The "Teaching of English" Series

SHAKESPEARE'S MERCHANT OF VENICE

No. 63

SHYLOCK

From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson

SHAKESPEARE'S
MERCHANT OF VENICE

Edited by
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"The reader acts the play
himself in the theatre of
his own mind"

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS series is planned with one simple aim in view—to make the reading of Shakespeare's plays as easy and straightforward as possible.

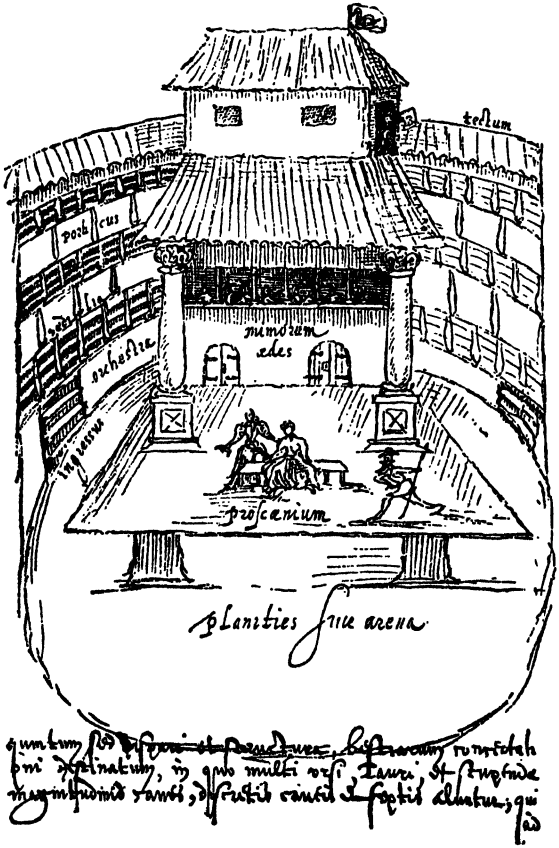
Notes are reduced to the smallest compass. First, in order that the reader's imagination may have definite material to work with, the list of the *dramatis personæ* is followed by a suggestion of their dress and appearance: and when practicable illustrations are given. Second, the text, which is presented without any further preliminary, is accompanied by footnotes which form a Glossary of obsolete or misleading words.

The play may therefore be read at first sight without let or hindrance—without even the delay and distraction which would be caused by turning to a later page for such merely necessary explanations. But there will be many for whom, if not at a first reading yet perhaps at a second, something further may be desirable—a bit of historical information, a paraphrase of a difficult passage, or the clearing up of a confused metaphor. To supply these, and to supply them at the right time, is the object of the brief notes placed immediately after the text.

Fourth, and last, comes a causerie in several divisions: offering, for any who are studiously inclined, a short commentary; marking the place of this particular drama in Shakespeare's career; tracing its importance in his poetic development; estimating its artistic value; and suggesting a number of other questions on which an intelligent student might reflect with pleasure.

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHPLACE

CONTENTS



THE SWAN THEATRE

(*From an old drawing*)

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THE DUKE OF VENICE.
THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO } *suitors to Portia.*
THE DUKE OF ARRAGON }
ANTONIO, *a merchant.*
BASSANIO, *his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.*
SALANIO }
SALARINO } *friends to Antonio and Bassanio.*
GRATIANO }
SALERIO }
LORENZO, *in love with Jessica.*
SHYLOCK, *a rich Jew.*
TUBAL, *a Jew, his friend.*
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, *servant to Shylock.*
OLD GOBBO, *father to Launcelot.*
LEONARDO, *servant to Bassanio.*
BALTHASAR } *servants to Portia.*
STEPHANO }
Clerk of the Court.

PORTIA, *a rich heiress.*
NERISSA, *her waiting-maid.*
JESSICA, *daughter to Shylock.*

Magnificoes of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Gaoler, Servants to Portia, and other Attendants.

Scene : Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the seat of Portia.

VENETIAN MERCHANTMEN

INTRODUCTION

ENVIRONMENT AND COSTUME OF THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

So famed is the beauty of Venice that nearly every one can picture the city where the events of this play take place: its palaces and waterways and gondolas and bridges, and the light and colour which seem so marvellous to those who must build their dwelling-places under the bleak skies of the north. In her architecture, as in many ways, Venice has her own independent quality. Among her great buildings some are in the Byzantine style (from Byzantium, or Constantinople, which, in the sixth century, was the centre of the arts), with round domes, semicircular arches, capitals of pillars exquisitely and elaborately carved, and sculptured panels, the brickwork foundation being overlaid with marble and mosaic; others are Gothic, with pointed arches and windows; others Renaissance, imitating the severe and beautiful designs of ancient Greece and Rome. In all these, however, there is something peculiarly Venetian: "owing to its isolated position on the very verge of Italy, and to its close connection with the East, Venetian architecture was an independent development." Those who have not yet seen Venice for themselves, and want a more definite picture of her glories than the vague if lovely one existing in their minds, should read one of the many illustrated books that have been written on the subject. Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* is a detailed study of the architecture of the city.

A Wanderer in Venice (E. V. Lucas) is a good travel-book, easy to read. In imagining the setting of Shakespeare's play certain differences between the old and the modern city must of course be taken into consideration. St. Mark's and the ducal palace were then, as now, the wonder of travellers; the coloured façades of the palaces of the magnificoes were even more splendid than they appear at the present time; but the famous Bridge of Sighs was only just begun, and the buildings of the later Renaissance were of course non-existent. Marble veneer, or painted stucco, covered most of the brick buildings. Ferries or *traghetti* across the canals had been instituted in the thirteenth century: it is to one of these that Portia alludes when she speaks of the "tranect or the common ferry that trades to Venice." Rivo Alto (Rialto) was the principal island group on which Venice was built, and on it was the Rialto of which Shylock speaks, thus described by an English traveller in the seventeenth century: "The Rialto, which is at the farthest side of the bridge as you come from St. Mark's, is a most stately building, being the Exchange of Venice, where the Venetian gentlemen and merchants do meet twice a day, betwixt eleven and twelve of the clock in the morning, and betwixt five and six of the clock in the afternoon. This Rialto is of a goodly height, built all with brick, as the palaces are, adorned with many fair walks or open galleries, and hath a pretty quadrangular court adjoining to it."

The out-of-door scenes of Shakespeare's play may be pictured as taking place in any suitable part of Venice. For those indoors, the court of justice would be a hall with walls and ceiling painted with splendid figure compositions, and Portia's house at Belmont would be similarly decorated, and equipped with furniture of a beautiful elaborate kind, of various fine woods carved, painted, and gilded. Her garden would have been one of the lovely formal Italian gardens of

the Renaissance, described by Bacon in his essay, designed in keeping with the architecture of the house, with terraces, arbours, statues, and straight paths sheltered with trees trained to grow in various shapes on "arches of carpenter's work." But the daytime detail of the garden of the lady of Belmont is not really of much significance in the play: its loveliness is in its sleeping moonlight and its music.

The dress of the young Venetian nobleman was a close-fitting doublet and breeches of silk, satin, or tabby, the breeches cut wide at the top and narrowing in at the knee, gold buttons, a small white ruff, silk stockings, and a high cap of stiff rich material, sometimes adorned with one big jewel in front, or with a tiny garland wrought in metal-work, with precious stones. Doublet and breeches were slashed in various fantastic designs to show a lining of coloured taffetas. This was the gay apparel of early manhood; as he grew older, the Venetian generally chose to wear out of doors a long garment of fine black cloth faced with watered silk, and a little black brimless cap. The older "merchant princes" of the city sometimes wore a long tunic reaching to the ground, with clasps and girdle of

silk, and a short cloak; the distinctive garment of the younger ones seems to have been a cloak of serge, cloth, camlet, or silk. As servant of Shylock, Launcelot would be plainly dressed in doublet and hose of some dull colour; as one of Bassanio's retinue he is tricked out in a livery "more guarded than his fellows"—that is, with more bars and tags of colour (see page 40). His old father, who has apparently come from the country, would wear a big hat of coarse straw, a tawny or ash-coloured jerkin, a rough cloth mantle, and leather gaiters. The appearance of the Doge was very splendid. His tunic, which reached the ground, and his trailing mantle were of velvet; he wore a short ermine cloak, just covering his shoulders, clasped with gold, and a velvet cap bent up behind in the form of a horn, and closed in a band of gold. Shylock speaks of his "Jewish gaberdine," but apparently the only distinctive features of Jewish dress were the yellow cap which must, according to Venetian law, be worn by the men, and the yellow veil by the women. Morocco's appearance is suggested by an interesting old stage direction (see page 34). Arragon would of course be attired in Spanish fashion, a doublet fitting in at the waist and almost covering the short

puffed trunk hose, long silk stockings, a small ruff, and a cloak flung across one shoulder and draped round the body in a variety of becoming ways. He might wear a hard-crowned hat with a feather, or a high cap of silk. His sword-belt would be magnificently adorned with metal-work and jewels.

Portia's colouring is in the fashion. Golden hair was of course admired in England, out of compliment to the queen, but Venetian ladies liked it too, though not for the same reason, and, it is said, obtained it by art if they had not been given it by nature. The appearance of the lady of Belmont is in effective contrast with that of her gentlewoman Nerissa, whose name means " dark-haired." Out of doors Venetian women generally wore dark garments, but indoors they might assume the splendid colours in taffetas or brocade which we associate with what has come to be called the " Portia dress." The fashion of this dress is a becoming one. The bodice is pointed, the neck cut away in front, but not very low, the ruff prettily shaped as a setting for the head. The Venetian lady wore a long veil, and carried a fan. She liked rich embroidery and jewels—necklaces, bracelets, and ear-rings.

As jurisconsult, Portia would have worn a long robe, cut with open sleeves, and made of black cloth, velvet, or silk, and a black cap of similar material.

THE OPENING OF THE PLAY

Bassanio, a young nobleman of Venice, is eager to journey to Belmont to try his fortune in the choice of three caskets, the only means by which, according to the will of her father, the lady Portia may be won. Having lived extravagantly, he is obliged to ask his friend, the merchant Antonio, to lend him the money he will need, and Antonio, whose wealth is all at sea,

borrows for him the sum of three thousand ducats from the Jew Shylock. What strange bond is made when this money is borrowed; how Bassanio prospers in his wooing; how, failing to repay the loan at the appointed time, Antonio is threatened with a terrible fate; and how Portia saves the situation—these things are told in the course of the play.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

ACT I

SCENE I

Venice. A street.

[*Enter* ANTONIO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.]

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

Salar. Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
There, where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

1. *In sooth*, In truth.
9. *Argosy*, Great merchant vessel richly laden.
10. *Signiors*, Gentlemen. 11. *Pageants*, Shows.
12. *Petty traffickers*, Small cargo boats.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures out of doubt
Would make me sad.
Salar. My wind cooling my broth
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great at sea might do.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
But tell not me: I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.
Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year:
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.
Salar. Why, then you are in love.
Ant. Fie, fie!

16. *Affections*, Feelings, passions; used in a wider sense than in modern English.
17. *Still*, Always.
27. *Andrew*, name of a ship.
38. *Bechanced*, Come to pass.
42. *Bottom*, Ship.
43. *Estate*, Fortune.

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

[*Enter* BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.]

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

Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.

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

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.

[*Exeunt* SALARINO *and* SALANIO.

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

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio;

50. *Janus.* See page 118.
56. *Nestor.* See page 120.
61. *Prevented,* Anticipated.
62. *Dear,* Precious.

You have too much respect upon the world:
They lose it that do buy it with much care:
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.
Ant. I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;
A stage where every man must play his part,
And mine a sad one.
Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
Sleep when he wakes and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks—
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
As who should say, "I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!"
O my Antonio, I do know of these
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile:
I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

74. *Respect*, Consideration.
82. *Mortifying*, Death-bringing. There was an old belief that when a man sighed deeply he lost a certain amount of vitality and thus shortened his life.
92. *Conceit*, Understanding, concept of the mind; then fanciful notion; then notion of one's own importance.
102. *Gudgeon*, Small freshwater fish, easily taken.

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

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

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

Gra. Thanks, i' faith, for silence is only commendable
In a neat's tongue dried.

[*Exeunt* GRATIANO *and* LORENZO.

Ant. Is that anything now?

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

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

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

108. *Moe*, More (used of number).
110. *For this gear*, For this occasion. 117. *Ere*, Before.
123. *Disabled mine estate*, Diminished my fortune.
124. *Swelling port*, Important bearing, prosperous appearance. He has lived more showily than he can afford.
126. *Abridged*, Cut off. 127. *Rate*, i.e. of expenditure.
132. *Warranty*, Warrant, permission.

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

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

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance ;
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost
Than if you had made waste of all I have :
Then do but say to me what I should do
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest unto it : therefore speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left ;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues : sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages :

138. ***Extremest means***, The very last possessions I have.
142. ***Advised***, Careful. 143. ***Adventuring***, Risking.
144. ***Proof***, Experience.
145. ***Innocence, i.e.*** There is no guile in the suggestion he is about to make. 151. ***Hazard***, Venture, risk.
154. ***Circumstance***, Circumlocution, roundabout speaking.
156. ***My uttermost***, My utmost, which I am willing to do for you.
160. ***Prest***, Ready.

Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate!

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

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

[*Enter* PORTIA *with her waiting-woman* NERISSA.]

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

166. *Cato*, a famous Roman law-giver.
166. *Brutus*, a Roman patriot, who joined the conspiracy against Cæsar when he was convinced that the latter threatened the liberty of Rome. His wife, eager to prove that she could share his confidence without betraying it, gave herself a deep wound, of which she said nothing to him until it was nearly healed. If she could bear such pain in silence, surely she could keep his secret.
172. *Jason*: See page 119.
175. *Presages*, Foretells.
175. *Thrift*, Success, profit.
178. *Commodity*, Goods, article of merchandise.
183. *Presently*, At once.

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

Por. Good sentences and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word "choose"! I may neither choose whom I would nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy men at their death have good inspirations: therefore the lottery, that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver and lead, whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who 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.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

7. *In the mean*, In the middle. 8. *Superfluity*, Having too much.
9. *Competency*, Having just enough. 37. *Level at*, Guess at.

Por. Ay, that's a colt indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

Ner. Then there is the County Palatine.

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

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

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

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

Por. You know I say nothing to him, for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the

41. *Parts*, Qualities, talents.
43. *County Palatine.* A count palatine (paladin) held office in the *palace* of the king. In Germany the title came to be applied to the Lords of the Palatinate on the western bank of the Upper Rhine.
46. *Weeping philosopher.* Heraclitus, so called from his deep and solemn doctrine, his contempt for men, and the solitary life he chose to lead. 49. *Sadness*, Gravity.
63. *Requite him*, Reward him (with her affection).

English. He is a proper man's picture, but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere.

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

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

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

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober, and 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, for if the devil be within and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I'll be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is indeed to return to their home and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you

70. ***Proper***, Handsome.
73. ***Round hose.*** The short breeches or trunk hose in fashion at this time were puffed or padded till they appeared "round."
73. ***Bonnet***, Cap.
77. ***Neighbourly charity:*** refers to the frequent alliances of France and Scotland against England.
80. ***Sealed under***, Put his seal below the Scot's as a surety.

may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

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

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

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

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

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

[*Enter a* Serving-man.]

How now! what news?

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

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good a heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach: if he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. Sirrah, go before.
Whiles we shut the gates upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

102. *Imposition*, Command.
106. *Parcel*, A small company, a pack.
127. *Condition*, Disposition.

SCENE III

Venice. A public place.

[*Enter* BASSANIO *with* SHYLOCK *the Jew.*]

Shy. Three thousand ducats; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months; well.

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

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

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

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

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good man.

Bass. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

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

1. *Ducats:* the ducat was worth 4s. 8d. in Venice.
7. *Stead me,* Help me.
17. *Sufficient: i.e.* his financial reputation is secure.
19. *Rialto,* the meeting-place of merchants, the Exchange.

Bass. Be assured you may.

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

Bass. If it please you to dine with us.

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

[*Enter* ANTONIO.]

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

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

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

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

40. ***Publican***, the Roman tax-gatherer, hated by the Jews in the days of the New Testament.
43. ***Gratis***, Free. 44. ***Usance***, Usury, interest.
45. ***Catch him on the hip***, Get the advantage of him, as in wrestling.

Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good signior;
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.
Ant. Shylock, although I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom. Is he yet possess'd
How much ye would?
Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Ant. And for three months.
Shy. I had forgot; three months; you told me so.
Well then, your bond; and let me see; but hear you:
Methought you said you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.
Ant. I do never use it.
Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep—
This Jacob from our holy Abram was,
As his wise mother wrought in his behalf,
The third possessor; ay, he was the third—
Ant. And what of him? did he take interest?
Shy. No, not take interest, not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest:
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.
Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of heaven.
Was this inserted to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast:
But note me, signior.
Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness

63. ***Possess'd***, Informed. 77. ***Compromised***, Agreed together.

As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship :
If he will take it, so ; if not, adieu ;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.
Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.
Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's ;
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you.
Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. [*Exit* SHYLOCK.
The Hebrew will turn Christian : he grows kind.
Bass. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.
Ant. Come on : in this there can be no dismay ;
My ships come home a month before the day.
[*Exeunt.*

168. *Knave*, Boy. 168. *Presently*, At once.

ACT II

SCENE I

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

[*Flourish of Cornets. Enter* MOROCCO, *a tawny Moor all in white, and three or four followers accordingly, with* PORTIA, NERISSA, *and their train.*]

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

14. *Nice,* Fastidious.

As any comer I have looked on yet
For my affection.
Mor. Even for that I thank you:
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune. By this scimitar,
That slew the Sophy and a Persian prince
That won three fields of Sultan Solyman,
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the earth,
Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady. But, alas the while!
If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
Which is the better man, the greater throw
May turn by fortune from the weaker hand:
So is Alcides beaten by his page;
And so may I, blind fortune leading me,
Miss that which one unworthier may attain,
And die with grieving.
Por. You must take your chance,
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear, before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage: therefore be advised.
Mor. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance.
Por. First, forward to the temple: after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.
Mor. Good fortune then!
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.
[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

25. *The Sophy*, the Shah of Persia.
26. *Solyman*, tenth Ottoman Sultan, called the Magnificent, during whose reign (1520–1566) Turkey attained the height of her glory. 32. *Hercules . . . Lichas.* See page 119.
35. *Alcides.* Another name for Hercules, who was grandson of *Alceus.* 42. *Advised*, Careful, deliberate.
44. *Temple.* Here the oath is to be taken.
45. *Hazard*, a game of dice.
45. *Your hazard shall be made*, You shall try your fortune.

SCENE II

Venice. A street.

[*Enter* LAUNCELOT *the* Clown, *alone.*]

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

The Clown (stage directions). The word "clown" is used in Elizabethan drama to describe not only the professional jester, but the rustic wit, often acting as serving-man, who plays the part of buffoon.

Grow to: a phrase originally applied to milk which has burned and stuck to the saucepan, and so acquires a taste.

very devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your command; I will run.

[*Enter* OLD GOBBO, *with a basket.*]

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

35. *Sand-blind*, Half-blind.
44. *God's sonties*, God's saints or sanctities.
56. *Ergo*, Therefore; used in logic to conclude the syllogism, or logical form of argument, with which the Elizabethan audience, having studied logic at school, would be familiar.

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

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

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

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

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

Laun. Do you not know me, father?

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

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

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

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

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

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

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. Lord worshipped might he be! what a beard

61. *Fates . . . Destinies . . . Sisters Three.* See page 119.

hast thou got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse has on his tail.

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

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

Laun. Well, well: but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew: give him a present! give him a halter: I am famished in his service: you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come: give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who indeed gives rare new liveries: if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground. O rare fortune! here comes the man: to him, father; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

[*Enter* BASSANIO, *with a follower or two.*]

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

[*Exit a Servant.*

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me?

95. *Fill-horse:* form of *thill-horse*, or one that works in shafts, or *thills*. According to the old stage tradition, Launcelot must kneel down to ask for a blessing with his back to his father, who mistakes the hair on the back of his head for a beard.

103. *Set up my rest*, Finally resolved. The term is from games of chance, and means staking all one's money on a particular throw.

116. *Anon*, Immediately.

119. *Gramercy* (grand merci), Many thanks, used as exclamation of surprise.

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bass. One speak for both. What would you ?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

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

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

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

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

128. *Cater-cousins*, Great friends, who would be "catered for" together (*cf.* derivation of *companion*).
146. *The old proverb*, "God's grace is gear (possession) enough."
152. *Guarded*, Striped with colour. The most "guarded" livery was that of the jester.

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

[*Exeunt* LAUNCELOT *and* OLD GOBBO.

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

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

[*Enter* GRATIANO.]

Gra. Where is your master?

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

Gra. Signior Bassanio!

Bass. Gratiano!

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

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

Bass. Why then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude and bold of voice;
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain

163. *For this gear*, For this occasion.
181. *Liberal*, Unrestrained (in a bad sense).

To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.
Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit,
Talk with respect and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely,
Nay more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
Thus with my hat, and sigh and say "Amen,"
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent
To please his grandam, never trust me more.
Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.
Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night: you shall not gauge me
By what we do to-night.
Bass. No, that were pity:
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.
Gra. And I must to Lorenzo and the rest:
But we will visit you at supper-time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III

The same. Outside SHYLOCK'S *house.*

[*Enter* JESSICA *and the* Clown, LAUNCELOT.]

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:

182. *Modesty*, Moderation. 183. *Skipping*, Frivolous.
192. *Sad ostent*, Grave appearance. 195. *Gauge*, Judge.

And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :
Give him this letter ; do it secretly ;
And so farewell : I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu ! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew, adieu : these foolish drops do something drown my manly spirit : adieu.

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

SCENE IV

The same. A street.

[*Enter* GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SALANIO.]

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

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

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

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

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

[*Enter* LAUNCELOT, *with a letter.*]

Friend Launcelot, what's the news ?

5. ***Spoke us***, Bespoken, ordered. 6. ***Vile***, Poor, mean.
6. ***Quaintly***, Prettily and ingeniously.

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

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

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

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

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

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

Salan. And so will I.

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

Salar. 'Tis good we do so.

[*Exeunt* SALARINO *and* SALANIO.

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 of a faithless Jew.
Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

10. *Break up*, Open (the letter would be sealed, and the seal would be broken). 17. *Marry* (By *Mary*), a mild form of oath.
22. *Masque.* The masquers, gaily disguised, went in procession to the house where the festivities were going on, and there acted or danced. In *Henry VIII.*, I. iv., the king and a "noble company" come thus to Wolsey's palace.

SCENE V

The same. Before SHYLOCK'S *house.*

[*Enter* Jew *and his man that was the* Clown.]

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 that I could do nothing without bidding.

[*Enter* JESSICA.]

Jes. Call you ? what is your will ?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica :
There are my keys. But wherefore should I go ?
I am not bid for love ; they flatter me :
But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,
Look to the house. I am right loath to go :
There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

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

Shy. So do I his.

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

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

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

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

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

Shy. The patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder;
Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
More than the wild-cat: drones hive not with me:
Therefore I part with him, and part with him
To one that I would have him help to waste
His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
Perhaps I will return immediately:
Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
Fast bind, fast find;
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [*Exit.*

Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [*Exit.*

43. *Jewess' eye:* the expression "worth a Jew's eye" meant very valuable, well worth looking at.
44. *Hagar's offspring*, the child of the bondwoman, not the free.
46. *Patch*, Fool; originally used of the court jester, because of the "patched" or motley appearance of his dress.

SCENE VI

The same.

[*Enter the* Maskers, GRATIANO, *and* SALARINO.]

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

[*Enter* LORENZO.]

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

1. *Pent-house* (pentice), shed projecting from a building.
7. *Obliged*, Pledged previously. 14. *Younker*, Youth.
21. *Abode*, Delay.

[*Enter* JESSICA, *above.*]

Jes. Who are you? Tell me, for more certainty,
Albeit I'll swear that I do know your tongue.
Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.
Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
For who love I so much? And now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?
Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.
Jes. Here, catch this casket; it is worth the pains.
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:
But love is blind and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit;
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformed to a boy.
Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.
Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too light.
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love;
And I should be obscured.
Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.
Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.
[*Exit above.*
Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile and no Jew.
Lor. Beshrew me but I love her heartily;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her,
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true,
And true she is, as she hath proved herself,
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair and true,

27. *Albeit*, Although.
52. *Beshrew me*, Plague take me! Used as a mild form of oath.

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 were 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 abroad:
I have sent twenty out to seek for you.
Gra. I am glad on't: I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII

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

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

65. *Presently*, At once. 2. *Several*, Separate.

Por. The one of them contains my picture, prince:
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
Mor. Some god direct my judgment. Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
" Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
Must give: for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver with her virgin hue?
" Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves."
As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend as far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
" Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint:
The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,

41. *Hyrcanian deserts*, in Asia, south of the Caspian Sea, famous for their tigers.

As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

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

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in 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 grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

[*Exit with his train. Flourish of Cornets.*

51. *Cerecloth.* Waxed cloth, used in embalming bodies; hence, a shroud.
56. *Angel.* Engraved with the figure of St. Michael subduing the dragon (value about 10s.).
63. *Carrion Death,* Fleshless skull.

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII

Venice. A street.

[*Enter* SALARINO *and* SALANIO.]

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail :
With him is Gratiano gone along ;
And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.
Salan. The villain Jew with outcries raised the duke,
Who went with him to search Bassanio's ship.
Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail :
But there the duke was given to understand
That in a gondola were seen together
Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica :
Besides, Antonio certified the duke
They were not with Bassanio in his ship.
Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,
So strange, outrageous, and so variable,
As the dog Jew did utter in the streets :
" My daughter ! O my ducats ! O my daughter !
Fled with a Christian ! O my Christian ducats !
Justice ! the law ! my ducats, and my daughter !
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter !
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stolen by my daughter ! Justice ! find the girl ;
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats."
Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.
Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.
Salar. Marry, well remember'd.

I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there 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.
Salan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear ;
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.
Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part :
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return : he answer'd, " Do not so ;
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time ;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love :
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there : "
And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand ; and so they parted.
Salan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.
Salar. Do we so. [*Exeunt.*

27. *Reasoned*, Talked.
29. *Miscarried*, Perished.
30. *Fraught*, Laden.
39. *Slubber*, Perform carelessly.
44. *Ostents*, Displays, demonstrations.
48. *Sensible*, Sensitive.
52. *Quicken*, Make alive, enliven.
52. *Heaviness*, Grief.

SCENE IX

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

[*Enter* NERISSA *and a* Servitor.]

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

[*Flourish of Cornets. Enter* ARRAGON, *his train, and* PORTIA.]

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

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage:
Lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

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

Ar. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! Gold; silver; and base lead.
"Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath."
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:

3. *Election*, Choice.
18. *To hazard*, To take the risk of the choice.
19. *Addressed me*, Prepared myself.

" Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire."

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

[*He opens the silver casket.*

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 !

27. *Fond*, Foolish.
28. *Martlet*, Martin.
32. *Jump with*, Be at one with.
38. *Cozen*, Cheat.

" 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. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices
And of opposed natures.
Ar. What is here ?

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

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools ! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.
Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.
Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

[*Enter* Messenger.]

Mess. Where is my lady?
Por. Here : what would my lord?
Mess. Madam, there is alighted at your gate

61, 62, *To offend . . . natures, i.e.* you cannot be defendant *and* judge in your own case.

A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord ;
From whom he bringeth sensible regreets,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love :
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee : I am half afeard
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa ; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

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

[*Exeunt.*

89. *Sensible*, that can be apprehended by the senses, that can be touched and felt.
89. *Regreets* (greetings), *i.e.* " gifts of rich value."
90. *Commends and courteous breath*, Greetings and courteous messages.
100. *Post*, Messenger.

ACT III

SCENE I

Venice. A street.

[*Enter* SALANIO *and* SALARINO.]

Salan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

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

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

Salar. Come, the full stop.

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

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

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

9. *Knapped*, Nibbled.
11. *Prolixity*, dwelling too long on little details.
19. *Betimes*, Quickly.

[*Enter* SHYLOCK.]

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

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

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

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

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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

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

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

Shy. To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled

35. *Rhenish*, a hock or white wine. 39. *Smug*, Spruce.
46. *Withal*, With (emphatic form).

by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

[*Enter a* Man *from* ANTONIO.]

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

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

[*Enter* TUBAL.]

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

[*Exeunt* Gentlemen.

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

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

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

62. *Sufferance*, Endurance.

ring but what lights on my shoulders ; no sighs but of my breathing ; no tears but of my shedding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

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

SCENE II

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

[*Enter* BASSANIO, PORTIA, GRATIANO, *and all their train.*]

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

6. *Quality*, Manner.
11. *I am forsworn*, I have sworn falsely.
15. *O'erlook'd*, Cast a spell upon, as by the power of the evil eye.
18. *Naughty*, Good for nothing, evil, used in a stronger sense than the modern word.
22. *Peize*, lit. to weigh, to poise, so to delay.

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

55. *Alcides*; 56. *Troy*; 58. *Dardanian wives*. See page 119.

With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much much more dismay
I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

[*Here music.*]

[*A song, the whilst* BASSANIO *comments on the caskets to himself.*]

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

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves;
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;
And these assume but valour's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,

63. *Fancy*, Love. 74. *Still*, Ever.
87. *Excrement*, Hair. The beard gives the man a virile martial look.

And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it:
So are those crisped snaky golden locks
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!
Por. [*Aside*] How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
O love, be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
In measure rain thy joy; scant this excess.
I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
For fear I surfeit.
Bass. What find I here?
[*Opening the leaden casket.*
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider and hath woven
A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men

115. *Counterfeit*, Imitation, portrait.

Faster than gnats in cobwebs: but her eyes,—
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune.

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

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

125. *Methinks*, It seems to me. 157. *Livings*, Properties.

Is sum of—something, which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised ;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn ; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn ;
Happiest of all is that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted : but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself ; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants and this same myself
Are yours, my lord : I give them with this ring ;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.
Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins ;
And there is such confusion in my powers
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear
Among the buzzing pleased multitude ;
Where every something, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save of joy,
Express'd and not express'd. But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from hence :
O, then be bold to say Bassanio's dead !
Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy : good joy, my lord and lady !
Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish ;
For I am sure you can wish none from me :
And when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,

194. *Bargain*, Contract.

Even at that time I may be married too.
Bass. With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.
Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the casket there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.
Por. Is this true, Nerissa?
Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.
Bass. And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?
Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.
Bass. Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.
Gra. But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?
What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

[*Enter* LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* SALERIO, *a messenger from Venice.*]

Bass. Lorenzo and Salerio, welcome hither;
If that the youth of my new interest here
Have power to bid you welcome. By your leave,
I bid my very friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.
Por. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.
Lor. I thank your honour. For my part, my lord,
My purpose was not to have seen you here;
But meeting with Salerio by the way,

200. *Intermission*, Delay. 219. *Very*, True.

He did entreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.
Saler. I did, my lord ;
And I have reason for it. Signor Antonio
Commends him to you. [*Gives* BASSANIO *a letter.*
Bass. Ere I ope his letter,
I pray you, tell me how my good friend doth.
Saler. Not sick, my lord, unless it be in mind ;
Nor well, unless in mind : his letter there
Will show you his estate. [BASSANIO *opens the letter.*
Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger ; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Salerio : what's the news from Venice ?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio ?
I know he will be glad of our success ;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.
Saler. I would you had won the fleece that he hath lost.
Por. There are some shrewd contents in yon same paper,
That steals the colour from Bassanio's cheek :
Some dear friend dead ; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse !
With leave, Bassanio ; I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.
Bass. O sweet Portia,
Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper ! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins, I was a gentleman ;
And then I told you true : and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you

228. *Commends him to you :* a common form of greeting.
232. *Estate,* Condition. 239. *Shrewd,* Evil.
243. *Constant,* Normally self-possessed.

My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing ; for indeed
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady ;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood. But is it true, Salerio ?
Have all his ventures fail'd ? What, not one hit ?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary and India ?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks ?
Saler. Not one, my lord.
Besides, it should appear, that if he had
The present money to discharge the Jew,
He would not take it. Never did I know
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound a man :
He plies the duke at morning and at night,
And doth impeach the freedom of the state,
If they deny him justice : twenty merchants,
The duke himself, and the magnificoes
Of greatest port, have all persuaded with him ;
But none can drive him from the envious plea
Of forfeiture, of justice and his bond.
Jes. When I was with him I have heard him swear
To Tubal and to Chus, his countrymen,
That he would rather have Antonio's flesh
Than twenty times the value of the sum
That he did owe him : and I know, my lord,

255. *State*, Estate, fortune. 257. *Engaged*, Pledged.
258. *Mere*, Pure, undiluted; hence thorough, unqualified.
274. *Doth impeach . . . state.* Threatens an action to annul the city's royal charter, by which it had the right to administer justice. Shakespeare is thinking of an English city rather than of Venice, which was at this time an independent sovereign state.
277. *Port*, Rank, position. 278. *Envious*, Malicious.

If law, authority and power deny not,
It will go hard with poor Antonio.
Por. Is it your dear friend that is thus in trouble?
Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.
Por. What sum owes he the Jew?
Bass. For me three thousand ducats.
Por. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair thorough Bassanio's fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
When it is paid, bring your true friend along.
My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

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

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

308. *Cheer*, Countenance.

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

SCENE III

Venice. A street.

[*Enter the* Jew, *and* SALANIO, *and* ANTONIO, *and the* Gaoler.]

Shy. Gaoler, look to him: tell me not of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
Gaoler, look to him.
Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.
Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The duke shall grant me justice. I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond
To come abroad with him at his request.
Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.
Shy. I'll have my bond: I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. [*Exit.*
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.
Ant. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers.

19. *Kept with*, Lived with. 20. *Bootless*, Useless.

He seeks my life ; his reason well I know :
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me ;
Therefore he hates me.
Salar. I am sure the duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.
Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law :
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice, if it be denied,
Will much impeach the justice of the state ;
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore go :
These griefs and losses have so bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not ! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

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

[*Enter* PORTIA, NERISSA, LORENZO, JESSICA, *and* BALTHASAR.]

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

27. *Commodity*, Interest, advantage.
29. *Impeach*, Call in question. 32. *Bated*, Weakened.

Por. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments, of manners and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow'd
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish misery!
This comes too near the praising of myself:
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord's return: for mine own part,
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord's return:
There is a monastery two miles off;
And there will we abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.
Lor. Madam, with all my heart:
I shall obey you in all fair commands.
Por. My people do already know my mind,
And will acknowledge you and Jessica
In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
And so farewell, till we shall meet again.
Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!
Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

15. *Manners.* The word was used to include the most important rules of conduct as well as those of pleasant social demeanour.
25. *Husbandry,* Control. 25. *Manage,* Management.
33. *Imposition,* Injunction, command.

Por. I thank you for your wish, and am well pleased
To wish it back on you : fare you well, Jessica.
[*Exeunt* JESSICA *and* LORENZO.
Now, Balthasar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
And use thou all the endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua : see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario ;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect, to the common ferry
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 that we lack. I hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died ;
I could not do withal ; then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, I had not kill'd them ;

53. *Tranect:* probably in error, as Rowe suggested, for *traject*, one of the traghetti, or ferries, of Venice. Neither word occurs elsewhere. 56. *Convenient*, Befitting the occasion.
63. *Accoutred*, Arrayed. 69. *Quaint*, Ingenious.
72. *I could not do withal*, I could not help it.

And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

The same. A garden.

[*Enter* LAUNCELOT, LORENZO, *and* JESSICA.]

Lor. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

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

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

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

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

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

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

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

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know

A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricksy word
Defy the matter. How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion,
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?
Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it, then
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other, for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.
Lor. Even such a husband
Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.
Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.
Lor. I will anon: first, let us go to dinner.
Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.
Lor. No, pray thee, let it serve for table-talk;
Then, howsoe'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.
Jes. Well, I'll set you forth. [*Exeunt.*

31. *Mean it:* observe the mean, *i.e.* enjoy blessings moderately.
41. *Stomach,* Appetite (for dinner), inclination (to praise you).

ACT IV

SCENE I

Venice. A court of justice.

[*Enter the* DUKE, *the* Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, *and* GRATIANO.]

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

[*Enter* SHYLOCK.]

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,

7. *Qualify*, Temper, alter by blending. 10. Envy, Malice.

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

Shy. I have possess'd your grace of what I purpose ;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond :
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats : I'll not answer that :
But, say, it is my humour : is it answer'd ?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned ? What, are you answer'd yet ?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig ;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat ;
Some, when they hear the bag-pipe : for affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer :
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,

20. *Remorse*, Compassion.
29. *Enow*, Enough.
39. *Charter*. See page 70.
26. *Moiety*, Portion (lit. half).
35. *Possess'd*, Informed.
49. *Affection*, Natural impulse.

Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;
Why he, a woollen bag-pipe ; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended ;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd ?
Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.
Shy. I am not bound to please thee with my answers.
Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love ?
Shy. Hates any man the thing he would not kill ?
Bass. Every offence is not a hate at first.
Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice ?
Ant. I pray you, think you question with the Jew :
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height ;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven ;
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that—than which what's harder ?—
His Jewish heart : therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no 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,

81. *Conveniency*, Suitable promptitude.

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 purchased slave,
Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them : shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs ?
Why sweat they under burthens ? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours and let their palates
Be season'd with such viands ? You will answer
" The slaves are ours " : so do I answer you :
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought ; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law !
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for 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.
Salar. My lord, here stays without
A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.
Duke. Bring us the letters ; call the messenger.
Bass. Good cheer, Antonio ! What, man, courage yet !
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
Ant. I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death : the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground ; and so let me :
You cannot better be employ'd, Bassanio,
Than to live still and write mine epitaph.

91. *Parts*, Duties.

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

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

130. *Pythagoras*, a Greek philosopher (sixth century B.C.), who taught that after death the souls of men and of animals might pass from one organism to another.
133. *Wolf.* It used to be customary on the Continent to try and convict animals in the courts.
134. *Fell*, Fierce.

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 Barabbas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!
[*Aloud*] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.
Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine:
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.
Shy. Most rightful judge!
Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.
Shy. Most learned judge! A sentence! Come, prepare!
Por. Tarry a little, there is something else.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are "a pound of flesh":
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge! Mark, Jew: O learned judge!
Shy. Is that the law?
Por. Thyself shalt see the act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.
Gra. O learned judge! Mark, Jew: a learned judge!
Shy. I take this offer, then; pay the bond thrice
And let the Christian go.
Bass. Here is the money.
Por. Soft!
The Jew shall have all justice; soft! no haste:
He shall have nothing but the penalty.
Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!
Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood, nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou tak'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.
Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.
Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.
Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.
Por. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.
Gra. A Daniel, still say I, a second Daniel!
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?
Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.
Shy. Why, then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew:
The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly and directly too
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.
Gra. Beg that thou mayst have leave to hang thyself:
And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
Thou hast not left the value of a cord;
Therefore thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.
Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it:
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's;
The other half comes to the general state,
Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.
Por. Ay, for the state, not for Antonio.
Shy. Nay, take my life and all; pardon not that.
You take my house when you do take the prop
That doth sustain my house; you take my life
When you do take the means whereby I live.
Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?
Gra. A halter gratis; nothing else, for God's sake.

350. *Contrive*, Plot.

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 shalt thou have two godfathers,
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.
[*Exit* SHYLOCK.
Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.
Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon:
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.
Duke. I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.
[*Exeunt* DUKE *and his train.*
Bass. Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties; in lieu whereof,

404. *Gratify*, Thank and reward.

Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope your courteous pains withal.
Ant. And stand indebted, over and above,
In love and service to you evermore.
Por. He is well paid that is well satisfied;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied
And therein do account myself well paid:
My mind was never yet more mercenary.
I pray you, know me when we meet again:
I wish you well, and so I take my leave.
Bass. Dear sir, of force I must attempt you further:
Take some remembrance of us, as a tribute,
Not as a fee: grant me two things, I pray you,
Not to deny me, and to pardon me.
Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.
[*To Ant.*] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;
[*To Bass.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more;
And you in love shall not deny me this.
Bass. This ring, good sir,—alas, it is a trifle!
I will not shame myself to give you this.
Por. I will have nothing else but only this;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.
Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:
Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:
You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.
Bass. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
And when she put it on, she made me vow
That I should neither sell nor give nor lose it.

410. *Cope*, Requite, reward.

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

Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;
Give him the ring, and bring him, if thou canst,
Unto Antonio's house: away! make haste.
[*Exit* GRATIANO.
Come, you and I will thither presently;
And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The same. A street.

[*Enter* PORTIA *and* NERISSA.]

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

[*Enter* GRATIANO.]

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en:
My Lord Bassanio upon more advice
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be:

449. *Commandment:* pronounce com-mand-e-ment, as the word is spelt in Folio I.
6. *Upon more advice,* After more careful consideration.

His ring I do accept most thankfully :
And so, I pray you, tell him : furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.
Gra. That will I do.
Ner. Sir, I would speak with you.
[*Aside to Por.*] I'll see if I can get my husband's ring,
Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.
Por. [*Aside to Ner.*] Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old swearing
That they did give the rings away to men ;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
[*Aloud*] Away ! make haste : thou know'st where I will tarry.
Ner. Come, good sir, will you show me to this house?
[*Exeunt.*

15. *Old:* used colloquially in the sense of thorough-going (*cf.* the modern " a good old cry," " a regular old sport," etc.).

ACT V

SCENE I

Belmont. Avenue to PORTIA'S *house*

[*Enter* LORENZO *and* JESSICA.]

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

4. *Troilus*, 7. *Thisbe*, 10. *Dido*, 13. *Medea*. See pages 120-121.

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

[*Enter* STEPHANO.]

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

[*Enter* LAUNCELOT.]

Laun. Sola, sola ! wo ha, ho ! sola, sola !
Lor. Who calls ?
Laun. Sola ! did you see Master Lorenzo ? Master Lorenzo, sola, sola !
Lor. Leave hollaing, man : here.
Laun. Sola ! where ? where ?
Lor. Here.
Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master

46. *Post*, Messenger.

with his horn full of good news: my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.

And yet no matter: why should we go in?
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.

[*Exit* STEPHANO.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

[*Enter* Musicians.]

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

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

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

59. *Patines*, golden plates used for the consecrated wafer at Mass or the Communion service.

60. *Orb.* According to the system of astronomy taught by the Egyptian *Ptolemy*, the sun, moon, and planets were set in crystalline spheres, which, as they revolved about the earth, made ravishing harmony—the music of the spheres.

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

[*Enter* PORTIA *and* NERISSA.]

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
Ner. When the moon shone, we did not see the candle.
Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king
Until a king be by, and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters Music! hark! [*Music.*
Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.
Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.
Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.
Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are

78. *Savage*, Wild. 81. *Stockish*, Stupid, like a stock.
99. *Respect*, Consideration, attention.

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

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

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,
If you would walk in absence of the sun.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

109. *Moon . . . Endymion.* See page 118.
118. *Signify*, Make known.
121. *Tucket*, Set of notes on a trumpet.
130. *Heavy*, Sad. 132. *Sort*, Arrange, dispose.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend.
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.
Por. You should in all sense be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.
Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.
Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.
Gra. [*To Ner.*] By yonder moon I swear you do me wrong:
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk:
Would he were dead that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.
Por. A quarrel, ho, already! what's the matter?
Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give to me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, " Love me, and leave me not."
Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death,
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.
Gra. He will, an if he live to be a man.
Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man.
Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

149. *Cutler's poetry.* Verses, not necessarily of high poetic quality, used to be engraved on the blades of knives.
156. *Respective,* Careful.

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't were to me, I should be mad at it.
Bass. [*Aside*] Why, I were best to cut my left hand off,
And swear I lost the ring defending it.
Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed
Deserved it too : and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine ;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.
Por. What ring gave you, my lord ?
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.
Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
I would deny it ; but you see my finger
Hath not the ring upon it ; it is gone.
Por. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By heaven, I will never be your wife
Until I see the ring.
Ner. No, nor I yours
Till I again see mine.
Bass. Sweet Portia,
If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
And how unwillingly I left the ring,
When nought would be accepted but the ring,
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.
Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,

Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,
Or your own honour to contain the ring,
You would not then have parted with the ring.
What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?
Nerissa teaches me what to believe:
I'll die for't but some woman had the ring.

Bass. No, by my honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night,
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you; you are 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.

201. *Contain*, Keep.
205. *Modesty*, Moderation of good behaviour.
206. *Ceremony*. The giving and keeping of the ring was, or should have been, a sacred rite to Bassanio.

Bass. Nay, but hear me :
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
Por. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.
Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio ; swear to keep this ring.
Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor !
Por. You are all amazed :
Here is a letter : read it at your leisure ;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario :
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk : Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd : I have not yet
Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome ;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect : unseal this letter soon ;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly :
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.
Ant. I am dumb.
Bass. Were you the doctor, and I knew you not ?
Gra. Were you the clerk, and yet 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.
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 possessed of.

Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starved people.
Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in ;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.
Gra. Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

271. *Inter'gatories*, Interrogatories, questions to which a witness was sworn to reply truly.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

I. THE EARLY LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Of the actual facts of Shakespeare's life not very much is known. From parish registers and other documents there is evidence that a baby called William Shakespeare, first son and third child of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, was baptized at Stratford parish church on the 26th April 1564; that his father, a substantial burgess, trading in agricultural produce, enjoyed certain civic dignities and suffered certain periods of ill-luck; that two husbandmen of Stratford stood surety for the validity of the marriage in question between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway; that their children, Susanna, and the twins Judith and Hamnet, were baptized at Stratford; that Shakespeare was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors; that he wrote certain poems and plays. But if we do not know much of what actually happened to him, we know what his surroundings must have been like. Stratford-on-Avon has grown since his time; the country round it is less thickly wooded, and parts of it have changed with the development of big towns, and "facilities for tourists." Still there are old Elizabethan houses in Stratford, and still, as in the sweet and peaceful river meadows about Charlecote and Hampton Lucy, there are stretches of Warwickshire countryside little changed from that where the boy Shakespeare hunted for nests, went coursing and

hawking, and, while on his boyish exploits, saw and heard a hundred things to which his mind returned again and again, in flower song and bird song, in descriptions of sheep-shearing and rites of May. Those who know the "pastoral heart of England"—not through a motor tour, but through quiet weeks or months or years spent in some Warwickshire village, and know Shakespeare's plays, may out of love and the curiosity of love pass much time examining documents and hunting up records; they may see new facts written down, but they gain or need little more than they already possess to recapture the atmosphere of the days of his childhood and young manhood.

A visitor to Stratford in Shakespeare's time, after crossing the fourteen-arched stone bridge which still spans the gentle, willow-edged Avon, would have come to a cobbled street of timbered, gabled houses—some of them shops, some private residences. Noticeable then, as now, would be the spire of Holy Trinity Church, the square tower of the Guildhall, the almshouses, and the grammar school which, though of older foundation, was proudly known by the townsfolk, who had bought it back from the Crown in the reign of Edward VI., as the King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon. One of the finest dwellings in the little town was the Great House belonging to Sir Hugh Clopton, and, when prosperity came to Shakespeare in London, he bought this property with its barns and gardens and orchards, and called it New Place. The so-called birthplace in Henley Street may have looked rather as it does now; for, in the mid-nineteenth century, care was taken to restore it to its probably original appearance. It certainly belonged to John Shakespeare, and was a "good" house, well built with oak planks and beams from the great forest in the neighbourhood, the Forest of Arden. A walnut tree shaded the entrance; there was a pool of water across the road, and at the back of the house were

a garden and out-buildings. Luxurious furnishings such as Shakespeare loved were gradually becoming general; but his childhood would probably have been spent in a somewhat sparsely furnished house. There would have been beds, a joined or trestle table, joint-stools, presses, benches, and a settle of plain wood. The floors would not be carpeted, but strewn with rushes. As Shakespeare's father was a man of importance, the walls of the living-room might be hung with tapestry, or "painted cloth."

As the eldest son of a prosperous citizen, it is most likely that Shakespeare went to the King's New School. You can picture the small, brown-eyed boy, with a brow both high and broad, but with interest in many things beyond books, joining the little groups that "creep like snail unwillingly to school." He is dressed like a merchant's son, in doublet and hose of russet or blue, with a leather belt from which hangs a pouch, square-toed shoes, and a flat cap like that of a beefeater at the Tower. In school he will be kept hard at work. He is past the "infant" stage: no boy may enter Stratford grammar school until he has mastered his "absey" (ABC) book. He will be taught the old mediæval studies of logic and rhetoric, but most of his time will be spent tussling with Lily's Latin Grammar, and translating various Roman authors from Latin into English. Many a tag from that grammar book is quoted in the plays; but, if we are to believe the scoff of Ben Jonson that Shakespeare knew small Latin and less Greek, this boy does not go far beyond its precepts.

Out of school he sees all there is to see in the lanes and woods and fields about his town. He recognizes the points of a good horse and a good hound; he watches, with the curious sympathy of many sportsmen, the stag dying by the brook under the oak tree, and the hare doubling back on his tracks; he listens of the abuse and praise of hounds by their names,

Silver, Bellman, Echo, Merriman, and Fury. He has an intimate knowledge of hawking, that sport which the Elizabethans loved, and which is now practised by only a few enthusiasts. Occasionally he sees entertainments in the town — morris dancers, London players acting in the Guildhall, or local talent exercising itself.

His boyhood ends abruptly with his hasty marriage, at the age of eighteen, to Anne Hathaway. A few years afterwards he leaves Stratford for London, perhaps as the result of a poaching episode in Charlecote Park, the estate of the Sir Thomas Lucy whom he satirizes as Justice Shallow, more likely because his natural bent would be towards the town where he could become permanently associated with the players and the theatre.

The chief life of " merry London," as Spenser calls it, was about the river, the " sweet Thames," which was then gay with state barges, sailing ships, and the boats of the watermen. The young countryman from Stratford, wandering by this great and beautiful waterway, would have admired London Bridge with its narrow arches, the square tower of St. Paul's, the fastness of the Tower, the grace of the Abbey. He would have seen the palaces and mansions of the noble, with gardens sloping down to the river, and boats lying moored at the foot of flights of steps. He would have seen the *Golden Hind* in which Drake sailed round the world ; he would have gazed at the shows of monsters in Fleet Street, the strawberries in Ely Place, the bushels of roses in Temple Gardens. In his mind there can have been no doubt as to his destination. It was for the stage of the *Theatre*, which belonged to James Burbage, that he did the first of his work. A bare and uncomfortable building it would seem to modern playgoers, only partially roofed and seated, the stage without scenery; but a contemporary writer speaks of it as the " gorgeous

playing-place." As an actor Shakespeare is said to have been "excellent," but he does not appear to have had first-rate parts. Almost at once he would begin to work as a playwright. He revised older plays; but not only did he revise, he re-created. The compliment of jealousy was immediately paid him. The dramatist Greene wrote venomously of "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in the country." The publisher of the pamphlet in which this contemptuous comment appeared at once apologized, but Shakespeare was unharmed by mockery. Fame did not come slowly to him. In 1598 a certain Francis Meres brought out a book called *Palladis Tamia* (Treasury of Wit) in which he spoke of Shakespeare as the best writer of both tragedy and comedy, and praised his poems and sonnets. When *The Merchant of Venice* was first acted, he was a man of some standing, with a wealthy and noble patron—the Earl of Southampton, to whom his two poems are dedicated—an assured profession, and the reputation won for him by six or seven plays that seem to have been immediately enjoyed and admired.

Chief Recorded Events of the Life of Shakespeare

(*For Reference.*)

1564. On 26th April William Shakespeare baptized at the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon. He is the first son and third child of *John Shakespeare*, a trader in agricultural produce, and holder of various important municipal offices in Stratford (four years after the poet's birth

he was "bailiff" or mayor of the town), and of *Mary Arden*, who came of good yeoman stock.

1582. At the age of eighteen Shakespeare marries Anne Hathaway, eight years older than himself, daughter of a farmer of Shottery, a little village near Stratford.

1583. Birth of Shakespeare's daughter Susanna.

1584. Birth of his twin children, Judith and Hamnet. The boy died at the age of eleven.

1592. Greene's attack on Shakespeare (see page 108), who must, by this time, have left Stratford for London and the theatre. Later, the publisher of this pamphlet apologizes for Greene's ill-natured attack, and speaks of Shakespeare as "excellent in the quality * he professes."

1593–1594. Publication of the poems *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, both dedicated to the Earl of Southampton.

1594. Shakespeare mentioned as one of the actors of the Lord Chamberlain's company. He plays before the Queen at Greenwich.

1596. The College of Heralds grants John Shakespeare a coat-of-arms, obtained three years later. He is known to have been in financial difficulties before this date, and it is thought probable that his son returned to Stratford in this year, and established the fortunes of the family on a firmer basis.

1597. Shakespeare buys New Place at Stratford. The Children of the Chapel installed at Blackfriars Theatre. Three years later their popularity imperils the fortunes of the men actors.

1598. Francis Meres publishes his *Palladis Tamia*, in which he praises Shakespeare as the greatest dramatist of the time. He mentions his narra-

* *Quality.* Technical term for the actor's profession.

tive poems, his sonnets, six comedies (*Two Gentlemen of Verona, Errors, Love's Labour's Lost, Love's Labour's Won,* Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Merchant of Venice*), and six tragedies (*Richard II., Richard III., Henry IV., King John, Titus, Romeo and Juliet*).

1599. *Globe* Theatre built. Shakespeare becomes a shareholder in the receipts of this theatre.

1601. Death of John Shakespeare, from whom his son inherits the houses in Henley Street now known as " Shakespeare's house."

1602. Shakespeare purchases arable land near Stratford.

1603. The Lord Chamberlain's Company receives its licence from James I., and is henceforth known as the King's Company or the King's Servants.

1604. Shakespeare is one of the actors chosen to walk in the procession accompanying the King on his entry into London.

1605. He buys a moiety (portion) of the tithes of Stratford, but this investment does not prove a very satisfactory one.

1607. His elder daughter Susanna marries Dr. John Hall. Their daughter Elizabeth was the only grandchild Shakespeare lived to see. She was the last surviving direct descendant of the poet.

1609. The Burbages, who had leased the *Blackfriars* Theatre, bought out the lessee. Shakespeare is one of the players who becomes a shareholder (profits much less than at the *Globe*).

1610. Shakespeare purchases pastoral land, to add to that bought in 1602.

1611. He settles at Stratford.

1616. His younger daughter Judith marries Thomas Quiney, son of one of his old friends. Of their

* Probably *All's Well that Ends Well.*

three sons, one died in infancy, the other two in young manhood.

1616. Death of Shakespeare (23rd April). He is buried in Stratford Parish Church, and over his grave are inscribed these lines :—

"Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
To dig the dust enclosed heare :
Bleste be the man that spares these stones,
And cursed be he that moves these bones."

THE WORK OF SHAKESPEARE

1590–(*c.*) 1600. Plays :—*Love's Labour's Lost; The Two Gentlemen of Verona; The Comedy of Errors; Romeo and Juliet; Henry VI.; Richard III.; Richard II.; Titus Andronicus; The Merchant of Venice; King John; A Midsummer Night's Dream; All's Well that Ends Well; The Taming of the Shrew; The Merry Wives of Windsor; Henry V.; Much Ado about Nothing; As You Like It; Twelfth Night.*

Poems :—*Venus and Adonis; Lucrece; The Sonnets.*

1600–1610. *Julius Cæsar; Hamlet; Troilus and Cressida; Othello; Measure for Measure; Macbeth; King Lear; Timon of Athens; Pericles; Antony and Cleopatra; Coriolanus.*

1610–1611. *Cymbeline; The Winter's Tale; The Tempest; Henry VIII.*

THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

The first playhouse in London, built by James Burbage in 1576, was the *Theatre* in Shoreditch, and, a little later in the same year, the *Curtain* was put up near it. These were the only theatres in London

when Shakespeare became a member of the company then known as " Lord Strange's men," but, in 1592, this company, allied with another, played at a new playhouse built by Henslowe on the Bankside, Southwark, and called the *Rose*. Here, two years later, was produced the " Venesyon Comedy," which was, according to some scholars, the first version of *The Merchant of Venice* as we know it. Before the end of the century the *Swan* and the *Hope* were built, and the old fabric of the demolished *Theatre* had been used for the most famous of all Elizabethan playhouses—the *Globe*, with which Shakespeare's company was continually associated.

The architecture of the old public theatre is reminiscent of the inn-yard where, before they had houses of their own, the players would bring their movable " pageant " or wooden stage and act their drama to those who looked from the windows and balconies of the inn buildings, or crowded round the stage to watch them. Indeed, the " pit " of the theatre was at first called the " yard " ; the " boxes " were called the " rooms " ; and a signboard, resembling that of the tavern, indicated the name of the theatre. That of the *Globe* showed Hercules bearing the world on his shoulders.

The theatre was built of wood, was circular in shape (" this wooden O," the Prologue in *Henry V.* calls the *Globe*), and was only partially roofed, the rush-strewn " yard " being exposed to the weather. Into this " yard " projected the stage, or *scaffold*, as it was then called. There was no backcloth painted to suggest scenery, and no curtain. (The land on which the second playhouse was built was known as " The Curtene," hence its name.) At the back of the stage was an upper gallery, which served as a tower, the walls of a city, a " window above," Juliet's balcony, and many other purposes, while the space below it might be a cave, a tomb, a bed, or an inner room.

Scenery, as we understand it, was unknown, but many stage properties were used, and, although little or no attempt was made to reproduce the dress worn at the period of the play, much money was spent on the costumes of the actors. There were no actresses in the public theatres (ladies took part in court masques) before the Restoration, all women's parts being played by boys.

Each company of actors was licensed to perform in the name of some royal or noble person. Thus we hear of Leicester's men, the Earl of Oxford's men, Nottingham's men, the Queen's players, and so on. From time to time a company would change its designation. The players with whom Shakespeare was associated were called successively Leicester's, Lord Strange's, the Lord Chamberlain's, and the King's men. With the growth of the popularity of the theatre the actor's salary and social importance increased. There are many envious allusions by contemporary writers to the rich apparel and the " excessive gains " of the players, " glorious vagabonds " as one young University dramatist calls them.

" England affords these glorious vagabonds,
That carried erst their fardles on their backs,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streets,
Sweeping it in their glaring satin suits,
And pages to attend their masterships ;
With mouthing words that better wits had framed,
They purchase lands and now esquires are made." *

The drawing of the interior of the Swan Theatre (see page viii), which was built in 1595, gives a general idea of the construction of the Elizabethan playhouse, and the respects in which it differs from our own, but there is no proof as to its entire accuracy. The exact architecture of the Elizabethan stage is a point on which there is much controversy. The last great

* The *Return from Parnassus.*

authoritative work on the subject is *The Elizabethan Stage* by Dr. E. K. Chambers (1924), in four volumes. Students still at school who are interested in Shakespeare's theatre should read chapters xxiv. and xxv. of *Shakespeare's England*, vol. ii., which they will be able to obtain in any good reference library.

SOURCES AND DATE OF THE PLAY

Contemporary allusions show that the subject of *The Merchant of Venice* had been used before Shakespeare made it his own. A satirical writer called Gosson, remembered for his condemnation of stage plays, alluded, in 1579, to a play called *The Jew*, "representing the greediness of worldly choosers and bloody minds of usurers." As this play does not, as far as we know, exist at the present time, we cannot tell whether Shakespeare took his plot directly from it. The theatrical manager Henslowe notes in his Diary, in the year 1594, a play called *The Venetian Comedy*, which some have thought to be *The Merchant of Venice*, but there is not sufficient evidence to prove the point. All that is really known as to the date of the composition of Shakespeare's play is that it must have been before 1598, when it was entered on the Stationers' Register as licensed for publication, and when it was mentioned by Francis Meres (see p. 110). From its metre and its general style, most scholars consider that it must be one of the later plays in the group given in the *Palladis Tamia*. Two quarto editions were printed in 1600.

The outline of the plot resembles that of a story in an Italian book, the *Il Pecorone* of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino. The lover's test in this story is not by the choice of the caskets, which occurs in an old Latin collection of tales called the *Gesta Romanorum*, very popular in Shakespeare's time, as it had been in

Chaucer's. Younger students should remember that the play was written before 1598, and that the story came to Shakespeare from the country which had so great an influence on the culture of Elizabethan England—Italy, and they should notice other Shakespearean plays, the outline of which they know, whose action takes place in Italian cities, and whose characters have Italian names. Advanced students will find the whole problem of the date and sources of the play exhaustively discussed in Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii., or in the *Variorum* edition of Shakespeare, which gives translated extracts from the novel of Fiorentino.

EARLY EDITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS

In Shakespeare's time it was not fashionable for a dramatist to publish his own works. It was not until seven years after his death, in 1623, that two of his fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, collected the plays in one volume, called, from its size, the Folio edition. During his life, however, many of the plays were piratically published by booksellers, in what are known as quarto editions. It has been suggested that these were taken down in the theatre word for word as they were acted, but it is unlikely that, before shorthand was perfected, such a method would have been successful, and probably the publisher-bookseller (there was then no distinction between these trades) would bribe an actor to let him see a copy of the play. These quartos were sold for sixpence in St. Paul's Churchyard, then famous for its bookshops.

There are certain differences between these old editions of Shakespeare and the modern ones. Stage directions occur, in folios and quartos, but there are no lists of *dramatis personæ*, and no headings to indi-

cate where the various scenes are supposed to take place. Occasionally a passage of blank verse is printed as prose, or vice versa. Sometimes the meaning of a passage is obscure, but with the correction, or emendation, of a more or less obvious misprint, it becomes clear. Sometimes the punctuation is apparently faulty. Other quarto and folio versions of the plays were published during the seventeenth century, and, in the eighteenth, the work of carefully editing the text began. Pope, Rowe, Hanmer, Capell, Theobald, and Dr. Johnson brought out editions which contain lists of *dramatis personæ*, indications of where the scene is supposed to take place, and emendations of passages where certain words or phrases appear to be corrupt. Some of these emendations have been found unnecessary, others have been accepted by later scholars and critics. For the chief ones made in *The Merchant of Venice*, see pages 139, 140. Students who are sufficiently advanced to be interested in text questions should examine the folio and quarto versions at first hand where possible. There are replicas of these editions in the libraries of most of our big towns.

LYLY'S "EUPHUES"

This prose romance, published in 1579, was extraordinarily popular during one period of Elizabeth's reign. It tells of the friendship of the youth Euphues with a rich fellow-student at Naples, and his love for the fickle Lucilla, who forsakes him for his friend, rejected in turn for a newer lover. Its chief attraction for the Elizabethans was not the plot, but the curious style, which it became fashionable to imitate, in conversation as well as in writing. This style is remarkable for its wealth of illustration, much of which is drawn from fabulous natural history, its rhetorical

questions, and its constant use of alliteration and of antithesis, or the balanced sentence. "Dost thou not know that a perfect friend should be like the glazeworm, which shineth most bright in the dark? or like the pure frankincense, which smelleth most sweet when it is in the fire? or at the least not unlike to the damask rose, which is sweeter in the still than on the stalk?" . . . "Too much study doth intoxicate their brains, for (say they) . . . though the camomile the more it is trodden and pressed down, the more it spreadeth, yet the violet the oftener it is handled and touched, the sooner it withereth and decayeth."

The fashionable "pained themselves" to emulate this.

> "Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies,
> Playing with words and idle similes.
> . . . . . .
> So imitating his ridiculous tricks,
> They spake and writ all like mere lunatics—"

says the poet Drayton, when the style begins to lose its novelty and charm. Shakespeare was always interested in and entertained by fashions in words. In *Henry IV.*, Part I., he makes Falstaff parody the euphuistic style of speech. In *The Merchant of Venice*, for a moment or two, Portia imitates it. There is no parody in her "If to do were as easy . . . princes' palaces," "The brain . . . cripple." For the moment she is simply talking like one of the "euphuised gentlewomen," as Dekker called them, of her time. Notice the alliteration and antithesis of the sentences.

CLASSICAL ALLUSION IN "THE MERCHANT OF VENICE"

Admiration of the thought and achievements of "the noble Grecians and Romans" is one of the characteristics of Elizabethan culture. At no other

period has there been so widespread a pleasure in and knowledge of the beautiful and stirring tales of classic myth, and the personages, human and divine, who figure in them. They are used as subjects of plays and masques; they appear in long poem and tiny lyric; allusions to them come naturally and easily in writing and in talk. Sometimes, of course, the allusions are dully or absurdly made, by pedants, mere followers of fashion, and simple bewildered folk like Launcelot Gobbo in this play, but generally they have a fresh and delightful beauty, and some of the loveliest imagery of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Spenser is drawn from these myths.

The classical legends should be read for their own sakes—no short note or "explanation" can suggest the pleasure of them. You may read them in adaptation or translation. A list of books is given on pages 121, 122.

Of the divinities alluded to in *The Merchant of Venice*, Mars (page 64) was the god of war; Diana (pages 27, 98) the virgin goddess of hunting and of the moon. It is said that one moonlit night Diana looked down and saw the shepherd Endymion sleeping on Mount Latmos. Never before had the huntress queen loved any man, but the beauty of this youth enchanted her, and she stole from her place in the high heaven and kissed him and watched him as he slept. It is this legend Portia thinks of when she silences the musicians in her garden (page 98).

Venus was the goddess of love, and the sparrow and the dove were sacred to her (page 47). The little love god Cupid was her son. Janus, by whom Salarino swears (page 19), was the Roman god of openings—of actual doors and gates, and of beginnings, including the beginning of the year. He was represented as looking forward and back, and his temple in the Forum had doors facing east and west, towards the beginning and ending of day.

" The Fates and Destinies and Sisters Three," who seem to Launcelot Gobbo such " odd branches of learning," were Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, the daughters of Night. One span the thread of man's life, one wove it into fabric, and, when the hour of his death came, one cut it off.

Foremost among the heroes of the Greeks was Hercules (Alcides), who, after his death, became one of the immortals. He was renowned for his enormous strength, which enabled him to fulfil the twelve labours imposed upon him by his cousin Eurystheus (see pages 35, 64). Lichas was his attendant. Among his other feats was the rescue of the maiden Hesione. Her father, king of Troy, had obtained the help of the sea-god Neptune in building the walls of the city, but had refused to give him the reward upon which they had agreed. In his anger, Neptune sent against the city a great sea monster, to appease which the king was forced to offer his daughter. But Hercules slew the monster and rescued Hesione. This tale is in Portia's mind when, watching Bassanio choose the caskets, she pictures him as the hero rescuing her from a cruel fate (see page 64). Troy was founded by Dardanus, hence " Dardanian " is merely another name for " Trojan."

Another Greek hero was Jason (pages 23, 69), who undertook the quest of the golden fleece. This fleece was that of a ram given by Mercury, the messenger of the gods, to a mother who, forsaken by her husband, wished to save her two children from the cruelty of his second wife. She put them on its back, and it sprang into the air and carried them away to the east. As it crossed the strait dividing Europe from Asia, the little girl, Helle, fell from its back into the sea, but the boy was brought safely to Colchis. There, in a grove, watched by a sleepless dragon, the golden fleece was hung. Jason obtained it by the help of the enchantress Medea, who loved him. After he had

won the fleece, he begged Medea to restore his father Æson to youth, which, by the power of her magic, she succeeded in doing (page 94).

Orpheus (page 97), the son of Apollo, was presented by his father with a lyre, on which he played so ravishingly that not only wild beasts but trees and stones were influenced by the power of his music. He was one of the heroes who accompanied Jason when he set off in his ship, the *Argo*, for the kingdom of Colchis.

When the Greeks at last took Troy, a number of fugitives, with the hero Æneas (page 94) as their leader, set sail in search of a land where they might build a new city. Among other adventures, they were almost wrecked in a terrible storm, after which they landed at Carthage, where the queen, Dido, entertained them royally. She fell passionately in love with Æneas, but, reminded by a divine message of his destiny as the founder of a great empire, he left her. When he had gone she caused a funeral pyre to be made, and, having stabbed herself, laid herself upon it to be destroyed by the flames, the light of which was seen by Æneas and his followers as they sailed from the harbour.

Another hero of the Trojan war was Troilus, son of the king of Troy (page 94). The story of his love for the Greek maiden Cressida, and of how she proved faithless to him, is not a " classical " one, but sprang up during the Middle Ages. In the same war, the wise Nestor was the oldest of the Grecian chiefs, and from him the others took counsel. Salarino (page 19) means that a jest which seems laughable to an old grave wise man is a good jest indeed—and yet the type of man he is describing will not condescend to smile at it.

Sibylla, or the Sibyl (page 27), was a wise old prophetess, through whose help Æneas was enabled to visit the underworld, the abode of the dead, where

he might question his father as to his fortunes and those of the race he was to found. When she was young she was loved by Apollo, the sun-god, and asked him to grant her her wish. Taking a handful of sand, she wished she might see as many birthdays as she held grains of sand. She forgot, however, to ask for lasting youth as well as long life, and so she lived on and on, an old, old woman without strength or beauty.

King Midas, offered the choice of a gift by the wine-god, Bacchus, asked that all he touched might turn into gold; but he repented of this desire when food became gold as soon as his lips touched it, and begged the god to withdraw his gift (page 65).

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe (page 94) is, like that of Romeo and Juliet, a tragedy of forbidden love. These two would converse secretly through a hole in the wall which divided their houses. They arranged to meet outside their city, below a white mulberry-tree by a spring. Thisbe, coming first to the trysting-place, fled at the sight of a lioness stained with blood, which came to drink at the spring. She dropped her veil, which the fierce beast tore to pieces. Finding it rent and covered with blood, Pyramus thought his lady had been killed, and slew himself. Returning, she found him dead, and plunged his sword into her breast.

BOOKS ABOUT THE LEGENDS OF GREECE AND ROME

For Younger Boys and Girls

Hyde, *Favourite Greek Myths.*
Kingsley, *The Heroes.*
Hawthorne, *Tanglewood Tales.*
Lamb, *The Adventures of Ulysses.*
Lang, *Tales of Troy and Greece.*

FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Classical Myths (Gayley). This is an excellent book of reference, well illustrated. *The Myths of Greece and Rome: their Stories, Significance, and Origin* (H. A. Guerber). Verse translations of Homer (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) were made by Chapman in the sixteenth and by Pope in the eighteenth century, of Virgil (the *Æneid*) by Dryden in the seventeenth century. Modern free translations of the *Æneid* and the *Odyssey* have been made by William Morris, who has also retold many of the classical legends in other poems. Chapman's *Homer*, both as poem and as translation, is the greatest of these works. Those who wish to add an English verse translation of a classical poem to their own private library are advised to borrow and read before buying, and discover if the style of the translator appeals to them.

ON THINKING IT OVER

FOR YOUNGER BOYS AND GIRLS

I

ANTONIO'S sadness is like a presentiment of evil to come. As far as he knows, there is no cause for it. What reasons do his friends suggest, and how does he dispose of these? The first words Bassanio speaks are a great contrast to Antonio's. What are they? Gratiano, who loves noisy gaiety, thinks that solemn men assume their gravity for a certain reason. What is this? Antonio and Bassanio are great friends. In what way has Antonio helped Bassanio in the past? Why does Bassanio need more help now? What is Antonio willing to do for him?

Portia complains that "the will of a living daughter is curbed by the will of a dead father." What conditions did he impose upon her wooers in this will? Can you guess at her own "will" from what she says to Nerissa at the end of Scene ii.? Do you remember her opinions of her various suitors? She is not long troubled with these suitors. Why do they all return home?

The old prejudice between Christian and Jew is not felt by the Christians alone. What words of Shylock's show that he sets himself apart, proudly, one might say, from the alien race? The sight of Antonio makes several reasons for hatred of him flash into Shylock's mind. What are these, and which does he himself say

is the strongest? A man of genius is in advance of his time in many of his thoughts and sympathies. Notice how Shakespeare lets Shylock put his case, exciting sympathy by the passion and sincerity with which he does so. But it is unlikely that the audience in the Elizabethan theatre would have been touched with pity for him—they would have felt as Antonio does. How does Antonio answer his outburst? Shylock at once changes his tone when he hears that answer. What suggestion does he make, as if for a jest? Up till now, Bassanio has perhaps seemed a rather careless, thoughtless young man, but how does he regard this suggestion? Why is Antonio willing to consent to it?

Learn by heart—

"Let me play the fool—" (page 20).

"In Belmont is a lady richly left—" (page 22).

"How like a fawning publican he looks—" (page 29).

"Signior Antonio, many a time and oft—" (page 31).

Learn the meanings of these words (as used by Shakespeare): Affections, still, prevented, dear, mortifying, conceit, advised, hazard, sadness, requite, parcel, proper.

Explain in simple modern prose what is meant by—

(*a*) Nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year.
(*b*) Your worth is very dear in my regard.
(*c*) I am Sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!
(*d*) It is no mean happiness to be seated in the mean.

II

Morocco seems more conscious of his own qualities than of those belonging to the lady he has come to woo. Of what does he boast to her? What makes him think seriously of choosing the silver casket, and

why does he finally decide upon the golden one? Does his reason seem a sensible one? What does he find within the golden casket? Why does Arragon reject the golden casket and choose the silver one? What does he discover within it? Does either of these suitors debate the likelihood of the leaden one being the lucky one? What inscription is carved on this leaden casket?

In what dilemma is Launcelot Gobbo? He has a very good opinion of himself. What title does he try to make his old father give him? Why has he a fancy for entering the service of Bassanio, and how does he refuse to allow his father to describe him to his new master? He likes to use long words—wrong words they generally turn out to be, but that does not matter, as long as they sound well. Do you remember any of the mistakes he makes? What other "confusions" make people laugh when Scene ii. is acted?

What warning does Bassanio give Gratiano when the latter wants to accompany him to Belmont? Does Gratiano take it good-humouredly? How does he promise to behave?

How does Launcelot make fun of Shylock's superstition? Why does Shylock say he is parting with his servant, and why is he glad the boy is going into Bassanio's service?

Jessica says of Shylock, "Though I am a daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners." Is this true? How does she behave towards her father? Has he shown her much sympathy and kindness?

Does the Duke of Venice do his best to help Shylock discover Lorenzo and Jessica? Describe the Jew's grief at the loss of his daughter. What, in Scene viii., gives you the impression that ill luck is closing in upon Antonio?

Learn the meaning of these words (as used by Shakespeare): Knave, nice, presently, quaintly,

reasoned, heaviness, fond, jump with, election, skipping, several, addressed me.

Write in simple modern English :

(*a*) All things that are
Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed.
(*b*) If thou be'st rated by thy estimation
Thou dost deserve enough.
(*c*) Let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.
(*d*) It (*i.e.* lead) were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
(*e*) I reasoned with a Frenchman yesterday.

III

What bad news for Antonio has come to the Rialto? Describe Shylock's mood in Scene i. The young Venetians, Salanio and Salarino, at first mock him. Where does their tone change? Notice the varying of Shylock's emotion during the talk with Tubal—the darting desire for vengeance, the momentary paralysis of despair. It is a wonderful scene on the stage—there has been a curious difference in the method of acting it (see page 130).

Portia is loth to show her feelings too plainly—but compare her demeanour with Bassanio and with Morocco or Arragon. Notice how she makes the others stand aside while he chooses, how she will have "music sound while he doth make his choice," how she watches him go towards the caskets. Why is Bassanio unwilling to delay? Portia's love for Bassanio makes her very humble. Where do you see this? The happy ending of Gratiano's courtship has depended on the caskets. How does he describe his energetic wooing? At the opening of the scene Portia dreaded the thought of Bassanio leaving her, but what does she say when she hears of the ill fortune that has befallen Antonio?

ON THINKING IT OVER

In Scene iii. the tables are turned; Shylock can now mock at Antonio. How does he do this? Do you feel that there is any likelihood of his relenting? Antonio makes a sad little jest as he takes leave of his friend. What is it? What does he say which makes you glad to know that Bassanio is on his way to Venice? How does Portia account for her absence from Belmont? Whom does she leave in charge of her household? How does she obtain the robes of a doctor of laws, and information as to the conducting of a case in a court of law? Does she enjoy the prospect of her disguise? What is Jessica's opinion of Portia?

Learn by heart—

" He hath disgraced me . . . instruction—" (page 59).

The song, " Tell me where is fancy bred—" (page 64).

" You see me, Lord Bassanio—" (page 66).

Bassanio's praise of Antonio, " The dearest friend . . . Italy " (page 71), and Jessica's of Portia, " Why, if two gods . . . fellow—" (page 77).

Learn the meanings of these words (as used by Shakespeare): Post, bootless, smug, naughty, fancy, shrewd, envious.

Explain what the following passages mean:

(*a*) I speak too long; but 'tis to peize the time,
To eke it and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.

(*b*) 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.

IV

Sometimes a man may be ashamed of putting an evil intention into practice if he believes that his fellow-men think he could not be guilty of such a

thing. Knowing this, what does the Duke tell Shylock? How does the Jew answer him? Avarice was once the strongest passion in Shylock's mind (do you remember the chief reason for his hatred of Antonio?). Has money any appeal to him now? By what comparison does he make good his claim to Antonio? Describe Antonio's behaviour and attitude of mind throughout his dreadful ordeal. Show to what different emotions and instincts in Shylock Portia tries to appeal. Notice how long she keeps up her trump card. Antonio has said farewell to his friends and has actually bared his bosom for the knife before she intervenes, "Tarry a little; there is something else." What does Shylock demand as soon as he sees the game is up? "The law has yet another hold on you," Portia tells him. What is this? With what sentence is he threatened? Who passes the final judgment upon him? With what part of this judgment is the modern point of view least in sympathy? Notice the characteristic behaviour of Bassanio and of Gratiano during the trial scene. What trick do Portia and Nerissa play on their husbands?

Learn by heart—

"I pray you, think you question with the Jew—" (page 80).

"The quality of mercy is not strained—" (page 84).

"Give me your hand, Bassanio, fare you well—" (page 86).

Learn the meanings of these words: Qualify, fell (adj.), moiety, enow, importunity.

Express in modern prose:

(*a*) Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal.

(*b*) I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old an head.

(*c*) Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

V

This play has been called a tragi-comedy. Do you know why? Its ending, however, is all peace and gaiety. You forget the conflict of passions in the law-court in Portia's moonlit garden. What entertaining little episode concludes the play? What good news does Antonio receive?

Learn by heart—

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank—" (page 96).

"The man that hath no music in himself—" (page 97).

Learn the meanings of these words: Post, patines, respective, tucket, signify.

Give the general meaning of these passages:

(*a*) 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.

(*b*) What man is there so much unreasonable,
If you had pleased to have defended it
With any terms of zeal, wanted the modesty
To urge the thing held as a ceremony?

FOR OLDER STUDENTS

1. Shakespeare, like most men of genius, was in advance of his time. The attitude of Antonio and the other Christians towards Shylock is that of the average Elizabethan—but, with his large humanity, Shakespeare realized another Shylock; he saw how a character may be warped and narrowed by constant scorn and injustice until there is room in it for nothing but

the desire for revenge. It is as if, once he had set the story going, he could not help himself: he must let the voice of the despised race speak. In which passages of the play does it speak most bitterly, most movingly, or most terribly? Describe the Christian attitude towards the Jew and his kind, remembering that Salarino says of Antonio, "A kinder gentleman treads not the earth," and that most of the Elizabethan audience would have agreed with him.

Have you seen the play acted?

From 1700–1741 the part of Shylock was played as if it were a comic part (see page 143). The scene with Tubal, with those lonely words, "no sighs but of my breathing; no tears but of my shedding," excited roars of laughter. Since the time of Macklin the part has been acted in such a way as to arouse sympathy—but it is a divided sympathy. The Elizabethans must have *enjoyed* this play more than we do. The *story* wants us to feel thoroughly delighted when Portia plays her trump card. Certainly we don't want to see Shylock plunge his knife into Antonio's bosom, but equally certainly Gratiano's mockery is almost unbearable. Can it be that Shakespeare's conception of Shylock has spoilt the story as a story? In his own theatre, Burbage may have played the Jew unsympathetically, and the audience would not have experienced the rather troubled sensation that afflicts us moderns. The question is an interesting one for discussion, after *seeing* the play. As you read, your mind is affected differently.

2. The editors of the First Folio classed Shakespeare's plays as comedies, histories, and tragedies, and placed *The Merchant of Venice* among the comedies, but many people consider that it is rather a tragi-comedy. How would you account for this point of view?

3. (*a*) Some critics have seen in this play an illustration of the conflict between the letter and the spirit

of the law. It is interesting to work this out, and to show how Portia defeats Shylock's purpose by a rigid adherence to the letter of the law, and "saves the spirit by pushing the letter to extreme."

(*b*) The critic Gervinus regards the play as illustrating different ideas of the value of wealth. How do Shylock, Jessica, Antonio, Bassanio, and Portia regard wealth (in the sense of money and possessions)? What idea as to the ultimate value of these things is brought out in the story of the caskets?

(*c*) It has been said that, of all Shakespeare's comedies, this one most clearly shows the strength of friendship and of love. Bring out the truth of this by describing and analysing the relationship of Bassanio and Antonio, of Bassanio and Portia, and show with how poignant an effect the isolation of Shylock is contrasted with the secure companionship of these characters, united to one another by love and trust.

4. There are three outstanding men characters in this play—Antonio, Bassanio, and Shylock. Obviously Antonio is meant to excite our sympathy and admiration. Bassanio is the romantic hero of the caskets story. As for Shylock, it seems as if, in creating him, Shakespeare shared one of the experiences of Sir Walter Scott, who complained that some demon seemed to sit on the feather of his pen and drive it astray, and that, in spite of himself, his rogue would sometimes turn out the hero of his novel.

Who do you consider is the hero of this play?

5. Modern dramatists, notably Mr. Shaw, often talk much in stage directions of the looks and dress of their characters, but, in the play itself, a dramatist seldom gives a *detailed* picture of the appearance of his men and women, as this must be left in part to the actors and actresses who are to interpret them on the stage. Does Shakespeare give any definite description of the looks of Portia? If you know other plays (say, *As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Henry V.*), it is interesting

to notice any suggestion he gives of the colouring, height, gait, etc., of his men and women—and how far what he tells you influences your conception of characters, whether you feel that the actor or actress *must* have these particular physical qualities, or be able to make up so as to appear to have them.

6. People sometimes talk as if what is called "higher education for women" began in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but, as you will know if you have read of the studies of, say, Queen Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey in their girlhood, the royal and noble young women of the Renaissance were learned as well as accomplished. Portia is, I think, a study of the young intellectual of her time—her talk is more bookish than that of Rosalind and Beatrice (look at her euphuistic conversation with Nerissa, and the working out of conceits in her talk with Bassanio before he chooses the caskets). She is gay and witty, but she has not their original and natural effervescence of gaiety and wit. If you have read *As You Like It* and *Much Ado About Nothing* you should compare these three girls—you get to know each one better after seeing her by the other two.

Hazlitt does not like Portia. She has, he says, "a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespeare's women, but which was perhaps a proper qualification for the office of a 'civil doctor' which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespeare. We do not admire the scene of the caskets."

What do you think of this criticism?

Notice the epithets that come to the minds of other characters in the play in connection with the name of Portia—they are illuminating.

Look again at the caskets scene. That aside of Portia's beginning "How all the other passions fleet to air" is a revelation of character. She loves to

have herself well in hand : she is afraid of " ecstasy," but certainly she feels it ! This " aside " gives special significance to the queenly humility of that speech to Bassanio beginning " You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand." Notice the effect her words have on him. What does the close of this scene show of the way in which she has schooled herself ?

To some critics she appears hard and callous in the trial scene, but notice the opportunities she gives Shylock and the appeals she makes to him before she passes judgment. These must be remembered when the severity of her sentence is condemned.

Portia's two great scenes are the caskets scene and the trial scene. Show what sides of her character are revealed in each. In which do you like her best ?

7. Some critics have praised Bassanio as a wise and noble youth, well able to distinguish the true from the false ; others have considered him a spendthrift and a fortune-hunter, unworthy of the friendship of Antonio and the love of Portia. What do you think of him ? Is he likeable ? Notice the first words he speaks in the play—his quick impulsiveness—any sudden seriousness and self-forgetfulness. How does he compare with Gratiano and Antonio ?

8. Study the characters of Portia, Shylock, Antonio, Bassanio, and Gratiano, as they reveal themselves in the trial scene.

9. Shakespeare sometimes makes his people criticize or discuss one another. Do you remember what other characters say of Antonio, Gratiano, Portia, Shylock ? Which of these opinions seem to you of special interest and significance ?

10. Shakespeare is working with a fairy tale in the story of the caskets, and yet there is interest and life in it. Is there any reason for Portia's father having made such a will as his ? Notice the significance of the inscriptions on the caskets, especially of that on the leaden one. Describe the reasons which govern the

choice of Morocco and Arragon. Which appeals to you as the more sensible? Is the reasoning which leads Bassanio to choose the leaden casket in keeping with what you see of his character?

11. Sometimes a phrase or situation in a play has some special significance for the audience, unappreciated, for the time being, by one or more of the characters in the play. For instance, Macduff, having rushed from the room where he has found the murdered king, shrinks from telling Lady Macbeth of what he has seen, feeling that " the repetition, in a woman's ear, would murder as it fell "—and the audience have watched this woman instigate her husband to the crime, and, taunting him for his faint-heartedness, go herself to perform the dreadful task of smearing the daggers and hands of the king's grooms with his blood. In *Twelfth Night,* when the Duke questions his page (the girl Viola disguised as a boy) about " his " love, and is told that his person is " about your years, my lord," and " of your complexion," he is quite unsuspicious of the truth—known to the audience—that Viola tells him of her love for him. In both these cases the dramatist uses the device known as *dramatic irony.* Have you come across instances of this irony, grave or gay, in the play of *The Merchant of Venice?*

12. If you know Spenser's *Faerie Queene,* compare the *allegorical* picture of Avarice and Revenge in the canto about the Palace of Pride (Book I., canto iv.) with Shakespeare's *dramatic* representation of these qualities in Shylock. Think out what the *purpose* of the writer of the allegory is, for what he uses his characters, and for what effect he must strive if they are to serve their turn. The purpose of the dramatist, to quote Hamlet's words about the player who interprets his work, is to hold the mirror up to nature—to make man see himself and his fellows as they are in reality. Study the scenes in which the greed and lust of revenge in Shylock are most powerfully shown. In

part of the trial scene he is as a man possessed—and yet, as you will see, he is "real."

13. Which scenes of *The Merchant of Venice* are written in prose? If you have read other plays by Shakespeare, look at them again, and notice for what type of scene prose is invariably used.

Notice where rhymed lines are used in the play, and with what effect.

14. In beginning to read Shakespeare the scansion of blank verse should be studied, at first in its simplest form, then with its variations. This should be done gradually—on one day a few perfectly regular lines, on the next lines with the trochaic first foot, and so on. From time to time a verse passage set down as prose should be re-written in its blank verse lines. Those who have a good ear for poetry read at once with observance of the harmony of blank verse; a slight over-emphasis of the rhythm will help those who do not easily detect it. From the earliest stages lines in which the sound echoes the sense with particular distinctness should be noticed, and attention called to the effect of long and short vowel sounds, guttural, explosive, and sibilant consonants. Such a scene as the first of Act V. is a good illustration of the dramatic variety of Shakespeare's blank verse; quite young students will be able to appreciate the contrast between the tranquil lovely music of Lorenzo's moonlight poem and the speed and snap of the verse of Portia and Bassanio's "quarrel," with the reiteration of the word "ring."

15. Look at Act V., which takes place in Portia's moonlit garden at Belmont. Notice where those who come into the garden speak of the moon and the stars, and with what varying beauty.

16. Dr. Johnson thought "the union of the two actions in one event in this drama eminently happy." What are these two actions? Show how Shakespeare has linked them together. There is also the subor-

dinate story of Lorenzo and Jessica. In what way is this connected with the others?

17. Every good story, whether dramatic or narrative, has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In comedy, the beginning is known as the *situation*. Then follows a *complication* or *entanglement* of matters, becoming more involved until the *climax* is reached. Then, generally quite quickly, comes the *dénouement*, or *solution* of the difficulties which have beset the characters in whom we feel the keenest interest.

Take first the bond story, then the caskets story: name the chief characters in each, describe the situation in which they find themselves at the beginning of the play, trace the complication to the climax, and indicate the solution. Do not tell either story in full: merely show the "make" of the play.

18. To what ancient beliefs do the following passages allude:

(*a*) Thou almost makest me waver in my faith
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men.

(*b*) There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings.

19. If you are studying the history of language—

(*a*) Distinguish between the uses of these words in Elizabethan and modern English: Affections, still, estate, prevented, mortifying, compromised, conceit, advised, proof, thrift, presently, sadness, proper, parcel, condition, possessed, imposition, level at, squandered, dear, respect, fond, nice, reasoned, sensible, estimable, knave, modesty, quaintly, several, heaviness, election, addressed, jump, cheer, complexion, post, smug, counterfeit, envious, quality, naughty, very, fancy, livings, bargain, shrewd, constant, kept with, manners, convenient, contrive, gratify, remorse, savage.

(*b*) Carefully note the meanings of these words and phrases, which are often used by Shakespeare: Argosy, in sooth, moe, gear, for this gear, hazard, commodity, ducat, gaged, doit, pageants, penthouse, cater-cousins, gramercy, marry (exclamation), patch (of a person), albeit, beshrew me, cerecloth, ostents, cozen, withal, to be forsworn, o'erlooked, peize, methinks, cheer (noun), bootless, impeach, bated, husbandry, manage (noun), accoutred, enow, moiety, fell (adjective).

(*N.B.*—The interest of words is enhanced by some knowledge of their derivation, and, if you want to study English thoroughly, you should possess an *etymological* dictionary, for your interest in the antecedents of our language is bound to grow. You may not be familiar with many of the languages from which words have passed into ours, and to learn derivations merely as derivations is not of much value, but there is much to be said for the mere discovery whence words come to us—from spoken Latin or book Latin, from Arabia, Italy, France, Spain.)

20. From time to time, for the sake of testing your understanding of what you read, you should try to express in modern prose a short passage of the play you are studying. Every one knows, of course, that part of the meaning is bound up in the form, that you cannot get the *value* of the original passage in another rendering, but this exercise of paraphrasing does prove if you are reading with intelligence. In giving the gist of the following passages do not necessarily *reproduce* the explanation of word or phrase printed in the footnotes, for this is a mere explanation, and might fit in clumsily with your rendering.

In Act I.—

Page 21. *Bassanio.* "Tis not unknown . . . continuance."

„ 22. *Antonio.* "You know . . . speak."

„ 24. *Nerissa.* "It is no mean . . . longer."

In Act II.—

Page 50. *Morocco.* "If thou be'st rated . . . myself."

„ 51. *Morocco.* "It were too gross . . . grave."

„ 53. *Salarino.* "I reasoned . . . fraught."

„ 53. *Salanio.* "I pray thee . . . other."

„ 57. *Servant.* "Madam . . . rich value."

In Act III.—

Page 62. *Portia.* "I speak too long . . . election."

„ 68. *Bassanio.* "Lorenzo and Salerio . . . welcome!"

In Act IV.—

Page 78. *Duke.* "Shylock, the world thinks . . . cruelty."

„ 90. *Bassanio.* "Most worthy gentleman . . . withal."

In Act V.—

Page 101. *Portia.* "What man is there . . . ceremony."

21. The following are variant readings of the same passages in Folio 1 and in the Quartos. Which seem to you the better? (The context of the passages should be taken into consideration.)

Folio 1	Quartos
page 24.	
It is no *small* happiness to be seated in the mean.	It is no *mean* happiness to be seated in the mean.
page 48.	
Now, by my hood, a *gentle*, and no Jew.	*Gentile* (Q. 1); *gentle* (Q. 2).
page 55.	
How much low *pleasantry* would then be gleaned	How much low *peasantry* . . . (Q. 2).
From the true seed of honour.	*Pleasantry* (Q. 1).
page 68.	
Swearing, till my very *rough* was dry.	. . . my very *roof* (Q. 1). . . . my very *rough* (Q. 2).

FOLIO 1	QUARTOS
page 80.	
Or even as well use question with the wolf	*You may as* well use question with the wolf
The ewe bleate for the lamb.	*Why he hath made the ewe bleake for the lamb* (Q. 1).
	You may as well use question with the wolf
	Why he hath made the ewe 'bleat for the lamb (Q. 3).
page 96.	
My friend *Stephen.*	My friend *Stephano* (Q. 1).
	My friend *Stephen* (Q. 2).

You will notice that similar readings often occur in F. 1 and Q. 2. It is supposed that this quarto was used in printing the folio version of the play.

22. (*a*) The following are emendations of various passages by Shakespearean editors. Suggest why these have been made. (The context of the passages should be consulted in every case.)

FOLIOS AND QUARTOS	EMENDATIONS
page 35.	
To win *the* lady.	To win *thee*, lady (Rowe).
page 51.	
Guilded timber do worms infold.	*Gilded tombs* do worms infold (Johnson).
page 62.	
To *ich* it, and to draw it out in length (Folios); to *ech* it (Quartos).	To *eke* it, and to draw it out in length (Johnson).
page 66.	
The full sum of me	
Is *sum of nothing* (F. 1).	*Sum of something* (Theobald).
Summe . . . summe of something (Q. 1, Q. 3).	*Sum of—something* (Clarke).
Sume of something (Q. 2).	

FOLIOS AND QUARTOS	EMENDATIONS
page 95.	
Cl. My master will be here ere morning, sweet soul.	*Cl.* My master will be here ere morning.
Lor. Let's in . . .	*Lor.* Sweet soul, let's in . . . (Rowe).
page 98.	
Peace, *how* the moon sleeps with Endymion.	Peace, *ho !* (Malone). Peace, *now* . . . (Collier).

(*b*) The quartos and folios introduce the character of Salerio in III. ii., but Rowe, in the eighteenth century, substituted *Salanio*, and many editors have followed him, on the grounds that the new character is unnecessary, and that the spellings of Salarino and Salanio in the old editions are so various (Salaryno, Slarino, Solanio, Salino) that " Salerio " may merely be a misprint. Would you include Salerio on the list of *dramatis personæ*, or substitute Salanio for him ?

(*c*) The quartos (published in 1600) make Nerissa ask Portia in I. ii. (page 26), " What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour ? " The First Folio (1623) substitutes " other " for " Scottish." Can you suggest any reason for this ?

23. If you have seen the play acted, what scenes struck you as having the greatest dramatic value ? Until the revival by Irving, the beautiful Fifth Act was generally omitted in the theatre. The episode of the rings is always a great success. How did the beginning of the Act, containing some of the loveliest poetry Shakespeare ever wrote, affect the audience ? Did you find more pleasure in reading or in seeing it ?

24. The idea of representing a Shakespearean play in the costume and with the setting of its period is a comparatively modern one. In Shakespeare's own time the actors generally appeared as Elizabethans (see page 113). Eighteenth century illustrations show Romeo in periwig and ruffles wooing a powdered and patched Juliet, and Portia with curled and powdered

hair confronting a Jew who has exchanged his "gaberdine" for the ordinary dark suit of a respectable middle-aged citizen of the time, while Bassanio and his friends, in their satin breeches and buckled shoes and tie-wigs and cravats, are like any of the young dandies who frequented the coffee-houses in London in the days of Queen Anne and the first Georges. In the nineteenth century the attempt to suggest the period of the play was made. Sir Henry Irving writes wisely of this: "The stage has become not only a mirror of the passions, but a nursery of the arts, for here students of the past learn the form and colour of the costumes and decoration of distant ages. To all this there are clear limits. It is not always possible to reproduce an historic period with exactness. Macbeth and Lear and Hamlet belong to history too remote for fidelity of costume, but a period has, in such cases, to be chosen and followed with conscientious thoroughness, tempered by discrimination. Above all, the resources of the picturesque must be wholly subordinate to the play. Mere pageant apart from the stage has no place in Shakespeare."

Some Shakespeare lovers think it best to act the plays as they were done in their original theatre (see page 113). Others would produce them on the arras or curtain stage, trusting to imaginative suggestion of colour and design rather than to detailed realistic representation for the right atmosphere. The most modern experiments in the production of Shakespeare, those of Sir Barry Jackson, have gone back to the old practice of making the play as "up-to-date" as possible, and let the characters appear in contemporary twentieth-century costume and with twentieth-century accessories—suitcases, revolvers, fountain pens, and so on.

Discuss these different theories of staging. (For what Shakespeare thought of his stage see the Pro-

logues to Act I. and Act IV. of *Henry V.* Those who are interested in staging should read Gordon Craig's *Art of the Theatre.*)

25. Choose from the play a scene that you particularly like, and consider how you would wish it to be acted. Describe in detail the appearance of the characters taking part in it, and give full stage directions as to position, gesture, tone of voice, facial expression, etc., throughout the scene.

26. (*a*) Look at Portia's instructions to Balthasar in III. iv., in the passage beginning " Now, Balthasar, As I have ever found thee honest-true." Then write, with all the life and vividness you can, the story of his ride—from Belmont to Padua, where he finds Dr. Bellario ill in bed, considering the Duke's letter asking him to come to Venice to try the difficult case of Shylock's bond—from Padua to Venice, through the night, with the robes and the letters, one to the Duke and one to Portia. (Portia must have at first intended to act as advocate for Antonio ; fate gives her the opportunity of becoming judge in the case. It is rather a curious little fact that the name she assumes—or is given by Bellario—is that of Balthasar, and may be used effectively in the story of his ride.)

(*b*) " Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I have heard, in one night fourscore ducats."

Describe, as if you saw it in a picture, the banquet and revelry on which Jessica spent Shylock's gold.

27. Very little is known of the early stage history of *The Merchant of Venice.* The title-page of Quarto 2 tells us that it was " divers times acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servants," and Richard Burbage must have played Shylock, whether with a certain sympathy, or as an object of ribald scorn, we cannot tell. The play does not seem to have been revived with the re-opening of the theatres at the Restoration. Pepys does not mention it in his *Diary.* It came back to the stage in the early eighteenth century in an " im-

proved " form (see page 130), with Doggett as a comic Jew. To Macklin belongs the honour of having restored to the stage an interpretation of Shylock of which Pope declared—

" That is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew."

But the great Shylock of the past was Edmund Kean. The story of his success is one of the most striking in the history of the English stage. To most of the audience in the Old Drury he was unknown, a shabby provincial actor, but, from the moment he came on (wearing a black wig instead of the traditional red one), " leant over his crutched stick with both hands, looked askance at Bassanio, and said ' Three thousand ducats ? ' paused, bethought himself, and then added ' Well,' his power made itself felt." He impressed his audience " like a chapter of Genesis," according to Douglas Jerrold ; Coleridge said that " seeing him act was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning." Irving's Shylock was one of his greatest parts, and no actress seems to have made Portia more delightful than Miss Ellen Terry did. On the modern stage there is generally not enough variety in the playing of the chief part—from the very beginning Shylock is a figure at once pathetic and terrible, the representative of a scorned and oppressed race. Mr. Matheson Lang well shows the change in the man, the gradual *possession* of his spirit by hatred, strengthened almost to madness after the defection of his daughter. Before her elopement he appears as the successful moneylender, loathing the Christians certainly, and sensible of their treatment of him, but with a savouring of life, a sardonic humour in the matter of the " merry bond "—which, one feels, might have been drawn up in " sport," merely with the notion of scaring Antonio half out of his senses.

Read and consider the following descriptions of the rendering of certain parts of the play.

A. Booth on the acting of Shylock's part :

I. iii. " Shylock enters with slow, shuffling gait ; restless, half-closed eyes, and the fingers of his disengaged hand (one holds his staff) ever moving, as if from the constant habit of feeling and caressing the ducats that are passing through them."

I. iii. " Yes, to smell pork."

" Doggett (see page 143) doubtless made a strong ' point ' here, but be very careful that you do not ; a too strong emphasis or expression of disgust might cause a laugh ; the whole speech must be spoken impressively."

IV. i. " Art thou contented, Jew ? what dost thou say ? "

" Shylock, thus addressed, raises both head and hands as if about to appeal to Portia, checks himself, and says very slowly, as head and hands drop, ' I am content.' His last words are uttered plaintively. As Shylock is leaving, Gratiano seizes his left arm, and at the conclusion of the taunting speech with which he addresses him, casts Shylock's hand from him. Shylock bows low to the Duke, and slowly totters towards the door—he meets Antonio, and shrinks with abhorrence, raises his hand (as on previous occasions), which slowly descends on the back of his head as it droops upon his breast,—falls against the door, which slowly opens. The curtain should be timed to Shylock's exit."

B. From accounts of Edmund Kean :

I. iii. " Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me—"

" In his wonderful delivery of this speech Edmund Kean used to say the words ' You called me dog ' in a voice of terrible passion ; then, recovering him-

self just in time, he used to stoop with a most profound obeisance as he spoke these next words, 'And for these courtesies . . .'"

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

"Kean replaced the conventional solemn severity of manner with a tone of humour bordering on the ludicrous; it was the bitter ironical joke of a man who saw no obstacle standing between him and the consummation of his cherished purpose."

C. Irving's Shylock.

Blackwood's Magazine:

I. iii. "Why, look you, how you storm!"

"When Shylock changes from reproach to fawning in this speech, he (Irving) comes close up to Antonio and touches him on the breast with an air of familiar entreaty. Antonio recoils from him with contemptuous scorn, and Shylock bows low, while he winces at the rebuke."

Ellen Terry:

"From a blind man came the most illuminating criticism of his Shylock. The sensitive ear of the sightless hearer detected a fault in Henry Irving's method of delivering the opening line of his part—'Three thousand ducats—well!' 'I hear no sound of the usurer in that,' the blind man said at the end of the performance. 'It is said with the reflective air of a man to whom money means very little.' The justice of the criticism appealed strongly to Henry. He revised his reading not only of the first line, but of many other lines in which he saw now that he had not been enough of the money-lender."

IV. i.

"I found that Henry Irving's Shylock necessitated an entire revolution of my conception of Portia,

especially in the trial scene. . . . I had considered, and still am of the same mind, that Portia in the trial scene ought to be very *quiet*. I saw an extraordinary effect in this quietness. But as Henry's Shylock was quiet, I had to give it up. His heroic saint was splendid, but it wasn't good for Portia."

28. During the late seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century many of Shakespeare's plays were adapted to contemporary taste by various alterations and interpolations. In 1701 Granville, Lord Lansdowne, produced a version of *The Merchant of Venice*. A Prologue is spoken by the ghosts of Shakespeare and Dryden, crowned with laurel, and in the course of it Shakespeare explains :

" These scenes in their rough native dress were mine ;
But now improved with nobler lustre shine ;
The first rude sketches Shakespeare's pencil drew,
But all the shining master-strokes are new."

The following are some of the new strokes of Granville. It is interesting to read and compare them with Shakespeare's scenes :

(*a*) The interpolation of an episode in which Bassanio, Antonio, Shylock, and Gratiano drink to friendship and love, and Shylock proposes a toast to his mistress, money. A masque is then enacted.

(*b*) Portia's betrothal speech to Bassanio appears as :

" Had choice decided, and not only chance ;
As Fortune has dispos'd me, so had I.
Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours
Is now converted. But now I was the Lady
Of this fair mansion, mistress of these servants,
Queen o'er myself, even now, and in a moment
This house, these servants, and myself their queen,
Are yours, my lord, I plight 'em with this ring,
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love.

And stand, as a record, that you were false,
A follower of my fortunes, not of me,
And never meant me fair."

(*c*) The second part of Antonio's farewell to Bassanio is :

" An age of poverty, from which lingering penance
She kindly cuts me off : once more farewell :
Grieve not, my friend, that thus you lose a friend,
For I repent not thus to pay your debt
Even with my blood and life : now do your office,
Cut deep enough be sure, and whet thy knife
With keenest malice ; for I would have my heart seen by
My friend."

(*d*) Portia orders music in her garden :

" Play all our instruments of music then,
Let nothing now be heard but sounds of joy,
And let those glorious orbs that we behold,
Who in their motions, all like angels sing,
Still quiring to the blue-eyed cherubims,
Join the chorus ; that in heav'n and earth
One universal tune may celebrate
This harmony of hearts. Soft stillness, and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony."

(*e*) Bassanio concludes the play with this speech :

" The sweets of love shall here forever blow ;
I needs must love, rememb'ring what I owe ;
Love, like a meteor, shows a short-liv'd blaze,
Or treads thro' various skies a wand'ring maze,
Begot by fancy ; and by fancy led ;
Here in a moment, in a moment fled ;
But fixt by obligations, it will last ;
For gratitude's the charm that binds it fast."

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