you thus much moneys"?

ANT. I am as like to call thee so again,  
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.  
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not  
 As to thy friends; for when did friendship take  
 A breed for barren metal of his friend?  
 But lend it rather to thine enemy;  
 Who if he break, thou mayst with better face  
 Exact the penalty.

130

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

BASS. This were kindness.

SHY. This kindness will I show.  
 Go with me to a notary, seal me there

SCENE III THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport, 140  
 If you repay me not on such a day,  
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are  
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit  
 Be nominated for an equal pound  
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken  
 In what part of your body pleaseth me.

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

BASS. You shall not seal to such a bond for me :  
 I'll rather dwell in my necessity. 150

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

SHY. O father Abram, what these Christians are,  
 Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect  
 The thoughts of others ! Pray you, tell me this ;  
 If he should break his day, what should I gain  
 By the exaction of the forfeiture ?  
 A pound of man's flesh taken from a man 160  
 Is not so estimable, profitable neither,  
 As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,  
 To buy his favour, I extend this friendship :  
 If he will take it, so ; if not, adieu ;  
 And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

140 *single bond*] a bond involving one person exclusively ; an engagement, responsibility for which cannot be devolved on another ; a bond that cannot be sealed under" by another. See note on I, ii, 73, *supra*.

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

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

170

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

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

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



ACT SECOND—SCENE I—BELMONT  
A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

*Flourish of Cornets. Enter the PRINCE OF MOROCCO and his train; PORTIA, NERISSA, and others attending*

MOROCCO



DISLIKE ME NOT FOR  
my complexion,  
The shadow'd livery of the bur-  
nish'd sun,  
To whom I am a neighbour and  
near bred.  
Bring me the fairest creature  
northward born,  
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws  
the icicles,  
And let us make incision for  
your love,  
To prove whose blood is reddest,  
his or mine.

I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine  
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love, I swear  
The best-regarded virgins of our clime

10

Have loved it too : I would not change this hue,  
 Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

POR. In terms of choice I am not solely led  
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes ;  
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny  
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing :  
 But if my father had not scanted me  
 And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself  
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,  
 Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair  
 As any comer I have look'd on yet  
 For my affection.

20

MOR. Even for that I thank you :  
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,  
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar  
 That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince  
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,  
 I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,  
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,  
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,  
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,  
 To win thee, lady. But, alas the while !  
 If Hercules and Lichas play at dice

30

25-26 *Sophy* . . . *Solyman*] The "Sophy" was a title commonly bestowed on the Shah or Emperor of Persia. Solyman the Magnificent, the greatest of the sultans of the Ottoman Empire, was defeated in an attack on Persia in 1535.

32 *Lichas*] The servant of Hercules who unwittingly brought him the poisoned shirt of Nessus, which caused the hero's death. The story is told in Ovid, *Met.*, IX, 155 *seq.* Ovid calls Hercules indif-



SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

Which is the better man, the greater throw  
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand  
So is Alcides beaten by his page ;  
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,  
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,  
And die with grieving.

POR. You must take your chance ;  
And either not attempt to choose at all,  
Or swear before you choose, if you choose wrong, 40  
Never speak to lady afterward  
In way of marriage : therefore be advised.

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

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

MOR. Good fortune then !  
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.  
[*Cornets, and exeunt.*]

SCENE II — VENICE

A STREET

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

LAUN. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run  
from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow,

---

ferently by this name and that of Alcides, as in line 35, *infra*, and in III. ii. 55.

35 *page*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *rage*, which might possibly make sense.

1 *will serve*] The context seems to require "will not serve," "will forbid." See lines 5-8, *infra*. The original reading implies that "will" is employed in the emphatic and coercive sense of "must," "is bound to."

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

7-8 *scorn running with thy heels*] scorn counsel of flight with every gesture of contempt, like a young horse kicking or shying at every object which moves its dislike. Cf. *Much Ado*, III, iv, 43-44: "Illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels."

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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counsel : I will run, fiend ; my heels are at your command ; I will run.

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*Enter Old Gobbo, with a basket*

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

LAUN. [*Aside*] O heavens, this is my true-begotten <sup>30</sup> father ! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel blind, knows me not : I will try confusions with him.

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

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

GOB. By God's sonties, 't will be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells <sup>40</sup> with him, dwell with him or no ?

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

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

---

<sup>31</sup> *sand-blind, high-gravel blind*] In the exuberance of his wit Launcelot duplicates synonyms for "purblind." With "sand-blind" and "gravel-blind" cf. "stone-blind," which was in common use for "completely blind." "High," in "high-gravel blind," is employed as an intensive.

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

GOB. Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir. 50

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

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

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

GOB. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop. 60

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

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

LAUN. Do you not know me, father?

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

LAUN. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of 70  
your son: give me your blessing: truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long; a man's son may; but, at the length, truth will out.

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

LAUN. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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. 80

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

LAUN. It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward: I am sure he had more hair of his tail than I have of my face when I last saw him. 90

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

LAUN. Well, well: but, for my own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to

---

85 *what a beard, etc.*] According to stage tradition, Launcelot kneels down with his back towards old Gobbo, who, touching the hair of his son's head, mistakes it for a beard.

him, father ; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

103

*Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other followers*

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

*[Exit a Servant.]*

LAUN. To him, father.

GOB. God bless your worship !

BASS. Gramercy ! wouldst thou aught with me ?

110

GOB. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

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

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

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

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

119

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.

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

BASS. One speak for both. What would you ?

LAUN. Serve you, sir.

GOB. That is the very defect of the matter, sir. 130

BASS. I know thee well ; thou hast obtain'd thy  
suit :

Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,  
And hath preferr'd thee, if it be preferment  
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become  
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

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

BASS. Thou speak'st it well. Go, father, with thy  
son.

Take leave of thy old master and inquire 140  
My lodging out. Give him a livery  
More guarded than his fellows' : see it done.

LAUN. Father, in. I cannot get a service, no ; I have  
ne'er a tongue in my head. Well, if any man in Italy  
have a fairer table which doth offer to swear upon a book,

137-138 *the grace of God*] The old English proverb ran, "The grace of  
God is better than riches." In Scotland it took the shape, "God's  
grace is gear enough."

142 *More guarded*] Better trimmed, ornamented with more lace or gold  
braid, which usually edged a garment and "guarded" it from  
fraying.

145 *table*] The speaker is here looking at the palm of his hand, which  
in palmistry was technically known as the "table."

*which doth offer . . . book*] which gives positive assurance. To  
"swear upon a book" is to take an oath of the most binding  
force.

I shall have good fortune. Go to, here's a simple line of life: here's a small trifle of wives: alas, fifteen wives is nothing! a leaven widows and nine maids is a simple coming-in for one man: and then to 'scape drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather-bed; here are simple scapes. Well, if Fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. Father, come; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt Launcelot and Old Gobbo.* 154

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

LEON. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

*Enter GRATIANO*

GRA. Where is your master?

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

GRA. Signior Bassanio, — 160

BASS. Gratiano!

GRA. I have a suit to you.

BASS. You have obtain'd it.

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

BASS. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:

Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;  
Parts that become thee happily enough,

152 *for this gear*] See note on I, i, 110, *supra*.



SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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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 170  
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, 180  
Like one well studied in a sad ostent  
To please his grandam, never trust me more.

BASS. Well, we shall see your bearing.

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

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

GRA. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest : 190  
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*]

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181 *sad ostent*] serious aspect or demeanor.

SCENE III—THE SAME  
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 A ROOM IN SHYLOCK'S HOUSE

*Enter JESSICA and LAUNCELOT*

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

LAUN. Adieu ! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beau- 10  
 tiful pagan, most sweet Jew ! if a Christian did not play  
 the knave, and get thee, I am much deceived. But,  
 adieu : these foolish drops do something drown my  
 manly spirit : adieu.

JES. Farewell, good Launcelot. [*Exit Launcelot.*]

---

10 *exhibit my tongue*] show what my tongue ought to express. The suggestion that Launcelot is here committing a verbal blunder, "exhibit" for "prohibit" or "inhibit," seems unnecessary.

11 *did not play*] This reading of the Second Folio has been generally adopted, and gives the meaning that Launcelot doubts Shylock to be Jessica's father. "Get" is very frequently used in the sense of "beget." The reading of the Quartos and First Folio "*do not play*," credits Launcelot with the hope that a Christian will steal Jessica away and marry her. The emendation "*did*" gives a more pointed sense.

SCENE IV THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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.

20

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV — THE SAME

A STREET

*Enter GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SALANIO*

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

GRA. We have not made good preparation.

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

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

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

*Enter LAUNCELOT with a letter*

Friend Launcelot, what's the news ?

LAUN. An it shall please you to break up this, it shall 10  
seem to signify.

LOR. I know the hand : in faith, 't is a fair hand ;

---

6 *quaintly order'd*] ingeniously, cleverly arranged.

And whiter than the paper it writ on  
Is the fair hand that writ.

GRA. Love-news, in faith.

LAUN. By your leave, sir.

LOR. Whither goest thou ?

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

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

Go, gentlemen, [Exit Launcelot. 20

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night ?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.

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

SALAN. And so will I.

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

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

GRA. Was not that letter from fair Jessica ?

LOR. I must needs tell thee all. She hath di-  
rected

How I shall take her from her father's house ; 30

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with ;

What page's suit she hath in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake :

And never dare misfortune cross her foot,

Unless she do it under this excuse,

That she is issue to a faithless Jew.

Come, go with me ; peruse this as thou goest :

Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer.

[Exeunt.

SCENE V THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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SCENE V—THE SAME

*BEFORE SHYLOCK'S HOUSE*  
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*Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT*

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

LAUN. Why, Jessica !

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

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

*Enter JESSICA*

JES. Call you ? what is your will ?

10

SHY. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica :  
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go ?  
I am not bid for love ; they flatter me :  
But yet I 'll go in hate, to feed upon  
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,  
Look to my house. I am right loath to go :  
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,  
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

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

20

SHY. So do I his.

LAUN. And they have conspired together, I will not  
say you shall see a masque ; but if you do, then it was

not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year, in the afternoon.

SHY. What, are there masques? Hear you me, Jessica:  
 Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum,  
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,  
 Clamber not you up to the casements then, 30  
 Nor thrust your head into the public street  
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces;  
 But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements:  
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter  
 My sober house. By Jacob's staff, I swear  
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night:  
 But I will go. Go you before me, sirrah;  
 Say I will come.

LAUN. I will go before, sir. Mistress, look out at  
 window, for all this; 40  
 There will come a Christian by,  
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [Exit.

28-29 *Lock up . . . fife*] Cf. Horace, *Odes*, III, 7, 29, 30:

“Prima nocte domum claude, neque in vias  
 Sub cantu querulae despice tibiae.”

The “wry-neck'd fife,” called by the Italians “cornetto curvo,” was a small flute with bent mouthpiece.

35 *Jacob's staff*] A reference to the words of Jacob in *Genesis* xxxii, 10: “For *with my staff* I passed over this Jordan.” But the term was in common usage for “pilgrim's staff,” a staff being one of the emblems of St. James (Jacobus), the patron saint of pilgrims.

42 *Jewess'*] Pope's emendation for the original reading *Jew's*, in order

SCENE VI THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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

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

SHY. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder ;  
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day  
More than the wild-cat : drones hive not with me ;  
Therefore I part with him ; and part with him  
To one that I would have him help to waste  
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in :  
Perhaps I will return immediately :  
Do as I bid you ; shut doors after you :  
Fast bind, fast find,  
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit.

JES. Farewell ; and if my fortune be not crost,  
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit.

SCENE VI—THE SAME

*Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masqued*

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

SALAR. His hour is almost past.

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

---

to obtain the meaning "worth a Jewess' attention." But the change is not absolutely necessary. "Worth a Jew's eye" was a common expression for "of great price or value." Launcelot may be merely paying Lorenzo an extravagant compliment. "Jew's" might well be pronounced as a dissyllable.

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

GRA. That ever holds : who riseth from a feast  
With that keen appetite that he sits down ?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again 10  
His tedious measures with the unbated fire  
That he did pace them first ? All things that are,  
Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.  
How like a younker or a prodigal  
The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,  
Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind !  
How like the prodigal doth she return,  
With over-weather'd ribs and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

SALAR. Here comes Lorenzo : more of this here-  
after. 20

*Enter LORENZO*

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

---

7 *To keep . . . unforfeited*] To keep unbroken a compulsory obligation.  
10-11 *the horse . . . measures*] A reference to a horse trained in the  
riding school to take deliberately measured steps, which he is  
wont to retrace with spiritless reluctance.



SCENE VI THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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

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

LOR. Lorenzo, and thy love.

JES. Lorenzo, certain; and my love, indeed,  
For who love I so much? And now who knows 30  
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?

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

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

LOR. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer. 40

JES. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?  
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.  
Why, 't is an office of discovery, love;  
And I should be obscured.

LOR. So are you, sweet,  
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.  
But come at once;

---

42 *light*] Shakespeare's fondness for quibbling with this word is twice  
again illustrated in this play. Cf. III, ii, 91, and V, i, 129, *infra*.

45 *garnish*] outfit or dress. In this sense the noun is rarely used.  
It commonly means the ornament or trimming of a dress. Cf.  
III, v, 60, *infra*.

For the close night doth play the runaway,  
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

JES. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some mo ducats, and be with you straight. 50  
[*Exit above.*]

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

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

*Enter JESSICA, below*

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

*Enter ANTONIO*

ANT. Who 's there ? 60

GRA. Signior Antonio !

ANT. Fie, fie, Gratiano ; where are all the rest ?  
'T is nine o'clock : our friends all stay for you.  
No masque to-night : the wind is come about ;  
Bassanio presently will go aboard :  
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

51 *by my hood*] An expletive objurgation, which may have originally been employed by hooded monks or friars. Cf. Chaucer, *Troylus*, V, 1151: "I commende hire wisdom *by myn hod*." Heywood, *Proverbs*, 84: "Onely for both I wed not, *by my hood*."

SCENE VII THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

GRA. I am glad on 't : I desire no more delight  
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE VII — BELMONT

A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

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

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

MOR. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,  
“ Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire ; ”  
The second, silver, which this promise carries,  
“ Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves ; ”  
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,  
“ Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.”  
How shall I know if I do choose the right ?

10

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

MOR. Some god direct my judgement ! Let me see ;  
I will survey the inscriptions back again.  
What says this leaden casket ?

“ Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.”  
Must give, — for what ? for lead ? hazard for lead ?  
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all  
Do it in hope of fair advantages :

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross ;  
I 'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

20

What says the silver with her virgin hue ?  
 " Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."  
 As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,  
 And weigh thy value with an even hand :  
 If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,  
 Thou dost deserve enough ; and yet enough  
 May not extend so far as to the lady :  
 And yet to be afraid of my deserving  
 Were but a weak disabling of myself. 30  
 As much as I deserve ! Why, that's the lady :  
 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,  
 In graces and in qualities of breeding ;  
 But more than these, in love I do deserve.  
 What if I stray'd no further, but chose here ?  
 Let's see once more this saying graved in gold ;  
 " Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."  
 Why, that's the lady ; all the world desires her ;  
 From the four corners of the earth they come,  
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint : 40  
 The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds  
 Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now  
 For princes to come view fair Portia :  
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head  
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar

26 *by thy estimation*] by the reputation which you enjoy.

30 *disabling*] depreciation, disparagement.

41 *Hyrcanian deserts*] wild tracts to the southeast of the Caspian Sea where tigers were reputed to abound. Cf. *Hamlet*, II, ii, 444, "th' Hyrcanian beast," and *3 Hen. VI*, I, iv, 155, "tigers of Hyrcania."

To stop the foreign spirits ; but they come,  
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.  
 One of these ~~three contains her~~ heavenly picture.  
 Is 't like that lead contains her ? 'T were damnation  
 To think so base a thought : it were too gross 50  
 To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.  
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,  
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold ?  
 O sinful thought ! Never so rich a gem  
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England  
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel  
 Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon ;  
 But here an angel in a golden bed  
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key :  
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may ! 60

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

MOR. O hell ! what have we here ?  
 A carrion Death, within whose empty eye  
 There is a written scroll ! I'll read the writing. [*Reads.*]

All that glisters is not gold ;  
 Often have you heard that told :  
 Many a man his life hath sold  
 But my outside to behold :  
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.

---

51 *rib her cerecloth*] enclose, encircle (like ribs) her winding sheet.  
 56 *angel*] A gold coin worth about ten shillings, on one side of which  
 was stamped in high relief a figure of the archangel Michael.  
 69 *tombs*] Dr. Johnson's admirable emendation for *timber*, the mis-  
 reading of the earlier editions. Cf. *Sonnet* ci, 11, "a gilded tomb."

Had you been as wise as bold,  
 Young in limbs, in judgement old,  
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd :  
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.

70

Cold, indeed and labour lost :

Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost !

Portia, adieu. I have too grieved a heart

To take a tedious leave : thus losers part.

*[Exit with his train. Flourish of cornets.]*

POR. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

Let all of his complexion choose me so.

*[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VIII — VENICE

A STREET

*Enter SALARINO and SALANIO*

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

SALAN. The villain Jew with outcries raised the  
 Duke,

Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

SALAR. He came too late, the ship was under sail :  
 But there the Duke was given to understand  
 That in a gondola were seen together  
 Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica :  
 Besides, Antonio certified the Duke  
 They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

10

SALAN. I never heard a passion so confused,

SCENE VIII THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

So strange, outrageous, and so variable,  
 As the dog Jew did utter in the streets :  
 “ My daughter ! O my ducats ! O my daughter !  
 Fled with a Christian ! O my Christian ducats !  
 Justice ! the law ! my ducats, and my daughter !  
 A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,  
 Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter !  
 And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones, 20  
 Stolen by my daughter ! Justice ! find the girl !  
 She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats ! ”

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

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

SALAR. Marry, well remember'd.  
 I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,  
 Who told me, in the narrow seas that part  
 The French and English, there miscarried  
 A vessel of our country richly fraught : 30  
 I thought upon Antonio when he told me ;  
 And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

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

SALAR. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.  
 I saw Bassanio and Antonio part :  
 Bassanio told him he would make some speed  
 Of his return : he answer'd, “ Do not so ;

---

19 *double ducats*] See note on I, iii, 1, *supra*.

Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,  
 But stay the very riping of the time ; 40  
 And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,  
 Let it not enter in your mind of love :  
 Be merry ; and employ your chiefest thoughts  
 To courtship, and such fair ostents of love  
 As shall conveniently become you there : ”  
 And even there, his eye being big with tears,  
 Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,  
 And with affection wondrous sensible  
 He wrung Bassanio's hand ; and so they parted.

SALAN. I think he only loves the world for him. 50  
 I pray thee, let us go and find him out,  
 And quicken his embraced heaviness  
 With some delight or other.

SALAR. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IX — BELMONT

A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

*Enter NERISSA and a Servitor*

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

---

52 *embraced heaviness*] sorrow to which he has voluntarily submitted.  
 Cf. III, ii, 109, *infra* : “ rash-*embraced* despair.”



SCENE IX THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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

POR. Behold, there stand the caskets, noble prince :  
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,  
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized :  
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,  
You must be gone from hence immediately.

AR. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things :  
First, never to unfold to any one 10  
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.

AR. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now  
To my heart's hope ! Gold ; silver ; and base lead. 20  
" Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."  
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.  
What says the golden chest ? ha ! let me see :  
" Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."  
What many men desire ! that " many " may be meant  
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,  
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach ;  
Which pries not to the interior, but, like the martlet,

28 *martlet*] Used here for the "house martin," but more properly the  
swift. Cf. *Macb.*, I, vi, 4 : "The temple-haunting *martlet*."

Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
 Even in the force and road of casualty. 30  
 I will not choose what many men desire,  
 Because I will not jump with common spirits,  
 And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.  
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house ;  
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear :  
 “ Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves : ”  
 And well said too ; for who shall go about  
 To cozen fortune, and be honourable  
 Without the stamp of merit ? Let none presume  
 To wear an undeserved dignity. 40  
 O, that estates, degrees and offices  
 Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour  
 Were purchased by the merit of the wearer !  
 How many then should cover that stand bare !  
 How many be commanded that command !  
 How much low peasantry would then be glean'd  
 From the true seed of honour ! and how much  
 honour  
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,  
 To be new-varnish'd ! Well, but to my choice :  
 “ Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves. ” 50  
 I will assume desert. Give me a key for this,  
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*]

46 *How much low peasantry*] How much vulgarity or boorishness would then be detected in those succeeding to high office by hereditary right.

48 *chaff and ruin*] the refuse, or residuum.

SCENE IX THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

POR. [*Aside*] Too long a pause for that which you find there.

AR. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,

Presenting me a schedule! I will read it.

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

"Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves."

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

60

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

AR. What is here?

[*Reads*]

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

70

Still more fool I shall appear

By the time I linger here:

With one fool's head I came to woo,

But I go away with two.

Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,

Patiently to bear my wroth.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*]

POR. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.  
 O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose, 80  
 They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

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

POR. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. Where is my lady?

POR. Here: what would my lord?

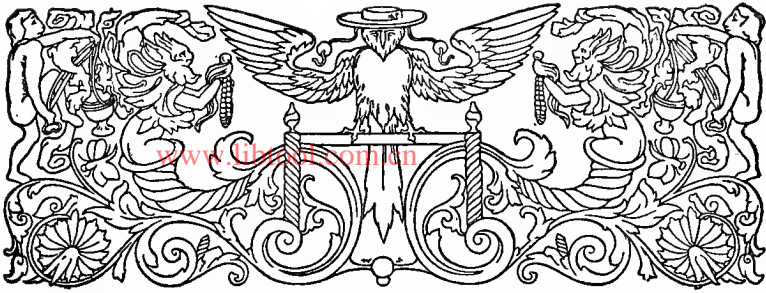
SERV. Madam, there is alighted at your gate  
 A young Venetian, one that comes before  
 To signify the approaching of his lord;  
 From whom he bringeth sensible regrets,  
 To wit, besides commends and courteous breath, 90  
 Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen  
 So likely an ambassador of love:

A day in April never came so sweet,  
 To show how costly summer was at hand,  
 As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

POR. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard  
 Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,  
 Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.  
 Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see  
 Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly. 100

NER. Bassanio, lord Love, if thy will it be! [*Exeunt.*]

98 *high-day wit*] holiday, cheerful wit. Cf. *M. Wives*, III, ii, 59: "He speaks *holiday*."



## ACT THIRD—SCENE I—VENICE

### A STREET

*Enter SALANIO and SALARINO*

SALANIO



OW, WHAT NEWS ON  
the Rialto?

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

SALAN. I would she were as  
lying a gossip in that as ever knapped ginger, or made  
her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third <sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *knapped ginger*] In Cotgrave's *French-English Dictionary*, "gnaw"  
and "nibble off" are given as synonyms of "knap," under the  
French word "ronger." A taste for ginger was commonly held

husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

SALAR. Come, the full stop.

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

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

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

*Enter SHYLOCK*

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants? 20

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

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

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

SHY. She is damned for it.

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

SHY. My own flesh and blood to rebel! 30

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

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

---

at the time to be characteristic of old women. Cf. *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 6: “marry, then ginger was not much in request, for the old women were all dead.”

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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

SHY. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug upon the mart; let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me <sup>40</sup> usurer; let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy; let him look to his bond.

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

SHY. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, <sup>50</sup> 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

---

51 *affections, passions*] See note on IV, i, 50, *infra*.

resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction. 60

*Enter a Servant*

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

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

*Enter TUBAL*

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

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

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

TUB. I often came where I did hear of her, but cannot find her. 70

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!

---

59 *humility*] humanity, benevolence, kindness, not "humbleness." Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 345: "And plant in tyrants mild *humility*."



SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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; 80 and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights on my shoulders; no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding.

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

SHY. What, what, what? ill luck, ill luck?

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

SHY. I thank God, I thank God! Is't true, is't true?

TUB. I spoke with some of the sailors that escaped the wreck. 90

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

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

SHY. Thou 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 99 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.

107

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

SCENE II — BELMONT

ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

*Enter* BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, *and* Attendants

POR. I pray you, tarry : pause a day or two Before you hazard ; for, in choosing wrong, I lose your company : therefore forbear awhile. There 's something tells me, but it is not love, I would not lose you ; and you know yourself, Hate counsels not in such a quality. But lest you should not understand me well, — And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, — I would detain you here some month or two

105 *I had it of Leah*] Shylock's sudden reminiscence of his dead wife Leah is a dramatic touch of singular vividness, and a very remarkable illustration of Shakespeare's humanity.

8 *a maiden . . . thought*] a maiden is restrained by modesty from giving expression to her love, and must only cherish it in thought.

Before you venture for me. I could teach you 10  
 How to choose right, but I am then forsworn ;  
 So will I never be ; so may you miss me ;  
 But if you do, you 'll make me wish a sin,  
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,  
 They have o'er-look'd me, and divided me ;  
 One half of me is yours, the other half yours,  
 Mine own, I would say ; but if mine, then yours,  
 And so all yours ! O, these naughty times  
 Put bars between the owners and their rights !  
 And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so, 20  
 Let fortune go to hell for it, not I.  
 I speak too long ; but 't is to peize the time,  
 To eke it and to draw it out in length,  
 To stay you from election.

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

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

BASS. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,  
 Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love :  
 There may as well be amity and life  
 'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

POR. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,  
 Where men enforced do speak any thing.

20-21 *Prove it so . . . not I*] If it should prove (that you are denied possession of me), I trust that fortune shall suffer for her perversity ; I deserve no punishment.

23 *eke*] Johnson's correct reading for *ich* of the First Folio. The first Quarto gives *ech*, and the second Quarto *ech*.

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

POR. Well then, confess and live.

BASS. [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn) "Confess," and "love,"  
 Had been the very sum of my confession :  
 O happy torment, when my torturer  
 Doth teach me answers for deliverance !  
 But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

POR. Away, then ! I am lock'd in one of them : 40  
 If you do love me, you will find me out.  
 Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.  
 Let music sound while he doth make his choice ;  
 Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,  
 Fading in music : that the comparison  
 May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream,  
 And watery death-bed for him. He may win ;  
 And what is music then ? Then music is  
 Even as the flourish when true subjects bow 50  
 To a new-crowned monarch : such it is  
 As are those dulcet sounds in break of day  
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,  
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,  
 With no less presence, but with much more love,  
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy

---

55 *young Alcides*] Ovid tells the story, in *Metamorphoses*, XI, 199 *seq.*, how Hercules rescued from the sea monster the Trojan maiden, Hesione, who had been sacrificed to free the town of Troy from pestilence, not for love of her, but on condition of receiving a gift of horses, from the girl's father, Laomedon.

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

60

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

SONG

Tell me where is fancy bred,  
 Or in the heart or in the head ?  
 How begot, how nourished ?

Reply, reply.

It is engender'd in the eyes,  
 With gazing fed ; and fancy dies  
 In the cradle where it lies.

Let us all ring fancy's knell ;

I'll begin it, — Ding, dong, bell.

70

ALL. Ding, dong, bell.

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

80

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins  
 The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;  
 Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;  
 And these assume but valour's excrement  
 To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,  
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;  
 Which therein works a miracle in nature,  
 Making them lightest that wear most of it:  
 So are those crisped snaky golden locks  
 Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,  
 Upon supposed fairness, often known  
 To be the dowry of a second head,  
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.  
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore  
 To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,

90

91 *lightest*] See note on II, vi, 42, *supra*.

95 *a second head*] The common practice of wearing false hair or hair cut from the heads of corpses is constantly denounced by Shakespeare and contemporaries. Cf. *Sonnet lxxviii*, 5-7:

“ Before the golden tresses of the dead,  
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,  
 To live a second life on *second head*.”

99 *Indian beauty*] This reading of the original text has been needlessly suspected. None of the many suggested emendations carries conviction. The context suggests that Shakespeare employs the words *Indian beauty* with the ironical significance of extreme ugliness. He often makes like reference to “an Ethiop” when he wishes to convey the impression of repulsive aspect. Cf. *L. L. L.*, IV, iii, 268: “And *Ethiopes* of their sweet complexion crack.” It is worth noting that Montaigne, *Essais*, II, 12 (Vol. III, p. 90, in

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

The seeming truth which cunning times put on 100  
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,  
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee ;  
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge  
 'Tween man and man : but thou, thou meagre lead,  
 Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,  
 Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence ;  
 And here choose I : joy be the consequence !

POR. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to  
 air,

As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,  
 And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy ! 110  
 O love, be moderate ; allay thy ecstasy ;  
 In measure rain thy joy ; scant this excess !  
 I feel too much thy blessing : make it less,  
 For fear I surfeit !

BASS. What find I here ?

[*Opening the leaden casket.*]

Fair Portia's counterfeit ! What demi-god  
 Hath come so near creation ? Move these eyes ?

Le Clerc's French edition), when arguing that beauty in men and women had no fixed or absolute quality and that what one race deems to be beautiful another declares to be ugly, especially instances the Indian notion of beauty, which he describes as "black and swarthy, with swollen lips, and flattened and large nose, whence hang great rings of gold." Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essais* was not published till 1603, and if the coincidence with Montaigne's argument be more than accident, Shakespeare must have read the French writer in the original.

109 *rash-embraced despair*] See note on II, viii, 52, *supra*.

Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,  
 Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,  
 Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar  
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs 120  
 The painter plays the spider, and hath woven  
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men,  
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes, —  
 How could he see to do them? having made one,  
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his  
 And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far  
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow  
 In underprizing it, so far this shadow  
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here 's the scroll,  
 The continent and summary of my fortune. 130

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

A gentle scroll. Fair lady, by your leave;  
 I come by note, to give and to receive. 140  
 Like one of two contending in a prize,  
 That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,  
 Hearing applause and universal shout,  
 Giddy in spirit, still gazing in a doubt  
 Whether those peals of praise be his or no;  
 So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so;



SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

As doubtful whether what I see be true,  
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

POR. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
 Such as I am : though for myself alone 150  
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
 To wish myself much better ; yet, for you  
 I would be treble twenty times myself ;  
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times  
 More rich ;

That only to stand high in your account,  
 I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,  
 Exceed account ; but the full sum of me  
 Is sum of something, which, to term in gross,  
 Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised ; 160

Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
 But she may learn ; happier than this,  
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn ;  
 Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit  
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.  
 Myself and what is mine to you and yours  
 Is now converted : but now I was the lord  
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
 Queen o'er myself ; and even now, but now, 170  
 This house, these servants, and this same myself,  
 Are yours, my lord : I give them with this ring ;  
 Which when you part from, lose, or give away,

---

162 *happier than this*] To complete the metre Capell adds the words  
*in that*. But it seems preferable to accept the reading of the  
 Second and later Folios: *happier then in this*.

Let it presage the ruin of your love,  
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASS. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,  
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins ;  
And there is such confusion in my powers,  
As, after some oration fairly spoke  
By a beloved prince, there doth appear 180  
Among the buzzing pleased multitude ;  
Where every something, being blent together,  
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,  
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring  
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence :  
O, then be bold to say Bassanio 's dead !

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

GRA. My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady, 190  
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. 200

---

200 *for intermission*] With this punctuation *intermission*, which is not  
uncommon in the sense of pause, rest, relief from occupation,

No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.  
 Your fortune stood upon the casket there,  
 And so did mine too, as the matter falls ;  
 For wooing here until I sweat again,  
 And swearing till my very roof was dry  
 With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,  
 I got a promise of this fair one here  
 To have her love, provided that your fortune  
 Achieved her mistress.

POR. Is this true, Nerissa ?

NER. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal. 210

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

GRA. Yes, faith, my lord.

BASS. Our feast shall be much honoured in your  
 marriage.

GRA. We'll play with them the first boy for a thou-  
 sand ducats.

NER. What, and stake down ?

GRA. No ; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake  
 down.

But who comes here ? Lorenzo and his infidel ? 220  
 What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio ?

---

must mean here "pastime," "the want of something to do." Theobald placed a colon after *loved*, and, removing the full stop after *intermission*, made the sentence run thus : "for *intermission* (*i. e.* since delay, procrastination) *No more pertains*," etc.

221 *Salerio*] This character has not appeared before. Some editors assume that the spelling of the name is a printer's error, and that Gratiano's "old Venetian friend" is rightly either Salanio or Salerino, who both appear with him on the stage in Act I, Sc. i,

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT III

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

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

POR. So do I, my lord :  
They are entirely welcome.

LOR. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,  
My purpose was not to have seen you here ;  
But meeting with Salerio by the way, 230  
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,  
To come with him along.

SALER. 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.

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

GRA. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger ; bid her welcome.  
Your hand, Salerio : what's the news from Venice ? 240  
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio ?

---

and one of whom, Salerino, is his companion in Act II, Sc. vi,  
Rowe read *Salanio*, and Capell *Salerino*. But Salerio seems (from  
the context) entitled to rank as an independent character.  
241 *royal merchant*] This term, which is again applied to Antonio, IV,  
i, 29, *infra*, was, according to Warburton, specifically allotted to

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

I know he will be glad of our success ;  
 We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

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

POR. There are some shrewd contents in yon same  
 paper,  
 That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek :  
 Some dear friend dead ; else nothing in the world  
 Could turn so much the constitution  
 Of any constant man. What, worse and worse !  
 With leave, Bassanio ; I am half yourself, 250  
 And I must freely have the half of anything  
 That this same paper brings you.

BASS. O sweet Portia,  
 Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words  
 That ever blotted paper ! Gentle lady,  
 When I did first impart my love to you,  
 I freely told you, all the wealth I had  
 Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman ;  
 And then I told you true : and yet, dear lady,  
 Rating myself at nothing, you shall see  
 How much I was a braggart. When I told you 260  
 My state was nothing, I should then have told you

---

the Venetian merchants who enjoyed a license from the Republic to occupy and govern islands in the Greek Archipelago on the sole condition of acknowledging the suzerainty of the Republic. But it may well be that the epithet "royal" has no more recondite significance than that of "great" or "magnificent," as in *Tempest*, V, i, 237, "Our *royal*, good, and gallant ship," and *Tim. of Ath.*, III, vi, 49, "*royal* cheer."

That I was worse than nothing ; for, indeed,  
 I have engaged myself to a dear friend,  
 Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,  
 To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady ;  
 The paper as the body of my friend,  
 And every word in it a gaping wound,  
 Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio ?  
 Have all his ventures fail'd ? What, not one hit ?  
 From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,  
 From Lisbon, Barbary, and India ?  
 And not one vessel scape the dreadful touch  
 Of merchant-marring rocks ?

270

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

280

JES. When I was with him I have heard him swear  
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,  
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh  
 Than twenty times the value of the sum  
 That he did owe him : and I know, my lord,

290

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

If law, authority and power deny not,  
It will go hard with poor Antonio.

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

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

POR. What sum owes he the Jew ?

BASS. For me three thousand ducats.

POR. What, no more ? 300

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond ;  
Double six thousand, and then treble that,  
Before a friend of this description  
Shall lose a hair through Bassanio's fault.  
First go with me to church and call me wife,  
And then away to Venice to your friend ;  
For never shall you lie by Portia's side  
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold  
To pay the petty debt twenty times over :  
When it is paid, bring your true friend along. 310  
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime  
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away !  
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day :  
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer :  
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.  
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

BASS. [*reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried,  
my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew  
is forfeit ; and since in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT III

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.

322

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

BASS. Since I have your good leave to go away,

I will make haste: but, till I come again,

No bed shall e'er be guilty of my stay,

No rest be interposer 'twixt us twain.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — VENICE

A STREET

*Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and GAOLER*

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

ANT. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

SHY. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:  
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.  
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;  
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:  
The Duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,  
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond  
To come abroad with him at his request.

10

ANT. I pray thee, hear me speak.

SHY. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:  
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.  
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,  
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield



SCENE III THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

To Christian intercessors. Follow not ;  
 I'll have no speaking : I will have my bond. [Exit.

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

ANT. Let him alone :  
 I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. 20  
 He seeks my life ; his reason well I know :  
 I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures  
 Many that have at times made moan to me ;  
 Therefore he hates me.

SALAR. I am sure the Duke  
 Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

ANT. The Duke cannot deny the course of law :  
 For the commodity that strangers have  
 With us in Venice, if it be denied,  
 Will much impeach the justice of his state ;  
 Since that the trade and profit of the city 30  
 Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go :

---

26-29 *The Duke . . . state*] The punctuation and grammatical construction of these lines are difficult. Capell proposed to regularize the construction by substituting a comma for the colon after *law* (26), and a colon for the comma after *Venice* (28), as well as by reading *'Twill* for *Will* at the beginning of line 29. The general sense is : "The Duke cannot deny the course of law, because of the advantage (*i. e.* commodity) of equal liberties and privileges which strangers in Venice always enjoy. If that advantage be withheld, the credit of the state for justice would be impaired, seeing that all nations contribute to the city's trade and profit." Abundant testimony is given by Elizabethan visitors to Venice of the width of her foreign trade and the impartiality of her administration.

These griefs and losses have so bated me,  
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh  
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor.  
 Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come  
 To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV — BELMONT

A ROOM IN PORTIA'S HOUSE

*Enter* PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, and BALTHASAR

LOR. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,  
 You have a noble and a true conceit  
 Of god-like amity ; which appears most strongly  
 In bearing thus the absence of your lord.  
 But if you knew to whom you show this honour,  
 How true a gentleman you send relief,  
 How dear a lover of my lord your husband,  
 I know you would be prouder of the work  
 Than customary bounty can enforce you.

POR. I never did repent for doing good, 10  
 Nor shall not now : for in companions  
 That do converse and waste the time together,  
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,  
 There must be needs a like proportion  
 Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit ;  
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,

<sup>7</sup> *lover*] This word is habitually applied by Elizabethan writers to a man's male friend. Cf. 17, *infra*.

SCENE IV THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

Being the bosom lover of my lord,  
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,  
How little is the cost I have bestow'd  
In purchasing the semblance of my soul 20  
From out the state of hellish misery !  
This comes too near the praising of myself ;  
Therefore no more of it : hear other things.  
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands  
The husbandry and manage of my house  
Until my lord's return : for mine own part,  
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow  
To live in prayer and contemplation,  
Only attended by Nerissa here,  
Until her husband and my lord's return : 30  
There is a monastery two miles off ;  
And there will we abide. I do desire you  
Not to deny this imposition ;  
The which my love and some necessity  
Now lays upon you.

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

POR. My people do already know my mind,  
And will acknowledge you and Jessica  
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.  
And so farewell, till we shall meet again. 40

LOR. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !

JES. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

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

[*Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.*

Now, Balthasar,  
 As I have ever found thee honest-true,  
 So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,  
 And use thou all the endeavour of a man  
 In speed to Padua: see thou render this  
 Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;  
 And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,  
 Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed  
 Unto the tranect, to the common ferry

50

49 *Padua*] Theobald's obviously correct emendation of the old reading  
*Mantua*.

52 *with imagined speed*] with all imaginable speed. For a like use of  
 the passive participle, cf. *Rich. III*, I, iv, 27: "unvalued [*i.e.* invaluable]  
 jewels." It is less reasonable to make *imagined speed* equivalent to  
 "speed of the imagination," as in *Hen. V*, Prolog. 1, "with  
*imagined wings*."

53 *tranect*] This word, which is found in all the early texts, is met with  
 nowhere else. If it be accepted, it must be regarded as an invention  
 of Shakespeare, who, familiar with "connect," may have  
 imagined that there was a corresponding Latin verb "trans-nectere,"  
 or "tra-nectere," which could at need supply a substantive meaning  
 "a place provided with means of crossing a waterway." It is doubtful  
 if *tranect* can be connected with the Italian "tranare," to draw,  
 and there is no other Italian word with which it can be associated.  
 Rowe preferred to substitute *traject*. This word has been held to be  
 an anglicised form of the Italian "traghetto" or "traghetti," which,  
 according to the contemporary English travellers Coryat and Moryson,  
 was technically applied to the ferries of Venice, where gondolas waited  
 for hire. Florio, in his *Ital.-Eng. Dict.* explains "traghetto" as  
 "a ferrie;" the Italian word is derived from the Latin "trajectus."  
 The word "traject" is not found in Elizabethan literature, and  
 though it has greater philological justification than "tranect," it has  
 less textual authority.

SCENE IV THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,  
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee.

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

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

NER. Shall they see us?

POR. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,  
That they shall think we are accomplished 60  
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,  
When we are both accoutred like young men,  
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,  
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,  
And speak between the change of man and boy  
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps  
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays  
Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies  
How honourable ladies sought my love, 70  
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;  
I could not do withal: then I'll repent,  
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;  
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,  
That men shall swear I have discontinued school  
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind  
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,  
Which I will practise.

---

72 *I could not do withal*] I could not help it; a common phrase in con-  
temporary authors.

NER. Why, shall we turn to men ?

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

80

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V—THE SAME

A GARDEN

*Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA*

LAUN. Yes, truly ; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children : therefore, I promise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation of the matter ; therefore be of good cheer ; for, truly, I think you are damned. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good ; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

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

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

10

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

LAUN. Truly then I fear you are damned both by

3 *I fear you*] I fear for you.

4 *agitation*] A clownish blunder for " cogitation."

SCENE V THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

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

LAUN. Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs: if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money. <sup>20</sup>

*Enter LORENZO*

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

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

JES. Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Launcelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth; for, in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork. <sup>30</sup>

LOR. I shall answer that better to the commonwealth

---

14-15 *Scylla . . . Charybdis*] This proverb, which is very common in Elizabethan authors, seems to have been the invention of a twelfth-century Latin poet, Philippe Gualtier de Chatillon, whose Latin epic *Alexandreis* includes the line:

"Incidis in Scyllam, cupiens vitare Charybdim."

than you can the getting up of the negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

LAUN. It is much that the Moor should be more than reason: but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for.

LOR. How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence; and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner. 40

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

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

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

LOR. Will you cover, then, sir?

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

LOR. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant? I pray thee, understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows; bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner. 50

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

LOR. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!  
The fool hath planted in his memory  
An army of good words; and I do know

---

45 cover] The clown quibbles on the use of the word "cover" in the two senses of laying the table and wearing one's hat.



A many fools, that stand in better place,  
 Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word  
 Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica ?  
 And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,  
 How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife ?

60

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

70

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

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

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

60-61 *Garnish'd . . . matter*] Dressed, or arrayed like him, who for the sake of scoring a sportive verbal quip make no serious attempt to deal with the matter in hand.

68 *mean it*] Capell here gives *mean* the unusual sense of "observe the mean," "enjoy one's blessings moderately." Pope reads *merit it*. There is little doubt that *mean* is the right reading in the sense of "intend (to find the joys of heaven)," or "aim at (finding them)." Mr. Gollancz quotes in the Temple Shakespeare George Herbert's *The Church Porch*, stanza 56 :

"Shoots higher much than he that *means* (*sc.* to shoot at) a tree."

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT III

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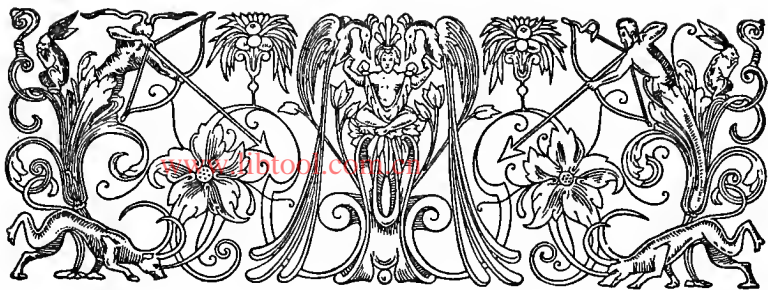
JES. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.

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

80

JES. Well, I'll set you forth.

[*Exeunt.*]



ACT FOURTH—SCENE I—VENICE

A COURT OF JUSTICE

*Enter the DUKE, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO,  
SALERIO, and others*

DUKE



WHAT, IS ANTONIO HERE ?

ANT. Ready, so please your  
Grace.

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

ANT. I have heard  
Your Grace hath ta'en great  
pains to qualify

His rigorous course ; but since he stands obdurate,  
And that no lawful means can carry me  
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose  
My patience to his fury ; and am arm'd  
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,

10

The very tyranny and rage of his.

DUKE. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

SALER. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

*Enter SHYLOCK*

DUKE. Make room, and let him stand before our face.

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,

That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice

To the last hour of act; and then 't is thought

Thou 'lt show thy mercy and remorse more strange 20

Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;

And where thou now exact'st the penalty,

Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,

Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,

But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,

Forgive a moiety of the principal;

Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,

That have of late so huddled on his back,

Enow to press a royal merchant down,

And pluck commiseration of his state 30

From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,

From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd

To offices of tender courtesy.

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHY. I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;

And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn

To have the due and forfeit of my bond:

If you deny it, let the danger light

Upon your charter and your city's freedom.

---

29 *royal merchant*] See note on III, ii, 241, *supra*.

You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have 40  
 A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive  
 Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:  
 But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?  
 What if my house be troubled with a rat,  
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats  
 To have it baned? What, are you answer'd yet?  
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig;  
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;  
 And others, when the bagpipe sings i' the nose,  
 Cannot contain their urine: for affection, 50  
 Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood  
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:

47 *gaping pig*] a pig prepared for the table with a lemon in its mouth.  
 Cf. Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, II, ii: "They stand *gaping like a roasted pig*."

49 *when the bagpipe sings*] J. C. Scaliger, in his attack on a rival physician, Jerome Cardan, in his *Exoticae Exercitationes* (1555), sect. 6, describes the like effect of the tones of the phorminx by way of illustrating the "jocosa sympathia" of a Gascon knight. A Devonshire gentleman's antipathy to the bag-pipes is the subject of a marginal note in a *Treatise of Specters*, 1605, a translation from the French of Pierre le Loyer. The experience noticed in the text was apparently not uncommon.

50-51 *for affection . . . mood*] The reading adopted here is that of Capell. The Quartos and the Folios have no stop after *urine*; a full stop, instead of a comma, after *affection*; and *Masters* instead of *Mistress* at the beginning of the next line. *Affection*, *i. e.* natural inclination or prejudice, is contrasted with *passion*, *i. e.* emotion. The two words are similarly contrasted by Shylock, III, i, 51, *supra*. "Masters" is spelt "Maisters" in the second Quarto and in the Second Folio, which justifies the reading "Mistress," sometimes spelt "Maistres."

As there is no firm reason to be render'd,  
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;  
 Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;  
 Why he, a woollen bag-pipe ; but of force  
 Must yield to such inevitable shame  
 As to offend, himself being offended ;  
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,  
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing  
 I bear Antonio, that I follow thus  
 A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd ?

60

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,

70

56 *woollen bag-pipe*] This reading is much disputed, but it seems to refer to a bag-pipe of sheepskin with the wool on. Capell's conjecture *nauling* has been widely adopted.

70 *think you . . . Jew*] remember you are conversing with, seeking to move the inflexible Jew.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven ;  
You may as well do any thing most hard,  
As seek to soften that — than which what 's harder ? —  
His Jewish heart : therefore, I do beseech you, 80  
Make no more offers, use no farther means,  
But with all brief and plain conveniency  
Let me have judgement and the Jew his will.

BASS. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

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

DUKE. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering  
none ?

SHY. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong ?  
You have among you many a purchased slave, 90  
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,  
You use in abject and in slavish parts,  
Because you bought them : shall I say to you,  
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs ?  
Why sweat they under burthens ? let their beds  
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates  
Be season'd with such viands ? You will answer  
"The slaves are ours : " so do I answer you :  
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,  
Is dearly bought ; 't is mine and I will have it. 100

---

77 *fretten*] The reading of the Quartos, which was changed in the Folios to *fretted*, an inflexion which impairs the harmony of the verse.

87 *draw*] take or receive, as in "draw one's salary," or "draw one's money from a bank."

92 *parts*] capacities that are abject and only fitted for slaves to fill.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT IV

---

If you deny me, fie upon your law !  
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
I stand for judgement : answer ; shall I have it ?

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

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

DUKE. Bring us the letters ; call the messenger. 110

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

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

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

DUKE. Came you from Padua, from Bellario ?

NER. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your  
Grace.

*[Presenting a letter. 120*

BASS. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly ?

SHY. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

GRA. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou makest thy knife keen ; but no metal can,  
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness  
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee ?



SHY. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

GRA. O, be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused.

Thou almost makest me waver in my faith, 130

To hold opinion with Pythagoras,

That souls of animals infuse themselves

Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit

Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,

Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,

Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

Are wolvisish, 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: 140

Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall

To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

DUKE. This letter from Bellario doth commend

A young and learned doctor to our court.

Where is he?

NER. He attendeth here hard by,

To know your answer, whether you'll admit him.

DUKE. With all my heart. Some three or four of you

Go give him courteous conduct to this place.

Meantime the court shall hear Bellario's letter. 149

*Clerk.* [*reads*] Your Grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in contro-

142 *cureless*] irremediable. This is the reading of the Quartos. The Folios read less satisfactorily *endless*.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ACT IV

---

versy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant : we turned o'er many books together : he is furnished with my opinion ; which, bettered with his own learning,—the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend,—comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no 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. 161

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

*Enter PORTIA for BALTHASAR*

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario ?

POR. I did, my lord.

DUKE. You are welcome: take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference

That holds this present question in the court ?

POR. I am informed throughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew ?

DUKE. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth. 170

POR. Is your name Shylock ?

SHY. Shylock is my name.

POR. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow ;

Yet in such rule that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not ?

---

175 *within his danger*] in his power. The original meaning of danger (O. Fr. *dangier*, from Lat. *dominiarium*, sovereignty) was not, as in modern times, "peril," but "dominion," including the power to hurt or harm.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

ANT. Ay, so he says.

POR. Do you confess the bond ?

ANT. I do.

POR. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

POR. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven 180

Upon the place beneath : it is twice blest ;

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :

'T is mightiest in the mightiest : it becomes

The throned monarch better than his crown ;

His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,

The attribute to awe and majesty,

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;

But mercy is above this sceptred sway ;

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself ; 190

And earthly power doth then show likest God's

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this,

That, in the course of justice, none of us

Should see salvation : we do pray for mercy ;

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

179 *strain'd*] compelled, moved by force or compulsion. Portia takes up the challenge conveyed in Shylock's query, "On what compulsion must I?"

180 *the gentle rain*] Cf. *Ecclesiasticus* xxxv, 20: "Mercy is seasonable in the time of affliction, as clouds of rain in the time of drought."

181 *blest*] Here used with an active significance, *i. e.* endowed with the power of blessing.

To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;  
 Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
 Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there. 200

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

POR. Is he not able to discharge the money ?

BASS. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court ;  
 Yea, twice the sum : if that will not suffice,  
 I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,  
 On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart :  
 If this will not suffice, it must appear  
 That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,  
 Wrest once the law to your authority : 210  
 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 judgement ! yea, a Daniel !  
 O wise young judge, how I do honour thee !

POR. I pray you, let me look upon the bond. 220

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

POR. Shylock, there 's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

218-219 *A Daniel . . . young judge*] The allusion is to the "History of Susannah" in the *Apocrypha*, where Daniel, "a young youth" (v. 45) convicted the elders "of false witness by their own mouth" (v. 61), and "from that day forth was had in great reputation in the sight of the people" (v. 64).

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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. 230  
It doth appear you are a worthy judge ;  
You know the law, your exposition  
Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law,  
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,  
Proceed to judgement : by my soul I swear  
There is no power in the tongue of man  
To alter me : I stay here on my bond.

ANT. Most heartily I do beseech the court  
To give the judgement.

POR. Why then, thus it is : 240  
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

SHY. O noble judge ! O excellent young man !

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

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

POR. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHY. Ay, his breast :  
So says the bond : — doth it not, noble judge ? —  
“ Nearest his heart : ” those are the very words.

POR. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh  
The flesh ? 250

SHY. I have them ready.

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

SHY. Is it so nominated in the bond ?

POR. It is not so express'd : but what of that ?  
'T were good you do so much for charity.

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

POR. You, merchant, have you any thing to say ?

ANT. But little : I am arm'd and well prepared.  
Give me your hand, Bassanio : fare you well ! 260

Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you ;  
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom : it is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow  
An age of poverty ; from which lingering penance  
Of such misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife :

Tell her the process of Antonio's end ;

Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death ; 270

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge

Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,

And he repents not that he pays your debt ;

For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,

I 'll pay it presently with all my heart.

250 *balance*] commonly treated as a plural noun with the sense of  
"scales."

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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

280

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

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

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

SHY. These be the Christian husbands. I have a  
 daughter ;

290

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 learned judge ! A sentence ! Come,  
 prepare !

---

291 *Barrabas*] This name is so spelt in Tyndale's and Coverdale's versions of the New Testament, but appears as "Barabbas" in the Authorized Version. "Barabas" with the accents, as here, on the first and third syllables is the name of the hero in Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Shakespeare was no doubt following Marlowe's guidance.

POR. Tarry a little ; there is something else. 300  
 This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood ;  
 The words expressly are “ a pound of flesh : ”  
 Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh :  
 But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed  
 One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods  
 Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate  
 Unto the state of Venice.

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

SHY. Is that the law ?

POR. Thyself shalt see the act :  
 For, as thou urgest justice, be assured 310  
 Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

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

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

BASS. Here is the money.

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

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

POR. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh. 320  
 Shed thou no blood ; nor cut thou less nor more  
 But just a pound of flesh : if thou cut'st more  
 Or less than a just pound, be it but so much  
 As makes it light or heavy in the substance,  
 Or the division of the twentieth part  
 Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn



SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

But in the estimation of a hair,  
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.

GRA. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew !  
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.

POR. Why doth the Jew pause ? take thy forfeiture. 330

SHY. Give me my principal, and let me go.

BASS. I have it ready for thee ; here it is.

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

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

SHY. Shall I not have barely my principal ?

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

SHY. Why, then the devil give him good of it ! 340  
I'll stay no longer question.

POR. Tarry, Jew :  
The law hath yet another hold on you.  
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,  
If it be proved against an alien  
That by direct or indirect attempts  
He seek the life of any citizen,  
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive  
Shall seize one half his goods ; the other half  
Comes to the privy coffer of the state ;  
And the offender's life lies in the mercy 350  
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.  
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st ;  
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,  
That indirectly, and directly too,

Thou hast contrived against the very life  
Of the defendant ; and thou hast incurr'd  
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.  
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

GRA. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thy-  
self :

And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state, 360  
Thou hast not left the value of a cord ;  
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

DUKE. That thou shall see the difference of our  
spirits,

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

POR. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.

SHY. Nay, take my life and all ; pardon not that :  
You take my house, when you do take the prop 370  
That doth sustain my house ; you take my life,  
When you do take the means whereby I live.

POR. What mercy can you render him, Antonio ?

GRA. A halter gratis ; nothing else, for God's sake.

ANT. So please my lord the Duke and all the court  
To quit the fine for one half of his goods,  
I am content ; so he will let me have  
The other half in use, to render it,

---

378 *in use*] in trust. Cf. Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*, IV, vii, 42-43 :  
"You do deliver this, sir, as your deed, To the *use* of Master  
Manley." Cf. Willobie's *Avisa*, Canto X, stanza 10 : "[He] this  
*in trust* from me shall take, whilst thou dost live, *unto thy use*."

Upon his death, unto the gentleman  
 That lately stole his daughter : 380  
 Two things provided more, that, for this favour,  
 He presently become a Christian ;  
 The other, that he do record a gift,  
 Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,  
 Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

DUKE. He shall do this, or else I do recant  
 The pardon that I late pronounced here.

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

SHY. I am content.

POR. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

SHY. I pray you, give me leave to go from hence ; 390  
 I am not well : send the deed after me,  
 And I will sign it.

DUKE. Get thee gone, but do it.

GRA. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers :  
 Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,  
 To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [*Exit Shylock.*]

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

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

DUKE. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not. 400  
 Antonio, gratify this gentleman,  
 For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

[*Exeunt Duke and his train.*]

394 *ten more*] a jury of twelve men. Cf. Jonson, *The Devil is an Ass*,  
 V, v, 10-11 : "I will leave you to your *godfathers in law*, Let *twelve*  
*men work.*"

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

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

POR. He is well paid that is well satisfied ; 410  
 And I, delivering you, am satisfied,  
 And therein do account myself well paid :  
 My mind was never yet more mercenary.  
 I pray you, know me when we meet again :  
 I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

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

POR. You press me far, and therefore I will yield. 420  
 Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake ;

[ *To Ant.*  
 And, for your love I'll take this ring from you : [ *To Bass.* ]  
 Do not draw back your hand ; I'll take no more ;  
 And you in love shall not deny me this.

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

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

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

407 cope] requite, give the equivalent of. This is a very rare usage.  
 The cognate word "recoup" is ordinarily employed.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

The dearest ring in Venice will I give you, 430  
 And find it out by proclamation :

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

POR. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers :  
 You taught me first to beg ; and now methinks  
 You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

BASS. Good sir, this ring was given me by my  
 wife ;

And when she put it on, she made me vow  
 That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

POR. That 'scuse serves many men to save their  
 gifts.

An if your wife be not a mad-woman, 440  
 And know how well I have deserved the ring,  
 She would not hold out enemy for ever,  
 For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you !

*[Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.]*

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

BASS. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him ;  
 Give him the ring ; and bring him, if thou canst,  
 Unto Antonio's house : away ! make haste.

*[Exit Gratiano.]*

Come, you and I will thither presently ; 450  
 And in the morning early will we both  
 Fly toward Belmont : come, Antonio. *[Exeunt.]*

446 'gainst] This is the reading of the Quartos, and leaves the line deficient in one foot. All the Folios read *against*, the adoption of which requires *valued* to be pronounced trisyllabically.

SCENE II—THE SAME  
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 A STREET

*Enter* PORTIA and NERISSA

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

*Enter* GRATIANO

GRA. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:  
 My Lord Bassanio upon more advice  
 Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat  
 Your company at dinner.

POR. That cannot be:  
 His ring I do accept most thankfully:  
 And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,  
 I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house. 10

GRA. That will I do.

NER. Sir, I would speak with you.  
 I'll see if I can get my husband's ring, [*Aside to Portia.*]  
 Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

POR. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall  
 have old swearing  
 That they did give the rings away to men;

---

15 *old*] a colloquial intensitive: "any amount of." See Glossary.

SCENE II THE MERCHANT OF VENICE ·

---

But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.

[*Aloud*] Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will  
tarry!

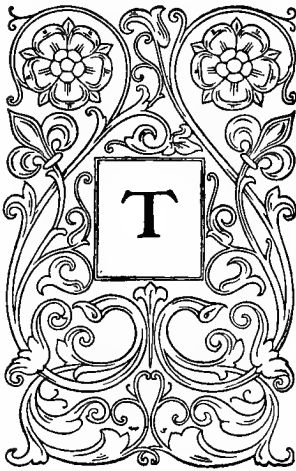
NER. Come, good sir, will you show me to this  
house? [*Exeunt.*]



ACT FIFTH—SCENE I—BELMONT  
AVENUE TO PORTIA'S HOUSE

LORENZO

*Enter LORENZO and JESSICA*



THE MOON SHINES  
bright: in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently  
kiss the trees  
And they did make no noise, in  
such a night  
Troilus methinks mounted the  
Troyan walls,  
And sighed his soul toward the  
Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.

JES. In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the  
dew,

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,  
And ran dismay'd away.

4-14 *Troilus* . . . *Æson*] The allusions to Troilus and to the three classical heroines in this passage all seem suggested by Chaucer, though Golding's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* doubtless



SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

LOR. In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks, and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage. 10

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

LOR. In such a night  
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,  
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice  
As far as Belmont.

JES. In such a night  
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,  
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith  
And ne'er a true one.

LOR. In such a night  
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,  
Slander her love, and he forgave it her. 20

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

*Enter STEPHANO*

LOR. Who comes so fast in silence of the night ?

STEPH. A friend.

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

---

gave some additional hints. The reference to Troilus seems taken directly and exclusively from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseide*, Book V, 666-670. The story of Thisbe is the second topic in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. The tale of Dido is the third, and the legend of Medea closely follows.

STEPH. Stephano is my name ; and I bring word  
 My mistress will before the break of day  
 Be here at Belmont : she doth stray about 30  
 By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays  
 For happy wedlock hours.

LOR. Who comes with her ?

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

LOR. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.  
 But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,  
 And ceremoniously let us prepare  
 Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

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

LOR. Who calls ? 40

LAUN. Sola ! did you see Master Lorenzo ? Master  
 Lorenzo, sola, sola !

LOR. Leave hollaing, man : here.

LAUN. Sola ! where ? where ?

LOR. Here.

---

28 *Stepháno*] Here, as in line 51, the second syllable is accented. Shakespeare in the *Tempest* employs the name with the first syllable accented in accordance with correct Italian usage.

41-42 *Master Lorenzo ? Master Lorenzo*] This is an original and satisfactory reading of the Cambridge editors. The First Quarto reads *M. Lorenzo, M. Lorenzo*. The Second Quarto and the First Folio read *M. Lorenzo, & M. Lorenzo*. The reading most commonly adopted is based on the Third Folio, *M. Lorenzo, and Mrs. Lorenza*. Delius reads, *Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo*.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

LAUN. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news : my master will be here ere morning, [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn) [Exit.

LOR. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter : why should we go in ? 50

My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,  
Within the house, your mistress is at hand ;  
And bring your music forth into the air. [Exit Stephano.  
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !

Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold :  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st 60

But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins ;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls ;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

*Enter Musicians*

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

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

LOR. The reason is, your spirits are attentive : 70  
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,  
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,  
 Which is the hot condition of their blood ;  
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,  
 Or any air of music touch their ears,  
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,  
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze  
 By the sweet power of music : therefore the poet  
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods ; 80  
 Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,  
 But music for the time doth change his nature.  
 The man that hath no music in himself,  
 Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
 Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils ;  
 The motions of his spirit are dull as night,  
 And his affections dark as Erebus :  
 Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

*Enter PORTIA and NERISSA*

POR. That light we see is burning in my hall.  
 How far that little candle throws his beams ! 90  
 So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

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

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

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

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

POR. Nothing is good, I see, without respect :  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day. 100

NER. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

POR. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attended ; and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by season season'd are  
To their right praise and true perfection !  
Peace, ho ! the moon sleeps with Endymion,  
And would not be awaked. [Music ceases.]

LOR. That is the voice, 110  
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

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

LOR. Dear lady, welcome home.

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

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

POR. Go in, Nerissa ;  
Give order to my servants that they take

---

99 *without respect*] *sc.* of circumstance. Cf. 156, *infra*, where Nerissa uses in much the same sense "respective," *i. e.* regardful of the attending circumstances.

No note at all of our being absent hence ; 120  
 Nor you, Lorenzo ; Jessica, nor you. [A tucket sounds.

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

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

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

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

POR. Let me give light, but let me not be light ;  
 For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130  
 And never be Bassanio so for me :

But God sort all ! You are welcome home, my  
 lord.

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

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

POR. You should in all sense be much bound to  
 him,

For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

ANT. No more than I am well acquitted of.

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

121 *A tucket*] A flourish on the trumpet, from the Italian *toccata*. Cf. Florio's *Ital.-Eng. Dict.* : "Toccáta d'un músico, a preludium that cunning musitions use to play as it were voluntary before any set lesson."

129 *light*] See note on II, vi, 42, *supra*.

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

It must appear in other ways than words, 140  
 Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.

GRA. [*To Nerissa*] By yonder moon I swear you do me  
 wrong ;

In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk :  
 Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,  
 Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

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

GRA. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring  
 That she did give me, whose posy was  
 For all the world like cutler's poetry  
 Upon a knife, " Love me, and leave me not." 150

NER. What talk you of the posy or the value ?  
 You swore to me, when I did give it you,  
 That you would wear it till your hour of death,  
 And that it should lie with you in your grave :  
 Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,  
 You should have been respective, and have kept it.  
 Gave it a judge's clerk ! no, God's my judge,  
 The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

NER. Ay, if a woman live to be a man. 160

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

141 *breathing courtesy*] the courtesy of breath ; welcome in words.  
 Cf. *Macb.*, V, iii, 27 : " mouth-honour, breath."

156 *respective*] see note on line 99, *supra*.

162 *scrubbed*] a contemptuous epithet implying both repulsiveness  
 and insignificance. According to Coles's *Lat.-Engl. Dict.*, 1677,  
 " scrubbed " was equivalent to the Latin "*squalidus*." It still sur-

No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,  
 A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee :  
 I could not for my heart deny it him.

POR. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,  
 To part so slightly with your wife's first gift ;  
 A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger  
 And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.  
 I gave my love a ring, and made him swear 170  
 Never to part with it ; and here he stands ;  
 I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it  
 Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth  
 That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,  
 You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief :  
 An 't were to me, I should be mad at it.

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

GRA. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away  
 Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed 180  
 Deserved it too ; and then the boy, his clerk,  
 That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine ;  
 And neither man nor master would take aught  
 But the two rings.

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

BASS. If I could add a lie unto a fault,  
 I would deny it ; but you see my finger  
 Hath not the ring upon it, it is gone.

---

vives in the colloquial "scrubby." In Cotgrave's *Fr.-Eng. Dict.*  
 "Marpaut" is interpreted "an ill-favoured *scrub*," "a little  
 ouglie or swartie wretch."



SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

POR. Even so void is your false heart of truth.  
 By heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed 190  
 Until I see the ring.

NER. Nor I in yours  
 Till I again see mine.

BASS. Sweet Portia,  
 If you did know to whom I gave the ring,  
 If you did know for whom I gave the ring,  
 And would conceive for what I gave the ring,  
 And how unwillingly I left the ring,  
 When nought would be accepted but the ring,  
 You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

POR. If you had known the virtue of the ring,  
 Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 200  
 Or your own honour to contain the ring,  
 You would not then have parted with the ring.  
 What man is there so much unreasonable,  
 If you had pleased to have defended it  
 With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty  
 To urge the thing held as a ceremony?  
 Nerissa teaches me what to believe:  
 I'll die for 't but some woman had the ring.

BASS. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,  
 No woman had it, but a civil doctor, 210  
 Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,

---

201 *contain*] retain. Cf. IV, i, 50, *supra*: "Cannot *contain* their urine."

206 *ceremony*] an ornament of sacred import; a solemn trophy. Cf. *Jul. Caes.*, I, i, 65, 66: "Disrobe the images, If you do find them decked with *ceremonies*."

210 *civil doctor*] a doctor of civil law.

And begg'd the ring ; the which I did deny him,  
 And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away ;  
 Even he that did uphold the very life  
 Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady ?  
 I was enforced to send it after him ;  
 I was beset with shame and courtesy ;  
 My honour would not let ingratitude  
 So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady ;  
 For, by these blessed candles of the night, 220  
 Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd  
 The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

POR. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house :  
 Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,  
 And that which you did swear to keep for me,  
 I will become as liberal as you ;  
 I'll not deny him anything I have,  
 No, not my body nor my husband's bed :  
 Know him I shall, I am well sure of it :  
 Lie not a night from home ; watch me like Argus : 230  
 If you do not, if I be left alone,  
 Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,  
 I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

NER. And I his clerk ; therefore be well advis'd  
 How you do leave me to mine own protection.

GRA. Well, do you so: let not me take him,  
 then ;

For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

ANT. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

220 *candles of the night*] Cf. *Sonnet* xxi, 12: "As those gold candles  
 fixed in heaven's air."

SCENE I THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

---

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

BASS. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong ; 240  
 And, in the hearing of these many friends,  
 I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,  
 Wherein I see myself, —

POR. Mark you but that !  
 In both my eyes he doubly sees himself ;  
 In each eye, one : swear by your double self,  
 And there 's an oath of credit.

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

ANT. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;  
 Which, but for him that had your husband's ring, 250  
 Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,  
 My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord  
 Will never more break faith advisedly.

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

ANT. Here, Lord Bassanio ; swear to keep this ring.

BASS. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor !

POR. I had it of him : pardon me, Bassanio ;  
 For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

NER. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano ; 260  
 For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,  
 In lieu of this last night did lie with me.

GRA. Why, this is like the mending of highways  
 In summer, where the ways are fair enough :  
 What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it ?

POR. Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed :  
 Here is a letter ; read it at your leisure ;  
 It comes from ~~v Padua, from~~ Bellario :  
 There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,  
 Nerissa there her clerk : Lorenzo here 270  
 Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,  
 And even but now return'd ; I have not yet  
 Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome ;  
 And I have better news in store for you  
 Than you expect : unseal this letter soon ;  
 There you shall find three of your argosies  
 Are richly come to harbour suddenly :  
 You shall not know by what strange accident  
 I chanced on this letter.

ANT. I am dumb.

BASS. Were you the doctor and I knew you not ? 280

GRA. Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold ?

NER. Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,  
 Unless he live until he be a man.

BASS. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow :  
 When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

ANT. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living ;  
 For here I read for certain that my ships  
 Are safely come to road.

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

NER. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. 290  
 There do I give to you and Jessica,  
 From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,  
 After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

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

POR. It is almost morning,  
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied  
Of these events at full. Let us go in ;  
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,  
And we will answer all things faithfully.

GRA. Let it be so : the first inter'gatory 300  
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,  
Whether till the next night she had rather stay,  
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day :  
But were the day come, I should wish it dark,  
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.  
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing  
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

---

298 *inter'gatories*] This abbreviated form of "interrogatories" is common in Elizabethan literature. An "interrogatory" is a question formally put (or drawn up in writing to be put) either to an accused person or to a witness in legal proceedings. The term is frequently used by Elizabethan dramatists, especially by Ben Jonson. Cf. his *Volpone*, I, 1; *Cynthia's Revels*, IV, 1; *Silent Woman*, IV, 2, *ad fin.*

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