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# MERCHANT OF VENICE.

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FROM

## HUDSON'S SCHOOL SHAKESPEARE.

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MERCHANT OF VENICE,  
JULIUS CÆSAR,  
HAMLET,  
THE TEMPEST,  
MACBETH.

*Published separately for 40 cents each.*

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OF

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SHAKESPEARE

SELECTED AND PREPARED FOR USE IN

SCHOOLS.

WITH INTRODUCTIONS AND NOTES.

BY

THE REV. HENRY N. HUDSON.

NUMBER I.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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### SKETCH OF THE POET'S LIFE.

**W**ILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was baptised in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon, Warwickshire, April 26th, 1564. The day of his birth is not positively known, but the general custom then was to baptise infants at three days old, and the custom is justly presumed to have been followed in this instance. Accordingly the 23d of April is agreed upon everywhere throughout the English-speaking world as the Poet's birthday, and is often celebrated as such with appropriate festivities. His father was John Shakespære, a well-reputed citizen of Stratford, who held, successively, various local offices, closing with those of Mayor of the town and Head-Alderman. His mother was Mary, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a man of good landed estate, who lived at Wilmeccote, some three miles from Stratford.

Nothing further is directly known of Shakespeare till his marriage, which took place in November, 1582, when he was in his nineteenth year. The bride was Anne, daughter of Richard Hathaway, a yeoman living at Shottery, which was a village near Stratford, and belonging to the same parish. The date of her baptism is not known; but the baptismal register of Stratford did not begin till 1558. She died August 6th, 1623, and the inscription on her monument gives her age as sixty-seven years; so that her birth must have been in 1556, some eight years before that of her husband. Their first child, Susanna, was baptised May 26th, 1583. Two more children, twins, were christened Hamnet and Judith, on the 2d of February, 1585, the Poet then being nearly twenty-one years old.

We have no certain knowledge as to when or why Shakespeare became an actor. At the last-named date, his father, after some years of thrift, had evidently suffered a considerable decline of fortune. Perhaps this was one reason of his leaving Stratford. Another reason may have been, that, as tradition gives it, he engaged, along with others, in a rather wild poaching frolic on the grounds of Sir Thomas Lucy, who owned a large estate not far from Stratford; which act Sir Thomas resented so sharply, that Shakespeare thought it best to quit the place and go to London. But the Drama was then a great and rising institution in England, and of course the dramatic interest had its centre in the metropolis. There were various companies of players in London, who used, at certain seasons, to go about the country, and perform in towns and villages. Stratford was often visited by such companies during the Poet's boyhood, and some of the players appear to have been natives of that section. In particular, the company that he afterwards belonged to performed there repeatedly while he was just about the right age to catch the spirit from them.

Shakespeare probably left Stratford in 1586 or thereabouts. Be that as it may, the next positive information we have of him is from a pamphlet written in 1592 by Robert Greene, a poor profligate who was then dying from the effects of his vices. Greene, who had himself written a good deal for the stage, there squibs some one as being, "in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country." There is no doubt that this refers to Shakespeare; and some of the terms applied to the *Shake-scene* clearly infer that the Poet was already

getting to be well known as a writer of plays. After Greene's death, his pamphlet was given to the public by one Henry Chettle, who, on being remonstrated with by the persons assailed, published an apology, in which he expresses regret for the attack on Shakespeare, adding, "because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art."

Our next authentic notice of Shakespeare is by the publication of his *Venus and Adonis*, in 1593. This poem was dedicated to Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton, who was among the finest young noblemen of that time; and the language of the dedication is such as the Poet would hardly have used but to a warm personal friend. The following year, 1594, he published his *Lucrece*, dedicating it to the same nobleman, in still warmer terms of address, and indirectly acknowledging important obligations to him. The same year Spenser wrote his *Colin Clout's Come Home again*, in which we have the following, clearly referring to Shakespeare:

"And there, though last not least, is Ætion:  
A gentler Shepherd may nowhere be found,  
Whose Muse, full of high thought's invention,  
Doth like himself heroically sound."

This was Spenser's delicate way of suggesting the Poet's name. Ben Jonson has a like allusion in his lines, — "To the Memory of my beloved Mr. William Shakespeare:"

"In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
As brandish'd at the eyes of Ignorance."

All which may suffice to show that the Poet was not long in making his way to the favourable regards of some whose good opinion was most to be desired, and whose respect was a strong pledge both of recognized genius and personal worth in the object of it. It is to be noted, however, that the forecited marks of consideration were paid to him altogether as an author, and not as an actor. As an actor it does not appear that he was ever much distinguished; though some of the parts which tradition reports him to have sustained would naturally infer him to have been at least respectable in that capacity. But it must have been early evident that his gift looked in another direction; and his associates could not have been long in finding his services most useful in the work for which he was specially gifted.

The dramatic company of which Shakespeare was a member were known as "the Lord Chamberlain's Servants." Richard Burbage, the greatest actor of the time, was a member of the same. The company had for some years owned and occupied what was called the Blackfriars Theatre. This building did not afford accommodation enough for their business. So, in December, 1593, the company went about building the Globe Theatre, in which Shakespeare is known to have been a considerable owner. And the obligations which I have spoken of his being under to Southampton were probably on account of some generous aid which this nobleman rendered him towards that enterprise. Tradition tells us that the Earl gave him a thousand pounds for the occasion. As this would be nearly equivalent to \$30,000 in our time, we may well stick at the alleged amount of the gift; but the Earl's approved liberality in such matters renders even that sum not incredible, and assures us, at all events, that the present must have been something decidedly handsome; though, to be sure, tradition may have overdrawn the amount.

It does not appear that the Poet at any time had his family with

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

him in London. But it is very evident that his thoughts were a good deal with them at Stratford; for he is soon found saving up money from his London business, and investing it in lands and houses in his native town. The parish register of Stratford notes the death of his only son Hamnet, then in his twelfth year, on the 11th of August, 1596. So far as is known, he never had any children but the three already mentioned.

In the Spring of 1597, he bought of William Underhill the establishment called "New Place," and described as consisting of "one messuage, two barns and two gardens." This was one of the best dwelling-houses in Stratford, and was situate in one of the best parts of the town. From that time forward we have many similar tokens of his thrift, which I must not stay to note in detail. Suffice it to say that for several years he continued to make frequent investments in Stratford and the neighbourhood; thus justifying the statement of Rowe, that "he had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasions;" and that "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends."

None of his plays are known to have been printed till 1597, in which year three of them, *King Richard II.*, *King Richard III.*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, came from the press, separately, and in quarto form. The next year, Francis Meres published his *Wit's Treasury*, in which we have the following: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins; so Shakespeare among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage." The writer then specifies by title the three plays already named, and also nine others, in confirmation of his judgment. Besides these twelve, several others also are known to have been in being at that time; and it is all but certain that as many at least as eighteen of the Poet's dramas were written before 1598, when he was thirty-four years old, and had probably been in the theatre about twelve years.

The Poet seems to have been laudably ambitious of gaining a higher social position than that to which he was born. So, in 1599 he procured from the Herald's College in London a coat of arms in the name of his father. Thus he got his yeoman sire dubbed a gentleman, doubtless that the honour might be his by inheritance, as he was his father's eldest son. An odd commentary on this proceeding is furnished by a passage in *King Lear*, Act iii. scene 6, where the Fool says to the old King,—"He's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him." The Poet's father was buried at Stratford, September 8th, 1601; and thenceforward we find him written down in legal documents as "William Shakespeare, Gentleman."

King James the First came to the throne of England in March, 1603. On the 17th of May following, he ordered a patent to be issued under the Great Seal, authorizing "our servants, Laurence Fletcher, William Shakespeare, Richard Burbage," and six others, to exercise their art in all parts of the kingdoms, "as well for the recreation of our loving subjects as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them." By this instrument, the company who had hitherto been known as the Lord Chamberlain's Servants were taken directly under the royal patronage; and accordingly they were henceforth designated as "the King's Players."

Whatever may have been his rank as an actor, Shakespeare evidently had a strong dislike to the vocation, and was impatient of his connection with the stage as a player. We have an affecting proof of this in one of his *Sonnets*, where he unmistakeably discovers his personal feelings on that point:

“O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,  
 The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,  
 That did not better for my life provide  
 Than public means which public manners breeds.  
 Thence comes it that my name receives a brand ;  
 And almost thence my nature is subdu'd  
 To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.”

Moreover, as Dyce remarks, it is evident that Shakespeare never ceased to turn his thoughts towards his birth-place, as the spot where he hoped to spend the evening of his days in honourable retirement.” It is uncertain at what time he withdrew from the stage. The latest notice we have of his acting was in 1608, when Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* was performed at the Blackfriars, and one of the parts was sustained by him. The probability is that he ceased to be an actor in the course of the next year; though it is tolerably certain that he kept up his interest in the affairs of the company some years longer, and that he continued to write more or less for the stage down to as late a period as 1613.

The Poet's eldest daughter, Susanna, was married June 5th, 1607, to John Hall, a gentleman, and a medical practitioner at Stratford, and well-reputed as such throughout the county. His first grandchild, Elizabeth Hall, was baptised February 21st, 1608; and on the 9th of September following his mother died. His other daughter, Judith, was married to Thomas Quiney, February 10th, 1616. Quiney was four years younger than his wife, and was a vintner and wine-merchant at Stratford.

Perhaps I ought to add that Meres, in the work already quoted, speaks of the Poet's “sugared Sonnets among his private friends.” At length, in 1609, these, and such others as the Poet may have written after 1598, were collected, to the number of a hundred and fifty-four, and published. By this time, also, as many as sixteen of his plays, including the three already named, had been issued, some of them repeatedly, in quarto form.

On the 25th of March, 1616, Shakespeare executed his will. The testator is there said to be “in perfect health and memory;” nevertheless he died at New Place on the 23d of April following; and, two days later, was buried beside the chancel of Stratford church. It is said that “his wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be laid in the same grave with him;” and accordingly two of them at least, the wife and the eldest daughter, were in due time gathered to his side.

Shakespeare was by no means so little appreciated in his time as later generations have mainly supposed. Besides the passages already cited, we have many other notes of respect and esteem from his contemporaries. No man indeed of that age was held in higher regard for his intellectual gifts; none drew forth more or stronger tributes of applause. Kings, princes, lords, gentlemen, and, what is perhaps still better, common people, all united in paying homage to his transcendent genius. And from the scattered notices of his contemporaries, we get, also, a pretty complete and very exalted idea of his personal character. How dearly he was held by those who knew him best is well shown by a passage of Ben Jonson's, written long after the Poet's death, and not published till 1640: “I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature.”

From the foregoing sketch it appears that the materials for a Life of Shakespeare are scanty indeed. Nevertheless there is enough, I think, to show that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet in his social intercourses; while, in the smooth and happy



marriage which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with systematic and successful prudence in business affairs, we have an example of well-rounded practical manhood, such as may justly engage our admiration and respect.

STATE AND SOURCES OF THE POET'S TEXT.

Of the thirty-seven plays commonly known as Shakespeare's, sixteen were published, separately, in quarto, during the author's life. Some of these were issued several times in that form; as, for instance, *King Richard II.*, of which there were five quarto editions, severally dated 1597, 1598, 1608, 1608, and 1615. Some of these issues, however, were undoubtedly stolen and surreptitious, and it is by no means certain that any of them were authorized by the Poet. In some cases, as, for instance, in *King Henry V.* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, the quartos present but wretched abortions of the genuine plays; the text being so mutilated and incomplete as to force the inference that the copy must have been taken at the theatre by ignorant or incompetent reporters. In other cases, again, as in the *First and Second Parts of King Henry IV.*, the quartos give the text in such order and fulness as to justify the belief that they were printed from the Poet's own manuscript. Still, upon the whole, we have no clear reason for supposing that a single page of the proofs was ever corrected by the author himself. It should be observed further, that the plays were written for the special use and benefit of the company to which the author belonged. Of course the company was naturally interested in being able to prevent rival companies from getting hold of them; there being at that time no copyright law to restrain appropriations in that kind. Accordingly few things touching the history of the early English stage are more clearly settled, than that theatrical companies took great pains to keep their plays out of print, that so they might control them and have the exclusive use of them. Nevertheless, there are some cases in which we have strong reason to believe that companies gave their consent for the printing of their plays; as in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, both of which were published in 1600; some of the circumstances being such as to warrant, if not invite, a conclusion to that effect.

Of the quarto editions, in some cases, if not in all, the later were undoubtedly printed from the earlier issues. Notwithstanding, we often find the several quarto issues of a given play differing a good deal among themselves in the reading of particular passages. Besides, some of them are shockingly printed, so that it is often impossible to make any sense at all out of the text; and all of them abound in gross typographical errors. Before passing on from this head, I must add that another of the plays, *Othello*, was published in quarto in 1622, six years after the author's death.

This brings me to what is known as the folio edition of 1623, in which the seventeen plays already printed in quarto, and all the others known or believed to be Shakespeare's, with the single exception of *Pericles*, were collected and published together in one volume. It was edited by two of the Poet's old friends and fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell; who dedicated the volume to the two brothers, William and Philip Herbert, Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. In their dedication the editors speak thus: "We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his orphans guardians; without ambition either of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare, by offer of his plays to your most noble patronage."

The dedication was followed by an address "to the great variety of readers," in which the editors claim "so to have published them as, where before you were abused with divers stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors that exposed them, even those are now offered to your view cured and perfect of their limbs, and all the rest absolute in their members as he conceived them; who, as he was a happy imitator of Nature, was a most gentle expresser of it: his mind and hand went together; and what he thought, he uttered with that easiness, that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

Doubtless it was natural, perhaps it was excusable, for the editors to speak in this manner; nevertheless, some of their statements are far from being borne out by the character and execution of the work. Some of the plays here published for the first time are wretchedly printed, insomuch that we have great cause to regret the lack of quarto copies to help us in clearing and rectifying the Poet's text. Others of them, however, it must be confessed, as, for instance, *As You Like It* and *Julius Cæsar*, are printed remarkably well for that time, so that modern editors have no great difficulty in making out, on the whole, a pretty satisfactory presentation of the workmanship. Some, again, of those which had previously appeared in quarto, are here given with errors so great and so frequent, and omissions so important, that no one thinks of relying wholly or even mainly on the folio for settling the text. In several of the plays, the best modern editors, our Mr. Grant White excepted, have no scruple in preferring, on the whole, the quarto copies, and accordingly use them as the chief authority in their textual reproduction.

All these circumstances, taken together, render Shakespeare's dramas one of the hardest books in the world, perhaps the very hardest, to get delivered in a thoroughly satisfactory state. Aside from the many errors, palpable or probable, in the printing, the variations of text in the old copies, the folio differing much from the quartos, and the quartos not a little among themselves, often tax an editor's judgment and diligence to the utmost in fixing his choice of readings; while, moreover, in hundreds of cases, not to say thousands, the claims of different readings are so nearly balanced as almost to foreclose the possibility of editors ever agreeing entirely in their delivery of the text. Volumes enough to make a large library have been written in that behalf; and the result just proves that no two editors can agree with each other in the matter, or even any one with himself for two years together. Therewithal, in some of the plays, especially some of those first printed in the folio, as, for example, *The Winter's Tale* and *Coriolanus*, there are divers passages so defective or so corrupt as fairly to defy the utmost stress of critical ingenuity and resource for curing them into soundness; so that they just have to be given up as incurable.

The folio of 1623 was reprinted in 1632, with a good many small changes of text made by some unknown hand. The folio of 1632 is not regarded as of any authority, though in some cases it furnishes aid of no little value.

I have thus drawn together, in as small a compass and as fair a statement as I could, such particulars relating to the state and sources of the Poet's text, as it seems needful that young students should have before them. For I cannot think it would be doing quite right, either by the subject or the student, to leave the latter altogether uninstructed touching the matters in question. Some further details in the same line are given from time to time, as occasion seemed to require, in the special introductions to particular plays.

This General Introduction may not improperly close with two note-worthy commendations of the Poet. The first, prefixed to the folio of 1623, is from the hand of "rare Ben Jonson," who, though ten years younger than Shakespeare, was one of his most intimate personal and professional friends; a ripe scholar; a diligent, painstaking, and highly idiomatic writer; and a right honest, true-hearted, capable, and thoroughly estimable man. It is certainly one of the noblest tributes ever paid by one man to another. The second first appeared among the commendatory verses prefixed to the folio of 1632. It was there printed without any signature, but was included by Milton in a collection of his poems published in 1645, which of course identifies him as the author of it. Milton was born eight years before Shakespeare died, and was twenty-four years old when this glorious little piece was first given to the public. It is worthy alike of the author and of the subject.

*To the Memory of my beloved, the Author, Mr. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, and what he hath left us.*

To draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,  
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;  
While I confess thy writings to be such  
As neither man nor Muse can praise too much:  
'Tis true and all men's suffrage. But these ways  
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise:  
For silliest ignorance on these may light,  
Which, when it sounds at best, but echoes right;  
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance  
The truth, but gropes, and urgeth all by chance;  
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,  
And think to ruin where it seem'd to raise.  
But thou art proof against them; and, indeed,  
Above th' ill fortune of them, or the need.  
I therefore will begin:—Soul of the age,  
Th' applause, delight, the wonder of our stage,  
My Shakespeare, rise! I will not lodge thee by  
Chaucer or Spenser; or bid Beaumont lie  
A little further, to make thee a room:  
Thou art a monument without a tomb;  
And art alive still, while thy book doth live,  
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.  
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses;  
I mean, with great but disproportion'd Muses:  
For, if I thought my judgment were of years,  
I should commit thee surely with thy peers;  
And tell how far thou didst our Lily outshine,  
Or sporting Kid, or Marlowe's mighty line:  
And, though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,  
From thence to honour thee I would not seek  
For names; but call forth thundering Æschylus,  
Euripides, and Sophocles, to us,  
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova, dead,  
To life again, to hear thy buskin tread  
And shake a stage; or, when thy socks were on,  
Leave thee alone for the comparison  
Of all that insolent Greece or haughty Rome  
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.  
Triumph, my Britain! thou hast one to show,  
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.

He was not of an age, but for all time!  
 And all the Muses still were in their prime,  
 When like Apollo he came forth to warm  
 Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm.  
 Nature herself was proud of his designs,  
 And joy'd to wear the dressing of his lines,  
 Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,  
 As since she will vouchsafe no other wit.  
 The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,  
 Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;  
 But antiquated and deserted lie,  
 As they were not of Nature's family.  
 Yet must I not give Nature all: thy art,  
 My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part:  
 For, though the poet's matter nature be,  
 His art doth give the fashion; and that he  
 Who casts to write a living line must sweat,  
 (Such as thine are,) and strike the second heat  
 Upon the Muses' anvil; turn the same,  
 (And himself with it,) that he thinks to frame;  
 Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn,—  
 For a good poet's made, as well as born:  
 And such wert thou. Look, how the father's face  
 Lives in his issue; even so the race  
 Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines  
 In his well-turned and true-fled lines;  
 In each of which he seems to shake a lance,  
 As brandish'd at the eyes of Ignorance.  
 Sweet Swan of Avon, what a sight it were  
 To see thee in our waters yet appear,  
 And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,  
 That so did take Eliza and our James!  
 But stay; I see thee in the hemisphere  
 Advanc'd, and made a constellation there:  
 Shine forth, thou Star of poets! and with rage  
 Or influence chide or cheer the drooping stage;  
 Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,  
 And despairs day, but for thy volume's light!

BEN JONSON

*An Epitaph on the admirable Dramatic Poet,*

W. SHAKESPEARE.

What needs my Shakespeare, for his honour'd bones,  
 The labour of an age in piled stones;  
 Or that his hallow'd reliques should be hid  
 Under a star-ypointing pyramid?  
 Dear son of Memory, great heir of Fame,  
 What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?  
 Thou, in our wonder and astonishment,  
 Hast built thyself a live-long monument:  
 For whilst, to the shame of slow-endeavouring art  
 Thy easy numbers flow; and that each heart  
 Hath, from the leaves of thy unvalu'd book,  
 Those Delphic lines with deep impression took;  
 Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,  
 Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;  
 And, so sepulch'r'd, in such pomp dost lie,  
 That kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

**T**HIS is among the plays of Shakespeare mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598. How long before that time it was written we have no means of knowing; but, judging by the qualities of the workmanship, we cannot well assign the writing to a much earlier date. In July of the same year (1598), the play was registered in the Stationers' books, but with a special proviso, "that it be not printed without license first had from the Right Hon. the Lord Chamberlain" The theatrical company to which Shakespeare belonged were then known as "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants;" and the purpose of the proviso was to keep the play out of print till the company's permission were given through their patron. The play was entered again at the same place in October, 1600; his lordship's license having probably been obtained by that time. Accordingly, two distinct editions of it were published in quarto form in the course of that year. These editions were by different publishers, and were most likely printed from different manuscripts, though the printer was the same in both. The play was never issued again, that we know of, till in the folio of 1623, where the repetition of various misprints shows it to have been reprinted from one of the quarto copies. Except in one instance, there is little difficulty about the text, nor has there been much controversy on that score. That exception is in Act iii. scene 2, where all the old copies have "the beauteous scarf veiling an Indian beauty." My own judgment of the passage is given in a note. A few varieties of reading are noted in the margin.

In this play, again, the Poet shows the same indifference to mere novelty of incident, which I have remarked in the case of *As You Like It*. Here, as there, he drew largely from preceding writers. Of invention, in the matter of plot and story, there is almost none. Nevertheless, in conception and development of character, in poetical texture and grain, in sap and flavour of wit and humour, and in all that touches the real life and virtue of the work, it is one of the most original productions that ever came from the human mind. Of the materials here used, some were so much the common stock of European literature before the Poet's time, and had been run into so many variations, that it is not easy to say what sources he was most indebted to for them. The incidents of the bond and the caskets are found separately in the *Gesta Romanorum*, an ancient and curious collection of tales. There was also an Italian novel, by Giovanni Fiorentino, written as early as 1378, but not printed till 1568, to which the Poet is clearly traceable. As nothing is known of any English translation of the novel, dating so far back as his time, it seems not unlikely that he may have been acquainted with it in the original.

The praise of *The Merchant of Venice* is in the mouth of nearly all the critics. That this praise is well deserved appears in that, from the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration (in 1660) till the present day, the play has kept its place on the boards; while it is also among the first of the Poet's works to be read, and the last to be forgotten; its interest being as durable in the closet as on the stage. Well do I remember it as the very beginning of my acquaintance with Shakespeare. As in case of the preceding play, I probably cannot do better than by quoting the temperate and firm-footed judgment of Hallam:

"*The Merchant of Venice* is generally esteemed the best of Shakespeare's comedies. In the management of the plot, which is sufficiently complex, without the slightest confusion or incoherence, I do not conceive that it has been surpassed in the annals of any theatre.

Yet there are those who still affect to speak of Shakespeare as a barbarian ; and others who, giving what they think due credit to his genius, deny him all judgment and dramatic taste. A comparison of his works with those of his contemporaries — and it is surely to them that we should look — will prove that his judgment is by no means the least of his rare qualities. This is not so remarkable in the mere construction of his fable — though the present comedy is absolutely perfect in that point of view, and several others are excellently managed — as in the general keeping of the characters, and the choice of incidents. The variety of the characters in *The Merchant of Venice*, and the powerful delineation of those upon whom the interest chiefly depends, the effectiveness of many scenes in representation, the copiousness of the wit, and the beauty of the language, it would be superfluous to extol ; nor is it our office to repeat a tale so often told as the praise of Shakespeare."

The remarks, also, of Schlegel on this drama are in so high a strain, and of a spirit so genial, that I cannot well forbear quoting a portion of them. "*The Merchant of Venice*," says this admirable critic, "is one of Shakespeare's perfectest works ; popular to an extraordinary degree, and calculated to produce the most powerful effect on the stage, and at the same time a wonder of ingenuity and art for the reflecting critic. Shylock, the Jew, is one of the inimitable masterpieces of characterization which are to be found only in *Shakespeare*. It is easy for both poet and player to exhibit a caricature of national sentiments, modes of speaking, and gestures. Shylock, however, is any thing but a common Jew : he has a strongly marked and original individuality, and yet we perceive a light touch of Judaism in every thing he says or does. The desire to avenge the wrongs and indignities heaped upon his nation is, after avarice, his strongest spring of action. His hate is naturally directed chiefly against those Christians who are actuated by truly Christian sentiments : a disinterested love of our neighbour seems to him the most unrelenting persecution of the Jews. The letter of the law is his idol : he refuses his ear to the voice of mercy which speaks to him with heavenly eloquence from Portia's lips ; insisting on rigid and inflexible justice, which at last recoils on his own head. Thus he becomes a symbol of the general history of his unfortunate nation. The melancholy and self-sacrificing magnanimity of Antonio is affectingly sublime. Like a princely merchant, he is surrounded with a whole train of noble friends. The contrast which this forms to the selfish cruelty of the usurer Shylock was necessary to redeem the honour of human nature. The danger which, almost to the close of the Fourth Act, hangs over Antonio, would fill the mind with too painful anxiety, if the Poet did not also provide for its recreation and diversion. This is effected in a special manner by the scenes at Portia's country-seat, which transport the spectator into quite another world. The judgment-scene, with which the Fourth Act is occupied, is in itself a perfect drama, concentrating in the interest of the whole. The knot is now untied, and, according to the common ideas of theatrical satisfaction, the curtain ought to drop. But the Poet was unwilling to dismiss his audience with the gloomy impressions which Antonio's acquittal — effected with so much difficulty — and the condemnation of Shylock were calculated to leave behind them : he therefore added the Fifth Act by way of a musical afterlude to the piece itself. The episode of Jessica, the fugitive daughter of the Jew, in whom Shakespeare has contrived to throw a veil of sweetness over the national features, and the artifice by which Portia and her companion are enabled to rally their newly married husbands, supply him with the necessary materials."

# THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

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## PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUKE of Venice.	LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant to Shylock.
Prince of Morocco, } Suitors to Portia.	OLD GOBBO, Father to Launcelot.
Prince of Arragon, }	LEONARDO, Servant to Bassanio.
ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice.	BALTHAZAR, } Servants to Portia.
BASSANIO, his Friend.	STEPHANO, }
SOLANIO, } Friends to Antonio and Bassanio.	PORTIA, a rich Heiress.
SALARINO, }	NERISSA, her Companion.
GRATIANO, }	JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.	
SHYLOCK, a Jew.	
TUBAL, a Jew, his Friend.	

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants, and other Attendants.

SCENE, partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont.

## ACT I. SCENE I. *Venice. A Street.*

*Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO.*<sup>1</sup>

*Ant.* In sooth,<sup>2</sup> I know not why I am so sad :  
It wearies me, you say it wearies you ;  
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,  
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,  
I am to learn ;  
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,  
That I have much ado to know myself.

*Sal.* Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;  
There, where your argosies<sup>3</sup> with portly sail, —  
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the old copies there is much confusion in the printing of these names, especially in the first scene. After the first scene the prefixes to the speeches uniformly are *Sal.* and *Sol.* So that we have authority for reading *Solanio* instead of *Salanio*, as it is in most modern editions.

<sup>2</sup> *Sooth* is *truth* ; old English.

<sup>3</sup> *Argosies* are large ships either for merchandise or for war. The name was probably derived from the classical ship *Argo*, which carried Jason and the Argonauts in quest of the golden fleece.

<sup>4</sup> *Signior* is used by Shakespeare very much in the sense of *lord* ; *signiory*, of *lordship*, meaning *dominion*. Thus, in *The Tempest*, Act i. scene 2, Prospero says of his dukedom : " Through all the *signiories* it was the first." *Burghers* are citizens. So, in *As You Like It*, Act ii. scene 1, the deer in the Forest of Arden, " poor dappled fools," are spoken of as " being native *burghers* of this desert city."

Or, as it were, the pageants<sup>5</sup> of the sea, —  
 Do overpeer the petty traffickers,  
 That curtsy to them, do them reverence,  
 As they fly by them with their woven wings.

*Sol.* Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,<sup>6</sup>  
 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;<sup>7</sup>  
 And every object that might make me fear  
 Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,  
 Would make me sad.

*Sal.* My wind, cooling my broth,  
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought  
 What harm a wind too great might do at sea.  
 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,<sup>8</sup>  
 Vailing<sup>9</sup> 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 bechanc'd would make me sad?  
 But tell not me: I know Antonio  
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

*Ant.* Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,  
 My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,<sup>10</sup>  
 Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate  
 Upon the fortune of this present year:  
 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

<sup>5</sup> *Pageants* were shows of various kinds, theatrical and others; from a word originally meaning, it is said, a high stage or scaffold. Pageants of great splendour, with gay barges and other paraphernalia, used to be held upon the Thames. Leicester had a grand pageant exhibited before Queen Elizabeth, on the water at Kenilworth Castle, when she visited him there in 1575; described in Scott's *Kenilworth*. Perhaps our Fourth-of-July fireworks come as near to it as any thing now in use.

<sup>6</sup> *Venture* is what is *risked*; exposed to "the peril of waters, winds, and rocks." — *Still*, second line below, has the sense of *continually*.

<sup>7</sup> *Roads* are *anchorages*; places where ships *ride* at anchor safely.

<sup>8</sup> *Dock'd in sand* is *stranded*. — Italian ships were apt to be named from Andrea Doria, the great Genoese Admiral.

<sup>9</sup> *To veil* is *to lower*, *to let fall*.

<sup>10</sup> A *bottom* is a transport-ship, or merchant-man.



*Sal.* Why, then you are in love.

*Ant.*

Fie, fie!

*Sal.* Not in love neither? Then let's say, you're sad,  
Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy  
For you to laugh and leap, and say you're merry  
'Cause you're not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,<sup>11</sup>  
Nature hath fram'd 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,<sup>12</sup>  
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,  
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.<sup>13</sup>

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

*Sal.* I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,  
If worthier friends had not prevented me.<sup>14</sup>

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

*Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, and GRATIANO.*

*Sal.* Good morrow, my good lords.

*Bass.* Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?  
You grow exceeding strange:<sup>15</sup> must it be so?

*Sal.* We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt SALAR. and SOLAN.*]

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

*Bass.* I will not fail you.

*Gra.* You look not well, Signior Antonio;  
You have too much respect upon the world:<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Janus, the old Latin Sun-god, who gave the name to the month of January, is here called *two-headed*, because he had two faces, one on either side of his head. There is also an allusion to certain antique two-faced images, one face being grave, the other merry, or a gloomy Saturn on one side, and a laughing Apollo on the other.

<sup>12</sup> In *Shakespeare* and other writers of the time, *aspect* generally has the accent on the second syllable. — *Other*, the singular form, was sometimes used with the plural sense.

<sup>13</sup> Nestor was the oldest and gravest of the Greek heroes in the Trojan war. The severest faces might justly laugh at what he should pronounce laughable.

<sup>14</sup> *Prevented*, in old language, is *anticipated*. To *prevent* is literally to go before. So in the *Prayer-Book*, 17th Sunday after Trinity: "That thy grace may always prevent and follow us."

<sup>15</sup> *Strange* is *distant, stranger-like*.

<sup>16</sup> The Poet often uses *respect* for *consideration*. So, in *King Lear*, i. 1. "Love's not love, when it is mingled with respects that stand aloof from th'

They use it that do buy it with much care.  
Believe me, you are marvellously chang'd.

*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:<sup>17</sup>  
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;  
And let my liver rather heat with wine  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice  
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio, —  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks, —  
There are a sort of men whose visages  
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond;  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;<sup>18</sup>  
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; who,<sup>19</sup> I'm very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,  
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.  
I'll tell thee more of this another time:  
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,  
For this fool-gudgeon, this opinion. —  
Come, good Lorenzo. — Fare ye well, awhile:  
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

entire point." Near the end of this play, we have *respective for consider-*  
*ative.*

<sup>17</sup> To *play the Fool* is, in Gratiano's sense, to act such a part as that of Fouchstone in *As You Like It*.

<sup>18</sup> *Conceit* for *conception* or *thought*. See page 87, note 5.

<sup>19</sup> All the old copies have *when* instead of *who*, thus leaving *would damn* without a subject. — The following lines refer to the judgment pronounced in the Gospel against him who "says to his brother, Thou fool." The meaning, therefore, is, that if those who "only are reputed wise for saying nothing" should go to talking, they would be apt to damn their hearers, by provoking them to utter this reproach. *Fool-gudgeon*, a little below, appears to mean such a fish as any fool might catch, or none but fools would care to catch. *Gudgeon* was the name of a small fish very easily caught.

*Ant.* Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.<sup>20</sup>

*Gra.* Thanks, i' faith; for silence is only commendable  
In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.<sup>21</sup>

[*Exeunt GRATIA. and LOREN.*]

*Ant.* Is that any thing now?

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

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

*Bass.* 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,  
How much I have disabled mine estate,  
By something showing a more swelling port<sup>22</sup>  
Than my faint means would grant continuance:  
Nor do I now make moan to be abridg'd  
From such a noble rate; but my chief care  
Is to come fairly off from the great debts  
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,  
Hath left me gag'd.<sup>23</sup> To you, Antonio,  
I owe the most, in money and in love;  
And from your love I have a warranty  
T' unburden all my plots and purposes,  
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

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

*Bass.* In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,  
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight<sup>24</sup>  
The self-same way with more advised watch,<sup>25</sup>  
To find the other forth; and, by adventuring both,

<sup>20</sup> *Gear* was often used of any business, matter, or affair in hand.

<sup>21</sup> Not good for the matrimonial market, unless she have the rare gift of silence to recommend her, or to make up for the lack of other attractions.

<sup>22</sup> *Port* is bearing, carriage, behaviour. — Next line, "continuance of."

<sup>23</sup> *Gag'd* is pledged. So in 1 *Henry IV.* i. 3: "That men of your nobility and power did *gag* them both in an unjust behalf."

<sup>24</sup> Arrows were variously formed for different ranges. A shaft "of the self-same flight" was an arrow made for shooting the same distance. — *His* for its, which was not then a legitimate word. See page 53, note 22.

<sup>25</sup> *Advised* is careful deliberate. So Bacon says that judges ought to be "more advised than confidant." — Observe, especially, that in the text as here set forth, — and it is the same in the old copies, — in all such words, *ed*, when printed in full, except in words ending in *ied*, always makes a syllable by itself, and is required by the verse to be so. See page 39, note 6.

I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,<sup>26</sup>  
 Because what follows is pure innocence.  
 I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,  
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please  
 To shoot another arrow that self way  
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt, —  
 As I will watch the aim, — or to find both,  
 Or bring your latter hazard back again,  
 And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

*Ant.* You know me well, and herein spend but time,  
 To wind about my love with circumstance;<sup>27</sup>  
 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:<sup>28</sup> therefore speak.

*Bass.* In Belmont is a lady richly left;  
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,  
 Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes<sup>29</sup>  
 I did receive fair speechless messages.  
 Her name is Portia; nothing undervalu'd  
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:  
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;  
 For the four winds blow in from every coast  
 Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks  
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;  
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,  
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.  
 O my Antonio! had I but the means  
 To hold a rival place with one of them,<sup>30</sup>  
 I have a mind presages me such thrift,  
 That I should questionless be fortunate.

*Ant.* Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;  
 Neither have I money, nor commodity  
 To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;  
 Try what my credit can in Venice do:  
 That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,  
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.

<sup>26</sup> The Poet elsewhere has *childhood* in the sense of *childish*.

<sup>27</sup> *Circumstance* is *circumlocution*. Thus, in *Hamlet*, i. 5: "And so, without more *circumstance* at all, I hold it fit that we shake hands and part."

<sup>28</sup> *Prest* is *prompt, ready*; from an old French word. Spenser has it repeatedly in the same sense. The Latin *presto* is the origin of it.

<sup>29</sup> *Sometimes* and  *sometime* were used indifferently in the sense of *formerly*.

<sup>30</sup> The language is awkward: "as one of them," we should say.

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,<sup>1</sup> Nerissa, my little body is a-weary 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 small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs,<sup>2</sup> but competency lives longer.

*Por.* Good sentences, and well pronounc'd.

*Ner.* They would be better, if well followed.

*Por.* If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood,<sup>3</sup> 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 curb'd by the will of a dead father. — Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

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

*Por.* I pray thee over-name them, and as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at my affection.<sup>4</sup>

*Ner.* First, there is the Neapolitan Prince.

<sup>1</sup> *Troth* is but an old form of *truth*.

<sup>2</sup> That is, superfluity sooner *acquires* white hairs; becomes old. We still say, how did he *come by* it? — The quartos have "no *mean* happiness," which makes a poor jingle with "seated in the *mean*."

<sup>3</sup> This use of *blood* was very common. See page 92, note 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Level at* is *guess* or *infer*. The Poet uses *aim* in the same sense.

*Por* Ay, that's a colt<sup>5</sup> indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afraid my lady his mother play'd false with a smith.

*Ner*. Then is there the County Palatine.

*Por*. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, *An you will not have me, choose*. He hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher when he grows old,<sup>6</sup> 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,<sup>7</sup> Monsieur le Bon?

*Por*. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker: but he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine: he is every man in no man: if a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering; he will fence with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would despise me,<sup>8</sup> I would forgive him; for, if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

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

*Por*. You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor penny-worth in the English. He is a proper man's picture;<sup>9</sup> hut, alas, who can converse with a dumb show?<sup>10</sup> How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany,<sup>11</sup> and his behaviour everywhere.

<sup>5</sup> The Neapolitans were eminently skilled in horsemanship. — *Colt* is used for a witless, heady, gay youngster.

<sup>6</sup> "The weeping philosopher" was Heraclitus of Ephesus, who became a complete recluse, and retreated to the mountains, where he lived on pot-herbs. He was called "the weeping philosopher" because he mourned over the follies of mankind, just as Democritus was called "the laughing philosopher" because he laughed at them. Perhaps Portia has in mind the precept, "*Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.*"

<sup>7</sup> *By* and *of* were among the words not fully differentiated in the Poet's time. So again, in Act ii. scene 9: "That *many* may be meant *by* the fool multitude." See page 33, note 18.

<sup>8</sup> *Would* for *should*; the two words being often used indifferently. So a little after: "You *should* refuse to perform." See preceding note and reference.

<sup>9</sup> A *proper* man is a *handsome* man.

<sup>10</sup> For an instance of *dumb show*, see *Hamlet*, Act iii. scene 2.

<sup>11</sup> *Bonnet* and *hat* have changed places with each other, since the Poet's time.

*Ner.* What think you of the Scottish lord,<sup>12</sup> his neighbour?

*Por.* That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another.<sup>13</sup>

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

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

*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;<sup>14</sup> for, if the Devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

*Ner.* You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determination; 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,<sup>15</sup> depending on the caskets.

*Por.* If I live to be as old as Sibylla,<sup>16</sup> I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's

<sup>12</sup> So in the quartos. In the folio *Scottish* was changed to *other*; doubtless on account of King James.

<sup>13</sup> To seal was to *subscribe*; as Antonio afterwards says, "I'll seal to such a bond." The principal sealed to a bond, his surety *sealed under*. The meaning therefore is, that the Frenchman became surety for another box of the ear, to be given in repayment of the first.

<sup>14</sup> The *wrong* casket. So, in *King John*, iv. 2: "Standing on slippers which his nimble haste had falsely thrust upon *contrary* feet."

<sup>15</sup> *Sort* appears to be here used in the sense of *lot*; from the Latin *sors*. So, in *Troilus and Cressida*, i. 3: "Let blockish Ajax draw the *sort* to fight with Hector." — "Your father's imposition" means the conditions imposed by your father.

<sup>16</sup> Shakespeare here turns the word *sibyl* into a proper name. That he knew it to be a generic, not an individual name, appears in *Othello*, iii. 4: "A sibyl, that had number'd in the world the Sun to course two hundred compasses, in her prophetic fury sew'd the work." Bacon, in his *Essay Of Delays*, also uses the word as a proper name: "Fortune is like the market where, many times, if you can stay a little, the price will fall; and again, it is sometimes like *Sibylla's* offer, which at first offereth the commodity at the full, then consumeth part and part, and still holdeth up the price." The particular Sibyl referred to by Portia is probably the Cumæan Sibyl, so named from Cumæ in Italy, where she had her prophetic seat. Apollo fell in love with her, and offered to grant any request she might make. Her request was that she might live as many years as she held grains of sand in her hand. She forgot to ask for the continuance of her beauty also, and so had a rather hard bargain of it.

If I can catch him once upon the hip,<sup>6</sup>  
 I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.  
 He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,  
 Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
 On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,  
 Which he calls interest: Cursed be my tribe,  
 If I forgive him!

*Bass.* Shylock, do you hear?

*Shy.* I am debating of my present store;  
 And, by the near guess of my memory,  
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross  
 Of full three thousand ducats: What of that?  
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,  
 Will furnish me. But, soft! how many months  
 Do you desire? — [*To ANT.*] Rest you fair, good Signior;  
 Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

*Ant.* Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow,  
 By taking nor by giving of excess,  
 Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,  
 I'll break a custom. — Is he yet possess'd?<sup>7</sup>  
 How much you would?

*Shy.* Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

*Ant.* And for three months.

*Shy.* I had forgot; — three months; you told me so.  
 Well then, your bond; and, let me see, — But hear you:  
 Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow  
 Upon advantage.

*Ant.* I do never use it.

*Shy.* When Jacob graz'd his uncle Laban's sheep, —  
 This Jacob from our holy Abraham was  
 (As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)  
 The third possessor; ay, he was the third,<sup>8</sup> —

*Ant.* And what of him? did he take interest?

*Shy.* No, not take interest; not, as you would say,  
 Directly interest: mark what Jacob did,  
 When Laban and himself were compromis'd,  
 That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied  
 Should fall as Jacob's hire.

*because they do Judaize; that it is against nature for money to beget money, and the like.*" The words in *Italic* show that usury was regarded as a badge of Judaism.

<sup>6</sup> Some explain this as a phrase of wrestling; others, of hunting. To *have one on the hip* was to have the advantage of him; as when a wrestler seized his antagonist by that part, or a hound a deer.

<sup>7</sup> *Possessed* was often used for *informed*. — *Excess*, second line before means in excess of the sum lent; that is, *interest*.

<sup>8</sup> The third, reckoning Abraham himself as the first. — See *Genesis* xxvii.



This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;  
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.<sup>9</sup>

*Ant.* This was a venture, sir, that Jacob serv'd for;  
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,  
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of Heaven.  
Was this inserted<sup>10</sup> to make interest good?  
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

*Shy.* I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.  
But note me, Signior.

*Ant.* Mark you this, Bassanio,  
The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.  
An evil soul, producing holy witness,  
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,  
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:  
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath!<sup>11</sup>

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

*Ant.* Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding to you?

*Shy.* Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,  
In the Rialto, you have rated me<sup>12</sup>  
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 spet<sup>13</sup> upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine own.  
Well then, it now appears you need my help:  
Go to then; you come to me, and you say,  
*Shylock, we would have moneys*: you say so;  
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur  
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.  
What should I say to you? Should I not say,  
*Hath a dog money? is it possible,*

<sup>9</sup> See *Genesis xxx.* 31–43.

<sup>10</sup> That is, inserted in the Scriptures.

<sup>11</sup> *Falsehood* here means *knavery, treachery*, as *truth* is sometimes used for *honesty*.

<sup>12</sup> In this scene we have already had "on the Rialto," and "upon the Rialto." Concerning the place meant, Rogers thus speaks in one of the notes to his poem on Italy: "Rialto is the name, not of the bridge, but of the island from which it is called; and the Venetians say *il ponte di Rialto*, as we say Westminster-bridge. In that island is the exchange; and I have often walked there as on classic ground. In the days of Antonio and Bassanio it was second to none."

<sup>13</sup> So in the old copies, but commonly changed to *spit*. As an old form of the word, and as giving a Shylockian tang to the speech, *spet* ought to be retained. — *Gaberdine* was a long, coarse outer garment or frock. Caliban, in *The Tempest*, ii. 2, wears one big enough, it seems, to wrap both himself and Trinculo in.

*A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or  
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,  
With 'bated breath and whispering humbleness,  
Say this, —*

*Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last;  
You 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 friend; (for when did friendship take  
A breed<sup>14</sup> of barren metal of his friend?)  
But lend it rather to thine enemy;  
Who if he break,<sup>15</sup> thou may'st with better face  
Exact the penalty.

*Shy.* Why, look you, how you storm!  
I would be friends with you, and have your love,  
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,  
Supply your present wants, and take no doit<sup>16</sup>  
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:  
This is kind I offer.

*Ant.* This were kindness.

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

*Ant.* Content, in 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<sup>17</sup> in my necessity.

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

*Shy.* O, father Abraham, what these Christians are,  
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect

<sup>14</sup> *Breed* is *interest*, money *bred* from the principal.

<sup>15</sup> For this uniting of the relative and personal pronouns, *who* and *he*, in one subject, see page 39, note 2.

<sup>16</sup> *Doit* was a small Italian coin, considerably less than our cent.

<sup>17</sup> That is, *continue*, or *abide*.

The thoughts of others!—Pray you, tell me this:  
If he should break his day, what should I gain  
By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man  
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,  
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,  
To buy his favour I extend this friendship:  
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;  
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

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

*Shy.* Then meet me forthwith at the notary's:  
Give him direction for this merry bond,  
And I will go and purse the ducats straight;  
See to my house, left in the fearful guard<sup>18</sup>  
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently  
I will be with you.

[*Exit.*

*Ant.* Hie thee, gentle Jew.

The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

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

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

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II. SCENE I. *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

*Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco, and his Train; PORTIA; NERISSA, and other of her Attendants.*

*Mor.* Mislike me not for my complexion,  
The shadow'd livery of the burnish'd Sun,  
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.  
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,  
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,  
And let us make incision for your love,  
To prove whose blood is reddest,<sup>1</sup> his or mine.  
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine  
Hath fear'd the valiant:<sup>2</sup> by my love I swear,  
The best-regarded virgins of our clime

<sup>18</sup> *Fearful guard* is a guard that is not to be trusted, but gives cause of fear. To *fear* was anciently to *give* as well as *feel* terrors.

<sup>1</sup> *Red blood* is a traditional sign of courage. Thus Macbeth calls one of his frightened soldiers a *lily-liver'd* boy; again, in this play, cowards are said to have *livers as white as milk*; and an effeminate man is termed a *milkop*.

<sup>2</sup> *Fear* was often used as a transitive verb, in the sense of *frighten* or *terrify*. See last note of preceding scene.

Have lov'd 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;<sup>3</sup>  
Besides, the lottery of my destiny  
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:  
But, if my father had not scanted me,  
And hedg'd me by his will, 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.

*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<sup>4</sup>  
That won three fields of Sultan Solymán, —  
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,  
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,  
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,  
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,  
To win thee, lady: But, alas the while!  
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice  
Which is the better man,<sup>5</sup> the greater throw  
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:  
So is Alcides beaten by his page;  
And so may I, blind Fortune leading me,  
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,  
And die with grieving.

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

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

<sup>3</sup> She means that reason and judgment have a voice potential in her matrimonial thoughts. *Nice* has somewhat the sense of *fanciful* here.

<sup>4</sup> A "History of the Wars between the Turks and Persians," translated from the Italian, was published in London in 1595; from which Shakespeare might have learned that "*Soffi*, an ancient word signifying a wise man," was "grown to be the common name of the Emperors of Persia." Ismael Sophi is said to have been the founder of what was called the Suffavian dynasty. The same potentate is twice referred to in *Twelfth Night*. — Solymán the Magnificent had an unfortunate campaign with the Persians in 1535.

<sup>5</sup> If they stake the question of which is the *braver* man upon a game of dice. — Lichas was the servant or *page* of Hercules, who ignorantly brought to his master from Dejanira the poisoned shirt. Hercules was a descendant of Alceus, and so is called, in the Greek idiom, Alcides.

*Por.* First, forward to the Temple:<sup>6</sup> after dinner  
Your hazard shall be made.

*Mor.* Good fortune then!  
To make me bless'd, or curs'd'st among men.

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE II. Venice. A Street.

*Enter LAUNCELOT GOBBO.*

*Laun.* Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, — *Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away: My conscience says, — No; take heed, honest Launcelot; take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.* Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: *Via!* says the fiend;<sup>1</sup> *away!* says the fiend; *for the Heavens,*<sup>2</sup> *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 rul'd 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 rul'd by the fiend, who, saving your reverence,<sup>3</sup> is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnation; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment; I will run.

<sup>6</sup> That is, to the church, to take the oath mentioned just before, and described more particularly in the eighth scene of this Act. Bibles were not kept in private houses in the Poet's time.

<sup>1</sup> *Via!* is Italian, meaning, *away!* — To scorn a thing with the heels appears to have been an old phrase for spurning or kicking at a thing. Shakespeare has the phrase again in *Much Ado about Nothing*, iii. 4. Launcelot seems to be in chase of a quibble between the heels as used in kicking, and the heels as used in running.

<sup>2</sup> *For the Heavens* was merely a petty oath. To make the fiend conjure Launcelot to do a thing for *Heaven's sake*, is a specimen of that "acute nonsense" which Barrow makes one of the species of wit.

<sup>3</sup> *Saving your reverence* is a sort of apologetic phrase for saying something lewd or coarse or profane; somewhat like our, "If you will allow me to say so." "God save the mark," and "God bless the mark," are phrases of similar import.

*Enter old GOBBO, with a Basket.*

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

*Laun.* [*Aside.*] O Heavens, this is my true-begotten father! who, being more than sand-blind, high-gravel-blind, knows me not:— I will try confusions with him.<sup>4</sup>

*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,<sup>5</sup> 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

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

*Gob.* No *master*, sir, but a poor man's son:<sup>6</sup> his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live.

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

*Gob.* Your worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir?<sup>7</sup>

*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.

<sup>4</sup> This is usually printed *conclusions*, following one of the quartos. The other quarto and the folio have *confusions*. To *try conclusions* is, in old language, to *try experiments*. *Try confusions* is a Gobbism, like "the Devil incarnation" above.

<sup>5</sup> God's *sonties* was probably a corruption of God's *saints*, in old language *sauncies*.

<sup>6</sup> *Master*, which we have bled and disbrained into *mister*, meant something in the Poet's time, as a title of respect. Shakespeare himself had no right to the title till he got his father made into a gentleman by procuring for him a coat of arms from the Herald's College.

<sup>7</sup> It appears that old Gobbo himself was named Launcelot: hence in the next speech Launcelot junior asks him if he talks of *young* Master Launcelot. The reader will see that Launcelot senior scruples to give his son the title of *master*.

*Laun.* [*Aside.*] Do I look like a cudgel, or a hovel-post, a staff, or a prop? — [*To him.*] Do you not 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? <sup>8</sup>

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

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

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

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

*Gob.* I cannot think you are my son.

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

*Gob.* Her name is Margery indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. [*Taking hold of his back hair.*] Lord worshipp'd might He be! what a beard hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin, than Dobbin my phill-horse <sup>9</sup> has on his tail.<sup>10</sup>

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

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

*Laun.* Well, well; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest <sup>11</sup> 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 famish'd in his service; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come:

<sup>8</sup> It was customary for young people to address any old man or woman as father or mother. Hence old Gobbo does not recognize his son on being called father by him.

<sup>9</sup> That is, *shaft*-horse, or horse that goes in the shafts. *Phill* is usually printed *thill*; the editors probably not knowing that *phill* or *fill* was a common form of *thill*.

<sup>10</sup> A stage tradition makes young Launcelot turn the back of his head to the old man, instead of his chin.

<sup>11</sup> A phrase from the old game of *primero*; meaning, to stand upon the cards you have in hand, hoping your adversary's hand will prove worse. Hence to make up one's mind, or be determined.

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.<sup>12</sup>—O, rare fortune! here comes the man:—to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

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

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

*Lawn.* To him, father.

*Gob.* God bless your worship!

*Bass.* Gramercy!<sup>13</sup> Would'st thou aught with me?

*Gob.* Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

*Lawn.* 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,—

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

*Gob.* His master and he (saving your worship's reverence) are scarce cater-cousins,<sup>14</sup>—

*Lawn.* 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<sup>15</sup> that I would bestow upon your worship; and my suit is,—

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

*Bass.* One speak for both:—What would you?

*Lawn.* Serve you, sir.

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

*Bass.* I know thee well; thou hast obtain'd thy suit: Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,

<sup>12</sup> We must remember that in Venice it was not easy to find ground enough to run upon.

<sup>13</sup> *Great thanks!* from the French *grand merci*.

<sup>14</sup> *Cater-cousin* is commonly explained fourth cousin; *cater* being, it is said, from the French *quatre*.

<sup>15</sup> There has been no little speculation among the later critics, whether Shakespeare ever visited Italy. Mr. C. A. Brown argues strongly that he did, and refers to this passage among others in proof of it: "Where did he learn of an old villager's coming into the city with 'a dish of doves' as a present to his son's master? A present thus given, and in our days too, and of doves, is not uncommon in Italy. I myself have partaken there, with due relish, in memory of poor old Gobbo, of a dish of doves, presented by the father of a servant."



And hath preferr'd thee ;<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup>

*Bass.* Thou speak'st it well. — Go, father, with thy son. —  
Take leave of thy old master, and inquire  
My lodging out. — [*To his followers.*] Give him a livery  
More guarded than his fellows' ;<sup>18</sup> see it done.

*Laun.* Father, in : — I cannot get a service, no ; — I have  
ne'er a tongue in my head. — Well, [*Looking on his palm.*] if  
any man in Italy have a fairer table,<sup>19</sup> which doth offer to  
swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune ! — Go to ; here's  
a simple line of life !<sup>20</sup> here's a small trifle of wives ! Alas,  
fifteen wives is nothing ! eleven widows and nine maids is a  
simple coming-in for one man ; and then to 'scape drowning  
thrice ; and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feath-  
er-bed ; — here are simple 'scapes !<sup>21</sup> Well, if Fortune be a  
woman, she's a good wench for this gear.<sup>22</sup> — Father, come ;  
I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt LAUNCELOT and old GOBBO.*]

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

*Leon.* My best endeavours shall be done herein.

*Enter GRATIANO.*

*Gra.* Where is your master ?

*Leon.* Yonder, sir, he walks.

[*Exit.*]

<sup>16</sup> Recommended thee ; often so used.

<sup>17</sup> "He that hath the grace of God hath enough," or something such, appears to have been "the old proverb" in question.

<sup>18</sup> That is, ornamented. *Guards* were trimmings, facings, or other ornaments, such as gold and silver lace.

<sup>19</sup> Launcelot, applauding himself for his success with Bassanio, and looking into the palm of his hand, which by fortune-tellers is called the *table*, breaks out into the following reflection : "Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune ;" that is, a *table* which doth *not only* promise, *but* offer to swear upon a book, *that* I shall have good fortune.

<sup>20</sup> The line in the palm passing round the root of the thumb was called the *line of life* ; that which begins near the root of the little finger, and extends towards the root of the fore-finger, was the *line of fortune*.

<sup>21</sup> Launcelot was an adept in the art of chiromancy, which in his time had its learned professors and practitioners no less than astrology. In 1558 was put forth a book by John Indagine, entitled "Brief introductions, both natural, pleasant, and also delectable, unto the Art of Chiromancy, or manual divination, and Physiognomy : with circumstances upon the faces of the Signs." "A simple line of life" written in the palm was cause of exultation to wiser ones than young Gobbo. "The edge of a feather-bed" is probably an absurd variation of the phrase "the edge of the sword."

<sup>22</sup> See Act i. scene 1, note 20.

*Gra.* Signior Bassanio, —

*Bass.* Gratiano!

*Gra.* I have a suit to you.

*Bass.*

You have obtain'd it.

*Gra.* Nay, you must not deny me: I must go  
With you to Belmont.

*Bass.* Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano:  
Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;  
Parts that become thee happily enough,  
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;  
But where thou art not known, why, there they show  
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain  
T' allay with some cold drops of modesty  
Thy skipping spirit; lest, through thy wild behaviour,  
I be misconstru'd in the place I go to,<sup>23</sup>  
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,<sup>24</sup> and sigh, and say amen;  
Use all th' observance of civility,  
Like one well-studied in a sad ostent<sup>25</sup>  
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.<sup>26</sup>

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

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

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *The Same. A Room in Shylock's House.*

*Enter* JESSICA and LAUNCELOT.

*Jess.* I'm sorry thou wilt leave my father so:  
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,

<sup>23</sup> *Misconstru'd* has the accent on the second syllable, and is spelt *misconster'd* in the old copies. See page 34, note 22.

<sup>24</sup> People used to keep their hats on while eating dinner. While grace was saying, they were expected to take the hat off and hold it over the eyes.

<sup>25</sup> That is, grave appearance; *show* of staid and serious behaviour. *Ostent* is a word very commonly used for *show* among old dramatic writers.

<sup>26</sup> *Gauge* is *measure*.

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 ;~~ *cn*  
 And so farewell : I would not have my father  
 See me in talk with thee.

*Lawn.* Adieu ; tears exhibit my tongue.<sup>27</sup> Most beautiful  
 pagan, most sweet Jew ! These foolish drops do somewhat  
 drown my manly spirit : adieu ! [*Exit.*

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

#### SCENE IV. *The Same. A Street.*

*Enter* GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO.

*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.

*Sal.* We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.<sup>1</sup>

*Sol.* 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly order'd,<sup>2</sup>  
 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 ?

*Lawn.* An it shall please you to break up this,<sup>3</sup> it shall seem  
 to signify.

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

*Gra.* Love-news, in faith.

*Lawn.* By your leave, sir.

<sup>27</sup> *Exhibit* is a Gobbosism for *inhibit* ; that is, *prevent* or *restrain*.

<sup>1</sup> Old language, meaning the same as *bespoken torch-bearers for us*.

<sup>2</sup> *Quaintly*, derived from the Latin *comptus*, was often used in the sense of *graceful, elegant*.

<sup>3</sup> *An* and *an if* were much in use with the simple force of *if*. — *Break up* is old language for *break open*.

*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. [*Giving him money.*] Tell gentle Jessica

I will not fail her: speak it privately;

Go. — Gentlemen, [*Exit LAUNCELOT.*]

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of a torch-bearer.<sup>4</sup>

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

*Sol.* And so will I.

*Lor.* Meet me and Gratiano

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

*Sal.* 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt SALAR. and SOLAN.*]

*Gra.* Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

*Lor.* I must needs tell thee all: She hath directed

How I shall take her from her father's house;

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with;

What page's suit she hath in readiness.

If e'er the Jew her father come to Heaven,

It will be for his gentle daughter's sake;

And never dare Misfortune cross her foot,

Unless she do it under this excuse, —

That she is issue to a faithless Jew.<sup>5</sup>

Come, go with me: peruse this, as thou goest.

Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *The Same. Before SHYLOCK'S House.*

*Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.*

*Shy.* Well, thou shalt see, thy eyes shall be thy judge,

The difference of old Shylock and Bassanio: —

What, Jessica! — thou shalt not gormandize,

As thou hast done with me, — What, Jessica! —

And sleep and snore, and rend apparel out. —

Why, Jessica, I say!

*Laun.* Why, Jessica!

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

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

*Enter JESSICA.*

*Jess.* Call you? What is your will?

*Shy.* I am bid forth to supper, Jessica:

<sup>4</sup> The prepositions *of*, *with*, and *by*, were often used indifferently. So, in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*: "He is invested of a precedent disposition." See page 106, note 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Faithless* is simply *without faith*, *unbelieving*.

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.<sup>1</sup> — Jessica, my girl,  
 Look to my house. — ~~I am right loth to go;~~  
 There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,  
 For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

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

*Shy.* So do I his.<sup>2</sup>

*Lawn,* 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<sup>3</sup> at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon.

*Shy.* What, are there masks? — Hear you me, Jessica: Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum, And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,<sup>4</sup> Clamber not you up to the casements then, Nor thrust your head into the public street, To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces:<sup>5</sup> 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,<sup>6</sup> I swear I have no mind of feasting forth to-night; But I will go. — Go you before me, sirrah; Say, I will come.

<sup>1</sup> In Act i. scene 3, Shylock says, "I will *not eat* with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Did the Poet commit an oversight, or did he mean to put the Jew at odds with himself out of hatred to the Christian?

<sup>2</sup> *Reproach* is a Gobbolism for *approach*, as, in a former scene, *frutify* is for *certify*. Shylock chooses to take him in the sense of *reproach*. And he expects Bassanio's reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This may have some bearing on the question whether Shylock has any hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's "losses at sea," which reports, it seems, turn out false at last.

<sup>3</sup> Easter-Monday. The origin of the name is thus explained by Stowe: "In the 34th of Edward III., the 14th of April, and the morrow after Easter-day, King Edward, with his host, lay before the city of Paris: which day was full dark of mist and hail, and so bitter cold, that many men died on their horses' backs with the cold. Wherefore unto this day it hath been called *Black-Monday*." — *Bleeding at the nose* was anciently considered ominous.

<sup>4</sup> One of the quartos and the folio have *squealing*. There has been some dispute whether *wry-neck'd fife* mean the instrument or the musician. Boswell cited a passage from Barnabe Rich's *Aphorisms*, 1618, which appears to settle the matter: "A *fife* is a *wry-neckt musician*, for he always looks away from his instrument."

<sup>5</sup> Alluding perhaps to the painted masks; but meaning, withal, an insinuation of duplicity, or doublefacedness.

<sup>6</sup> *Hebrews* xi. 21: "By faith, Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

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

There will come a Christian by,

Will be worth a Jewess' eye.<sup>7</sup> [*Exit LAUN.*

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

*Jess.* His words were, *Farewell, mistress*; nothing else.

*Shy.* The patch is kind enough:<sup>8</sup> 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.*

*Jess.* Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,

I have a father, you a daughter lost.

[*Exit.*

*Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masked.*

*Gra.* This is the pent-house under which Lorenzo  
Desir'd us to make stand.

*Sal.* His hour is almost past.

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

*Sal.* O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly<sup>9</sup>  
To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont,  
To keep obliged faith unforfeited!<sup>10</sup>

*Gra.* That ever holds: Who riseth from a feast  
With that keen appetite that he sits down?  
Where is the horse that doth untread again  
His tedious measures with th' 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 [wanton] wind!  
How like a prodigal doth she return,

<sup>7</sup> The worth of a Jew's eye was the price with which the Jews used to buy themselves off from mutilation. The expression became proverbial, and was kept up long after its original meaning was lost.

<sup>8</sup> This use of *patch* is said to have sprung from the motley or patched dress worn by professional Fools. Hence a general term of contempt. So, in a *Midsommer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2: "A crew of *patches*, rude mechanicals that work for bread upon Athenian stalls."

<sup>9</sup> The allusion seems to be to the *doves* by which Venus's chariot is drawn.

<sup>10</sup> *Obliged* faith is *plighted* faith.

With over-weather'd ribs, and ragged sails,  
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the [wanton] wind!<sup>11</sup>

*Sal.* Here comes Lorenzo: — more of this hereafter.

*www. | Enter LORENZO:*

*Lor.* Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode;<sup>12</sup>  
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. — Come, approach;  
Here dwells my father Jew. — Ho! who's within?

*Enter JESSICA above, in Boy's Clothes.*

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

*Lor.* Lorenzo, and thy love.

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

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

*Jess.* Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.  
I'm glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,  
For I am much asham'd of my exchange;<sup>13</sup>  
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.

*Jess.* What, must I hold a candle to my shames?  
They in themselves, good sooth, are too-too light.<sup>14</sup>  
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;  
And I should be obscur'd.

*Lor.* So are you, sweet,  
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.  
But come at once;  
For the close<sup>15</sup> night doth play the run-away,  
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

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

[*Exit, from above.*]

<sup>11</sup> This passage well illustrates how the Poet's text ought to be printed, especially the verse. In *chased*, *scarfed*, and *embraced*, the verse plainly requires the *ed* to be a distinct syllable; the contrary of which as plainly holds in *cajy'd*, *hugg'd*, *over-weather'd*, and *beggar'd*. See page 103, note 25.

<sup>12</sup> Long *tarrying*.

<sup>13</sup> Exchange of clothes.

<sup>14</sup> A pun implied, between light in a material and light in a moral sense.

<sup>15</sup> *Close* is *secret*, what conceals or keeps dark.

*Gra.* Now, by my hood, a Gentile,<sup>16</sup> 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 prov'd 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 ?

*Gra.* Signior Antonio ?

*Ant.* Fie, fie, Gratiano ! where are all the rest ?  
'Tis nine o'clock ; our friends all stay for you.  
No masque to-night ; the wind is come about ;  
Bassanio presently will go aboard :  
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.

*Gra.* I'm glad on't : I desire no more delight,  
Than to be under sail, and gone to-night.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

*Flourish of Cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the Prince of Morocco, and both 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, which this inscription bears :  
*Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.*  
The second, silver, which this promise carries :  
*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*  
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt :  
*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath. —*  
How shall I know if I do choose the right ?

*Por.* The one of them contains my picture, Prince :  
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.

<sup>16</sup> Gratiano is disguised with a mask, and in swearing by his hood he implies a likening of himself to a hooded monk swearing by his monastic character. — There is also a play on the word *gentile*, which signifies both a *heathen* and *one well-born* ; perhaps referring also to her *generosity* as contrasted with her father's *avarice*.



*Mor.* Some god direct my judgment! Let me see  
I will survey th' inscriptions back again.

What says this leaden casket?

*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.*

Must give, — For what? for lead? hazard for lead?

This casket threatens: ~~Men that hazard all~~

Do it in hope of fair advantages.

A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;

I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver, with her virgin hue?

*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*

As much as he deserves! — Pause there, Morocco,

And weigh thy value with an even hand:

If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough

May not extend so far as to the lady:

And yet to be afraid of my deserving,

Were but a weak disabling of myself.

As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,

In graces, and in qualities of breeding;

But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I stray'd no further, but chose here? —

Let's see once more this saying grav'd 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.<sup>1</sup>

Th' Hyrcanian deserts<sup>2</sup> and the vasty wilds

Of wide Arabia are as through-fares now

For princes to come view fair Portia:

The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head

Spits in the face of Heaven, is no bar

To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,

As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.

One of these three contains her heavenly picture.

Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation,

To think so base a thought: it were too gross

To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Christians often made long pilgrimages to kiss the shrine of a saint, that is, the place where a saint's bones were enshrined. And Portia, because she enshrines so much excellence, though still but "a traveller between life and death," is compared to such a hallowed shrine.

<sup>2</sup> A wilderness of indefinite extent south of the Caspian Sea.

<sup>3</sup> That is, lead were unworthy even to enclose her cerements, or her shroud. The Poet elsewhere has *rib* in the sense of *enclose* or *protect*: in *Cymbeline*, iii. 1, he speaks of England as "Neptune's park, *ribbed* and paled in with rocks unscaleable and roaring waters." — It would seem that *obscure*

Or shall I think in silver she's immur'd,  
 Being ten times undervalu'd to tried gold?<sup>4</sup>  
 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,<sup>5</sup> but that's insculp'd upon;  
 But here an angel in a golden bed  
 Lies all within. — Deliver me the key;  
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

*Por.* There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,  
 Then I am yours. [*He unlocks the golden Casket.*]

*Mor.* O Hell! what have we here?  
 A carrion Death,<sup>6</sup> within whose empty eye  
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads.*] *All that glisters is not gold;  
 Often have you heard that told:  
 Many a man his life hath sold,  
 But my outside to behold:  
 Gilded tombs do worms infold.  
 Had you been as wise as bold,  
 Young in limbs, in judgment old,  
 Your answer had not been inscroll'd:  
 Fare you well; your suit is cold.*

Cold indeed, and labour lost;  
 Then, farewell heat, and welcome frost! —  
 Portia, adieu! I have too griev'd a heart  
 To take a tedious leave: thus losers part. [*Exit with Train.*]  
*Por.* A gentle riddance. — Draw the curtains, go:  
 Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VII. Venice. A Street.

*Enter SALARINO and SOLANIO.*

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

here was meant to have the first syllable long. The Poet has many instances of like usage. However, it is to be noted that he often allows and even prefers a Dibrach or a Spondee in any part of the line.

<sup>4</sup> This is said to have been just the ratio of silver and gold in the year 1600. Now it is about 1 to 15.

<sup>5</sup> The angel appears to have been the national coin in Shakespeare's time. The custom of stamping an angel upon the coin is thus explained by Verstegan, in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*: "The name of *Engel* is yet at this present in all the Teutonic tongues as much as to say, an Angel; and if a Dutchman be asked how he would in his language call an Angel-like-man, he would answer, *ein English-man.*"

<sup>6</sup> A human skull from which the flesh has all decayed.

*Sol.* The villain Jew with outcries rais'd the Duke,  
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.

*Sal.* 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.

*Sol.* I never heard a passion so confus'd,  
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, stol'n from me by my daughter !*  
*And jewels, — two stones, two rich and precious stones,*  
*Stol'n by my daughter ! — Justice ! find the girl !*  
*She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats !*

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

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

*Sal.* Marry, well remember'd.  
I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,<sup>1</sup>  
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part  
The French and English, there miscarried  
A vessel of our country richly fraught :  
I thought upon Antonio when he told me ;  
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

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

*Sal.* A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.  
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part.  
Bassanio told him he would make some speed  
Of his return : he answer'd, *Do not so ;*  
*Slubber not business for my sake,<sup>2</sup> Bassanio,*  
*But stay the very riping of the time :*  
*And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,*  
*Let it not enter in your mind of love.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> The Poet uses both *reason* and *question* in the sense of *converse*. — *Marry*, as stated page 24, note 5, was a colloquial intensive, which probably grew into use from a custom of swearing by St. Mary the Virgin.

<sup>2</sup> To *slubber* is to do a thing carelessly. Thus, in Fuller's *Worthies of Yorkshire* "Slightly *slubbing* it over, doing something for show, and nothing to purpose."

<sup>3</sup> *Mind of love* probably means *loving mind*, or *mind full of love*. The Poet elsewhere has *mind of honour* for *honourable mind*.

*Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts  
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love<sup>4</sup>  
As shall conveniently become you there.*

And even then, 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.

*Sol.* I think he only loves the world for him.  
I pray thee, let us go and find him out,  
And quicken his embraced heaviness<sup>5</sup>  
With some delight or other.

*Sal.*

Do we so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII. *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

*Enter NERISSA, with a Servant.*

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

*Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Arragon, PORTIA,  
and their Trains.*

*Por.* Behold, there stand the caskets, noble Prince:  
If you choose that wherein I am contain'd,  
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemniz'd;  
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,  
You must be gone from hence immediately.

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

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

*Ar.* And so have I address'd me.<sup>1</sup> Fortune now  
To my heart's hope! — Gold, silver, and base lead.  
*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.*  
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.  
What says the golden chest, ha? let me see:  
*Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.*  
What many men desire! — That many may be meant

<sup>4</sup> See page 120, note 25.

<sup>5</sup> The heaviness he is fond of, or cherishes.

<sup>1</sup> *Address'd* is *prepared, made ready.* See page 94, note 19.

By the fool multitude,<sup>2</sup> that choose by show,  
 Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;  
 Which pries not to th' interior, but, like the martlet,  
 Builds in the weather on the outward wall,  
 Even in the force and road of casualty.  
 I will not choose what many men desire,  
 Because I will not jump with common spirits,<sup>3</sup>  
 And rank me with the barbarous multitude.  
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;  
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:  
*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*  
 And well said too; for who shall go about  
 To cozen Fortune, and be honourable  
 Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume  
 To wear an undeserved dignity.  
 O, that estates, degrees, and offices,  
 Were not deriv'd corruptly! and that clear honour  
 Were purchas'd by the merit of the wearer!  
 How many then should cover that stand bare!  
 How many be commanded that command!  
 How much low peasantry would then be glean'd  
 From the true seed of honour! and how much honour  
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times,  
 To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:  
*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*  
 I will assume desert. — Give me a key for this,  
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

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

*Ar.* What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot,  
 Presenting me a schedule! I will read it. —

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

*Por.* T' offend, and judge, are distinct offices,  
 And of opposed natures.

*Ar.*

What is here?

*The fire seven times tried this:  
 Seven times tried that judgment is,  
 That did never choose amiss.  
 Some there be that shadows kiss;  
 Such have but a shadow's bliss.*

<sup>2</sup> By again for of. See page 106, note 7.

<sup>3</sup> To jump with is to agree with.

*There be fools alive, I wis,  
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.  
Take what wife you will to bed,<sup>4</sup>  
I will ever be your head:  
So be gone, sir; you are sped.*

Still more fool I shall appear  
By the time I linger here:  
With one fool's head I came to woo,  
But I go away with two. —  
Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,  
Patiently to bear my wroth.<sup>5</sup>

[*Exeunt Arragon and Train.*]

*Por.* Thus hath the candle sing'd the moth.  
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

*Ner.* The ancient saying is no heresy:  
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

*Por.* Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Serv.* Where is my lady?

*Por.* Here: what would my lord?<sup>6</sup>

*Serv.* Madam, there is alighted at your gate  
A young Venetian, one that comes before  
To signify th' approaching of his lord,  
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets;<sup>7</sup>  
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,  
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen  
So likely an ambassador of love:  
A day in April never came so sweet,  
To show how costly Summer was at hand,  
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

*Por.* No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard  
Thou'lt say anon he is some kin to thee,

<sup>4</sup> An apparent oversight of the Poet's: the Prince was sworn "never to woo a maid in way of marriage." Perhaps, though, he might woo and marry a widow.

<sup>5</sup> *Wroth* is used in some of the old writers for *suffering*. Thus, in Chapman's 22d Iliad: "Born all to *wroth* of woe and labour." The original meaning of *wrath* is pain, grief, anger, any thing that makes one *writh*; and the text exemplifies a common form of speech, putting the effect for the cause.

<sup>6</sup> A merry reply to the Messenger's "Where is *my lady*?" So, in *Richard II.*, Act v. scene 5, the Groom says to the King, — "Hail, royal *prince*!" and he replies, "Thanks, noble *peer*." And in 1 *Henry IV.*, Act ii. scene 4, the Hostess says to Prince Henry, — "O Jesu! *my lord*, the prince;" and he replies, "How now, *my lady*, the hostess!"

<sup>7</sup> *Sensible regrets* are feeling salutations, or salutations that may be felt, such as valuable presents.

Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him. —  
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see  
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

*Ner.* Bassanio, Lord Love, if thy will it be! [Exeunt.

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ACT III. SCENE I. *Venice. A Street.*

*Enter SOLANIO and SALARINO.*

*Sol.* Now, what news on the Rialto?

*Sal.* Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd, that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins,<sup>1</sup> 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.

*Sol.* I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd ginger,<sup>2</sup> or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio, — O, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company! —

*Sal.* Come, the full stop.

*Sol.* Ha, — what say'st thou? — Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.

*Sal.* I would it might prove the end of his losses.

*Sol.* 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?

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

*Sal.* That's certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.<sup>3</sup>

*Sol.* And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledg'd; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Goodwin Sands, as they were called, lay off the eastern coast of Kent. The name was supposed to have been derived from Earl Godwin, whose lands were said to have been swallowed up there in the year 1100. In *King John*, v. 5, it is said that the supplies expected by the French "are cast away and sunk on Goodwin Sands."

<sup>2</sup> To *knapp* is to *break short*. The word occurs in the *Book of Common Prayer*: "He *knappeth* the spear in *sunder*."

<sup>3</sup> Salarino probably has a sly allusion to the dress in which Jessica eloped.

<sup>4</sup> *Complexion* was much used for natural temperament, or constitutional

*Shy.* She is damn'd for it.

*Sal.* That's certain, if the Devil may be her judge.

*Shy.* My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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

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

*Sal.* 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.<sup>5</sup> 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 us'd to come so smug upon the mart.<sup>6</sup> Let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer;—let him look to his bond: he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy;—let him look to his bond.

*Sal.* 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 disgrac'd me, and hinder'd me half a million;<sup>7</sup> laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.<sup>8</sup>

*Enter a Servant.*

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

texture and grain. In the old tale upon which *Hamlet* was partly founded, the hero is spoken of as being a "Saturnist by complexion," referring to his melancholy disposition.

<sup>5</sup> Rhenish wines are called white wines; named from the river Rhine.

<sup>6</sup> *Smug* is *brisk, gay, or spruce*; applied both to persons and things. Thus, in *King Lear*, iv. 6: "I will die bravely, like a *smug* bridegroom: what, I will be jovial." And in 1 *Henry IV.*, iii. 1: "Here the *smug* and silver Trent shall run in a new channel, fair and evenly."

<sup>7</sup> Hinder'd me to the extent of half a million; ducats, of course.

<sup>8</sup> I will work mighty hard rather than fail to surpass my teachers.



*Sal.* We have been up and down to seek him.

*Sol.* Here comes another of the tribe: a third cannot be match'd, unless the Devil himself turn Jew.

[*Exeunt SOLAN., SALAR., and Servant.*

*Enter TUBAL.*

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

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

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

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

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

*Tub.*—hath an argosy cast away, coming from Tripolis.

*Shy.* I thank God, I thank God!—Is it true, is it true?

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

*Shy.* I thank thee, good Tubal:—Good news, good news! ha, ha!—Where? in Genoa?

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

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

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

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

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

*Shy.* Out upon her! Thou torturest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise;<sup>9</sup> I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

<sup>9</sup> The *Turquoise* is a precious stone found in the veins of the mountains on the confines of Persia to the east. In old times its value was much en-

*Tub.* But Antonio is certainly undone.

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

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

*Enter BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, NERISSA, and Attendants. The caskets are set out.*

*Por.* I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two,  
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.  
There's something tells me — but it is not love —  
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,  
Hate counsels not in such a quality.  
But, lest you should not understand me well, —  
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —  
I would detain you here some month or two  
Before you venture for me. I could teach you  
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;  
So will I never be: so may you miss me;  
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin, —  
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,  
They have o'erlook'd me,<sup>1</sup> and divided me;  
One half of me is yours, th' 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,<sup>2</sup>  
Let Fortune go to Hell for it, not I.  
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,<sup>3</sup>  
To eke it, and to draw it out in length,  
To stay you from election.

hanced by the magic properties attributed to it in common with other precious stones, one of which was that it faded or brightened as the health of the wearer increased or grew less.

<sup>1</sup> To be o'erlook'd, forelooked, or eye-bitten, was a term for being bewitched by an evil eye.

<sup>2</sup> If it prove so. Portia here means a good deal more than meets the ear; that if it prove so, the fault will be Fortune's, yet she herself will have to bear the pain.

<sup>3</sup> To peize is from *peser*, French; to weigh or balance. So, in *Richard III.*: "Lest leaden slumber peize me down to-morrow." In the text it is used figuratively for to suspend, to retard, or delay the time. Mr. Dyce changes *peize* to *piece*, which may be right.

*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 th' enjoying of my love :<sup>4</sup>  
There may as well be amity and league  
'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.

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

*Por.* Well then, confess, and live.

*Bass.* Confess, and love,  
Had been the very sum of my confession.  
O happy torment, when my torturer  
Doth teach me answers for deliverance !  
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

*Por.* Away then ! I am lock'd in one of them :  
If you do love me, you will find me out. —  
Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof. —  
Let music sound, while he doth make his choice ;  
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,<sup>5</sup>  
Fading in music : that the comparison  
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream  
And watery death-bed for him. He may win,  
And what is music then ? then music is  
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow  
To a new-crowned monarch :<sup>6</sup> such it is  
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day  
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,  
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,  
With no less presence, but with much more love,  
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy  
To the sea-monster :<sup>7</sup> I stand for sacrifice ;  
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,  
With bleared visages, come forth to view  
The issue of th' exploit. Go, Hercules !

<sup>4</sup> Fear in the sense of *doubt* ; fear the *not* enjoying of my love. — *League*, in the next line, is Mr. Walker's correction of *life*, the old reading.

<sup>5</sup> Alluding to the opinion which long prevailed, that the swan uttered a plaintive musical sound at the approach of death.

<sup>6</sup> It is an old custom in English coronations to have the putting on of the crown announced by a flourish of trumpets.

<sup>7</sup> The story, as told by Ovid, is, that Hesione, daughter of the Trojan King, being demanded by the Sea-monster, and being bound to a rock, Hercules slew the monster, and delivered her. Bassanio "goes with much more love," because Hercules went, not from love of the lady, but to gain the reward offered by Lamedon.

Live thou, I live. With much, much more dismay  
I view the fight, than thou that mak'st the fray.

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

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Song.

*Tell me, where is fancy bred,<sup>8</sup>  
Or in the heart, or in the head?  
How begot, how nourished?*

*Reply, reply.  
It is engender'd in the eyes,  
With gazing fed; and fancy dies  
In the cradle where it lies.*

*Let us all ring fancy's knell;  
I'll begin it,— Ding, dong, bell.*

All. *Ding, dong, bell.*

*Bass.* So may the outward shows be least themselves:  
The world is still deceiv'd 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,<sup>9</sup>  
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?  
There is no vice so simple, but assumes  
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts.  
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false  
As stairs of sand,<sup>10</sup> wear yet upon their chins  
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;  
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk!<sup>11</sup>  
And these assume but valour's excrement,<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Fancy* is often used by the Poet for *love*; but that can hardly be the meaning here. Probably it refers to the *illusion* which has misled the other suitors, who, as Portia says, "have the wisdom by their wit to lose." And that illusion "dies in the cradle where it lies," as soon as it is brought to the test of experience by opening the wrong casket. Perhaps the song is meant as a sort of *riddle*, to start Bassanio on the right track, or to make him distrustful of such shows as catch the fancy.

<sup>9</sup> To *approve* it is to *make it good*, to *prove it true*; often so used.

<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the Poet had in mind the saying of the Son of Sirach: "As hills of sand are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man." Perhaps it should be "*stays* of sand," or *stayers*; that is, *props*, or *supports*.

<sup>11</sup> Cowards were commonly spoken of as having white livers. Shakespeare has *lily-livered* and *milk-livered* and *milk-sop* in the same sense; and Falstaff instructs us that "the second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice."

<sup>12</sup> *Excrement*, from *excreco*, is used for every thing which appears to grow or vegetate upon the human body, as the hair, the beard, the nails.

To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,  
 And you shall see 'tis purchas'd by the weight;  
 Which therein works a miracle in nature,  
 Making them lightest that wear most of it:<sup>13</sup>  
 So are those crisped snaky golden locks,  
 Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,  
 Upon supposed fairness,<sup>14</sup> often known  
 To be the dowry of a second head,  
 The skull that bred them, in the sepulchre.<sup>15</sup>  
 Thus ornament is but the guiled shore<sup>16</sup>  
 To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf  
 Veiling an Indian; beauty,<sup>17</sup> in a word,  
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on  
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,  
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;<sup>18</sup>  
 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 plainness moves me more than eloquence;<sup>19</sup>  
 And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

*Por.* How all the other passions fleet to air,  
 As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embrac'd despair,  
 And shuddering fear, and green-ey'd jealousy!  
 O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;

<sup>13</sup> Another quibble upon *light*. See page 125, note 14. Here, however, it is between *light* as opposed to *heavy*, and *light* in the sense of *vanity*.

<sup>14</sup> That is, *imagined* or *imputed* fairness.

<sup>15</sup> The Poet has often expressed a strong dislike of the custom, then in vogue, of wearing false hair. His 68th Sonnet has a passage very like that in the text:

“Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,  
 When beauty liv'd and died as flowers do now;  
 Before the golden tresses of the dead,  
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,  
 To live a second life on second head;  
 Ere beauty's dead fleeces made another gay.”

<sup>16</sup> *Guiled* for *guiling*; that is, *beguiling*. The Poet often thus uses the passive form with an active sense, and *vice versa*. In Act i. scene 3, of this play, we have *beholding* for *beholden*.

<sup>17</sup> Such is the only arrangement I can make up my mind to, in this troublesome passage. Both the old and recent editions give it “veiling an Indian beauty.” As printed in the text, the only objection I can think of to it is, that Bassanio is speaking of ornament, not beauty. But I cannot see that this amounts to much; for he has just used “*beauteous scarf*” to express a form of ornament.

<sup>18</sup> Midas was a mythological personage who asked of God Bacchus that whatever he touched might be turned into gold. The request being granted, and all his food turning to gold in the eating, he implored Bacchus to revoke the favour.

<sup>19</sup> The old copies have *paleness* instead of *plainness*. But the Poet has just spoken of silver as *pale*, and he would hardly apply the same epithet to lead. Moreover, *plainness* makes a right antithesis to *eloquence*.

In measure rain thy joy ; scant this excess !  
I feel too much thy blessing ; make it less,  
For fear I surfeit !

*Bass.* [*Opening the leaden Casket.*] What find I here?  
Fair Portia's counterfeit! <sup>20</sup> What demi-god  
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?  
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,  
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,  
Parted with sugar breath : so sweet a bar  
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs  
The painter plays the spider ; and hath woven  
A golden mesh t' 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. <sup>21</sup> 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 : <sup>22</sup>

*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 pleas'd with this,  
And hold your fortune for your bliss,  
Turn you where your lady is,  
And claim her with a loving kiss.*

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

[*Kissing her.*]

<sup>20</sup> *Counterfeit* anciently signified a *likeness*, a *resemblance*. So, in *The Wit of a Woman*, 1684: "I will see if I can agree with this stranger for the drawing of my daughter's *counterfeit*." And Hamlet calls the pictures he shows to his mother, "The *counterfeit* presentment of two brothers."

<sup>21</sup> That is, unfurnished with a companion or fellow. In Fletcher's *Lover's Progress*, Alcidon says to Clarangé, on delivering Lidian's challenge, which Clarangé accepts:

"You are a noble gentleman.  
Will't please you bring a friend? we are two of us,  
And pity either, sir, should be *unfurnish'd*."

<sup>22</sup> *Continent*, in old English, is simply that which *contains* something.

As doubtful whether what I see be true,  
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

*Por.* You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,  
Such as I am: though for myself alone  
I would not be ambitious in my wish,  
To wish myself much better; yet for you  
I would be trebled twenty times myself;  
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;  
That, only to stand high in your account,  
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,  
Exceed account: but the full sum of me  
Is sum of—something;<sup>28</sup> which, to term in gross,  
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractis'd:  
Happy in this, she is not yet so old  
But she may learn; then happier in this,  
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;  
Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit  
Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
As from her lord, her governor, her king.  
Myself and what is mine to you and yours  
Is now converted: but now I was the lord  
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,  
This house, these servants, and this same myself,  
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;  
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,  
Let it presage the ruin of your love,  
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

*Bass.* Madam, you have bereft me of all words;  
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins:  
And there is such confusion in my powers,  
As, after some oration fairly spoke  
By a beloved prince, there doth appear  
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;  
Where every something, being blent together,  
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,  
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring  
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence:  
O, then be bold to say, Bassanio's dead!

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

<sup>28</sup> So the quartos; the folio has *nothing*, which does not seem to cohere very well with the words, "which, to term in gross." Following the intelligent editors of the "Globe Edition," I insert a dash before *something*, to indicate hesitation on the fair speaker's part for a term with which to describe herself modestly, yet without any affectation of modesty.

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

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

*Gra.* I thank your lordship, you have got me one.  
 My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours :  
 You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid ;<sup>24</sup>  
 You lov'd, I lov'd ; for intermission  
 No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.  
 Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,  
 And so did mine too, as the matter falls ;  
 For wooing here, until I swet 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  
 Achiev'd her mistress.

*Por.* Is this true, Nerissa ?

*Ner.* Madam, it is, so you stand pleas'd withal.

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

*Gra.* Yes, 'faith, my lord.

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

*Gra.* But who comes here ? Lorenzo, and his infidel ?  
 What, and my old Venetian friend, Solanio ?<sup>25</sup>

*Enter* LORENZO, JESSICA, and SOLANIO.

*Bass.* Lorenzo and Solanio, 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.

<sup>24</sup> We are not to understand by this that Nerissa is merely a servant-maid or waiting-woman to Portia : she holds the place of companion or friend, and Portia all along treats her as such. They are as nearly equals in rank, as Bassanio and Gratiano are, who are a pair of *friends*, not master and servant. Nor does it conflict with this, that Gratiano speaks of Portia as "her mistress;" for he is in a position that requires him to plead his present cause with a good deal of modesty and deference, lest he should seem to have abused his privilege of accompanying Bassanio on this loving voyage.

<sup>25</sup> In the old copies, this latter name is given as *Salerio* ; and modern editions generally regard him as a distinct person from Solanio ; one who appears nowhere but in this scene. But Gratiano's speaking of him as "my old Venetian friend" naturally refers us to the man who has hitherto been known as Solanio ; so that I have little scruple in adopting the change made by Mr. Dyce. None of the old copies gives any list of the persons represented.



*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 Solanio by the way,  
He did entreat me, past all saying nay,  
To come with him along.

*Sol.* I did, my lord,  
And I have reason for't. 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.  
*Sol.* 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 yond stranger; bid her welcome.—  
Your hand, Solanio: What's the news from Venice?  
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?  
I know he will be glad of our success:  
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

*Sol.* Would you had won the fleece that he hath lost!

*Por.* There are some shrewd contents in yond same paper,<sup>26</sup>  
That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek:  
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world  
Could turn so much the constitution  
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse! —  
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,  
And I must have the half of any thing  
That this same paper brings you.

*Bass.* O sweet Portia!  
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words  
That ever blotted paper. Gentle lady,  
When I did first impart my love to you,  
I freely told you, all the wealth I had  
Ran in my veins, — I was a gentleman:  
And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,  
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see  
How much I was a braggart. When I told you  
My state was nothing, I should then have told you  
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,  
I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,  
Engag'd 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,

<sup>26</sup> *Shrewd*, in old language, is *sharp, biting*. See page 95, note 21

Issuing life-blood. — But is it true, Solanio?  
 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?

*Sol.* 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<sup>27</sup>  
 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

*Jess.* When I was with him, I have heard him swear  
 To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,  
 That he would rather have Antonio's flesh  
 Than twenty times the value of the sum  
 That he did owe him; and I know, my lord,  
 If law, authority, and power deny not,  
 It will go hard with poor Antonio.

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

*Bass.* The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,  
 The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit<sup>28</sup>  
 In doing courtesies; and one in whom  
 The ancient Roman honour more appears  
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

*Por.* What sum owes he the Jew?

*Bass.* For me three thousand ducats.

*Por.* What, no more?  
 Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;  
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Envy* and *envious* are continually used by old writers in the sense of *malice* and *malicious*.

<sup>28</sup> The force of the superlative, *best*, is continued over *unwearied* in the sense of *most*. — *Condition'd* is *tempered, disposed*. See page 108, note 19.

<sup>29</sup> The Venetian ducat, in or near the Poet's time, is said on good authority to have been equivalent to nearly \$1.53 of our money. At this rate, Portia's 36,000 ducats would have equalled about \$55,000. And money was worth some six times as much then as it is now! — In the second line below, *my* is wanting in all the old copies till the folio of 1632, where it is supplied. The Poet would hardly have made the verse deficient in a syllable there. Perhaps we should read *through* instead of *through*, those two forms being used indifferently at that time.

Before a friend of this description  
 Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.  
 First go with me to church and call me wife,  
 And then away to Venice to your friend;  
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side  
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold  
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over;  
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along:  
 My maid Nerissa and myself, mean-time,  
 Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!  
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day.  
 Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;<sup>30</sup>  
 Since you are dear-bought, I will love you dear.  
 But let me hear the letter of your friend.

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

*Por.* O love, despatch all business, and be gone!

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

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. Venice. A Street.

*Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and Jailer.*

*Shy.* Jailer, look to him: tell not me of mercy. —  
 This is the fool that lends out money gratis. —  
 Jailer, look to him.

*Ant.* Hear me yet, good Shylock.

*Shy.* I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:  
 I've 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 jailer, that thou art so fond<sup>1</sup>  
 To come abroad with him at his request.

*Ant.* I pray thee, hear me speak.

*Shy.* I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:  
 I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.

<sup>30</sup> *Cheer* is from the French *chère*, signifying *countenance*. Shakespeare has it in the same sense again in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2: "All fancy-sick she is, and pale of *cheer*."

<sup>1</sup> *Fond* is generally used by Shakespeare in the sense of *foolish*.

I'll not be made a soft and dull-ey'd fool,  
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield  
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;  
I'll have no speaking: I will have my bond.

[*Exit* SHYLOCK.

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

*Ant.* Let him alone:  
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.  
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:  
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures  
Many that have at times made moan to me;  
Therefore he hates me.

*Sal.* 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,  
'Twill much impeach the justice of the State;  
Since that the trade and profit of the city  
Consisteth of all nations.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, go:  
These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,  
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh  
To-morrow to my bloody creditor. —  
Well, jailer, 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 BAL-  
THAZAR.

*Lor.* Madam, although I speak it in your presence,  
You have a noble and a true conceit<sup>1</sup>

<sup>2</sup> It should be borne in mind, that Antonio was one of the citizens, while Shylock was reckoned among the strangers of the place. And since the city was benefited as much by the trade and commerce of foreigners as of natives, justice evidently required that the law should give equal advantages to them both. But to stop the course of law in behalf of citizens against strangers, would be putting the latter at a disadvantage, and so would clearly impeach the justice of the State. *For* means the same as *because of*, — a sense in which it is often used by the Poet. The passage is usually printed thus:

“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 the state.”

Where *commodity* is obviously the subject of *impeach*. Which greatly clogs and obscures the passage, though perhaps it may still be made to yield the same meaning. *Commodity* here bears the sense of *commercial intercourse*.

<sup>1</sup> *Conceit* is *conception, idea, or judgment*. I think the word is never used by Shakespeare in a bad sense. See page 102, note 18.

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

*Por.* I never did repent for doing good,  
 Nor shall not now : for in companions  
 That do converse and waste the time together,  
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,  
 There must be needs a like proportion  
 Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit ;  
 Which makes me think that this Antonio,  
 Being the bosom lover of my lord,<sup>2</sup>  
 Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,  
 How little is the cost I have bestow'd  
 In purchasing the semblance of my soul  
 From out the state of hellish cruelty !  
 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 breath'd a secret vow  
 To live in prayer and contemplation,  
 Only attended by Nerissa here,  
 Until her husband and my lord's return :  
 There is a monastery two miles off,  
 And there we will abide. I do desire you  
 Not to deny this imposition,<sup>3</sup>  
 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.  
 So, fare you well, till we shall meet again.

*Lor.* Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !

*Jess.* I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

*Por.* I thank you for your wish, and am well pleas'd  
 To wish it back on you : fare you well, Jessica. —  
 Now, Balthazar, [ *Exeunt JESSICA and LORENZO.*

<sup>2</sup> *Lover* was much used by Shakespeare and other writers of his time for friend. His sonnets are full of examples in point.

<sup>3</sup> *Imposition* is any charge, task or duty imposed.

As I have ever found thee honest-true,  
 So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,  
 And use thou all th' 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 imagin'd speed <sup>4</sup>  
 Unto the Tranect,<sup>5</sup> to the common ferry  
 Which trades to Venice. Waste no time in words,  
 But get thee gone : I shall be there before thee.

*Balth.* Madam, I go with all convenient speed.

[*Exit.*

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

*Ner.* Shall they see us ?

*Por.* They shall, Nerissa ; but in such a habit,  
 That they shall think we are accomplished  
 With what we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,  
 When we are both accountred like young men,  
 I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,  
 And wear my dagger with the braver grace ;  
 And speak between the change of man and boy  
 With a reed voice ; and turn two mincing steps  
 Into a manly stride ; and speak of frays,  
 Like a fine bragging youth ; and tell quaint lies,  
 How honourable ladies sought my love,  
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died ;  
 I could not do withal :<sup>6</sup> 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've discontinu'd school  
 Above a twelvemonth. I've within my mind  
 A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,  
 Which I will practise. —  
 But come ; I'll tell thee all my whole device  
 When I am in my coach, which stays for us

<sup>4</sup> That is, with the celerity of imagination. So, in the Chorus preceding the Third Act of *Henry V.*: "Thus with *imagin'd* wing our swift scene flies."

<sup>5</sup> This word evidently implies the name of a place where the passage-boat set out, and is in some way derived from *tranare*, to draw. No other instance of its use has yet occurred. The Poet had most likely heard or read of the place on the Brenta, about five miles from Venice, where a boat was *drawn* over a dam by a crane.

<sup>6</sup> A phrase of the time, signifying *I could not help it*. So, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Little French Lawyer*, Dinant, who is reproached by Clerimont for not silencing the music which endangered his safety, replies: "*I cannot do withal* ; I have spoke and spoke ; I am betrayed and lost too."

At the park-gate; and therefore haste away,  
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. .

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V. *The Same. A Garden.*

*Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA.*

*Laun.* Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children: therefore, I promise you, I fear you.<sup>1</sup> I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation<sup>2</sup> of the matter: therefore be of good cheer; for, truly, I think, you are damn'd.

*Jess.* I shall be sav'd by my husband; he hath made me a Christian.

*Laun.* Truly, the more to blame he: we were Christians enough 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.

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

*Enter LORENZO.*

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

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

*Lor.* I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots.<sup>3</sup> — Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

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

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

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

*Lor.* Will you cover, then, sir?

*Laun.* Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is, fear for you, or on your account. So, in *Richard III.*, Act i. scene 1: "The king is sickly, weak, and melancholy, and his physicians fear him mightily."

<sup>2</sup> A Gobbolism for *cogitation*.

<sup>3</sup> A shrewd proof that the Poet rightly estimated the small wit, the puns and verbal tricks, in which he so often indulges. He did it to please others, not himself.

<sup>4</sup> Launcelot is playing upon the two senses of *cover*, which was used both for setting the table and for putting on the hat.

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

*Laun.* For the table, sir, it shall be serv'd 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* LAUNCELOT.]

*Lor.* O, dear discretion, how his words are suited!  
The fool hath planted in his memory  
An army of good words; and I do know  
A many fools, that stand in better place,  
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word  
Defy the matter.<sup>5</sup>—How cheer'st thou, Jessica?  
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion;  
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

*Jess.* Past all expressing. It is very meet  
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;  
For, having such a blessing in his lady,  
He finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth;  
And if on Earth he do not merit it,<sup>6</sup>  
In reason he should never come to Heaven.  
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,  
And on the wager lay two earthly women,  
And Portia one, there must be something else  
Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world  
Hath not her fellow.

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

*Jess.* Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.

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

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

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

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

<sup>5</sup> That is, they set the matter at defiance, or strangle the meaning, in their fondness of verbal trickery and trifling, or in their chase after puns and plays upon words. Shakespeare alludes, no doubt, to the habit which was then but too common in the high places of learning and of the State; where one could scarce come at the matter, it was so flourished in the speaking. Launcelot is a good satire on the practice, however the satire may rebound upon the Poet himself.

<sup>6</sup> The old copies have *mean it*, instead of *merit*. The change is Pope's approved by Dyce.



ACT IV. SCENE I. *Venice. A Court of Justice.*

*Enter the DUKE; the Magnificoes; ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SALARINO, SOLANIO, and Others.*

*Duke.* What, is Antonio here?

*Ant.* Ready, so please your Grace.

*Duke.* I'm 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,<sup>1</sup> I do oppose  
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd  
To suffer with a quietness of spirit  
The very tyranny and rage of his.

*Duke.* Go one, and call the Jew into the Court.

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

*Enter SHYLOCK.*

*Duke.* Make room, and let him stand before our face. —  
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,  
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice  
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought  
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse,<sup>2</sup> more strange  
Than is thy strange-apparent cruelty:  
And where<sup>3</sup> thou now exact'st the penalty, —  
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh, —  
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,<sup>4</sup>  
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;  
Enough to press a royal merchant down,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Envy* in this place means *hatred* or *malice*; a frequent use of the word in Shakespeare's time, as every reader of the English Bible ought to know. See page 144, note 27.

<sup>2</sup> *Remorse* in Shakespeare's time generally signified *pity*, *tenderness*; the *relentings* of compassion.

<sup>3</sup> In the Poet's age, *where* was continually used, in all sorts of writing, for *whereas*.

<sup>4</sup> *Loose* has the sense of *release*. — *Moiety*, second line after, properly means the half of a thing, but is used by the Poet for any portion.

<sup>5</sup> This epithet was striking and well understood in Shakespeare's time, when Gresham had the title of the *royal merchant*, both from his wealth, and

And pluck commiseration of his state  
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,  
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd  
To offices of tender courtesy.

We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

*Shy.* I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:  
If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.  
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have  
A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive  
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;  
But say it is my humour:<sup>6</sup> is it answer'd?  
What if my house be troubled with a rat,  
And I be pleas'd to give ten thousand ducats  
To have it ban'd! What, are you answer'd yet?  
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;<sup>7</sup>  
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat.  
Masters of passion sway it to the mood  
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:  
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,  
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;  
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;  
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,  
More than a lodg'd hate and a certain loathing  
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus  
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

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

*Shy.* I am not bound to please thee with my 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.

because he constantly transacted the mercantile business of Queen Elizabeth. And there were similar ones at Venice, such as the Giustiniani and the Grimaldi.

<sup>6</sup> In Shakespeare's time the word *humour* was used, much as *conscience* was at a later period, to justify any eccentric impulse of vanity, opinion, or self-will, for which no common ground of reason could be alleged. Thus, if a man had an individual crotchet which he meant should override the laws and conditions of our social being, it was his *humour*. Corporal Nym is a burlesque on this sort of affectation.

<sup>7</sup> A pig's head as roasted for the table. In England, a boar's head is served up at Christmas, with a lemon in its mouth. So, in Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, iii. 2: "He could not abide to see a pig's head gaping: I thought your Grace would find him a Jew." And in Fletcher's *Elder Brother*, ii. 2: "And they stand gaping like a roasted pig."

You may as well go stand upon the beach,  
 And bid the main flood 'bate his usual height;  
 You may as well use question with the wolf,  
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;  
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines  
 To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,  
 When they are fretten<sup>s</sup> with the gusts of heaven;  
 You may as well do any thing most hard,  
 As seek to soften that (than which what's harder?)  
 His Jewish heart. — Therefore, I do beseech you,  
 Make no more offers, use no further means,  
 But, with all brief and plain conveniency,  
 Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

*Bass.* For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

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

*Duke.* How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

*Shy.* What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?  
 You have among you many a purchas'd slave,  
 Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,  
 You use in abject and in slavish parts,  
 Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,  
 Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?  
 Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds  
 Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates  
 Be season'd with such viands? You will answer,  
 The slaves are ours. So do I answer you:  
 The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,  
 Is dearly bought, 'tis mine, and I will have it:  
 If you deny me, fie upon your law!  
 There is no force in the decrees of Venice.  
 I stand for judgment: 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.

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

*Duke.* Bring us the letters; call the messenger.

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

<sup>s</sup> So in both the quartos, but usually printed *fretted*. *Fretten* is apparently an old form of the word, like *waxen* in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act ii. scene 1.

*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.

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*Enter* NERISSA, dressed like a Lawyer's Clerk.

*Duke.* Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

*Ner.* From both, my lord: Bellario greets your Grace.

[Presents a Letter.]

*Bass.* Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

*Shy.* To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.

*Gra.* Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,  
Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,  
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness  
Of thy sharp envy.<sup>9</sup> Can no prayers pierce thee?

*Shy.* No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.

*Gra.* O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!<sup>10</sup>

And for thy life let justice be accus'd.<sup>11</sup>  
Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,  
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,<sup>12</sup>  
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 [with] thy unhallow'd dam,  
Infus'd itself in thee; for thy desires  
Are wolfish, bloody, starv'd, and ravenous.

*Shy.* Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,  
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud:  
Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall  
To cureless ruin.<sup>13</sup> — I stand here for law.

*Duke.* This letter from Bellario doth commend  
A young and learned Doctor to our Court. —  
Where is he?

<sup>9</sup> Malice. See note 1, of this scene. This passage is well illustrated by one in 2 *Henry IV.*, Act iv. scene 4.

"Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts,  
Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart."

<sup>10</sup> All the old copies have "*inexecrable* dog," which I am very much inclined to think right, taking the prepositive *in* as intensive.

<sup>11</sup> The meaning probably is, Let Justice be impeached for suffering thee to live.

<sup>12</sup> The ancient philosopher of Samos, who is said to have taught the transmigration of souls. In *As You Like It*, iii. 2, Rosalind says, "I was never so berhym'd since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember."

<sup>13</sup> Thus the quartos; the folio has "*endless* ruin."

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

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

[Clerk reads.] *Your Grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick; but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant: we turn'd o'er many books together: he is furnished with my opinion; which, better'd 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;<sup>14</sup> for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.*

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

*Enter PORTIA,<sup>15</sup> dressed like a Doctor of Laws.*

Give me your hand: Came you from old Bellario?

*Por.* I did, my lord.

*Duke.* You're 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.

*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<sup>16</sup> as you do proceed. —

[To ANT.] You stand within his danger,<sup>17</sup> do you not?

*Ant.* Ay, so he says.

<sup>14</sup> The sense apparently is, Let his lack of years be no hindrance to his being treated with reverence.

<sup>15</sup> The old stage direction here is, "Enter Portia for Balthazar."

<sup>16</sup> To *impugn* is to *oppose*, to *controvert*.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson says, — "In French and old English law, *danger* seems equivalent to *penalty*, *damages*, *commissi poena*. Thus: 'Narcissus was a bachelere that love had caught in his *daungere*;' that is, within the reach of hurtful, mischievous power. Thus also: 'In *danger* hadde he at his owen gise the yonge girles of the diocese.' And again: 'He was never wedded to woman's *danger*;' that is, woman's dangerous power."

*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;<sup>18</sup>  
It droppeth as the gentle rain from Heaven  
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:  
'Tis 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;  
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.<sup>19</sup> I have spoke thus much,  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which if thou follow, this strict Court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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

*Por.* Is he not able to discharge the money?

*Bass.* Yes, here I tender 't for him in the Court;  
Yea, thrice the sum:<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup> And, I beseech you,

<sup>18</sup> That is, the nature of mercy is to act freely, not from constraint. Portia had used *must* in a moral sense, and the Jew purposely mistook it in a legal sense. This gives a natural occasion and impulse for her strain of "heavenly eloquence."

<sup>19</sup> "Portia, referring the Jew to the Christian doctrine of Salvation, and the Lord's Prayer, is a little out of character." So says Sir William Blackstone; whereas the Lord's Prayer was itself but a compilation, all the petitions in it being taken out of the ancient euchologies or prayer-books of the Jews. So in *Ecclesiasticus* xxviii. 2: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest."

<sup>20</sup> The old copies have "twice the sum." But Portia says to the Jew a little after, "there's thrice thy money offered thee."

<sup>21</sup> *Truth is honesty* here. A true man in old language is an honest man. And the honesty here shown is in offering to pay thrice the money.

Wrest once the law to your authority :  
To do a great right, do a little wrong ;  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

*Por.* It must not be ; there is no power in Venice  
Can alter a decree established :  
'Twill be recorded for a precedent ;  
And many an error, by the same example,  
Will rush into the State. It cannot be.

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

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

*Shy.* Here 'tis, most reverend Doctor ; here it is.

*Por.* Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.

*Shy.* An oath, an oath, I have an oath in Heaven :  
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?  
No, not for Venice !

*Por.* Why, this bond is forfeit ;  
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim  
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off  
Nearest the merchant's heart. — Be merciful ;  
Take thrice thy money ; bid me tear the bond.

*Shy.* When it is paid according to the tenour.  
It doth appear you are a worthy judge ;  
You know the law, your exposition  
Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law,  
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,  
Proceed to judgment. By my soul I swear  
There is no power in the tongue of man  
To alter me : I stay here on my bond.

*Ant.* Most heartily I do beseech the Court  
To give the judgment.

*Por.* Why, then thus it is :  
You must prepare your bosom for his knife ; —

*Shy.* O, noble judge ! O, excellent young man !

*Por.* — For the intent and purpose of the law  
Hath full relation to the penalty,<sup>22</sup>  
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 ?

<sup>22</sup> That is, the law relating to contracts is fully applicable in this case.

*Shy.* I have them ready.<sup>23</sup>

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

*Shy.* Is it so nominated in the bond?

*Por.* It is not so express'd; but what of that?

'Twere good you do so much for charity.

*Shy.* I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.

*Por.* Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?

*Ant.* But little: I am arm'd and well prepar'd. —

Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!

Grieve not that I am fall'n 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 a misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:

Tell her the process of Antonio's end;

Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death;

And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge,

Whether Bassanio had not once a lover.

Repent not you that you shall lose your friend,

And he repents not that he pays your debt;

For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,

I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

*Bass.* Antonio, I am married to a wife

Which is as dear to me as life itself;

But life itself, my wife, and all the world,

Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:

I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all

Here to this devil to deliver you.

*Por.* Your wife would give you little thanks for that,

If she were by, to hear you make the offer.

*Gra.* I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:

I would she were in Heaven, so she could

Entreat some power to change this currish Jew

*Ner.* 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;

The wish would make, else, an unquiet house.

*Shy.* [*Aside.*] These be the Christian husbands! I have a  
daughter;

Would any of the stock of Barrabas<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Balance*, though singular in form, is used as plural in sense, referring to the two *scales* which make the balance. The usage was common.

<sup>24</sup> Shakespeare seems to have followed the pronunciation usual in the theatre, *Barabbas* being sounded *Barabas* throughout Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.



Had been her husband rather than a Christian!—

[To POR.] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

*Por.* A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:  
The Court awards it, and the law doth give it.

*Shy.* Most rightful judge!

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

*Shy.* Most learned Judge! A sentence!—Come, prepare.

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

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

*Shy.* Is that the law?

*Por.* Thyself shalt see the Act:

For, as thou urgest justice, be assur'd  
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

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

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

*Bass.* Here is the money.

*Por.* Soft!

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

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

*Por.* Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.  
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more  
But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak'st more  
Or less than a just pound,—be't but so much  
As makes it light or heavy in the substance  
Or the division of the twentieth part  
Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn  
But in the estimation of a hair,—  
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.<sup>25</sup>

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

Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

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

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

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

<sup>25</sup> This form of the participle was used in a good many words. And so it is still, as in the words *situate*, *consecrate*, and others. Twice in this scene we have *forfeit* for *forfeited*.

*Por.* He hath refus'd it in the open Court:  
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

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

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

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

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

*Por.* Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.  
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,—  
If it be prov'd against an alien,  
That by direct or indirect attempts  
He seek the life of any citizen,  
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive  
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half  
Comes to the privy coffer of the State;  
And the offender's life lies in the mercy  
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.  
In which predicament I say thou stand'st;  
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,  
That indirectly, and directly too,  
Thou hast contriv'd against the very life  
Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd  
The danger formally by me rehears'd.<sup>26</sup>  
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

*Gra.* Beg that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself:  
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the State,  
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;  
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the State's charge.

*Duke.* That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,  
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:  
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;  
The other half comes to the general State,  
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.<sup>27</sup>

*Por.* Ay, for the State; not for Antonio.<sup>28</sup>

*Shy.* Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that:  
You take my house, when you do take the prop

<sup>26</sup> The old copies have *formerly* instead of *formally*. The change is Hanmer's.

<sup>27</sup> That is, submission on your part may move me to reduce it to a fine.

<sup>28</sup> Meaning, apparently, that the reduction of the forfeiture to a fine should apply only to that half of his goods which was to come to the coffer of the State, not that which fell to Antonio. Portia is not yet supposed to know that the report of Antonio's losses was bogus, and so she looks out for his interest.

That doth sustain my house; you take my life,  
When you do take the means whereby I live.

*Por.* What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

*Gra.* A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

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

*Duke.* He shall do this; or else I do recant  
The pardon that I late 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;  
I am not well: send the deed after me,  
And I will sign it.

*Duke.* Get thee gone, but do it.

*Gra.* In christening thou shalt have two godfathers:  
Had I been judge, thou should'st have had ten more,<sup>29</sup>  
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:<sup>30</sup>  
I must away this night toward Padua,  
And it is meet I presently set forth.

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

[*Exeunt DUKE, Magnificoes, and Train.*]

*Bass.* Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend  
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted  
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,<sup>31</sup>  
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,  
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> That is, a jury of twelve men to condemn him. This appears to have been an old joke. So, in *The Devil is an Ass*, by Ben Jonson: "I will leave you to your godfathers in law. Let twelve men work."

<sup>30</sup> An old English idiom now obsolete. See page 92, note 8.

<sup>31</sup> In consideration whereof, or in return for which. For this use of *lieu*, see page 48, note 6.

<sup>32</sup> The only instance that I remember to have met with, of the word *cope*

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

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

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

*Por.* You press me far, and therefore I will yield. —  
[*To ANT.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake; —  
[*To BASS.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you  
Do not draw back your hand: I'll take no more;  
And you in love shall not deny me this.<sup>33</sup>

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

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

*Bass.* There's more depends on this than on the value.  
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,  
And find it out by proclamation;  
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

*Por.* I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:  
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks  
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

*Bass.* Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;  
And, when she put it on, she made me vow  
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

*Por.* That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.  
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,  
And know how well I have deserv'd this 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 valu'd 'gainst your wife's commandment.

being used in the sense of *pay*, or *reward*. A like use of the word in composition, however, occurs in Ben Jonson's *Fox*, Act iii. scene 5:

"He would have sold his part of Paradise  
For ready money, had he met a *cope-man*."

<sup>33</sup> *Shall* and *will* are among the words which had not become fully differentiated in the Poet's time. He has many instances of either being used for the other.

*Bass.* Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
Give him the ring; and bring him, if thou canst,  
Unto Antonio's house. Away! make haste. —

[*Exit* GRATIANO.]

Come, you and I will thither presently;  
And in the morning early will we both  
Fly toward Belmont: Come, Antonio.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *The Same. A Street.*

*Enter* PORTIA and NERISSA, *disguised as before.*

*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 overta'en:  
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,<sup>1</sup>  
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat  
Your company at dinner.

*Por.* That cannot be.  
His ring I do accept most thankfully;  
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore,  
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

*Gra.* That will I do.

*Ner.* Sir, I would speak with you. —  
[*To POR.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,  
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

*Por.* Thou may'st, I warrant. We shall have old swearing<sup>2</sup>  
That they did give away the rings to men;  
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.  
Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.

*Ner.* Come, good sir; will you show me to this house?

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V SCENE I. *Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S House.*

*Enter* LORENZO and JESSICA.

*Lor.* The Moon shines bright. In such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,

<sup>1</sup> Upon further consideration. See page 103, note 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Old* was a frequent intensive in colloquial speech; very much as *huge* is used now. So, in *Much Ado about Nothing*, v. 2: "Yonder's *old* coil at home." And in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, i. 4: "Here will be an *old* abusing of God's patience and the king's English."

And they did make no noise,— in such a night  
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sigh'd his soul toward the Grecian tents,  
Where Cressid lay that night.<sup>1</sup>

*Jess.* In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew;  
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,<sup>2</sup>  
And ran dismay'd away.

*Lor.* In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand<sup>3</sup>  
Upon the wild sea-banks, and wav'd her love  
To come again to Carthage.

*Jess.* In such a night  
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs  
That did renew old Æson.<sup>4</sup>

*Lor.* In such a night  
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,  
And with an únthrift love did run from Venice  
As far as Belmont.

*Jess.* And in such a night  
Did young Lorenzo swear he lov'd her well,  
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,  
And ne'er a true one.

*Lor.* And in such a night  
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew,  
Slander her love, and he forgave it her.

*Jess.* I would out-night you, did nobody come:  
But, hark! I hear the footing of a man.

*Enter STEPHANO.*

*Lor.* Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

*Steph.* A friend.

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

*Steph.* Stephano is my name;<sup>5</sup> and I bring word

<sup>1</sup> The story of Troilus and Cressida is set forth in Shakespeare's play of that name.

<sup>2</sup> That is, ere she saw the lion himself. The story of "Pyramus and his love Thisbe" is burlesqued in the interlude of Bottom and company in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

<sup>3</sup> Spenser in like sort makes the willow a symbol of forsaken love. Thus, in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 1, 9: "The willow, worne of forlorne paramours."

<sup>4</sup> Twice, already, in this play, we have had allusions to the story of Jason and his voyage to Colchos in quest of the golden fleece. Medea, also, stole her father's treasure, and ran away from Colchos with Jason after he had won the fleece. The Poet seems to have been fresh from the reading of that tale, when he wrote this play. Perhaps Medea had something to do in suggesting and shaping the part of Jessica.

<sup>5</sup> In this play the name *Stephano* has the accent on the second syllable.

My mistress will before the break of day  
Be here at Belmont: she doth stray about  
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays  
For happy wedlock hours.<sup>6</sup>

*Lor.* Who comes with her?

*Steph.* None, but a holy hermit and her maid.

I pray you, is my master yet return'd?

*Lor.* He is not, nor we have not heard from him. —  
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,  
And ceremoniously let us prepare  
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

*Enter LAUNCELOT*

*Laun.* Sola, sola! wo, ha, ho! sola, sola!

*Lor.* Who calls?

*Laun.* Sola! — did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress  
Lorenzo? — sola, sola!

*Lor.* Leave hollaing, man; — here.

*Laun.* Sola! — Where? where?

*Lor.* Here.

*Laun.* Tell him there's a post come from my master, with  
his horn full of good news:<sup>7</sup> my master will be here ere  
morning. *[Exit.*

*Lor.* Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.  
And yet no matter: why should we go in? —  
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,  
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;  
And bring your music forth into the air. — *[Exit STEPHANO.*  
How sweet the moon-light 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<sup>8</sup> of bright gold:  
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st

In *The Tempest*, written some years later, the same name has it, rightly, on the first.

<sup>6</sup> In old times crosses were set up at the intersection of roads, and in other places specially associated with saintly or heroic names, to invite the passers-by to devotion. And in those days Christians were much in the habit of remembering in their prayers whatever lay nearest their hearts. So in *The Tempest*, iii. 1, Ferdinand says to Miranda: "I do beseech you, — chiefly that I might set it in my prayers, — what is your name?" So, again, Hamlet to Ophelia: "In thy orisons be all my sins remember'd!"

<sup>7</sup> The postman used to carry a horn, and blow it to give notice of his coming, on approaching a place where he had something to deliver. Launcelot has just been imitating the notes of the horn in his exclamations, *Sola, &c.*

<sup>8</sup> A small plate, used in the administration of the Eucharist: it was commonly of gold, or silver-gilt.

But in his motion like an angel sings,  
 Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins :<sup>9</sup>  
 Such harmony is in immortal souls ;<sup>10</sup>  
 But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
 Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. —

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*Enter Musicians.*

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

[*Music.*

*Jess.* I'm never merry when I hear sweet music.

*Lor.* The reason is, your spirits are attentive :  
 For do but note a wild and wanton herd,  
 Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,  
 Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,  
 Which is the hot condition of their blood ;  
 If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,  
 Or any air of music touch their ears, •  
 You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,  
 Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,  
 By the sweet power of music : Therefore the poet  
 Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods ;  
 Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,  
 But music for the time doth change his nature.  
 The man that hath no music in himself,  
 Nor is not mov'd 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 at a distance.*

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

*Ner.* When the Moon shone we did not see the candle.

<sup>9</sup> Of course everybody has heard of "the music of the spheres." — an ancient mystery which taught that the heavenly bodies in their revolutions sing together in a concert so loud, various, and sweet, as to exceed all proportion to the human ear. And the greatest souls, from Plato to Wordsworth, have been lifted above themselves, and have waxed greater than their wont, with an idea or intuition that the universe was knit together by a principle of which musical harmony is the aptest and clearest expression.

<sup>10</sup> The soul of man was thought by some to be or to have something like the music of the spheres. Thus in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. 38: "Touching musical harmony, such is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have thereby been induced to think that *the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony.*"



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

*Ner.* It is your music, Madam, of the house.

*Por.* Nothing is good, I see, without respect :<sup>11</sup>  
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

*Ner.* Silence bestows that virtue on it, Madam.

*Por.* The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attended ; and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by season season'd are  
To their right praise and true perfection !—  
Peace, ho ! the Moon sleeps with Endymion,  
And would not be awak'd !<sup>12</sup>

[*Music ceases.*]

*Lor.* That is the voice,  
Or I am much deceiv'd, 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' welfare,  
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

<sup>11</sup> Unless it be *heeded*, or *attended to*. Hence it sounds better when there is nothing to divert the attention.

<sup>12</sup> Endymion was a very beautiful youth: Juno took a fancy to him, whereupon her old man, Jupiter, grew jealous of him, and cast him into a perpetual sleep on Mount Latmos. While he was there asleep, Madam Luna got so smitten with his beauty, that she used to come down and kiss him, and lie by his side. Some said, however, that Luna herself put him asleep, that she might have the pleasure of kissing him without his knowing it, the youth being somewhat shy when awake. The story was naturally a favourite with the poets. Fletcher, in *The Faithful Shepherdess*, tells the tale charmingly, —

“How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,  
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes  
She took eternal fire that never dies ;  
How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,  
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep  
Head of old Latmus, where she stoops each night,  
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,  
To kiss her sweetest.”

No note at all of our being absent hence ; —  
Nor you, Lorenzo ; — Jessica, nor you. [*A Tucket sounds.*<sup>13</sup>

*Lor.* Your husband is at hand ; I hear his trumpet.

We are no tell-tales, Madam ; fear you not.

*Por.* This night, methinks, is but the daylight sick ;  
It looks a little paler : 'tis a day,  
Such as a 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 <sup>14</sup>  
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,  
And never be Bassanio so for me :  
But God sort all ! You're welcome home, my lord.

*Bass.* I thank you, Madam. Give welcome to my friend :  
This is the man, this is Antonio,  
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

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

*Ant.* No more than I am well acquitted of.

*Por.* Sir, you are very welcome to our house :  
It must appear in other ways than words,  
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.<sup>15</sup>

*Gra.* [*To NER.*] By yonder Moon I swear you do me  
wrong ;  
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

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

*Gra.* About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring  
That she did give to me ; whose posy was  
For all the world like cutler's poetry  
Upon a knife,<sup>16</sup> *Love me, and leave me not.*

*Ner.* What talk you of the posy or the value ?  
You swore to me, when I did give it you,  
That you would wear it till your hour of death ;  
And that it should lie with you in your grave :  
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,  
You should have been respective,<sup>17</sup> and have kept it.

<sup>13</sup> A *tucket* is a flourish of trumpets. The word is probably from the Italian *toccata*, which is said to mean a prelude to a sonata.

<sup>14</sup> Twice before, in these scenes, we have had similar playings upon *light*. here it is especially graceful and happy. See page 139, note 13.

<sup>15</sup> This complimentary form, made up only of *breath*.

<sup>16</sup> Knives were formerly inscribed, by means of *aqua fortis*, with short sentences in distich. The *posy* of a ring was the motto.

<sup>17</sup> *Respective* is *considerate* or *regardful* ; in the same sense as *respect* is explained, page 101, note 16. The word is repeatedly used thus by Shakespeare ; as in *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 1 : " Away to Heaven *respective* lenity, and fire-ey'd fury be my conduct now ! "

Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge!  
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

*Ner.* Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

*Gra.* Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,  
A kind of boy; a little scrubbed boy,<sup>18</sup>  
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 riveted with faith unto your flesh.  
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear  
Never to part with it; and here he stands:  
I dare be sworn for him, he would not leave it,  
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth  
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,  
You give your wife too unkind cause of grief:  
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

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

*Gra.* My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away  
Unto the judge that begg'd it, and indeed  
Deserv'd 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 receiv'd of me.

*Bass.* If I could add a lie unto a fault,  
I would deny it; but you see my finger  
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

*Por.* Even so void is your false heart of truth.  
By Heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed  
Until I see the ring.

*Ner.* Nor I in yours,  
'Till I again see mine.

*Bass.* Sweet Portia,  
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,  
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,  
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,  
And how unwillingly I left the ring,

<sup>18</sup> *Scrubbed* is here used in the sense of *stunted*; as in Holland's *Pliny*: "Such will never prove fair trees, but *scrubs* only." And Mr. Verplanck observes that the name *scrub oak* was from the first settlement of this country given to the dwarf or bush oak.

When nought would be accepted but the ring,  
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

*Por.* If you had known the virtue of the ring,  
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,  
Or your own honour to contain the ring,<sup>19</sup>  
You would not then have parted with the ring.  
What man is there so much unreasonable,  
If you had pleas'd 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 mine honour, Madam, by my soul,  
No woman had it; but a Civil Doctor,<sup>20</sup>  
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,  
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,  
And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;  
Even he that had held up the very life  
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?  
I was enforc'd to send it after him:  
I was beset with shame and courtesy;<sup>21</sup>  
My honour would not let ingratitude  
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;  
For, by these blessed candles of the night,  
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd  
The ring of me to give the worthy Doctor.

*Por.* Let not that Doctor e'er come near my house.  
Since he hath got the jewel that I lov'd,  
And that which you did swear to keep for me,  
I will become as liberal as you:  
I'll not deny him any thing I have.

*Ant.* I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

*Por.* Sir, grieve not you; you're welcome notwithstanding

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

*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:

<sup>19</sup> *Contain* was sometimes used in the sense of *retain*. So, in Bacon's *Essays*: "To *containe* anger from mischief, though it take hold of a man, there be two things."

<sup>20</sup> A *Civil Doctor* was a doctor of the Civil Law.

<sup>21</sup> Equivalent, perhaps, to *shame of my discourtesy*.

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;<sup>22</sup>  
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,  
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,  
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord  
Will never more break faith advisedly.

*Por.* Then you shall be his surety: Give him this;  
And bid him keep it better than the other.

*Ant.* Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

*Bass.* By Heaven, it is the same I gave the Doctor!

*Por.* I had it of him; pardon me, Bassanio.

*Ner.* And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano.

*Gra.* Why, this is like the mending of highways  
In Summer, when the ways are fair enough.

*Por.* You are all amaz'd:  
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure;  
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:  
There you shall find that Portia was the Doctor;  
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here  
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,  
And even but now return'd; I have not yet  
Enter'd my house. — Antonio, you are welcome;  
And I have better news in store for you  
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;  
There you shall find three of your argosies  
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.  
You shall not know by what strange accident  
I chanced on this letter.

*Ant.* I am dumb.

*Bass.* Were you the Doctor, and I knew you not?

*Ant.* Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;  
For here I read for certain that my ships  
Are safely come to road.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> That is, for his *good*. *Wealth* is only another form of *weal*: we say indifferently common-*weal* or common-*wealth*; and the commonwealth is the good that men have in common.

<sup>23</sup> The Poet leaves us somewhat in the dark as to how the reports of shipwreck grew into being and gained belief. I have noted one seeming indication before, that the Jew exercised his cunning as well as malice in plotting and preparing them. See page 123, note 2. Shylock appears, at all events, to have known that such reports were coming, before they came. Yet I suppose the natural impression from the play is, that he lent the ducats and took the bond on a mere chance of coming at his wish. But he would hardly grasp so sharply at a bare possibility of revenge, without using means for turning it into something more. This would mark him with much darker lines of guilt. Why then did not Shakespeare bring the matter forward more prominently? Perhaps it was because the doing so would have made Shylock appear too steep a criminal for the degree of interest which his part was meant to carry in the play. In other words, the health of the drama as

*Por.* How now, Lorenzo!  
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

*Ner.* Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee.—  
There do I give to you and Jessica,  
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,  
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

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

*Por.* It is almost morning,  
And yet I'm 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.* Well, while I live, I'll fear no other thing  
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.

[*Exeunt.*]

a work of *comic* art required his criminality in this point to be kept in the background. He comes very near overshadowing the other characters too much, as it is. And Shylock's character is *essentially tragic*: there is none of the proper timber of comedy in him.

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