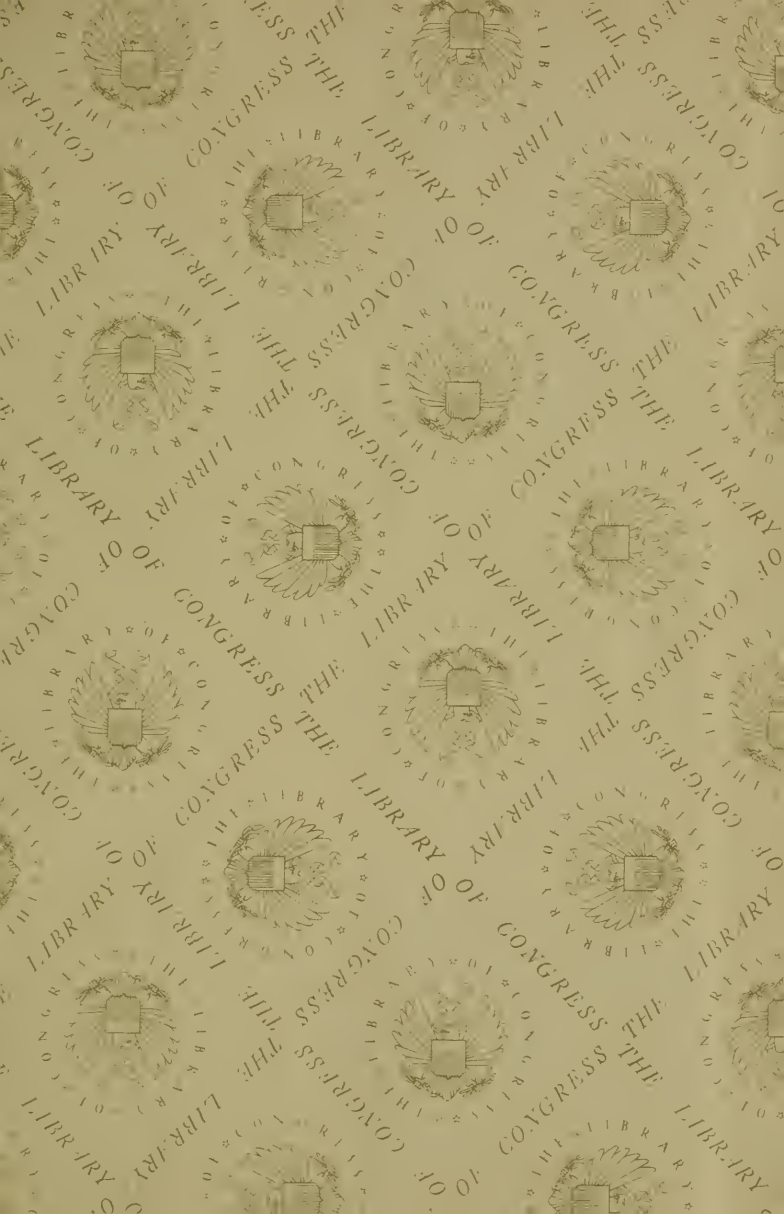


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Shakespeare
Merchant of Venice

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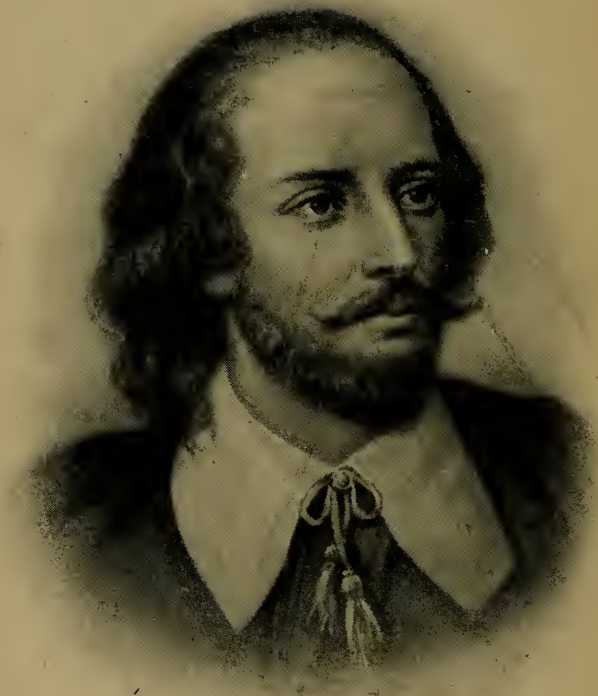
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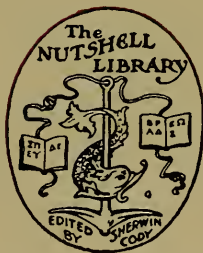
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SHAKSPERE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE



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NOTE. The text used in this edition is based on the Globe Edition of W. G. Clark and W. Aldis Wright, but alterations have been made where those estimable editors have seemed to adhere too closely to the probable misprints of the earlier editions.

For convenience in reference, the numbering of the lines in the Globe Edition has been adopted, except in the prose passages, where the numbers have been omitted.

Shakspeare.

SHAKSPERE THE BEGINNING OF MODERN LITERATURE.

Modern literature begins with Shakspeare. When Homer wrote he embodied in his work the best that had been thought and felt in the world until his time. So Virgil, Dante, and Chaucer were each the sum of the best that had preceded them. This is true of Shakspeare in still greater degree. Shakspeare gives us the best in thought and feeling to be found anywhere in the world before his time. We might almost say that when we have read him we do not need to read Homer or Virgil or Dante, for in our reading of Shakspeare we have already become familiar with their best thoughts.

From another point of view Shakspeare is the beginning of modern literature. He is the oldest writer whose work we can read in the language in which it was written. The English of four hundred years ago is antiquated; yet we can read the English of Shakspeare and understand it without the help of a translator. The work of every writer before Shakspeare is practically buried to us: we must read it through translations, or else by giving years to the study of the language in

which it is written. Such language and such literature may appropriately enough be called dead. But Shakspeare is fully alive to any one who will read him with care. In this sense, therefore, he marks the beginning of modern literature.

But even if he were not first in point of time, he would be the starting point from which we would reckon in all our study of modern literature, or any literature, because he is the greatest. To the student of modern literature, therefore, Shakspeare must always be, like Greenwich, the prime meridian, from which literary longitude is reckoned east and west, the world over.

WHAT WE KNOW OF THE MAN.

We naturally wish to know something of the man who thus stands head and shoulders above all the other men of literature in the world's history. Who was he? What was he? What did he do?

All we know of the life of Shakspeare is what has been gathered from church records, town records, account books, and very brief references to him in the works of his contemporaries. Tradition has preserved some few stories about him; but no one thought of writing his life till he had been dead many years.

BIRTH OF SHAKSPERE.

William Shakspeare was born at Stratford, on the river Avon, in Warwickshire, England. At that time it was a town of 1,400 inhabitants—in

short, a country village; but it was located in one of the most picturesque and beautiful regions imaginable, the very heart of England.

The date of his birth we do not know. The church record shows that he was christened or baptized April 26, 1564. There is a tradition that the date of his death was the date of his birth—April 23 old style, or May 3 new style.

SHAKSPERE'S PARENTS.

John, the father of William Shakspeare, was a well-to-do burgess of Stratford. He was a farmer, and he made and sold gloves. In time he rose to fill the posts of chamberlain, alderman, and high bailiff.

William's mother, Mary Arden, belonged to a family of landed gentry dating back to a time before the Conquest. Her father had died, and she brought her husband considerable property.

William was the oldest of the family, though two baby girls had died before his birth. There were a sister and two brothers younger than himself. One brother was an actor and died in 1607. The older brother and the sister outlived their famous relative.

SCHOOLING.

Shakspeare's father could not write his own name; but his son must have had some education. His fellow playwright, Ben Jonson, describes his learning as "small Latin and less Greek." There was a Free Grammar School at Stratford, in

which presumably Latin, Greek, and mathematics were taught, as well as other studies usually required in preparation for the universities. To this school John Shakspeare, now in the height of his prosperity, doubtless sent his eldest son until he was fifteen or sixteen.

PLAYERS AT STRATFORD.

It appears in the town records that during the period of Shakspeare's boyhood, say from the ages of ten to fifteen, the chamberlain of Stratford paid sums of money to "the Earl of Leicester's players," "my Lord of Warwick's players," and "the Earl of Worcester's players." During this period John Shakspeare had become chief alderman, and no doubt he, like the town of Stratford which he represented, welcomed and patronized the dramatic fraternity. Moreover, in 1575 Queen Elizabeth visited Kenilworth, which was within walking distance of Stratford, and we may well believe that Shakspeare, a boy of eleven, was taken to see the magnificent shows with which Leicester welcomed his royal mistress, whose husband he hoped to be. In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Oberon describes some of these shows with such accuracy that we cannot help supposing that the author of the play had witnessed those wonderful exhibitions at Kenilworth, the talk of England for many a year afterward.

THE FAMILY FORTUNES DECLINE.

Until 1578 John Shakspeare seems to have been a prosperous and wealthy man, but now we find him mortgaging his wife's farm; then he is not required to pay the weekly levy for the relief of the poor; his borough taxes for 1579 are entered as "unpaid and unaccounted for." Finally he sells his wife's property; but his case grows only the worse. Six years later, on a writ to seize his goods for debt, return is made that John Shakspeare has nothing in which he is "able to be distrained." He is also deprived of his office as alderman because he "doth not come to the hall, nor hath not done of long time." He was even arrested and had to sue out a writ of *habeas corpus*. Even so late as 1592 the commission appointed to investigate the conformity of the people of Warwickshire to the established religion notes the failure of John Shakspeare to appear monthly at church, and sets it down to the fear of "processe of debt." From this period his fortunes steadily improve until his death in 1601. This change in the tide of his financial affairs we may safely attribute to the success of his son as a dramatist. We may guess from this, also, that 1592 is the date which marks the beginning of Shakspeare's popularity.

SHAKSPERE'S YOUTH.

What the future dramatist did between the time at which he left school, presumably on account

of the decline of his father's fortunes, and the date of his marriage, we do not know. There is one tradition that he was apprenticed to a butcher, another that he was a country schoolmaster, and some suppose, from the accuracy of his legal allusions, that he spent some time in an attorney's office.

MARRIAGE.

All we actually know of this period is that at the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, the daughter of a yeoman, at Shottery, a hamlet near Stratford. License was granted by the bishop of Worcester in November, 1582, for a marriage upon once asking of the bans; and their first child was baptized May 26, 1583. The wife was eight years older than her husband, and the irregularities revealed by the dates suggest something more than a little wildness in the young man's character. In 1585 William Shakspeare became the father of twins, Hamnet and Judith. The son Hamnet died in 1596; the daughter is mentioned in his will.

DEER-STEALING.

We have no certain information concerning Shakspeare from the year 1585, when his twin children were born, to 1592, when the dramatist Greene alludes in bitter terms to the rising playwright, who has become his rival. Tradition has it that he was obliged to leave Stratford because of a deer-stealing escapade. According to this story, the young poet made some verses on

Sir Thomas Lucy, whose estate of Charlcoote was near Stratford and who had been irritated by the robbing of his deer-close. One verse only of the poem has this tradition preserved, but its reference to "lowsie Lucy" is sufficiently insulting to account for Sir Thomas' ire. Sir Thomas Lucy was a member of Parliament, of the Puritan party, and about this time is known to have introduced into Parliament a bill for the preservation of game. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Shakspeare makes Justice Shallow complain that Sir John Falstaff had broken open his lodge and killed his deer; moreover, there are "lucres" in the Shallow coat-of-arms. The Welsh parson misunderstands this word and says, "the dozen white louses do become an old coat well"—a bit of gentle revenge which we may imagine the successful dramatist taking in this play written especially at the request of the Queen.

GOES UP TO LONDON.

In 1587 the "Queen's Players" were at Stratford, and possibly Shakspeare went back to London with the company. There is a tradition that he began life in the great city by holding horses outside the doors of the theatres. The fact is, however, that we have no knowledge at all as to how he got his start in the dramatic world. The first record we have is the allusion made by Robert Greene in his *Greenes Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*. This was a pamphlet published immediately after Greene's

death by his executor, Henry Chettle. The playwright on his deathbed warns certain of his author friends against putting their trust in players: "Yes, trust them not:" says he; "for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *tygers heart wrapt in a players hide*, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes factotum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shakescene in a country." The words "a tygers heart wrapt in a players hide" are a parody on a line from the Third Part of *Henry VI.*,

Oh tygers heart wrapt in a woman's hide.

Shakspeare had recast this play from a preceding play entitled *The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of York*, of which Greene may himself have been the author, and from which, at any rate, Shakspeare has borrowed the line referred to.

A few months later, in December, 1592, a pamphlet entitled *Kind-Harts Dream*, by Henry Chettle, appeared. It seems that Shakspeare and Marlowe had taken offence at the references in *Greenes Groatsworth*. Replying to these Chettle says that as for one of them (Marlowe), while he reverences his learning he has nothing to answer for, and cares not ever to make his acquaintance. Then he goes on: "The other [Shakspeare] whome at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had. . . . I am as sory as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because my selfe have seene his demeanor no lesse civill, than he exelent in the qualitie he professes; be-

sides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approoves his art." ("Qualitie" was used of the actor's profession, and this is a compliment to Shakspeare as an actor. "Facetious" means felicitous, happy.)

SHAKSPEARE AT THE AGE OF 28.

A careful study of these references to Shakspeare does not, I think, warrant us in saying more than that in perhaps five years' time Shakspeare had won for himself a respectable standing as an actor, and that he had rewritten the plays of others. Greene's path is far more likely to arise from the fact that Shakspeare had remodelled one of his plays, to his loss and discredit, than that the young dramatist was proving a successful rival with original plays.

We also see that Shakspeare is a "good fellow," a gentleman, and an actor and author of parts. He has just come on to the broad stage of public life; and he is bearing himself modestly and well.

FIRST PUBLISHED POEMS.

Precisely what success, if any in particular, brought Shakspeare into notice in 1592 we cannot say. But evidently fortune's tide had turned in his favor in this year, and not only is he able to help his father out of debt, but he begins to think seriously of winning literary reputation. In 1593 *Venus and Adonis*, "the first heire of my inven-

tion," as he calls it, was published with a dedication to the Earl of Southampton. This young lord was nine years his junior; but evidently the two were excellent friends, though in the appeal of his dedication Shakspeare is very modest. In his *Lucrece*, published the following year, 1594, he speaks as if he were thoroughly confident of the Earl's friendship, which was no doubt balanced on his side by the rising reputation Shakspeare was winning. These two poems made a distinct literary success. In London the successful author who is also a gentleman by nature has always been given a social position next to the aristocracy. We may conclude, therefore, that Shakspeare had had that ample measure of literary popularity which should make his social position secure. Southampton was a generous and high-spirited young man, perhaps the model for Shakspeare's chivalrous heroes in his earlier comedies. There is a tradition that the noble earl once gave or offered the dramatist £1,000 to carry out some purchase. This is doubtless an exaggeration; but we soon find our author and actor buying land and applying in the name of his father for a coat-of-arms.

PROSPERITY.

At Christmas time, 1593, the Lord Chamberlain's company of players performed before Queen Elizabeth, and Shakspeare's name is in the list of actors. In 1596 John Shakspeare applied for a grant of coat armor, and in the following year the

grant was made by the Garter King-of-Arms. We presume from this that Shakspeare had conceived an ambition to found a family; but he was doomed to disappointment in his respect, for his only son died in the same year his father applied for the coat-of-arms.

In 1597 Shakspeare bought an excellent dwelling at Stratford, known as New Place, for the sum of £60. It is evident that he had retained his interest in his native town and was planning to return there to live at some future time. This interest in Stratford is attested by a letter dated 1598 from Master Abraham Sturley to Richard Quiney (father of Shakspeare's future son-in-law). Mr. Quiney is in London soliciting certain favors for the town of Stratford, and Mr. Sturley suggests that he will succeed through Mr. Shakspeare's social influence. Later in the year we have a letter from Quiney to Shakspeare (the only letter to the poet still in existence) begging a loan of £30. Further evidence of Shakspeare's financial prosperity would hardly be required; but we know from records that in this year he was an owner of corn and malt at Stratford, and paid taxes of £5 13s. 4d. in St. Helen's parish, Bishopsgate, London.

SUCCESS AS A DRAMATIST.

We have no specific mention of any of Shakspeare's plays until 1597. In that year *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, and *Romeo and Juliet* were printed. The following year Francis Meres in his *Palladis*

Tamia, Wit's Treasury, mentions twelve plays by Shakspeare, and refers to his "sugred sonnets among his private friends." From this time on pirated and other editions of the plays follow in rapid succession.

It is clear that the five years following 1592 had been crowded with literary work; but in those days a play was usually the property of the company which produced it, and unless it was very remarkable did not bring the author into particular notice. Shakspeare was an actor, and finally became a manager. When his ability as a writer of plays was discovered, it is not unnatural that it was frequently called into requisition by the managers of the company to which he belonged. Apparently, however, his plays did not attract particular attention outside the green-room circle until the production of *Romeo and Juliet* in the autumn of 1596. Early in the next year this play was published in quarto "as it hath been often, with great applause plaid publicly by the right Honourable the L of Hunsdon his servants." Now Henry Lord Hunsdon who was Lord Chamberlain until his death, died July 22, 1596, and his son George Lord Hunsdon was appointed Chamberlain in April, 1597. At any other time than between these two dates the players would have been spoken of as "the Lord Chamberlain's servants." The natural conclusion to be drawn, therefore, is that *Romeo and Juliet* was produced in the autumn of 1596, and had such a run that some pub-

lisher was tempted to print it. Moreover, it was doubtless this burst of popularity which called forth the reference by Meres already spoken of. In 1598 he wrote: "As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines, so Shakespeare among the English is most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for Comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Love labours lost, his Love labours wonne, his Midsummers night dreame, and his Merchant of Venice; for Tragedy, his Richard the 2, Richard the 3, Henry the 4, King John, Titus Andronicus, and his Romeo and Juliet." We can only conjecture what "Love labours wonne" refers to. Perhaps it was *All's Well that Ends Well*.

PERIOD OF HIS GREATEST PLAYS.

Romeo and Juliet and *The Merchant of Venice* were probably produced in the same year, and mark the transition from the first period of his production to the second. Such plays as *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Comedy of Errors*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* are light and graceful, but present no great or striking characters. They are full of rhymes, puns, and plays upon words. These formed the fashionable wit of the period. To us it is somewhat tame, and we see that fashions lose their flavor. In so far as Shakspeare catered to the times, his plays are things of the past. But like every successful

workman, he began by doing better than others what others about him were doing.

In the two plays mentioned above as marking his transition to something better, we find the same puns and rhymes, and *Romeo and Juliet* has traces of bombast; but we find also for the first time strong characters. Shakspeare was beginning to feel his powers, no doubt unconsciously; and the popular success was probably as great a surprise to himself as to any one else. But he at once rose to the opportunity which his unexpected success had presented and, throwing off much of the cheap wit and the cheap methods of the stage of that day, he poured himself out in a series of great and striking characters.

SECRET OF SHAKSPERE'S GREATNESS.

Shakspeare's peculiar greatness is only partially due to an inspired gift of language; for though he is a master of language in his broad grasp and power of expression, he often indulges in bombast and a cheap twittering in which we must confess there is no poetry whatever, even if it did come from the pen of the greatest of poets. Nor is his especial greatness to be found in his literary skill and felicity in plot construction. Shakspeare is so great because he has created so many great men and women. Hamlet is a great man; Portia is a great woman; Macbeth, Iago, Lear, Brutus and Cæsar, Antony and Cleopatra, all impress us with their power. It is easy to create ordinary men and women; only a truly great man can create

a great man or woman. In all literature we have no greater characters than those Shakspeare has given us, and that is why we call him the greatest of writers.

SHAKSPERE AS AN ACTOR.

Shakspeare, poet and dramatist though he was, clung to his profession through nearly the entire period of his greatest success as an author, and continued to act not only in his own plays, but in those of others. In 1598 we know that he acted in Ben Jonson's first comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*. Again in 1603 we find him in the list of actors in Jonson's *Sejanus*. *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, and other great and successful plays had already appeared; yet at the zenith of his reputation we see that he is still attending to his regular business.

In 1602 he purchased for £320 one hundred and seven acres in the parish of Old Stratford, and later in the year a smaller property. In 1605 he bought for £440 the unexpired lease of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. And there is evidence that during this entire time he was engaged in a malt business.

LATER YEARS.

It is probable that Shakspeare had some interest in the Globe theatre, and perhaps acted as manager, and subsequently derived an income from it. We presume that about 1612 he left London and went to live at Stratford. In 1613 he bought a

house near Blackfriars Theatre and leased it to a tenant for ten years. In 1614 we find him protesting against the enclosure of common lands near Stratford, declaring that "he was not able to bear the enclosure of Welcombe." March 25, 1616, he executed his will, and in less than a month he had died. The Vicar of Stratford noted fifty years later that "Shakspere, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakspere died of a fever there contracted." Whether this is myth or history it would be hard to say; but scandalous gossip, we may be certain, never grows less in fifty years.

In his will the greater part of his property was left to his eldest daughter, Susanna Hall, and her husband. To his wife he left only his "second-best bed;" a bequest by no means insulting, for she had a widow's dower rights, which must have amply provided for her without any specific bequest in the will.

His daughter Susanna had a daughter Elizabeth, who married a Mr. Nash and was Shakspere's last living descendant.

LIKENESSES OF THE POET.

Shakspere was buried in the parish church at Stratford, and a few years later a bust was erected, supposed to have been modelled from a death-mask. It was colored originally—the eyes hazel, the hair and beard auburn. On the flat

stone above his grave may be read the following inscription, said to have been written by Shakspeare himself:

“Good frend, for Jesus sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare,
Blest be the man that spares thes stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.”

The first collected edition of Shakspeare's works, published seven years after his death, has a portrait engraved by Droeshout. This engraving and the bust are the only two likenesses of which we can be certain; but there is a painting in the National Portrait Gallery in London which is generally regarded as an authentic likeness. It is the so-called Chandos portrait, and represents the poet with a full, pointed beard. It represents a more delicate and sensitive face than either the bust or the engraving, and by popular choice this has been fixed upon as the true face of Shakspeare. It is the one appearing in this volume.

WORKS.

The first collected edition of Shakspeare's works was the “Folio of 1623,” set forth by his “friends” and “fellows” John Heminge and Henry Condell. However, some of the separate plays had previously been published in quarto form, as the dates given below will indicate. The copy for many of these quartos was either stolen or obtained by reporters sent to the theatre to take down the speeches as they were delivered.

Much time and effort have been devoted by Shakspeare scholars to determining the dates of his plays. Moreover, various plays have been attributed to Shakspeare on which grave doubt has been thrown. Much of this work has doubtless been futile and the results are not to be trusted. Certain dates, however, are fixed by contemporary references, and to the ordinary mind these are quite sufficient.

The first of these dates is 1592. We are safe in supposing that previous to that time Shakspeare devoted his dramatic talents chiefly to remodelling old plays. Of these, internal evidence leads us to suppose that we have examples in *Titus Andronicus*, and *1 Henry VI.*, published 1600; again 1611; perhaps in 1594; retouched by Shakspeare before 1592.

Next we have the comedies and histories mentioned by Meres in 1598, three of which had been published in 1597. These are:

	FIRST PUBLISHED,
Love's Labour's Lost	1598
Comedy of Errors	1623
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1623
A Midsummer Night's Dream	1600
2 & 3 Henry VI.	1623
Richard II.	1597
Richard III.	1597
King John	1623
Merchant of Venice	1600
Romeo and Juliet—1597 (pirated)	1599

The last is a tragedy and marks the transition to the next period. (In the following list the dates affixed to the titles are those given by Professor Dowden for the writing of the plays):

FIRST
PUBLISHED.

HISTORY.

1 & 2 Henry IV.—1597-8	
(1st) 1598; (2nd) 1600	
Henry V.—1599	(pirated) 1600

COMEDY.

Taming of the Shrew—1597 ?	1623
Merry Wives of Windsor—1598 ?	1602
Much Ado About Nothing—1598	1600
As You Like It—1599	1623
Twelfth Night—1600-1	1623
All's Well That Ends Well— 1601-2 ?	1623
Measure for Measure—1603	1623
Troilus and Cressida—1603 ?; re- vised 1607 ?	1609

TRAGEDY.

Julius Cæsar—1601	1623
Hamlet—1602; 1603 (pirated)	1604
Othello—1604	1622
King Lear—1605	1608
Macbeth—1606	1623
Anthony and Cleopatra—1607	1623
Coriolanus—1608	1623
Timon of Athens—1607-8	1623

FIRST
PUBLISHED

ROMANCES.

Pericles—1608	1609
Cymbeline—1609	1623
The Tempest—1610	1623
A Winter's Tale—1610-11	1623

FRAGMENTS.

Two Noble Kinsmen—1612	1623
Henry VIII.—1612-13	1623

POEMS.

Venus and Adonis—1592 ?	1593
Lucrece—1593-4	1594
Sonnets—1595-1605 ?	1609

A careful study of Shakspeare's plays in the order indicated above will reveal the progress of his skill and the development of his nature and character. The first comedies are light and clever, and in form and manner not much out of the range of other comedies of the period. The histories show substantial workmanship, but with the exception of *Richard III.* no very remarkable characters.

In *Romeo and Juliet* we have the introduction of tragedy, and with it Shakspeare's greatest characters. His later comedies also show the breadth and range of his thought and feeling and his grasp of every phase of life. This was his period of thought, of passionate feeling, of greatest mental energy.

The romances are his later work. The struggles and sufferings of life passed, and success won, he seems to rise lightly and confidently above all that would drag us down. We have the view of life of a man who looks on it from the height of success. These are by no means Shakspeare's greatest plays. They have not the strength, the energy, and depth of the tragedies and comedies of the middle period. They are, however, from the artistic point of view, more nearly perfect; and they breathe the confident spirit of the man who has succeeded and has the right to speak from the point of view of success.

ORIGINALITY.

Though we may boldly say that Shakspeare is the one great original English writer, yet he borrowed his plots, and even many of his phrases, from other writers. He freely used the worthless plays of those who had gone before him, and there is scarcely a plot that was not derived from some romance or history accessible to him in English. Yet in none of these do we find the character of Hamlet or Portia or Iago or Lear. In giving us these he gave us what no one else could give.

SHERWIN CODY.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE DUKE OF VENICE.

THE PRINCE OF MOROCCO, }
THE PRINCE OF ARRAGON, } suitors to Portia.

ANTONIO, a merchant of Venice.

BASSANIO, his friend, suitor likewise to Portia.

SALANIO,

SALARINO, }
GRATIANO, } friends to Antonio and Bassanio.

SALERIO,

LORENZO, in love with Jessica.

SHYLOCK, a rich Jew.

TUBAL, a Jew, his friend.

LAUNCELOT GOBBO, the clown, servant to Shylock.

OLD GOBBO, father to Launcelot.

LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio.

BALTHASAR, }
STEPHANO, } servants to Portia.

PORTIA, a rich heiress.

NERISSA, her waiting-maid.

JESSICA, daughter to Shylock.

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

SCENE: *Partly at Venice, and partly at Belmont, the
seat of Portia, on the Continent.*

The Merchant of Venice.*

ACT I.

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 of the flood, 10
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,

* The incidents of the caskets and the pound of flesh are found in medieval Italian, Persian and Egyptian romances, and had doubtless been used in English ballads and dramas before Shakspeare's time. In a pamphlet published in 1579 Stephen Gosson mentions a certain play as "The Jew, shown at the Bull, representing the greed of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers." It is not unlikely that this was the basis of Shakspeare's play.

† Antonio, the merchant, after whom the play is named, does not have a leading role in it; but though he himself does nothing, he is the centre about which the events of the play move, the object of the love or hatred or anxiety and ingenuity of the other actors. Therefore the play is properly named for him rather than for Shylock, the strongest character.

‡ *Large ships.*

Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Salan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports and piers and roads*;
And every object that might make me fear 20
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, 30
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

* *Roadsteads.*

† *Letting fall.* The ship tipped on its side in the sand has its high-top lower than its ribs.

‡ Understand a gesture here, indicating something large.

Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

40

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

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant. Fie, fie!

Salar. Not in love neither*? Then let us say you are
sad,

Because you are not merry; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed
Janus†, 50

Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh like parrots at a bag-piper,
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

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. 61

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.

* Double negatives were grammatical in Shakspeare's time.

† Janus had a face in front and one behind. (January was named
for him.) ‡ *Anticipated.*

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say,
when?

You grow exceeding strange: must it be so?

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

[*Exeunt Salarino and Salanio.*

Lor. My Lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you: but at dinner-time, 70
I pray you, have in mind where we must meet.

Bass. I will not fail you.

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

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

Gra. Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come, 80
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, 90
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion

* *Concern.*

† Antonio's sadness seems to presage his disaster in forfeiting the pound of flesh.

Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit,
 As who should say 'I am Sir Oracle,
 And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!
 O my Antonio, I do know of these
 That therefore only are reputed wise
 For saying nothing, when, I am very sure,
 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
 Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
 I'll tell thee more of this another time: 100
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
 For this fool gudgeon*, this opinion.
 Come, good Lorenzo. Fare ye well awhile;
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

Ant. Farewell: I'll grow a talker for this gear.‡ 110

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

[*Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.*]

Ant. Is that 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, 120

* The gudgeon was a fish easily caught.

† *More.* ‡ Any business in hand.

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.

130

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

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft, 140
 I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
 The self-same way with more advised watch,
 To find the other forth, and by adventuring both
 I oft found both; I urge this childhood proof,
 Because what follows is pure innocence.
 I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
 That which I owe is lost; but if you please
 To shoot another arrow that self† way
 Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
 As I will watch the aim, or to find both
 Or bring your latter hazard back again

150

* *Engaged, pledged.* † *Self-same, same.*

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. 160

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left;
And she is fair and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues: sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia, nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth,
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors, and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece; 170
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: 180
That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.

* *Prompt, ready.* † *As one of them.*

Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust or for my sake. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *Belmont. A Room in Portia's House.*

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

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

Ner. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no small happiness, therefore, 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 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.

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

Ner. Then 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 Neapoli-

* *Of, in reference to.*

tan'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 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

* An old form for *if*. Compare the common phrase "without any *ifs* or *ans*." So, too, *An if*.

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 any thing, 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 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.

* The present distinction between *should* and *would* was not made in Shakspeare's time.

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.*

SCENE III. *A Public Place.*

Enter Bassanio and Shylock†.

Shy. Three thousand ducats‡; well.

Bass. Ay, sir, for three months.

Shy. For three months; well.

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

Shy. Antonio shall become bound; well.

* *Temper, disposition.*

† Shylock is without doubt the strongest character in any of Shakspeare's comedies, and this was evidently a temptation to name the play after him, for it was originally entered at Stationers' Hall as "*The Merchant of Venice, or otherwise called The Jew of Venice.*"

‡ A ducat was equal to \$1.53, but the value of money was six times what it is now.

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

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?

* *Aid.*

† Referring to the swine that ran into the Sea of Galilee.

Enter Antonio.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio. 41

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, 50
 On me, my bargains and my well-won thrift,
 Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe
 If I forgive him!

Bass. Shylock, do you hear?

Shy. I am debating of my present store,
 And, by the near guess of my memory,
 I cannot instantly raise up the gross
 Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
 Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
 Will furnish me. But soft! how many months
 Do you desire? [*To Ant.*] Rest you fair, good
 signior; 60

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 possessed
 How much we 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 70
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, the ewes, being rank,
In the end of autumn turned to the rams,
And, when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act,
The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
He stuck them up before the fulsome ewes,
Who then conceiving did in eaning time
Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest: 90
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;

* *Agreed.* † *New-born lambs.* ‡ That is, *in Scripture.*

But note me, signior.

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness 100
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a godly outside falsehood hath!

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

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

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
In the Rialto you have rated me
About my moneys and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug, 110
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine*,
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to, then; you come to me, and you say
'Shylock, we would have moneys:' you say so;
You, that did void your rheum† upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit. 120
What should I say to you? Should I not say
'Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondman's key,
With bated breath and whispering humbleness,

* *Long outer garment.*

† The discharge from eyes, nose, or mouth.

Say this :

'Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last* ;
 You spurn'd me such a day ; another time
 You called me dog ; and for these courtesies
 I'll lend you thus much moneys' ?

130

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
 To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
 If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
 As to thy friends ; for when did friendship take
 A breed for barren metal of his friend ?
 But lend it rather to thine enemy,
 Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
 Exact the penalty.

Shy. Why, look you, how you storm !
 I would be friends with you and have your love,
 Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
 Supply your present wants and take no doit † 141
 Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me :
 This is kind I offer.

Bass. This were kindness.

Shy. This kindness will I show.
 Go with me to a notary, seal me there
 Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,
 If you repay me not on such a day,
 In such a place, such sum or sums as are
 Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
 Be nominated for an equal pound 150
 Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken

* We should doubtless take this figuratively, for Antonio is much too much of a gentleman to do anything so vulgar ; and if he had done it he would not have allowed Bassanio to ask the Jew for money. The two are enemies, but not beyond the bounds of social intercourse.

† A small Dutch coin worth less than a cent.

In what part of your body pleaseth me.

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

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

Ant. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it;
Within these two months, that's a month before
This bond expires, I do expect return 160
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

Shy. O father Abram, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?

A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttens, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour, I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu; 170
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. 180

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

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *Belmont. A Room in Portia's House.*

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco and his train; Portia, Nerissa, and others attending.

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 10
 Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
 Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
 By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
 Besides, the lottery of my destiny
 Bars me the right of voluntary choosing:
 But if my father had not scanted me
 And hedged me by his will, to yield myself
 His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
 Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair 20
 As any comer I have look'd on yet
 For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you:

* *Frightened.*

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, 30
 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 40
 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.*]

* Persian emperor. Ismael Sophi founded a dynasty.

† Lichas was the page of Hercules. Hercules was also called Alcides.

SCENE II*. *Venice. A street.**Enter Launcelot.*

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow 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 afore-said, 'honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run; scorn running with thy heels.' Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack: 'Via!' says the fiend; 'away!' says the fiend; 'for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind,' says the fiend, 'and run.' Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, 'My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,' or rather an honest woman's son; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste; well, my conscience says 'Launcelot, budge not.' 'Budge,' says the fiend. 'Budge not,' says my conscience. 'Conscience,' say I, 'you counsel well;' 'Fiend,' say I, 'you counsel well:' to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who, God bless the mark, is a kind of devil; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence, is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnal; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard con-

* Much of the humor of this scene is in the ignorant misuse of words.

science, 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?

* *Purblind, dim-sighted.* † *Corruption of saints or sanctity.*

‡ *Well off.* Gobbo contradicts himself.

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.

* Old men were often addressed as *father*.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. [*Taking hold of his back hair.*] Lord worshipped* might he be! what a beard thou hast 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 Leonardo and other followers.

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

[*Exit a Servant.*]

Laun. To him, father.

* This phrase, not used elsewhere, has never been satisfactorily explained. † *Immediately.*

Gob. God bless your worship!

Bass. Gramercy! wouldst thou aught with me!

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy,—

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

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

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 rever-
ence, 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.

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 trifl. 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.

* *Ornamented.* *Guards* were trimmings.

† He means his hand. *Launcelot* is a palmist.

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; 190
Parts that become thee happily enough
And in such eyes as ours appear not faults;
But where thou art not known, why, there they
show

Something too liberal. Pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty
Thy skipping spirit, lest through thy wild behaviour
I be misconstrued in the place I go to
And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me:
If I do not put on a sober habit, 199
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 210
Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
That purpose merriment. But fare you well:
I have some business.

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

SCENE III. *The same. A room in Shylock's house.*

Enter Jessica and Launcelot.

Jes. I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so:
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
But fare thee well, there is a ducat for thee:
And, Launcelot, soon at supper shalt thou see
Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest:
Give him this letter; do it secretly;
And so farewell: I would not have my father
See me in talk with thee. 9

Laun. Adieu! tears exhibit my tongue. Most beautiful pagan, most sweet Jew! if a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu: these foolish drops do 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, 20
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?

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

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. 2I

Go. [*Exit Launcelot.*] 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 Salar. and Salan.]

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, 3I

What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with,
 What page's suit she hath in readiness.
 If e'er the Jew her father come to heaven,
 It will be for his gentle daughter's sake:
 And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
 Unless she do it under this excuse,
 That she is issue to a faithless Jew.
 Come, go with me; peruse this as thou goest:
 Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. *The same. Before Shylock's house.*

Enter Shylock and Launcelot.

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

Laun. Why, Jessica!

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

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

Enter Jessica.

Jes. Call you? what is your will? 10

Shy. I am bid forth to supper*, Jessica:
 There are my keys. But wherefore should I go?
 I am not bid for love; they flatter me:
 But yet I'll go in hate, to feed upon
 The prodigal Christian. Jessica, my girl,

* Did Shakspeare forget that the Jew had previously asserted he would not eat with Christians?

Look to my house. I am right loath to go:
 There is some ill a-brewing towards my rest,
 For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

Laun. I beseech you, sir, go: my young master doth
 expect your reproach. 20

Shy. So do I his.

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

Shy. What, are there masques? Hear you me,
 Jessica:

Lock up my doors; and when you hear the drum
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife, 30
 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; 41

There will come a Christian by,
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye. [*Exeunt.*]

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

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

* Easter-Monday, so called from a terribly dark, cold Easter-Monday in the siege of Paris by Edward III.

- 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 50
 His borrow'd purse. Well, Jessica, go in:
 Perhaps I will return immediately:
 Do as I bid you; shut doors after you:
 Fast bind, fast find;
 A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. [Exit.
- Jes.* Farewell; and if my fortune be not crost,
 I have a father, you a daughter, lost. [Exit.

SCENE VI. *The same.*

Enter Gratiano and Salarino, masqued.

- Gra.* This is the pent-house* under which Lorenzo
 Desired us to make stand.
- Salar.* His hour is almost past.
- Gra.* And it is marvel he out-dwells his hour,
 For lovers ever run before the clock.
- Salar.* O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly
 To seal love's bonds new-made, than they are wont
 To keep obliged faith unforfeited.
- Gra.* That ever holds: who riseth from a feast
 With that keen appetite that he sits down?
 Where is the horse that doth untread again 10
 His tedious measures with the unbated fire
 That he did pace them first? All things that are,
 Are with more spirit chased than enjoy'd.
 How like a younker or a prodigal

* A porch.

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! 19
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?

Enter Jessica, above, in boy's clothes.

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

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

Jes. Lorenzo, certain, and my love indeed,
 For who love I so much? And now who knows
 But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours? 31

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. 40

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 closet† 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. 50

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

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

Enter Jessica, below.

What, art thou come? On, gentlemen; away!
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.
[Exit with Jessica and Salarino.

Enter Antonio.

Ant. Who's there? 60

Gra. Signior Antonio!

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

* Dress. † Secret.

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 the Prince of Morocco, and their trains.

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

Mor. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;'

The second, silver, which this promise carries,
'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;'

This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'

How shall I know if I do choose the right? 10

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

Mor. Some god direct my 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; 20

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 de-
 serves.'

As much as he deserves! Pause there, Morocco,
 And weigh thy value with an even hand:
 If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
 Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
 May not extend so far as to the lady:
 And yet to be afraid of my deserving
 Were but a weak disabling of myself. 30

As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
 I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
 In graces and in qualities of breeding;
 But more than these, in love I do deserve.
 What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
 Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
 'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men de-
 sire.'

Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her;
 From the four corners of the earth they come,
 To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint: 40
 The Hyrcanian deserts and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
 For princes to come view fair Portia:
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
 To stop the foreign spirits, but they come,
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.

One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
 To think so base a thought: it were too gross 50

To rib her cerecloth* in the obscure grave.
 Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
 O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
 Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
 A coin that bears the figure of an angel
 Stamp'd in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within. Deliver me the key:
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may! 60

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

Mor. O hell! what have we here?

A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
 There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.

[*Reads*] All that glisters is not gold;

Often have you heard that told;

Many a man his life hath sold

But my outside to behold:

Gilded tombs do worms infold.

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.*]

Por. A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.

Let all of his complexion choose me so. [*Exeunt.*]

* *Grave-clothes.* Lead was too base even for her coffin.

SCENE VIII. *Venice. A street.**Enter Salarino and Salanio.*

Salar. Why, man, I saw Bassanio under sail :

With him is Gratiano gone along ;

And in their ship I am sure Lorenzo is not.

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

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail :

But there the Duke was given to understand

That in a gondola were seen together

Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica :

Besides, Antonio certified the Duke

They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

10

Salan. I never heard a passion so confused,

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.'

21

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,

Crying, his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Salan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,

Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.

I reason'd with a Frenchman yesterday,

Who told me, in the narrow seas that part

The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught: 30
I thought upon Antonio when he told me;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

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

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so;
Slubber* not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time; 40
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love:
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there:'
And even then, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible
He wrung Bassanio's hand; and so they parted.

Salan. I think he only loves the world for him. 50
I pray thee, let us go and find him out
And quicken his embraced heaviness
With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [Exeunt.

* Do carelessly.

SCENE IX. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

Enter Nerissa with 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 the Prince of Arragon, Portia, and their trains.

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

Ar. I am enjoin'd by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one 10
Which casket '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. 20
'Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.'
You shall look fairer ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:
'Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.'
What many men desire! that 'many' may be meant

* *Prepared myself.*

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. 30

I will not choose what many men desire,
 Because I will not jump† with common spirits
 And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
 Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
 Tell me once more what title thou dost bear;
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 And well said too; for who shall go about
 To cozen fortune and be honourable
 Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
 To wear an undeserved dignity. 40

O, that estates, degrees and offices
 Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honour
 Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
 How many then should cover‡ that stand bare!
 How many be commanded that command!
 How much low peasantry would then be glean'd
 From the true seed of honour! and how much honour
 Pick'd from the chaff and ruin of the times
 To be new-varnish'd! Well, but to my choice:
 'Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.'
 I will assume desert. Give me a key for this, 51
 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.

* *Of.* † *Agree.* ‡ *Keep their hats on.*

How much unlike art thou to Portia!

How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

'Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.'

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

Is that my prize? are my deserts no better? 60

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices

And of opposed natures*.

Ar. What is here?

[*Reads*] The fire seven times tried this:

Seven times tried that 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†, 70

I will ever be your head‡:

So be gone: you are sped.

Still more fool I shall appear

By the time I linger here;

With one fool's head I came to woo,

But I go away with two.

Sweet, adieu. I'll keep my oath,

Patiently to bear my wrath.

[*Exeunt Arragon and train.*]

Par. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose, 80

They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

* A man is not competent to judge his own deserts.

† Did Shakspeare forget that Arragon had sworn never to woo a maid? Morocco made a similar promise.

‡ *You shall ever have a fool's head.*

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

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here: what would my lord?

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate
A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify the approaching of his lord;
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets†,
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath, 90
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love;
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee: I am half afraid
Thou wilt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day wit in praising him.
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly. 100

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

* *Go* would be more grammatical

† *Hearty greetings.*

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 carcasses of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of her word.*Salan.* I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapped† ginger or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband. But it is true, without any slips of prolixity or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,— O that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—*Salar.* Come, the full stop.*Salan.* Ha! what sayest thou? Why, the end is, he hath lost a ship.*Salar.* I would it might prove the end of his losses.*Salan.* Let me say 'amen' betimes, lest the Devil cross my prayer, for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.*Enter Shylock.*

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

* Off the coast of Kent. † *Nibbled.*

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

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

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

Shy. She is damned for it.

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

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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

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

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 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 ene-

* *Disposition.*

mies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.

Enter a Servant.

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

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

Enter Tubal.

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

[*Exeunt Salan., Salar., and Servant.*

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

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

Shy. Why, there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The

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

Por. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
 Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
 I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
 There's something tells me, but it is not love,
 I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
 Hate counsels not in such a quality.
 But lest you should not understand me well,—
 And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—
 I would detain you here some month or two
 Before you venture for me. I could teach you 10
 How to choose right, but I am then forsworn;
 So will I never be: so may you miss me;
 But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
 That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,

They have o'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, 20
 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.

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 30
 '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 : 40
 If you do love me, you will find me out.
 Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof.
 Let music sound while he doth make his choice ;

* *Retard.*

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 50
 As are those dulcet* sounds in break of day
 That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear
 And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
 With no less presence, but with much more love,
 Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
 The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
 To the sea-monster: I stand for sacrifice;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With bleared visages, come forth to view
 The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules! 60
 Live thou, I live: with much, much more dismay
 I view the fight than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself.

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,
 Or in the heart or in the head?
 How begot, how nourished?

Reply.]

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; 70
 I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

* *Sweet.*

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves ;
 The world is still deceiv'd with ornament.
 In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
 But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
 Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
 What damned error, but some sober brow
 Will bless it and approve it with a text,
 Hiding the grossness with fair ornament? 80
 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,
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight ;
 Which therein works a miracle in nature, 90
 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 100
 To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee ;
 Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
 'Tween man and man : but thou, thou meagre lead,

* *Beguiling, treacherous.* † The text here is doubtful.

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-embrac'd despair,
 And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy! 110
 O love,
 Be moderate; allay thy ecstasy;
 In measure rein thy joy; scant this excess.
 I feel too much thy blessing: make it less,
 For fear I surfeit.

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 120

The painter plays the spider and hath woven
 A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
 Faster than gnats in cobwebs; but her eyes,—
 How could he see to do them? having made one,
 Methinks it should have power to steal both his
 And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprising it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
 The continent* and summary of my fortune. 131

* *Likeness.*

[*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;

[*kissing her.*]

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 see be true,
 Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand, 150
 Such as I am: though for myself alone
 I would not be ambitious in my wish,
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you
 I would be trebled twenty times myself;
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times
 More rich;
 That only to stand high in your account,
 I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
 Exceed account; but the full sum of me
 Is sum of—something; which, to term in gross,
 Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised; 161
 Happy in this, she is not yet so old

* That which contains.

*But she may learn; happier in this,
 She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
 Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed;
 As from her lord, her governor, her king.
 Myself and what is mine to you and yours
 Is now converted: but now I was the lord
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants, 170
 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 180
 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! 190

Gra. My lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
 I wish you all the joy that you can wish;

* The reading here adopted is the one that seems best to suit the beauty of the passage in the modern ear.

For I am sure you can wish none from me*:
 And when your honours mean to solemnize
 The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
 Even at that time I may be married too.

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

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
 You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid; 200
 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

Achiev'd her mistress.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa? 210

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

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

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

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

Gra. We'll play with them the first boy for a thousand ducats.

Ner. What, and stake down?

Gra. No; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down. 220

But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?

What, and my old Venetian friend Salerio?

* *Begrudge me any.*

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; 230
But meeting with Salerio by the way,
He did intreat me, past all saying nay,
To come with him along.

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

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

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

Gra. Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome. 240
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.

* Some conjecture this is Salanio. There is evidently some confusion between the three friends of Antonio, *Salarino*, *Salanio* and *Salerio*, for in the old editions all the names are spelled in a variety of ways.

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! 250
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,
And I must 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
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, 271

* *Sharp, hence painful.*

† Bassanio is not a strong character in the play. but he is certainly a thorough gentleman. ‡ *Estate.* ‡‡ *Absolute.*

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 280
 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, 290
 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.

* Importance. † Malicious. ‡ Best-tempered.

Por. What, no more? 310

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,
 Before a friend of this description
 Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.
 First go with me to church and call me wife,
 And then away to Venice to your friend;
 For never shall you lie by Portia's side
 With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over:
 When it is paid, bring your true friend along. 310
 My maid Nerissa and myself meantime
 Will live as maids and widows. Come, away!
 For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
 Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer;
 Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
 But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [*Reads*] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all mis-
 carried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very
 low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since in pay-
 ing 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!

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.*

* A grammatical error. *Between you and me.*

SCENE III. *Venice. A street.*

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio and Gaoler.

Shy. Gaoler, look to him; tell not me of mercy;
This is the fool that lent out money gratis:
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. 10

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

Shy. I'll have my bond; I will not hear thee speak:
I'll have my bond; and therefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-eyed fool,
To shake the head, relent, and sigh, and yield
To Christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond. [*Exit.*

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

Ant. Let him alone:
I'll follow him no more with bootless prayers. 20
He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me.

Salar. I am sure the Duke
Will never grant this forfeiture to hold.

* *Foolish.*

Ant. The Duke cannot deny the course of law:
 For the commodity* that strangers† have
 With us in Venice, if it be denied,
 Will much impeach the justice of his state;
 Since that the trade and profit of the city, 30
 Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
 These griefs and losses have so bated me,
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor.
 Well, gaoler, on. Pray God, Bassanio come
 To see me pay his debt, and then I care not!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV. *Belmont. A room in Portia's house.*

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

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

Por. I never did repent for doing good, 10
 Nor shall not now: for in companions
 That do converse and waste the time together,
 Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
 There must be needs a like proportion

* *Because of the interest, or intercourse.*

† Antonio was a citizen, but Shylock was an alien in the eyes of the law. ‡ *Conception.*

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 20
 From out the state of hellish misery!
 This comes too near the praising of myself ;
 Therefore no more of it : hear other things.
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry and manage of my house
 Until my lord's return : for mine own part,
 I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow
 To live in prayer and contemplation,
 Only attended by Nerissa here,
 Until her husband and my lord's return : 30
 There is a monastery two miles off ;
 And there will we abide. I do desire you
 Not to deny this imposition ;
 The which my love and some necessity
 Now lays upon you.

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

Por. My people do already know my mind,
 And will acknowledge you and Jessica
 In place of Lord Bassanio and myself.
 And so farewell, till we shall meet again. 40

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !

Jes. I wish your ladyship all heart's content.

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

[Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.

Now, Balthasar,
 As I have ever found thee honest-true,
 So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
 And use thou all the endeavour of a man
 In speed to Padua: see thou render this
 Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario; 50
 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, 60
 That they shall think we are accomplished
 With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
 When we are both accoutred like young men,
 I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
 And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
 And speak between the change of man and boy
 With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
 Into a manly stride, and speak of frays
 Like a fine bragging youth, and tell quaint† lies,
 How honourable ladies sought my love, 70
 Which I denying, they fell sick and died;
 I could not do withal‡; then I'll repent,
 And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them;

* A doubtful word. † *Ingenious.* ‡ *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.

Ner. Why, shall we turn to men?

Por. Fie, what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter! 80
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 and Jessica.

Laun. Yes, truly; for, look you, the sins of the father
are to be laid upon the children; therefore, I prom-
ise ye, I fear you. I was always plain with you, and
so now I speak my agitation of the matter: there-
fore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are
damned. There is but one hope in it that can do
you any good; and that is but a kind of bastard hope
neither.

Jes. And what hope is that, I pray thee?

Laun. Marry, you may partly hope that your father
got you not; that you are not the Jew's daughter.

Jes. That were a kind of bastard hope, indeed: so the
sins of my mother should be visited upon me.

Laun. Truly then I fear you are damned both by
father and mother: thus when I shun Scylla, your

father, I fall into Charybdis, your mother: well, you are gone both ways.

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

Laun. Truly, the more to blame he; we were Christians enow before; e'en as many as could well live, one by another. This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs; if we grow all to be pork-eaters, we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

Enter Lorenzo.

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

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

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

Lor. I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Launcelot.

Laun. It is much that the Moor should be more than reason; but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for.

Lor. How every fool can play upon the word! I think the best grace of wit will shortly turn into silence, and discourse grow commendable in none only but parrots. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

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

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

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

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

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

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

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! 70
The fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter. 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, 80
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

* Some read, *he do not merit it*. The passage is hopelessly corrupt

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. 90

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, howso'er thou speak'st, 'mong other things
I shall digest it.

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

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *Venice. A court of justice.*

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

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

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

Ant. I have heard
Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify*
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose 10
My patience to his fury, and am arm'd
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

Duke. Go one, and call the Jew into the court.

Saler. He is ready at the door: he comes, my lord.

Enter Shylock.

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face.
Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse† more strange

* *Moderate.* † *Pity*

Than is thy strange apparent cruelty ; 21
 And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
 Thou wilt not only lose the forfeiture,
 But, touch'd with human gentleness and love,
 Forgive a moiety* of the principal ;
 Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
 That have of late so huddled on his back,
 Enow to press a royal merchant down
 And pluck commiseration of his state 30
 From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
 From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train'd
 To offices of tender courtesy.
 We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possess'd† your grace of what I purpose ;
 And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
 To have the due and forfeit of my bond :
 If you deny it, let the danger light
 Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
 You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have 40
 A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
 Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that :
 But, say, it is my humour: is it answer'd?
 What if my house be troubled with a rat
 And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
 To have it baned‡? What, are you answer'd yet?
 Some men there are love not a gaping pig ;
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat ;
 And others, when the bagpipe sings i' the nose,
 Cannot contain their urine ; for affection‡‡, 50

* *Half*, or used of any portion. † *Informed*.

‡ *Killed with ratsbane*.

‡‡ *The state of being affected or moved*

Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer :
 As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
 Why he cannot abide a gaping pig ;
 Why he, a harmless necessary cat ;
 Why he, a wauling* 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. 60
 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: 70
 You may as well go stand upon the beach
 And bid the main flood† bate his usual height ;
 You may as well use question with the wolf
 Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb ;
 You may as well forbid the mountain pines
 To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
 When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven ;
 You may as well do anything most hard,
 As seek to soften that—than which what's harder?—
 His Jewish heart: therefore, I do beseech you, 80

* The old editions read *woollen*. † *Ocean tide*.

Make no more offers, use no farther means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency

Let me have judgment and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats

Were in six parts and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

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

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?

You have among you many a purchas'd slave, 90

Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules,

You use in abject and in slavish parts,

Because you bought them: shall I say to you,

Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?

Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds

Be made as soft as yours and let their palates

Be season'd with such viands? You will answer

'The slaves are ours:' so do I answer you:

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,

Is dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it. 100

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.

Saler. My lord, here stays without

A messenger with letters from the doctor,

New come from Padua.

Duke. Bring us the letters; call the messenger. 110

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

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

Enter Nerissa, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

Ner. From both, my lord. Bellario greets your grace.

[Presenting a letter. 120

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeit 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, inexorable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused.

Thou almost makest me waver in my faith. 130

To hold opinion with Pythagoras,

That souls of animals infuse themselves

Into the trunks of men; thy currish spirit

Govern'd a wolf, who, hang'd for human slaughter,

Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,

Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

Are wolfish, bloody, starved and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,

Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak so loud: 140

Repair thy wit, good youth, or it will fall
To cureless ruin. I stand here for law.

Duke. This letter from Bellario doth commend
A young and learned doctor to our court.
Where is he?

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

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

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

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

Enter Portia, dressed like a doctor of laws.

Give me your hand. Come you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place. 170

Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed throughly* of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow;

Yet in such rule that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

You stand within his danger, do you not? 180

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power, 190
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;

* *Thoroughly.* *Thorough* and *through* were originally the same word.

It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,
That, in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy; 200
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice, 210
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority:
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established:
'Twill be recorded for a precedent, 220
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the state; it cannot be.

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

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

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

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

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

Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

No, not for Venice!

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit; 230

And lawfully by this the Jew may claim

A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off

Nearest the merchant's heart. Be merciful:

Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenour.

It doth appear you are a worthy judge;

You know the law, your exposition

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

Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,

Proceed to judgment: by my soul I swear 240

There is no power in the tongue of man

To alter me: I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court

To give the judgment.

Por. Why then, thus it is:

You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

Por. For the intent and purpose of the law

Hath full relation to the penalty,

Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true: O wise and upright judge! 250

How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

Shy. Ay, his breast:

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

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

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

Shy. I have them ready.

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

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

Por. It is not so express'd: but what of that? 260
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

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

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

Ant. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.

Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!

Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you:

For herein fortune shows herself more kind

Than is her custom: it is still her use

To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,

To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow 270

An age of poverty; from which lingering penance

Of such misery doth she cut me off.

Commend me to your honourable wife:

Tell her the process of Antonio's end;

Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death;

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

Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

Repent but you that you shall lose your friend,

And he repents not that he pays your debt;

For if the Jew do cut but deep enough, 280

I'll pay it presently 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,

* *Who.* Compare *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

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: 290

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. These be the Christian husbands. I have a
daughter ;

Would any of the stock of Barrabas

Had been her husband rather than a Christian !

[*Aside.*

We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine :

The court awards it, and the law doth give it. 300

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 311

Unto the state of Venice.

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

Shy. Is that the law ?

- Por.* Thyself shall 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! 320
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 cut'st more
Or less than a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple, nay, if the scale do turn 330
But in the estimation of a hair,
Thou diest and all thy goods are confiscate.
- Gra.* A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have you on the hip.
- Por.* Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.
- 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! 340
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.
- Shy.* Shall I not have barely my principal?

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 350
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 360
Of the defendant; and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formally 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; 370
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.

Ant. So please my lord the duke and all the court 380

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. 390

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. 400

[*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,

* That is, twelve jurymen to condemn him to death. An ancient joke.

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,

410

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.

420

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!

430

I will not shame myself to give you this.

Por. I will have nothing else but only this;

And now methinks I have a mind to it.

Bass. There's more depends on this than on the value.
The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
And find it out by proclamation:

Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.

Por. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers:

You taught me first to beg; and now methinks
You teach me how a beggar should be answer'd.

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

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if your wife be not a mad-woman,
And know how well I have deserved the ring,
She would not hold out enemy for ever,
For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you!

[*Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.*]

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:

Let his deservings and my love withal 450

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.*]

* Pronounced with four syllables.

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:
His ring I do accept most thankfully:
And so, I pray you, tell him: furthermore, 10
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 forever.

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.*]

* A slang word used as we might *huge*.

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 10
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 Æsor.

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

Jes. In such a night
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well,

* *Saw the lion's shadow before the lion himself.*

Stealing her soul with many vows of faith
And ne'er a true one.

Lor. In such a night 20

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

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

Enter Stephano.

Lor. Who comes so fast in the 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 30
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.

Lor. Who comes with her?

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

Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.

But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter Launcelot.

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

Lor. Who calls? 40

Laun. Sola! did you see Master Lorenzo?

Master Lorenzo, sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! where? where?

Lor. Here.

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

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in? 50
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air.

[Exit Stephano.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines* of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings, 61
Still quiring† to the young-eyed cherubins;
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

Enter Musicians.

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

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

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive: 70
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,

* Small gold or silver-gilt plates used in the Eucharist.

† *Singing like a choir.*

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark
When neither is attended, and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought
No better a musician than the wren.
How many things by season season'd are
To their right praise and true perfection!
Peace, ho! the moon sleeps with Endymion
And would not be awaked. *[Music ceases.]*

Lor. That is the voice, 110
Or I am much deceiv'd, of Portia.

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

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

Por. We have been praying for our husbands' 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; 120
Nor you, Lorenzo; Jessica, nor you.
[A tucket sounds.]*

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

Por. This night methinks is but the daylight sick;
It looks a little paler: 'tis a day,
Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

* A peculiar series of notes on a trumpet.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their followers.

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

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light;
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband, 130
And never be Bassanio so for me:

But God sort all! You are welcome home, my lord.

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

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

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

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words, 140
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 gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

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

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me, whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife, 'Love me, and leave me not.' 150

Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death
And that it should lie with you in your grave:

Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective* and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

Ner. Ay, if a woman live to be a man. 160

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk,
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, I must be plain with you,
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger
And so riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring and made him swear 170
Never to part with it; and here he stands;
I dare be sworn for him he would not leave it
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratiano,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief:
An 'twere to me, I should be mad at it.

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

Gra. My Lord Bassanio gave his ring away
Unto the judge that begg'd it and indeed 180
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,
That took some pains in writing, he begg'd mine;
And neither man nor master would take aught
But the two rings.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?

* *Considerate.*

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 ne'er come in your bed 190

Until I see the ring.

Ner. Nor I in yours

Till I again see mine.

Bass. Sweet Portia,

If you did know to whom I gave the ring,

If you did know for whom I gave the ring

And would conceive for what I gave the ring

And how unwillingly I left the ring,

When nought would be accepted but the ring,

You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring, 200

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, 210

Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me

And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him

And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away;

Even he that did uphold the very life

Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night, 220
Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house:
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you;
I'll not deny him any thing I have,
No, not my body nor my husband's bed:
Know him I shall, I am well sure of it:
Lie not a night from home; watch me like Argus:
If you do not, if I be left alone,
Now, by mine honour, which is yet mine own,
I'll have that doctor for my bedfellow.

Ner. And I his clerk; therefore be well advised
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

Gra. Well, do you so: let not me take him, then;
For if I do, I'll mar the young clerk's pen.

Ant. I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

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

Bass. Portia, forgive me this enforced wrong; 240
And, in the hearing of these many friends,
I swear to thee, even by thine own fair eyes,
Wherein I see myself—

Por. Mark you but that!
In both my eyes he doubly sees himself;

In each eye, one: swear by your double self,
And there's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me:

Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth;
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried: I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.

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

Ant. Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

Bass. By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

Por. I had it of him: pardon me, Bassanio;

For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

Ner. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano; 260

For that same scrubbed boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this last night did lie with me.

Gra. Why, this is like the mending of highways
In summer, where the ways are fair enough:
What, are we cuckolds ere we have deserved it?

Por. Speak not so grossly. You are all amazed:

Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;

It comes from Padua, from Bellario:

There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,

Nerissa there her clerk: Lorenzo here 270

Shall witness I set forth as soon as you

And even but now return'd; I have not yet

Enter'd my house. Antonio, you are welcome;

And I have better news in store for you

Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;

There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly:
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter.

Ant. I am dumb.

Bass. Were you the doctor and I knew you not? 280

Gra. Were you the clerk that is to make me cuckold?

Ner. Ay, but the clerk that never means to do it,
Unless he live until he be a man.

Bass. Sweet doctor, you shall be my bedfellow:
When I am absent, then lie with my wife.

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.

Por. How now, Lorenzo!

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

Ner. Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. 290

There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

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

Por. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gra. Let it be so: the first inter'gatory 300
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay,
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day:

But were the day come, I should wish it dark,
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [Exeunt.

[THE END.]

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