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1868.
In the preparation of this edition of the *Merchant of Venice* the Editor has had no such aid as was supplied to him, for the 'Julius Cæsar' and 'Henry VIII.,' by North's 'Plutarch,' and the 'Chronicles' of Hall and Holinshed. The present play, therefore, as compared with the two others, has demanded a greater amount of reflection,—a more careful attention to the significancy of the 'thick coming fancies' of the poet's mind. It is hoped, however, that no difficulty in Shakspeare's language is here left without elucidation or comment, that many of his expressions, possessing a force or import very liable to be overlooked, have received original illustration, and that his allusions to Scripture, classical antiquity, peculiarities of his own age, &c., will be found distinctly indicated and explained. In the Introductory Remarks, the supposed sources of the plot are pretty fully exhibited, the general merits of the play discussed, and the characters of Shylock, Antonio, Portia, and Jessica, severally estimated.
There is one feature characterising many of the notes in the Editor's 'Henry VIII.' and 'Julius Cæsar,' and some of those contained in the present publication, the nature of which he finds to be sometimes misunderstood, and now therefore wishes to place in a proper light. While, in every instance in which the text is at all obscure, or likely to be misapprehended, he has endeavoured either to give the true sense, or to select the most admissible interpretation which modern criticism may have proposed, he has frequently given interpretations of phraseology that is in itself easily intelligible. In cases of this kind the object has generally been to suggest some appreciation of the philological import of the language,—an import which may not be very obvious, even when the idea meant to be conveyed is in no danger of being mistaken. Occasional examination of the grammatical character of phrases that are idiomatic, elliptical, &c., is useful as a mental discipline, and may very properly be admitted as one mode of illustration in endeavouring to adapt such works as those of Shakspeare to the minds of youthful students, and to the use of schools.* And further, it is believed

* At the Oxford Middle-Class examination of 1861, in an excellent set of Questions on Shakspeare's Julius Cæsar, one was the following:—'Explain the constructions, sit thee down—as liff not be—you ought not walk—what trade art thou?—if thou path thy native semblance on—who is that knocks?—you are the first that rears your hand.'

Of these constructions every one had been distinctly explained in
that the habit of appreciating language, as to its grammatical construction, will often promote a readier discernment of the significance and force of particular passages, than is likely to be exercised by persons unused to such appreciation. It is, therefore, hoped that those notes which by some may be thought unnecessary, will prove to others suggestive of some useful considerations, and that these editions of Shakspeare's plays will be found to include a very ample amount of useful and interesting illustration for the general reader.

Of the Merchant of Venice, a few lines that, on the score of delicacy, would have been objectionable in relation to some purposes of this edition, are omitted.

the Editor's notes on Julius Caesar; and the same is to be said of the four passages of which an explanation of the meaning was proposed in another Question; while, for the remaining Questions, the Notes, taken along with the Introductory Remarks, had anticipated very nearly all the details requisite to compose full and appropriate answers.

The Notes and Introductory Remarks on Henry VIII. had a similar relation to the University Paper of 1860.
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

ON

SHAKSPEARE'S MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Of the Merchant of Venice two editions in small quarto were published in 1600; but as it is the last play mentioned in the list of Francis Meres,* 1598, its first production was probably not later than 1597.

It is composed of two stories,—that of the forfeited bond, and that of the three caskets; and we cannot doubt that to Shakspere's skill chiefly, if not entirely, is owing the admirable manner in which these stories are interwoven. In a tract, however, by Stephen Gosson, published in 1579, called 'The School of Abuse,' mention is made of a certain play in the following terms: 'The Jew, shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of Worldly Choosers, and the bloody minds of Usurers:' this seems to contain reference both to the lottery

* In a collection of similitudes under the title of 'Palladis Tamia: Wit's Treasury,' p. 282.—We have there the two following similitudes:—

'As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakspere; witness his Venus and Adonis, his Lucrece, his sugared sonnets among his private friends.

'As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latins, so Shakspere among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for Comedy, witness his Gentlemen of Verona, his Errors, his Love labor's Lost, his Love labour's wonne, his Midsummer's night dream, 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.'
INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

of the caskets, and the forfeit of the pound of flesh; so that Shakspeare possibly borrowed his double plot from a previous play; but, if he did so, we are sure his genius blended the two stories with an art far more exquisite than had ever been exhibited by any of his dramatic predecessors.

The poet may have seen two stories of a somewhat similar nature in some English translation of an old collection of allegorical fables compiled in Latin under the title of 'Gesta Romanorum' (Deeds of the Romans), the Romans referred to being the people of western and southern Europe who spoke the various dialects of the Romance language, a kind of bastard Latin, which came into use after the fall of the Roman Empire. Medleys of fictions under the above title appear to have been compiled in various forms, and some of these fictions had become current in England before the close of the thirteenth century. In one of the chapters of the English 'Gesta' in a story containing the following particulars:—A marriage was proposed between the son of a Roman emperor and a princess of Apulia. The young lady was shipwrecked on her voyage, and swallowed by a whale. In this situation, she contrived with a knife to wound the animal, which then rushed towards the shore, and was there slain by a knight, who delivered the princess, and took her under his protection. On relating her story, she was conveyed to the emperor, who, in order to prove whether she was worthy to receive the hand of his son, placed before her three vessels, of gold, silver, and lead. On the golden vessel, which was filled with dead men's bones, was this inscription, Who chooses me shall find what he deserves; on the silver one, containing earth, the inscription was, Who chooses me shall find what nature covets; the leaden vessel, filled with precious stones, had the inscription, Who chooses me shall find what God hath placed. The emperor then ordered her to choose one of the vessels, and said that if she made choice of that which should profit herself and others, she would obtain his son. The lady chose the lucky vessel, which was that of lead, and she was forthwith married to the young prince.

But the incidents connected with the bond were in all pro-
bability derived chiefly from a collection of tales, called 'Il Pecorone,' by Ser. Giovanni Fiorentino, first published in 1550, though written nearly two centuries before. In that collection is a story called the 'Adventures of Giannetto,' of which, omitting some licentious parts, we give the following summary: Giannetto, the adopted son of a Venetian merchant, Ansaldo, obtains permission to visit Alexandria; but on his voyage enters the port of Belmont, where there dwells a young lady of great wealth and beauty, whom he becomes eagerly desirous to marry. Returning to Venice, he solicits Ansaldo for a supply of money to enable him to prosecute his love-suit; and Ansaldo, to accommodate him, borrows of a Jew 10,000 ducats, the condition of the loan being, that if Ansaldo shall fail to repay the amount within a certain time, he shall forfeit a pound of his flesh, to be cut off by the creditor. Giannetto obtains the lady in marriage, but forgetful of the pecuniary engagement, prolongs his stay at Belmont till the day fixed for repayment has gone by. He then suddenly recollects the obligation, and returning in haste to Venice, finds the Jew resolved on the exaction of the penalty, and not to be turned aside from his purpose even by the offer of ten times the amount of the loan. Giannetto's bride, hearing of the merchant's perilous position, disguises herself in the dress of a doctor of law, repairs to Venice, and finds means of being introduced as a judge in the court where the case of Ansaldo and the Jew is to be tried; for in Italy, in those days, very nice or difficult points of law were determined, not by the ordinary judges, but by doctors of law called from Padua, Bologna, and other towns famous for their legal colleges. The disguised lady, unrecognized by her husband, is informed of the merits of the case; and having read the bond, desires the Jew to take the pound of flesh, but neither more nor less than the just weight, and at the same time to beware of shedding the merchant's blood, as the bond made no mention of blood. An executioner is then sent for to be in readiness to behead the Jew, in the event of any blood being drawn with the forfeit. The Jew being thus confounded, says he will accept the offer of 100,000 ducats in liquidation of the claim; but as he had dis-
tinctly and repeatedly declared he would have nothing but the pound of flesh, the judge refuses to allow any repayment of money whatever, and the Jew in a rage tears up the bond and quits the court. Hereupon Giannetto, overjoyed at the happy issue, offers to the judge, in token of his gratitude, a ring which his wife had given him on their marriage-day; and the judge, on returning home and putting off the disguise, rails at her husband in fine terms about his parting with the ring, which she says she is sure he must have given to some woman.

In addition to the preceding story, we may refer to the old ballad entitled 'The cruelty of Gernutus, a Jew, who, lending to a merchant a hundred crowns, would have a pound of his flesh, because he could not pay him at the time appointed.' It is difficult, indeed, to decide whether this production, a copy of which will be found in Dr. Percy’s ‘Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,’ is of earlier or later origin than Shakspeare’s Merchant of Venice; but there are one or two curious points of resemblance between the ballad and the play, as may be seen in the following extracts:

In Venice town, not long ago,
A cruel Jew did dwell,
Which lived all on usury,
As Italian writers tell.

Within that city dwelt that time
A merchant of great fame,
Which, being distressed, in his need
Unto Gernutus came.

Desiring him to stand his friend,
For twelve month and a day
To lend him an hundred crowns,
And he for it would pay

Whatever he would demand of him,
And pledges he should have:
No (quoth the Jew with fearing looks),
Sir, ask what you will have;

No penny for the loan of it
For one year you shall pay;—
You may do me as good a turn,
Before my dying day.

But we will have a merry jest,
For to he talked long:
You shall make me a bond, quoth he,
That shall be large and strong.

And this shall be the forfeiture,—
Of your own flesh a pound;
If you agree, make you the bond,
And here is a hundred crowns.

With right good will! the merchant
And so the bond was made. [says;]
When twelve month and a day drew on,
That back it should be paid,

The merchant’s ships were all at sea,
And money came not in;
Which way to take, or what to do,
To think he doth begin.

Some offered for his hundred crowns
Five hundred for to pay;
And some a thousand, two, or three,
Yet still he did deny.
And, at the last, ten thousand crowns
They offered, him to save:
Geruntus said, I will no gold,—
My forfeit I will have.
* * * * *
The bloody Jew now ready is,
With whetted blade in hand,
To spoil the blood of innocent,
By forfeit of his bond.

And, as he was about to strike
In him the deadly blow,
Stay, quoth the judge, thy ornelt,—
I charge thee to do so.

Sith needs thou wilt thy forfeit have,
Which is of flesh a pound,
See that thou shed no drop of blood,
Nor yet the man confound;

For if thou do, like murderer
Thou here shalt hanged be;
Likewise of flesh see that thou cut
No more than 'longs to thee;

For if thou take either more or less,
To the value of a mite,
Thou shalt be hanged presently,
As is both law and right.

Geruntus now wrot frantic mad,
And wots not what to say;
Quoth he at last, Ten thousand crowns
I will that he shall pay;

And so I grant to let him free.
The judge doth answer make,—
You shall not have a penny given:
Your forfeiture now take, &c. &c.

On the few facts supplied by the legendary sources of the present play, Shakspeare has most skilfully based the development of those characters in which he has made the chief elements of the dramatic action to manifest themselves.

In the kindness with which Antonio consents to sign the bond for the accommodation of his friend Bassanio, the poet found a reason for representing the rich merchant as a man of generous disposition,—one who delighted in doing good; but in the general aversion with which the Jews, throughout the period of their modern history, had been regarded by Christians, there appeared sufficient authority for making Antonio a Jew-hater. In Shakspeare’s time, notwithstanding the progress which had been made in tolerant habits of thinking with respect to differences of religious profession, the Jews were greatly detested. Even men of piety, actuated by hereditary prejudice, seemed to suppose that Scripture, instead of simply predicting the reproach of Israel, made the infliction of that reproach the righteous duty of Christians. ‘Let us not be surprised, then, to find the good Antonio treating Shylock with indignity, however unjust and lamentable we may think Antonio’s prejudice to be. But Shakspeare introduces other reasons for the enmity between Shylock and Antonio: the merchant dislikes Shylock not merely because the latter is a Jew, but further, because he is an avaricious usurer, and an oppressive exactor of forfeitures:
Antonio is disliked by Shylock, not merely because he is a Christian and an insulting enemy, but further, because he is entirely opposed to the practice of charging interest for the use of money. The poet makes Antonio's generosity partly to exhibit itself in gratuitous advances of money to merchants in distress, enabling them to meet the claims of the Jewish creditor before the term of payment expires, and thus to avoid the usual penalty of being obliged to pay usury upon usury for the creditor's allowance of postponement.

Such, then, were the men between whom the loan of the 3000 ducats was negotiated. 'Of a strange nature' was the forfeit 'nominated in the bond:' so Shakspeare thought; but he has ingeniously contrived to render the Jew's proposal and the merchant's consent, respecting the pound of flesh, much less strange and improbable than they are in the original story, by making Antonio one who disapproved of interest,* so that the Jew may seize on this circumstance as a means of pretending to show kindness in offering a gratuitous loan. Shylock imagines that the 'merry jest,' of specifying a pound of the merchant's flesh as the forfeit, will not be regarded in any other light than as a merely nominal condition, proposed in a conciliatory spirit, and humouring the prejudice of one to whose sentiments the practice of borrowing upon interest is repugnant.

Thus, then, we may perceive what sort of character Shakspeare considered it necessary to represent in the merchant. Antonio is a good man,—a man whom we love for his high integrity, his disinterested liberality, his devoted friendship; but his rashness in signing the bond suggested to the dramatist the propriety of characterising him as deficient in worldly prudence, and too easy and unwary in his dealings with mankind. It was certainly through simplicity, though not what Shylock calls low simplicity, that Antonio condemned interest; it was through simplicity that he thought lightly of the condition stipulated

* The advocates against interest maintained that the sin of Sabbath-breaking was involved in making money bear interest on all the days of the week, and that it was improper to charge any interest at all, because of the natural barrenness of metal. Meres says, 'Usury and increase by gold and silver is unlawful, because against nature: nature hath made them sterile and barren; usury makes them procreative.' (See, in Lord Bacon's Essays, the one on Usury.)
in the bond; he was imprudent in allowing himself to forget, or in failing to exert himself that he might be prepared for, the day of payment; he was incautious in venturing the whole of his wealth in argosies upon the ocean. That he was a rich merchant we may suppose to have been probably owing more to patrimonial inheritance than to his own mercantile sagacity and success. That he should be found unable, though a wealthy man, to lend 3000 ducats, was necessary to give occasion for the bond; and the inability is made to arise out of that incautiousness by which Shakspeare has so consistently characterised him.

While, therefore, Antonio, though 'even his failings leaned to virtue's side,' appears to have been not intended as an example of perfect excellence, neither was Shylock designed to represent a character of unmodified vileness. The Jew in *The Merchant of Venice* is not like Barabas in Marlow's play of 'The Jew of Malta,'—a play which was very popular in Shakspeare's time, because it made the Jew a villain altogether execrable. Charles Lamb says, 'Shylock, in the midst of his savage purpose, is a man. His motives, feelings, resentments, have something human in them. "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" Barabas is a mere monster, brought in with a large painted nose, to please the rabble. He kills in sport—poisons whole nunneries—invents infernal machines. He is just such an exhibition as, a century or two earlier, might have been played before the Londoners, *by the Royal command*, when a general pillage and massacre of the Hebrews had been previously resolved on in the cabinet.* Shakspeare, the interpreter of nature and humanity, felt that the prejudices against the Jews were cruelly immoderate. He could not, indeed, represent the Jew of Venice as magnanimous, or in any respect amiable, for this would have been inconsistent with the general character of the Jews, and would have been so opposed to popular prejudice, that the public representation of the play would not have been tolerated; but while he had prepared avarice, malignity, and cruelty, as the colours with which he meant to portray the

* Specimens of Dramatic Writers Contemporary with Shakspeare.*
Jew of Venice, he saw that Shylock's moral deformity might be in a great measure justly attributed to the influence of social circumstances, and he felt that the Jew, even in a temper of malignity, might convincingly show to Christians that their persecuting spirit impressed on his tribe the character which the Jews bore in society. Shylock, accordingly, is a man whose intellectual power is not to be despised, a man who can deeply feel, and powerfully expostulate against, the indignity to which he is subjected. He cannot be allowed any Christian advocate among the dramatis persona, but he himself can forcibly demonstrate that it is far more reasonable in him to act according to what was 'said by them of old time'—'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' than it is for Christians to boast of the excellence of that gospel charity which their conduct habitually violates. And herein was the dramatist a faithful and a skilful monitor to professing Christians. Had the Jew been enabled to resent in proper time, and with proper impunity, any wrongs that might be inflicted upon him, his resentment would have had vent, and might have left his heart capable of charity; but he had to endure, without retaliation, injury and insult after time, until his heart became hardened as a stone that would whet keenly the knife of vengeance, should legal justice ever give him an opportunity of obtaining redress. Such an opportunity he craftily sought by means of the 'merry bond.' His hope was that the penalty of failure might be incurred, and then he knew the Duke must grant him justice; for it was the policy of the Venetian government to protect the rights of those wealthy Jews who, by loans of capital, encouraged enterprising merchants to trade with or to reside in Venice. The passion for revenge, indeed, has to struggle with the love of money in the heart of Shylock; and while the proposal for the loan of the 3000 ducats is under consideration, he gives ample evidence of being habitually cautious and avaricious in pecuniary dealings; but at the same time we can discern that he is inwardly estimating the expediency of sacrificing even 'a good round sum' for the gratification of his 'lodged hate,' and for the removal of a great obstacle in the way of his worldly prosperity; and eventually, in the judgment-hall, we behold
the spirit of revenge so ferociously predominant, that he will not remit the penalty for six times the amount of the loan.

In the issue of the trial the Jew's malicious purpose is utterly frustrated, and his wickedness deservedly punished; but Shakspeare has generously mitigated, in very great measure, the severity of this retribution, by the forfeiture which the Jew had incurred being converted to the benefit of his child. The dramatist, too, as if judging that the claim of redress, for the indignities which Shylock had formerly suffered from Antonio, should not be utterly disowned, makes reparation by marrying Jessica to a Venetian gentleman, thus introducing her into the society of the most distinguished families of Venice. It is true this has to be brought about through opposition to her father's wishes; but still it is to the Jew's own flesh and blood that favour is shown. We feel that the gloomy solitude of the harsh Jew's dwelling ought not to imprison the intelligent girl, who though 'daughter to his blood' is not 'daughter to his manners,' who is naturally disposed to be cheerful, whose mind is formed for society and her heart for happiness. We wonder not that when her affections are interested and drawn out by the loving attentions of her Christian suitor, the poetical Lorenzo, she should elope with him from Jewish degradation and thraldom. She is certainly not to be commended for carrying off a great part of the money and jewels which Shylock had entrusted to her care; though, perhaps, she may be supposed as having attempted to vindicate herself by the consideration that he had acquired much of his wealth by extortionate exactions from Christians, or as having thought it no heinous sin to supply herself at once with some portion of the dowry she might anticipate, or with an amount of means which would have been gradually expended for her support had she continued to live under her father's roof. Her conduct in this matter may require to be regarded as a politic sacrifice to the prejudices of those Christians into whose society she was about to be transferred: it certainly was a means of securing for her, as a heroine in the acted drama of Shakspeare's time, an exemption from the antipathy with which the public regarded the Jewish character.
With regard to Portia, the chief heroine of the play, we should observe that Shakspeare, in designing that she should act the part of an assessor to the Duke in the trial scene, imposed on himself the necessity of distinguishing her by a considerable amount of intelligence, sagacity, and self-reliance. She is an intellectual character, at one time sparkling with vivacity of wit, at another glowing with serenity of wisdom; while all her sentiments are more or less influenced and adorned by a poetical imagination. She has the dignity of one who has been accustomed to move amidst the grandeur, and to rule the household, of a magnificent mansion; but she has affections that long to bestow her hand on some worthy lord, for whom she may feel it her happiness to live and to entertain loving respect. The idea that she is bound to take whatever husband the fortune of the caskets may allot to her, does not, indeed, for a time appear much to discourage her natural cheerfulness: she seems to find satisfaction in dutifully honouring her father's will, and in trusting to the wise and good disposal of Providence. For Nerissa's assertion, about holy men at their death having good inspirations, is probably designed merely to let us know how Portia's heart was already influenced by reliance on the prophetic sagacity with which dying persons were supposed to be gifted. But when she is asked whether she remembers the Venetian who had visited Belmont in company of the Marquis of Montferrat,* she at once enables Nerissa to 'level' truly at her affection. And when this Venetian comes to 'hold a rival place' with the other suitors, the struggle which is then excited in her bosom, between the spirit of filial duty and the desire of unrestricted choice, is most naturally and forcibly exhibited. There is, indeed, a methodical style in the expression even of her most impassioned thoughts, which has induced some critics to impute to her a degree of affectation unusual in Shakspeare's delineations of female character; but we believe that the dramatist has herein observed a most

* Monferrato was an Italian territory north of Genoa, and east of Piedmont, now part of Sardinia. Its most famous marquis, well known to Venice, was Boniface, who became general of the land forces, when the French planned a Fourth Crusade in concert with the Venetians.
judicious consistency, and that the language in which Portia describes her emotions is not the less indicative of genuine feeling for containing some reflex of that peculiar aptitude of mind which she displays in the trial scene. There she is methodical amidst all her excitement of anxiety for the honour of her husband. She has been furnished by her legal friend Bellario with advice, which assures her of saving the life of Antonio; but she would rather owe Antonio's preservation to a just and liberal discharge of her husband's debt, than to a triumph by which the Jew will be deprived of every ducat; and though the appeals by which she endeavours to make the Jew relent are characterised by an observance of formal argument, we should remember that she is all the while actuated by intense solicitude in the utterance of these appeals.

The main subject of this dramatic composition necessarily excites a considerable degree of melancholy interest; but Shakspeare has skilfully lightened it in various ways. He has combined playfulness with dignity in Portia's temper, and has in several instances exhibited her in the full exercise of humorous ingenuity; as in her dialogues with Nerissa about the merits of the various suitors, and the intention to disguise herself in male attire; and also in her conversation with Bassanio, when the excitement of the trial is over, and the success of her serious scheme for the deliverance of Antonio has disposed her mind to seek the relief of devising a pleasant stratum against her husband, and to enjoy the farce with which she enlivens the conclusion of the drama, in taking the 'vantage to exclaim on him.' Gratiano, too, in his buoyancy and brusquerie, presents a relieving contrast beside the thoughtful sadness of Antonio, and amid the stern procedure of the trial. And Launcelot Gobbo, the clown of the piece, with his quaint drolleries, his puns, his absurd inversions and perversions of language, gives the mind expedient relaxation from the severer thought required for an intelligent appreciation of the graver portions of the play.

We may further observe that in the rich profusion of exquisite poetical beauties with which Shakspeare has adorned this production of his wondrous mind, we have one of the many
reasons by which we may account for the great popularity which it has acquired, both as a stage-piece and as a subject of perusal.

Scarcely anything of Venetian history is necessary to be known for the proper understanding of this play.* The poet could not assign the romantic incidents of the fable to any particular period in the history of the republic. He has, indeed, invested his characters with the manners of the sixteenth century; Antonio's 'argosy bound to the Indies,' and the reign of 'Sultan Solyman,' belong also to that century; but the main action of the play must be supposed to belong to some indefinitely earlier period. The dramas of Shakspeare are not to be explained or criticised by such chronological references. His anachronisms, and his frequent practice of transferring English habits to foreigners, are well known, and are freely permitted to a dramatist whose chief object was 'to hold the mirror up to nature,' and who has given us delineations of human character so diversified, so truthful, so instructively and universally interesting.

The Merchant of Venice belongs to that division of Shakspeare’s plays which has been called his Comedies. 'The players,' says Johnson, in his Preface to 'Shakspeare,' 'who in their edition divided our author's works into comedies, histories, and tragedies, seem not to have distinguished the three kinds by any very exact or definite ideas. An action which ended happily to the principal persons, however serious or distressful through its intermediate incidents, in their opinion constituted a comedy.' Shaw, in his 'Outlines of English Literature,' says 'Comedy is essentially the expression not of life but of society. It does not deal with the passions, but with the affectations and follies of our nature: it belongs, therefore, to a highly civilised and artificial state of existence. Many of Shakspeare's most humorous creations are comic in the highest

degree, but they are not in any sense comedies. They are something infinitely more elevated, more profound, more far-reaching; but they are not comedies. Exquisitely humorous as they are, the humour is not in them the primary element, the unmixed subject-matter of these inimitable delineations; it is united with tenderness, romantic passion, exhaustless poetic fancy; and therefore we call them Plays. Indeed, it may almost be maintained that humour is not the true element of comedy at all—that is, of comedy properly so named. Wit is the essence, the life-blood of comedy, and wit is as different from humour as from tragic passion.
PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUKE OF VENICE . . . . . . Act IV. sc. 1.
PRINCE OF ARRAGON, suitor to Portia . . . . . . Act II. sc. 9.
PRINCE OF MOROCCO, suitor to Portia . . . . . . Act II. sc. 1; sc. 7.

ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice . Act I. sc. 1; sc. 3. Act II. sc. 6. Act III. sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 1. Act V. sc. 1.
SOLANO, friend to Antonio and Bassanio . . . . . . Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 4; sc. 8. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act IV. sc. 1.
SALARINO, friend to Antonio and Bassanio . . . . . . Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 4; sc. 6; sc. 8. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 1.
GRATIANO, friend to Antonio and Bassanio . . . . . . Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 2; sc. 4; sc. 6. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act IV. sc. 1.

LORENZO, in love with Jessica . . Act I. sc. 1. Act II. sc. 4; sc. 6. Act III. sc. 2; sc. 4; sc. 5. Act V. sc. 1.
SHYLOCK, a Jew . . . . . . Act I. sc. 3. Act II. sc. 5. Act III. sc. 1; sc. 3. Act IV. sc. 1.
TUBAL, a Jew, friend to Shylock . . Act III. sc. 1.

LAUNCELOT GORBO, a clown, servant to Shylock . . . . Act II. sc. 2; sc. 3; sc. 4; sc. 5. Act III. sc. 5. Act V. sc. 1.

OLD GORBO, father to Launcelot . Act II. sc. 2.
LEONARDO, servant to Bassanio . Act II. sc. 2.
BALTHAZAR, servant to Portia . . Act III. sc. 4.
STEPHANO, servant to Portia . . Act V. sc. 1.

PORTIA, a rich heiress . . . . Act I. sc. 3. Act II. sc. 1; sc. 7; sc. 9. Act III. sc. 2; sc. 4. Act IV. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act V. sc. 1.

NERISSA, waiting-maid to Portia . Act I. sc. 2. Act II. sc. 1; sc. 7; sc. 9. Act II. sc. 2; sc. 4. Act IV. sc. 1; sc. 2. Act V. sc. 1.
JESSICA, daughter to Shylock . . Act II. sc. 3; sc. 5; sc. 6. Act III. sc. 2; sc. 4; sc. 5. Act V. sc. 1.

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

SCENE—PARTLY AT VENICE, AND PARTLY AT BELMONT, THE SEAT OF PORTIA, ON THE CONTINENT,
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Antonio, Salarino, and Solanio.¹

Ant. In sooth², I know not why I am so sad; It wearies me³; you say it wearies you; But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,⁴

¹ Salarino and Solanio] In the original copies there is much confusion in the orthography of the names of these persons, and uncertainty in the assignment of their speeches.

² In sooth] In truth. The Anglo-Saxon soth meant truth or true; hence, forsooth, for certain, indeed; hence, also, soothsayer, one who professes power to reveal hidden truth.

³ It wearies me] I feel weary or dejected; an impersonal verb, as in the expression it repents me. The pronoun it has here no reference to anything definite; Antonio is unable to account for his sadness; but in the expression it wearies you, the verb is not impersonal, as the word it now denotes Antonio's sadness as a cause of weariness to his friends.—You say my melancholy makes you sad: you know, therefore, the cause of sadness in your case; but how I caught it, &c., I have yet to learn.—The third and fourth lines of this speech consist of noun clauses objective to learn.

⁴ Came by it] Came in its way, met with it, came to have it. See note 6, p. 17.
What stuff't is made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

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

Solan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would

1 Whereof] A relative adverb, like the preceding why and how.
2 A want-wit] A witless being.
3 To know myself] In order to maintain my individual consciousness.—This infinitive is adverbial to the phrase have much ado.
4 Ocean] Here used as a trisyllable. See note 3, p. 71.
5 Argosies] Large ships for merchandise or for war; probably so called from the Argo, a famous vessel, in which Jason sailed to Colchis for the recovery of the golden fleece. See note 3, p. 16. The preposition phrase with portly sail is adjective to argosies.
6 Signiors] Great lords and wealthy commercial freemen of the sea.—Another reading is 'on the flood.'
7 Pageants] Deities of the sea: an allusion to the custom, at some grand processions, of representing gods and goddesses in triumphal cars.
8 Overpeer] Look with lofty dignity over the heads, as it were, of the petty traders.—In the word traffickers, the retention of the letter k (not now in the word traffic), is because of c before e having commonly the sound of s, as in officers.
9 As they fly] As these petty traffickers fly.
10 Had I such venture forth] Had I such costly merchandise risked abroad on the ocean.—The adverb forth modifies had.
11 The better part] The chief part of my affections would be abroad along with the objects of my hope.
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind;¹
Peering in maps, for ports, and piers, and roads;²
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt³
Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague,⁴ when I thought⁵
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats;⁶
And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,⁷
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs.⁸

¹ Still plucking the grass] Ever plucking the light blades of grass, and holding them up, to know where the wind sits when it is as yet scarcely felt.—The word still has frequently in Shakspeare the sense of always.
² Peering in maps] Prying into charts, to ascertain where there are ports, and harbourage, and roadsteads.
³ Out of doubt] Undoubtedly would be to me a cause of sadness. Solanio uses the expressions 'believe me, sir,' and 'out of doubt,' to intimate that he considers it perfectly natural that Antonio should feel the anxiety which is now imputed to him.
⁴ Would blow me to an ague] In blowing my broth to cool it, I should be chilled into an ague.
⁵ When I thought] The form of the past indicative used in a potential sense; a frequent usage.
⁶ Of shallows and of flats] The sand of the hour-glass would suggest shoals and sand-banks.
⁷ My wealthy Andrew] My richly-freighted ship.—A large ship is here supposed to be called by the name of the famous Genoese naval commander, Andrea Doria.—Docked means lying as in a dock, stuck on a sand-bank, run aground.
⁸ Vailing her high-top] Vailing, from the French avaler, means letting down, lowering; the vessel being laid on its side, with the highest top of its masts lower than the other side.
To kiss her burial.¹ Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,²
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,³
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,—
And, in a word⁴, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought⁵
To think on this; and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced, would make me sad?
But tell not me ⁶: I know Antonio
Is sad to think upon ⁷ his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no: I thank my fortune for it,⁸

¹ To kiss her burial] To kiss the ground where the ship is, as it were, interred.—The analogous phrase 'to lick the dust,' means 'to fall dead in battle.'
² Dangerous rocks] This notion, perhaps, has reference to the church being founded on a rock of security; otherwise, the association seems a very distant one, between 'the holy edifice of stone' and the 'dangerous rocks' of the ocean.
³ The stream] The flowing tide. Milton, P. L. i. 202, speaks of 'the ocean stream.'
⁴ And in a word] And, in short, the idea that but this moment the vessel was worth so much, and in the same moment is worth nothing. See note 10, p. 90.—The noun nothing is an objective to of understood, worth meaning worthy.
⁵ Shall I have the thought] Shall I have the thought which imagines this possibility, and not have the thought which anticipates how sad such a thing, falling to my lot, would make me?
⁶ Tell not me] I have no need to be informed of the cause of Antonio's sadness.
⁷ To think upon] Through thinking upon.
⁸ I thank my fortune for it] Antonio had been incautious in risking all his merchandise at one time, though not all in one vessel, nor all to one port; he therefore thanks his fortune rather than his prudence. We think the dramatist means to convey to us the im-
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year: ¹
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

_Salar._ Why, then you are in love.

_Ant._ Fie, fie!

_Salar._ Not in love neither? Then let's say, you are sad
Because you are not merry; and 't were as easy²
For you to laugh, and leap, and say you are merry
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,³
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time:
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,⁴
And laugh, like parrots, at a bagpiper; ⁵

expression that Antonio's sadness was really on account of all his fortunes being at sea, and that the merchant's refusal to own this cause merely signifies that, when he argues the matter with himself, he can see so little reason to fear any serious failure among so many argosies, all having different destinations, that he cannot believe his sadness to arise from such apprehension. The _dramatic plot_ is _foreshadowed_ by his _presentiment_ of 'some ill a brewing.'

¹ _Upon the fortune_] Dependent on the success.

² _And 't were as easy_] Then, surely, it would be as easy for you to laugh and leap, and account for it in the same way, by saying, &c. _To laugh_, an infinitive used as a noun, in apposition to _it_, the nominative to _were_.

³ _Janus_] The Roman divinity called Janus was the god of the year, and was represented with two heads or faces looking opposite ways. The poet alludes to those antique _bifrontine images_, in which a grave or austere countenance was associated with a humorous one, as Pan's with that of Bacchus, or Saturn's with that of Apollo. _The_ exclamation 'by two-headed Janus' is in keeping with the description that follows.

⁴ _Peep through their eyes_] Have their eyes half shut with laughter.

⁵ _Like parrots_] Laugh at the sound of the bagpipe, with as little sense or reason as parrots.
And other of such vinegar aspect,¹
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.²

Enter Bassanio, Lorenzo, and Gratiano.

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

Salar. I would have staid till I had made you merry,
If worthier friends had not prevented me.³

Ant. Your worth is very dear in my regard.⁴
I take it,⁵ your own business calls on you,
And you embrace the occasion to depart.⁶

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.
Bass. Good signiors both, when shall we laugh? say, when?
You grow exceeding strange⁷:—Must it be so?

¹ Other of such vinegar aspect] We now use others as the plural of the pronoun other. A vinegar aspect is a sour look, an expression of face like that caused by the taste of vinegar.
² Nestor] Though even the grave Nestor himself should declare the jest to be truly laughable.—Nestor, one of the Grecian heroes in Homer's Iliad, and in Shakspeare's Troilus and Cressida, was King of Pylos (now Navarino), and was remarkable for his great age, wisdom, and gravity.
³ Worthier friends] Bassanio and the others who are now entering.
⁴ Your worth] You are very worthy friends in my estimation. Your is emphatic.
⁵ I take it] I take the case to be; I apprehend, or suppose.
⁶ To depart] In order to get away: an adverbial infinitive.
⁷ You grow exceeding strange] You become great strangers to us; we see very little of you. Exceeding, an adjective, is here used for in an exceeding degree, and thus becomes adverbial: the
Salar. We'll make our leisures to attend on yours.¹

[Exeunt Salarino and Solanio.

Lor. My lord Bassanio, since you have found Antonio,
We two will leave you; but at dinner-time²
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:³
They lose it that do buy it with much care.⁴
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

Ant. I hold the world but as the world⁵; Gratiano;
A stage, where every man must play a part,
And mine a sad one.⁶

Gra. 'Let me play the Fool:⁷
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;⁸
And let my liver rather heat with wine,

use of an adjective for an adverb may always be accounted for in this way.—Must it be so? does not refer to the strangeness, but to the going away.—Are you obliged to go?
¹ We'll make] We will make our leisure, or opportunity, for talking with Antonio give way to yours; we will wait till you have done with him.
² At dinner-time] Adverbial to have.
³ Respect upon the world] Regard for, concern about, worldly things.
⁴ They lose it] They who sacrifice their peace of mind to obtain worldly possessions lose the enjoyment which they thus pay for.
⁵ I hold the world] I look upon, or regard, the world in no other than its proper light.
⁶ Mine a sad one] Where mine is a sad one.
⁷ Let me play the Fool] Let the part assigned to me on the stage of the world be that of the Fool.—The Fool was always one of the dramatis personae in the old farces; hence our common phrase 'to play the fool.'
⁸ With mirth and laughter] Let mirth and laughter form the wrinkles for old age to impress on my visage.
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man whose blood is warm within
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster? ¹
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice ²
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—
I love thee ³, and it is my love that speaks,—
There are a sort of men ⁴, whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond,⁵
And do a wilful stillness entertain,⁶

¹ Like his grandsire] The word like is either an adjective complement to sit, describing man, and having to understood after it, or else it is equivalent to an adverbial conjunction, as an abbreviation for in like manner as: the former of these grammatical interpretations makes the noun grandsire an objective; the latter makes it nominative.

² Creep into the jaundice] There is here a reference to one of the most remarkable instances of the mind’s influence in the production of bodily disease. Peevishness is included among those mental emotions which, in Dr. Copeland’s Dictionary of Medicine, are stated to be ‘the most common exciting causes of jaundice.’ Compare Troilus and Cressida, Act i., beginning of Sc. 3.—What Gratiano says of the effect of despondency on the temperature of the heart, and of wine on that of the liver, has also a reference to medical science.—See Dr. Bucknill’s Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare, p. 92.

³ I love thee] This line is parenthetic, the speaker designing to preclude offence being taken at what he is about to say.

⁴ A sort of men] This expression collectively forms a plural nominative to the verb are, and is not so inaccurate, in grammar, as the common expression these sort of things; it may be observed that the properly corrected form of this latter expression is not that sort of things, but things of that sort. See note 3, p. 23.

⁵ Cream and mantle] Put on a gloomy and rigid aspect.—To cream is to throw up a scum to the surface; to mantle is to put on an exterior covering. In King Lear, iii. 4, Edgar speaks of ‘the green mantle of the standing pool.’

⁶ Entertain] Assume designedly a demure appearance.
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;
As who should say, I am sir Oracle,
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark!
O, my Antonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise
For saying nothing; who, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not with this melancholy bait,
For this fool gudgeon, this opinion.
Come, good Lorenzo:—Fare ye well, a while;

1 With purpose] That they may be invested with the credit of possessing wisdom, gravity, and profound judgment.
2 As who should say] As persons who should say: implying as much as to say, I am the chief authority in matters of opinion. Portia uses the same phrase in the next scene, 'He doth nothing but frown, as who should say;' &c.
3 Let no dog bark] Let rudeness and ignorance be silent; let no one rudely and ignorantly oppose or disturb me.
4 Know of these] Know some of these; or, of these I do know some that, &c.
5 Therefore only] Only on this account, that they say nothing. An illative clause introduced by therefore is now required to succeed the expression of reason; we find in Scripture several instances of the contrary arrangement, as in Isa. v. 13, 'Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge;' see also John viii. 47.
6 Almost damn those ears] Would provoke those who hear them to say to their brother, Thou fool, and thus almost occasion the perdition threatened in Scripture; see Matt. v. 22.
7 Fool gudgeon] The gudgeon is a fish very easily caught, and not worth taking.—Do not by such melancholy looks seem as if you were trying to gain this useless reputation which even fools can gain. See note 3, p. 69.
I’ll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

Ant. Farewell: I’ll grow a talker ¹ for this gear.²

Gra. Thanks, i’ faith; for silence is only commendable
In a neat’s tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.³

[Exeunt Gratiano and Lorenzo.

Ant. Is that anything now? ⁴

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more
than any man in all Venice: His reasons are as two grains ⁵
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 ⁶
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,

¹ A talker] Appositive complement to the intransitive verb grow.
² For this gear] On account of this state of things: that I may
be armed against you.—The word gear is from the Anglo-Saxon
gearwian to prepare, and has here the now obsolete meaning of
business or a state of things, which it has again in Act ii. Sc. 1, ‘If
fortune be a woman, she is a good wench for this gear;’ also in
Troilus and Cressida, i. 1, ‘Will this gear ne’er be mended;’ and in
2 Henry VI., iii. 1, ‘I will remedy this gear ere long.’
³ Not vendible] That has not much chance of getting a husband;
for silence, being so rare amongst females, may in her case be a dis-
tinction sufficient to make her attractive.
⁴ Is that anything now?] Now, is there any wit in that?
⁵ His reasons are as two grains] The reasons implied in his re-
marks; the amount of reason contained in what he says.—The
reading in some of the old copies is ‘are two grains.’
⁶ The same] That or it.—The idea of swearing a pilgrimage to
the lady is suggested by the practice of vowing pilgrimages to the
shrine of ‘Our Lady’ the Virgin Mary.
That you to-day promised to tell me of? ¹

_Bass._ 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,

How much I have disabled mine estate,²

By something showing a more swelling port

Than my faint means would grant continuance;

Nor do I now make moan³ to be abridged

From such a noble rate; but my chief care⁴

Is, to come fairly off from the great debts

Wherein my time, something too prodigal,

Hath left me gaged. To you, António,

I owe the most in money and in love;

And from your love I have a warranty⁵

To unburthen all my plots and purposes,

How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

_Ant._ I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;

¹ _That you to-day_] That you promised to tell me of to-day. The relative _that_, when governed by a preposition, always precedes the preposition, with two or more words intervening. The adverb _to-day_ modifies _tell_, and properly should have ended the sentence. Compare _Julius Caesar_, iii. 1, 'He wished to-day our enterprise might thrive,' where the adverb modifies _thrive._

² _Disabled mine estate_] Impaired my fortune by showing in some measure a more pompous state, making a somewhat grander appearance, than that to which my weak resources would allow continuance. _Something_, for _in something_, is an adverb modifying _showing_, and occurs again adverbially in the eighth line of this speech. The preposition _by_ governs the gerundial participle _showing._

³ _Make moan_] Repine on account of being reduced from so grand a style.—_To be abridged_ is an adverbial infinitive.

⁴ _My chief care is_] My chief trouble, or anxiety, is to get myself honourably discharged from the heavy debts, in which my course of life, which has been somewhat too extravagant, has left me liable, responsible.

⁵ _Warranty_] Such encouragement as warrants me to unload my mind, by bringing out and laying before you all my plans and intentions regarding the manner in which I seek, &c.
And, if it stand, as you yourself still do,¹
Within the eye of honour, be assured,
My purse, my person², my extremest means,
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.³

_Bass._ In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow⁴ of the self-same flight
The self-same way⁵, with more advised watch,⁶
To find the other forth; and by adventuring both
I oft found both: I urge this childhood proof,⁷
Because what follows is pure innocence.⁸
I owe you much; and, like a wilful youth,⁹
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way ¹⁰

¹ _If it stand]_ If it stand approved in honour's estimation, as you yourself ever do. See note 1, p. 5.
² _My person]_ My personal credit or security. Perhaps there is here an allusion on the part of the dramatist to the peculiar nature of 'the bond.'
³ _Unlocked]_ Placed at your disposal, freely accessible to you, to serve your occasions. See note 3, p. 71.
⁴ _His fellow]_ Its fellow: his being anciently a neuter as well as a masculine possessive. _Of the self-same flight_ is _of the very same power of flight._
⁵ _Way]_ Direction: objective to in understood.
⁶ _With more advised watch]_ With more heedful observation of the spot where it alighted, that it might thus bring forth to view the other shaft.—The expression to find forth occurs also in the Comedy of Errors, i. 2, where one drop of water is spoken of as going to seek another drop in the ocean, and 'falling there to find his fellow forth.' We now say to find out.
⁷ _Childhood proof]_ Experiment of my childhood.—The expedient of shooting a second arrow to find the first had been often referred to by writers preceding Shakspeare.
⁸ _What follows]_ Subjective noun clause to is.—What I am about to propose is in a spirit of childlike or guileless simplicity.
⁹ _Like a wilful youth]_ An elliptical expression for 'like what will happen with a wilful youth.'
¹⁰ _That self way]_ That very way; in that very direction in which,
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim\(^1\), or to find both,\(^2\)
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well, and herein spend but time,\(^3\)
To wind about my love with circumstance;
And, out of doubt, you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,\(^4\)
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\(^5\) unto it: therefore speak.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair, and fairer than that word;\(^6\)
Of wond'rous virtues. Sometimes\(^7\) from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages:
Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued\(^8\)

\&c.; that is, if you will repeat your generosity by lending me a
further sum.—The word self is thus used by Shakspeare in several
other places.

\(^1\) As I will watch\] From the precaution I will use in my em-
ployment of the money.

\(^2\) Or to find\] Or when used for either should be pronounced with
greater emphasis than the or following.

\(^3\) Herein spend but time\] You only waste time by appealing to
my affection in such a roundabout way.—Circumstance here means
circuitous approach.

\(^4\) Making question\] Feeling uncertain even as to whether I will
do my uttermost to serve you.

\(^5\) Prest\] Ready: from the old French prest, modern prét; Italian
presto.

\(^6\) Fairer than that word\] More fair than the word fair can
denote; passing or transcending fair.

\(^7\) Sometimes\] On some former occasions.

\(^8\) Nothing undervalued\] She is in no degree inferior.—Nothing,
for in nothing, is adverbial. See note 2, p. 13.
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.¹
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors; and her sunny locks ²
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece,³
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,⁴
I have a mind presages me such thrift,⁵
That I should questionless be fortunate.

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money, nor commodity ⁶
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth,
Try what my credit can in Venice do;
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,⁷

¹ Brutus' Portia] Portia, daughter of Cato Uticensis, was wife of Marcus Brutus, the chief of the conspirators by whom Julius Caesar was slain.
² Her sunny locks] The golden-coloured locks are specified here probably in compliment to Queen Elizabeth, whose hair was of a sandy colour.
³ A golden fleece] An allusion to the ancient fable of the golden fleece of Colchis, or Colchos, a country east of the Euxine Sea. Jason was leader of the Argonautic expedition (so called from the ship Argo), for the recovery of this golden fleece, which was suspended on a tree, and guarded by an ever-watchful dragon.
⁴ Hold a rival place] Had I but the means of presenting myself like one of them, as a rival suitor; if I could appear in such a style, or with such an equipage, as theirs.
⁵ Presages me] That augurs for me such a thriving suit; I have a presentiment of my being such a thriving wooer, that it is questionless I should be the successful candidate.
⁶ Commodity to raise] Convenient means of raising a sufficient amount of ready money.
⁷ That shall be racked] My credit shall be stretched to its utmost limit.—That, a demonstrative pronoun.
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently 1 inquire, and so will I,
Where money is; and I no question make,
To have it of my trust 2, or for my sake.  [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—Belmont. 3 A Room in Portia's House.

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Portia. By my troth, Nerissa, my little body 4 is aweary of this great world.

Nerissa. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; And yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing: It is no mean happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean 5; superfluity comes sooner by 6 white hairs, but competency lives longer.

1 Presently] Immediately; at once.*
2 To have it of my trust] That is, on the strength of my credit.
3 The infinitive to have is here used for of having. Our poet uses the infinitive form of the verb to express a much greater variety of relations than is admitted in modern usage.
4 Belmont] Shakspeare found this name in one of the old stories, but it is hardly to be supposed that he had in his eye some definite spot as the place of Portia's residence. He seems (Act iii. Sc. 4) to make it about twenty miles from Venice. As in the legend it is called a seaport, we may imagine it to be on the coast south-west of Venice.
5 My little body] The comparison here made by Portia has reference to the suitors coming to her from all parts of the world.
6 Seated in the mean] Placed in the middle rank of life.—There is here a quibble between the two senses of the word mean; the First Folio, however, reads small happiness.
7 Comes sooner by] Sooner arrives at, or comes to have; a condition of opulence or supersubundance sooner brings on the decline of life. See note 4, p. 3.
Por. Good sentences¹, 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 do², chapels had been³ churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows⁴ his own instructions: I can easier⁵ 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 blood⁶; but a hot temper leaps o'er⁷ 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 fashion⁸ 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 meaning⁹, chooses

¹ *Sentences*] Maxims.—An exclamatory nominative.

² *What were good to do*] An objective noun clause to know. *What*, nominative to were. *To do*, an adverbial infinitive to good.

³ *Had been*] Should have been.—The indicative form with potential signification.

⁴ *That follows*] The antecedent to the relative that is the pronoun *it*, which has a kind of demonstrative import.

⁵ *Easier*] By easier means: an adjective used adverbially.

⁶ *For the blood*] For the regulation of the temper.

⁷ *Leaps o'er*] Will not be restrained by.

⁸ *Not in the fashion*] Not according to the prescribed mode of choosing a husband for me.—*The fashion to choose* means the fashion that is to choose, the peculiar mode of choosing, viz., the lottery of the caskets. *Me* governed by for, understood, is emphatic.

⁹ *Whereof who chooses his meaning*] Whoever makes that dis-
you,) will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly, but one who you shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

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

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 is there the county Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, An you will not have me, choose: he hears merry tales, and smiles not:—I fear he will prove the weeping phi-

crimination of them which he approved.—*His meaning*, that is, the casket by which he meant you to be won.

1 *Who you shall rightly love*] You is the objective to love, the sense being 'one who shall love you with right motives.'

2 *Level at my affection*] Try to hit, argue, guess at the nature of my affection.

3 *That is a colt, indeed*] A man of coltish mind or fancy.—The Neapolitans were eminently skilled in all matters of horsemanship.

4 *The county Palatine*] A Polish Palatine, of great opulence, Count Albert Alaski, visited the court of Elizabeth in 1583, and was treated with great distinction: he was a man of gay and prodigal habits; but the circumstance of his visit to England may have suggested to our poet the introduction of a Count Palatine, though of different disposition, in the list of Portia's suitors.

5 *As who should say*] See note 2, p. 11.

6 *An you will not have me, choose*] Make your own choice, choose whom you please.—*An* is an old English word for if; it is sometimes found followed by if redundant (see note 1, p. 126), and is sometimes corrupted into and, as in Luke xii. 45. *But and if Neb's servant say in his heart..."
...philosopher when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in his youth. I had rather to be married to a death's head with a bone in his mouth, than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

Ner. How say you by the French lord, monsieur le Bon?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker. But he! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's; a better bad habit of frowning than the count Palatine: he is every man in no man: if a thrrostle 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

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1 *The weeping philosopher*] Heraclitus was called the 'weeping philosopher,' because he mourned over the follies of mankind, just as Democritus was called the 'laughing philosopher,' because he laughed at these follies. *Philosopher* is a nominative following the intransitive verb *prove.*

2 *I had rather to be married*] I would rather have that I should be married.—The infinitive is here an objective complement to *had.* In some of the old copies *to* is omitted.

3 By the French lord] By has here the now obsolete sense of respecting. See note 3, p. 69.

4 To be a mocker] The sinfulness here thought of is deduced chiefly from Prov. xvii. 5, 'Whoso mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker;' compare the preceding part of Portia's speech.

5 Better than the Neapolitan's] Thus showing that as a horse-fancier he is even more particular than the Neapolitan.

6 A better bad habit] The adjective *better* qualifies the complex noun *bad habit,* and there is an intended jest in the association of the word *bad* with the comparative degree of *good,* but the meaning is that the Frenchman surpasses the Count Palatine in the bad habit of frowning. The words *good,* *better,* *best,* are often used to denote mere degree or extent.

7 He is every man] He has something of every man's temper in him, and is no man himself, has no individuality of disposition.

8 A thrrostle] A kind of thrush.—The slightest influences find something responsive in that Frenchman.
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 Faulconbridge¹, the young
baron of England?

_Por._ You know I say nothing to him; for he under-
stands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French,
nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear²
that I have a poor pennyworth in the English.³ He is a
proper man's picture⁴; 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 lord⁵, his neigh-
bour?⁶

_Por._ That he hath a neighbourly charity⁷ 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

¹ _To Faulconbridge_. That is, with reference to, in relation to.
In Portia's answer, this meaning of the word to is playfully altered.
² _Come into the court and swear_. You will declare as seriously
as if you were upon oath in a court of justice.
³ _In the English_. In the amount of English that he speaks.
⁴ _A proper man's picture_. The likeness of a handsome man.
This meaning of proper is frequent in Shakspeare and others of our
older writers. See the Editor's Julius Cæsar, p. 5, note 4.
⁵ _The Scottish lord_. The word Scottish occurs in the 4to editions
of this play, which were printed before the accession of James I.;
but it was afterwards changed for the word other, to avoid giving
offence to that monarch.
⁶ _His neighbour_. Scotland being the neighbouring country to
England.
⁷ _Neighbourly charity_. Charity or love such as we should show
towards our neighbour; for the Englishman, Faulconbridge, having
laid this Scotchman under obligation by giving him a box on the
ear, the latter vowed he would repay the favour, when it should be
in his power to do so.—This satirically implies Scotland's usual
the Frenchman became his surety, and sealed under for another.¹

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

Por. Very vilely ² 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; and the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

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

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket ³; for, if the devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do anything, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords; they have acquainted me with their determinations: which is⁴, indeed, to return to their home and to trouble expectation of French assistance in her quarrels with England, as is more expressly ridiculed in the remainder of the speech.

¹ Sealed under for another] Monsieur le Bon signed an engagement with his seal affixed, became security, for another box on the ear; that is, engaged that another blow should be given in repayment.—The quarrel here referred to is meant to be understood as originating in rivalry between the English and Scottish suitors, during their present stay at Belmont.

² Very vilely] With great contempt.

³ On the contrary casket] On either of the caskets that are adverse to the wishes of the suitors; for though the devil himself were within, instead of my portrait, I know that the German would choose the casket which tempted him with Rhenish wine.

⁴ Which is] This is grammatically inaccurate in relation to
you with no more suit; unless you may be won by some other sort than your father’s imposition, depending on the caskets.

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

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

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

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

the antecedent word determinations, but is accounted for by the fact that all the lords had come to one common determination; and the grammatical correction would have to consist in changing the antecedent into the singular form.

1 Impostion] Ordination, appointment, prescribed condition, viz., by depending on the caskets, that is, submitting to the lottery of the caskets. See the nature of the imposition, p. 68.

2 As old as Sibylla] The Sibyllæ were women supposed to be inspired, and to have the power of revealing the will of Heaven. There were several recognised in classic fable; but the most famous Sibylla, and the one referred to in the text, was the Cumaean sibyl, who prophesied at Cumæ in Italy, and who, when Apollo, in his love for her, offered to grant her any request she should make, asked that she might live as many years as she held grains of sand in her hand. She thus secured longevity, but afterwards had to lament that she did not include in her request the continuance of youthful beauty and vigour.

3 This parcel of wooers] The whole phrase here is to be regarded collectively as a plural nominative to are; compare the expression referred to in note 4, p. 10—‘there are a sort of men.’
Por. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Enter a Servant.

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 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. While we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door.

[Exeunt.

SCENE III.—Venice. A public Place.

Enter Bassanio and Shylock.

Shy. Three thousand ducats,—well.

1 How now! What news!] These words are not found in the First Folio; but the manner in which the servant addresses Portia would seem abrupt without some such question.

2 Bid the fifth welcome] ‘Bid welcome to the fifth stranger’ is the grammatical construction.

3 The condition of a saint] The quality or disposition of a saint. If this prince of Morocco have the complexion of a devil, if he be black as I suppose, then, though his inward excellence were that of a saint, making him desirable enough as my confessor, I should be very sorry to have him as my husband.

4 Three thousand ducats] This and the next three speeches of Shylock should be read in the slow style of thoughtful deliberation.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. 25

Bass. Ay, sir 1, for three months.

Shy. For three months,—well.

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

Shy. Antonio shall become bound,—well.

Bass. May you stead me? 2 Will you pleasure me? 3

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 4: yet his means are in supposition 5: he hath an

The interjection well is an interrogatory appeal for further communication. The coin called a ducat is supposed by some to have received its name from being coined in ducal dominions; others derive the name from the following Latin hexameter which was the legend on the coin,—

'Sit tibi, Christe, datus quem tu regis iste ducatus,'

that is, 'To thee, O Christ, be devoted that dukedom which thou dost govern.' 6 The value of the Venetian silver ducat was about 4s.

1 Ay, sir] Bassanio's use of this expression indicates that he is repeating, with some impatience, particulars already stated to the Jew.

2 May you stead me?] Can you supply my want?

3 Pleasure me] So in Merry Wives, i. 1, 'What I do is to pleasure you, coz;' and in several other places in Shakspeare.

4 Sufficient] Of means sufficient to refund such a sum; sufficient as a security.

5 In supposition] Only conjectural or probable; at risk.
argosy bound to Tripolis \(^1\), another to the Indies \(^2\); I understand moreover upon the Rialto \(^3\), he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath, squandered abroad.\(^4\) 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 \(^5\); and that I may be assured, I will **bethink me** \(^6\): **May** I speak with Antonio?

**Bass.** If it please you \(^7\) to dine with us.

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\(^1\) **Tripolis** An older name of Tripoli, a town of Syria on the Mediterranean.

\(^2\) **The Indies** Before the discovery of the passage to the Indies by the Cape of Good Hope, Venice enjoyed a monopoly of the commerce of India.

\(^3\) **The Rialto** The Rialto was originally called the Isola del rivo alto, the Island of the deep stream, because of the estuary that washed its shore forming a channel of sufficient depth for the anchorage of vessels of considerable burden. The Rialto became also a name for the bridge connecting the island with St. Mark's Quarter; and further, it was employed to denote the Exchange that was built on that island. It is the Exchange which Shylock means by the Rialto.

\(^4\) **Squandered abroad** Dispersed, scattered, bound to various foreign ports.

\(^5\) **I will be assured** Will is here very emphatic, as implying Shylock's malignant determination to ascertain strictly the goodness of the security.

\(^6\) **Bethink me** Set myself a thinking, consider. Our verb *think* is from the Anglo-Saxon *thencan*; but the prefix *be*, in the present instance, is only a modern imitation of the common Anglo-Saxon prefix.

\(^7\) **If it please you** This expresses directly the original meaning of our common phrase *if you please*, that is, *if it you please*, as in the
Shy. Yes, to smell pork! to eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into! I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you.—What news on the Rialto?—Who is he comes here?

Enter Antonio.

Bass. This is signior Antonio.

Shy. [Aside.] How like a fawning publican he looks! I hate him for he is a Christian;
But more, for that, in low simplicity,
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.

French form s'il vous plaît; the pronoun you being properly an objective to please, though now regarded as nominative, which alters the original meaning of the verb.

1 The habitation] The body, as a dwelling for the spirit. The allusion is to Christ's miracle in the country of the Gadarenes; Luke viii. 33.

2 I will not eat with you] Yet afterwards we find Shylock 'bid forth to supper,' by Bassanio, and complying with the invitation:—Act ii. Sc. 5, 'I'll go in hate, to feed upon the prodigal Christian.'

3 A fawning publican] One who like a publican meanly endeavours to please Gentiles, by injurious enmity against Jews.

4 For that, in low simplicity] Like a mean-spirited simpleton. For that he lends, &c. is an example of the old usage of a noun clause introduced by that, and governed by a preposition. See the Editor's Julius Cæsar, p. 64, note 3; and compare 2 Cor. v. 4, and Rom. vi. 10.

5 Gratis] A contracted form of gratiis, ablative case plural of a Latin noun; it originally means for mere thanks, that is, without pecuniary charge.

6 Brings down the rate] Lowers the rate of interest with us Jews here in Venice. The principal money-lenders of Venice, in
If I can catch him once upon the hip,\(^1\)
I will feed fat\(^2\) the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,\(^3\)
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,\(^4\)
Which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe\(^5\)
If I forgive him!

_Bass._ Shylock, do you hear?

_Shy._ I am debating of my present store;\(^6\)
And, by the near guess of my memory,\(^7\)
I cannot instantly raise up the gross\(^8\)
Of full three thousand ducats: What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,\(^9\)

her days of commercial greatness, were Jews, who were encouraged by the Government, because the accommodation they could supply encouraged the resort and residence of enterprising merchants, and thus contributed to enrich the state.

\(^1\) _Upon the hip_] To 'catch upon the hip' is an allusion to an advantage aimed at by a wrestler in trying to disable his antagonist, and means 'to have at an entire advantage'; so in Othello, ii. 1, 'I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,' and again, in the present play, iv. 1, 'Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.'

\(^2\) _Feed fat_] Richly gratify that feeling of vindictive hatred towards him which I have had so long in my heart.

\(^3\) _Where merchants most do congregate_] That is, the Rialto, or Exchange, which was held in a piazza opposite the church of San Jacopo, on the island of Rivo Alto.—Most means in greatest number, and is an adverb to congregate.

\(^4\) _Thrift_] Proceeds of industrious economy or management.

\(^5\) _Tribe_] That is, race, not any particular Hebrew tribe.

\(^6\) _Debating of_] Trying to estimate or reckon up.

\(^7\) _By the near guess_] According to the nearly accurate guess.

\(^8\) _The gross_] This word means the amount or aggregate of the several sums which Shylock has been adding together in his mind.

\(^9\) _Hebrew of my tribe_] This tautology seems to mean that Tubal, as being one of Shylock's own tribe, would therefore readily enable
Will furnish me. But soft 1: How many months
Do you desire?—Rest you fair 2, good signior: [To Ant.
Your worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant. Shylock, albeit 3 I neither lend nor borrow,
By taking nor by giving of excess, 4
Yet, to supply the ripe wants 5 of my friend,
I'll break a custom:—Is he yet possessed 6
How much you would? [To Bass.

Shy. Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.
Ant. And for three months.
Shy. I had forgot7,—three months, you told me so.
Well then, your bond;—and, let me see.—But hear you:

him to make up the sum. It may be here remarked that the law of
Moses, while it allowed the Jews to exact usury from strangers, pro-
hibited them from lending on such advantage to their own country-
men. See Deut. xxiii. 20.

1 Soft] Be soft or gentle; stay a moment; hold.

2 Rest you fair] Heaven grant you fair fortune.—Rest you here
means cause you to rest; and such phrases as 'rest you fair,' 'rest
you merry,' &c. are borrowed from the language used in wishing
repose for a departed spirit.

3 Albeit] Probably a compound of all, be, and it, meaning be it
all true, or all true though it be.

4 Excess] Money in excess of the sum lent or borrowed;
interest.

5 Ripe wants] Wants come to maturity; admitting no longer
delay of supply.

6 Possessed] Put in possession of the fact, informed of how much
money you desire. So in Act iv. Sc. 1, 'I have possessed your grace
of what I purpose;' Coriolanus, ii. 1, 'Is the senate possessed of
this?' and in Mayne's City Match, iv. 5, 'She is possessed what
streams of gold you flow in.'

7 I had forgot] The first two lines of this speech consist of de-
sultory expressions, admirably indicating that Shylock's mind is
secretly engrossed with the wicked scheme by which he seeks the
chance of ruining Antonio. He has already made up his mind to
Methought you said, you neither lend nor borrow
Upon advantage.

Ant. I do never use it.

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

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

Shy. No, not take interest; not, as you would say,
Directly interest: mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings which were streaked and pied,
Should fall as Jacob’s hire,—

charge no interest, and expects that the ‘pound of flesh’ will appear
to Antonio a merely nominal substitute, kindly intended to let him
off from the payment of interest.

1 Methought you said] It seemed to me that you said; I under-
stood you to say.—The word methinks, i.e. it thinks me, is from the
Anglo-Saxon thincan to seem, and means it seems to me.

2 Use it] Make a practice of it.

3 From our holy Abraham] Was the third possessor, reckoning
from Abraham as the first.—Shylock wishes Jacob’s sacred character
to be kept in view, as that of a man to whom God assigned the bless-
ings which were partly acquired by Jacob in the manner about to be
mentioned.

4 Wrought in his behalf] Alluding to the deception which
Rebekah devised for securing the blessing to Jacob before Esau’s
return. Gen. xxvii.

5 Ay, he was the third] He was the third of the sacred three
who were specially distinguished by the terms of the covenant
blessing. See Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

6 Directly] Exactly; in literal strictness of meaning.


8 Eanlings] Lambs just brought forth; from the Saxon eanian
to bring forth lambs or kids. The forms yeon and yeanling are
corruptions.—Pied means spotted, variegated with spots.
The skilful shepherd pilled me certain wands, 
And stuck them up before the fulsome ewes; 
Who, then conceiving, did in earing-time 
Fall 2 parti-coloured lambs; and those were Jacob's. 
This was a way to thrive, and he was blessed; 3
And thrift 4 is blessing, if men steal it not. 

Ant. This was a venture 5, sir, that Jacob served for; 
A thing not in his power to bring to pass, 
But swayed and fashioned 6 by the hand of Heaven. 
Was this inserted to make interest good? 7
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

1 Pilled me] Peeled. The pronoun me appears to be expletive; compare Julius Caesar, i. 2, 'He plucked me ope his doublet.' Probably, however, the pronoun thus used was once meant to refer to the subject of the verb in another person, as having in the first instance belonged to the expression of purpose, 'I will peel-me,' and then having been transferred from that expression as a portion of a complex verb, into another person; so that he peeled-me would signify he peeled for himself. In the dialogue between Petruchio and Grumio, in The Taming of the Shrew, i. 2, we find Shakspeare jesting with this anomaly: 'Pet. Villain, I say, knock me here soundly. Gru. Knock you here, sir? why, sir, what am I, sir, that I should knock you here, sir? Pet. Villain, I say, knock me at this gate, &c.' See note 1, p. 46.

2 Fall] Drop. The verb fall is not now used in this transitive way.

3 He was blessed] He was one on whom God had pronounced a blessing.

4 Thrift] Increase of worldly store; gain. The word now generally means frugal economy, a sense in which Shakspeare also sometimes uses it, as in Hamlet, i. 2, 'Thrift, thrift, Horatio.'

5 A venture] A thing committed to the disposal of Providence.

6 Swayed and fashioned] Controlled and produced.

7 Was this inserted] Can you say that this was inserted in Scripture to make us think interest to be a right thing? The advocates against usury were in the habit of maintaining that money
Shy. I cannot tell; I make it breed as fast.
But note me, signior,—¹

Ant. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The devil can cite scripture ² for his purpose.
An evil soul producing holy witness ³
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek;⁴
A goodly apple rotten at the heart;
O, what a goodly outside falsehood hath! ⁴

Shy. Three thousand ducats,—'t is a good round sum.
Three months from twelve ⁵;—then let me see the rate.
Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholden⁶ to you?
Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft⁷
In the Rialto you have rated me
is naturally a barren thing, and cannot like corn or cattle multiply
its kind. Accordingly, Antonio afterwards says, 'When did friend-
ship take a breed for barren metal of his friend?'

¹ But note me, signior] These words may be supposed to be
introductory to some intended proposal respecting a loan free of
interest; but Antonio having turned away from the Jew to address
Bassanio, Shylock begins to reflect on the unpleasantness of having
no interest for his money.

² Cite scripture] As on the occasion of the Temptation in the
Wilderness; Matt. iv. 6.

³ Producing holy witness] Presenting apparent proofs of holi-
ness.

⁴ Falsehood hath] Dishonesty or knavery often assumes.

⁵ Three months from twelve] This is said in the spirit of avarice,
which hesitates to allow the contemplated sacrifice of interest.—
Three months' improvement of the money will be lost out of the
ten; then, let me think what that might realise at the usual rate
per cent.

⁶ Beholden] This is no part of our present verb to behold, being,
as Professor Craik observes, a corrupted form of gehealden, participle
of the Anglo-Saxon verb healdan to hold.

⁷ Many a time and oft] An emphatic tautology, as in the phrases
'over and above,' 'again and again,' 'for ever and ever.' It occurs
also in Julius Cæsar, i. 1.
About my moneys, and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance\(^1\) is the badge of all our tribe:
You call me misbeliever\(^2\), 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\(^3\); you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneys; You say so;\(^4\)
You, that did void your rheum\(^5\) upon my beard,
And foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur\(^6\)
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With 'bated breath\(^7\), and whispering humbleness,
Say this,—
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;

---

\(^1\) *Sufferance*] Endurance of persecution is the distinguishing
characteristic of all our race.

\(^2\) *Misbeliever*] A misbeliever strictly means one who holds a
wrong faith; an unbeliever, one who denies the true faith:—You
call me miscreant, blood-thirsty dog, and spit on my Jewish cas-
sock.

\(^3\) *Go to, then*] Go to means come to the point; to may be regarded
as an adverb, and should be pronounced emphatically.

\(^4\) *You say so*] The pronoun here is strongly emphatic.

\(^5\) *Void your rheum*] Discharge your saliva or spittle.

\(^6\) *A stranger cur*] Stranger is here a noun in apposition with cur,
not a noun used as an adjective. A noun when used as an adjective
is always an abridgment of an adjetival preposition phrase; as the
summer months, that is, the months of summer. See the Editor's
Julius Cesar, p. 3, note 3.

\(^7\) *With 'bated breath*] With slow utterance.
You spurned me such a day; another time
You called me dog\(^1\); and for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?\(^2\)

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\(^3\); (for when did friendship take
A breed for barren metal\(^4\) of his friend?)
But lend it rather to thine enemy;
Who, if he break\(^5\), thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

Shy. Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends\(^6\) with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit\(^7\)
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me:
This is kind I offer.

---

\(^1\) You called me dog\] The dog was held in great contempt among the Jews, not owned and cherished as it is amongst us, but excluded from man's society. Dog is indirect object to the verb called, and in apposition to me.

\(^2\) Thus much moneys\] Thus an adverb to much, which is adjective to amount understood; moneys is objective to of understood.

\(^3\) As to thy friends\] As an adverb modifying the adverbial preposition phrase to thy friends.

\(^4\) A breed for barren metal\] See note 7, p. 31. The first folio has 'of barren metal.'

\(^5\) Who, if he break\] This construction is ungrammatical in relation to what follows; we must regard who as a kind of exclamatory nominative. If he break means, if he break his day, if he fail to fulfil his engagement.

\(^6\) Friends\] One of a pair of friends. See the Editor's 'Text-Book of Grammar,' note 2, p. 92.

\(^7\) Doit\] A small Dutch coin, value an eighth of a stiver, or about half a farthing.
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
Expressed in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

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

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

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

Shy. O father Abraham, what these Christians are!

---

1 A notary] One authorised to draw up and attest contracts, &c. The word there, at the end of the line, represents the preposition phrase to a notary.

2 Your single bond] A single bond is a bond without the condition of a pecuniary penalty.

3 In a merry sport] So, in the old ballad of 'Gernutus,' the Jew says 'But we will have a merry jest,' &c. The preposition phrase is adverbial to nominated.

4 An equal pound] Let the forfeit be described as an equivalent pound, &c.; let a pound of your flesh be stated as the equivalent in way of penalty.

5 In what part] In governs the clause following; part is nominative to pleaseth.

6 Dwell in my necessity] Continue or abide in my present poverty.

7 Thrice] An adverb modifying three; value objective to of understood.
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect\(^1\)  
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this;  
If he should break his day, what should I gain  
By the exaction of the forfeiture?  
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man,  
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,  
As flesh of muttons, beefs\(^2\), or goats. I say,  
To buy his favour I extend this friendship;  
If he will take it, so\(^3\); if not, adieu;  
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.  

\textit{Ant.} Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.  
\textit{Shy.} Then meet me forthwith at the notary's;  
Give him direction for this merry bond,  
And I will go and purge the ducats straight;  
See to my house, left in the fearful guard\(^4\)  
Of an unthrifty knave\(^5\); and presently  
I will be with you.  

\textit{Ant.} Hie thee\(^6\), gentle Jew.  
This Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.  
\textit{Bass.} I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.  
\textit{Ant.} Come on; in this there can be no dismay,  
My ships come home a month before the day.  

\textit{Exeunt.}

\(^1\) \textit{Teaches them suspect} More correctly, this would be 'teach them to suspect.'  
\(^2\) \textit{Muttons, beefs} These words here mean sheep and oxen; from the French \textit{mouton}, a sheep, and \textit{bœuf}, an ox.  
\(^3\) \textit{So} That is, well and good so let him.  
\(^4\) \textit{Fearful guard} Much to be feared, untrustworthy care; an unusual meaning of \textit{fearful.}  
\(^5\) \textit{Unthrifty knave} Wasteful, improvident servant.  
\(^6\) \textit{Hie thee} Hasten.—There is here an instance of \textit{thee} used for \textit{thou}, as in the expressions \textit{fare thee well}, \textit{haste thee}. See note 1, p. 49.
ACT II.

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

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco, and his Train; Portia, Nerissa and other of her Attendants.

Mor. Mislike me not for my complexion,¹
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,²
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,³
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,⁴
And let us make incision for your love,⁵

¹ Complexion] Shakspeare often makes the pronunciation of such terminations as -tion, -sion, &c. dissyllabic. See note 4, p. 4. Complexion has here what is now its ordinary meaning, viz., the colour of the skin, more particularly of the face. An earlier meaning is constitution or temperament, as formerly supposed to be a complication or blending of the four elements, which, mixed variously in different persons, were thought to produce the various temperaments or humours called sanguine, phlegmatic, choleric, and melancholy. See note 3, p. 75; see also the Editor's Julius Cæsar, p. 136, note 3, or Henry the Eighth, p. 11, note (a).

² The shadowed livery] Which is but a shadowy veil forming the distinguishing dress of the children of the sun, himself the brightest object in nature, in nearness to whose presence I dwell and have been reared.

³ The fairest creature] The man of fairest complexion.

⁴ Where Phœbus' fire, &c.] An adverbal clause to born, explanatory of the adverb northward.

⁵ Make incision] Open our veins for the sake of your love. Montaigne (Essays, i. 40, Florio's Translation) says: 'The Turks are wont to wound and scar themselves for their ladies' sakes.'—Red blood
To prove whose blood is reddest, his, or mine.¹
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath feared ² the valiant; by my love, I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too: I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts³, my gentle queen.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction ⁴ of a maiden's eyes:
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right ⁵ of voluntary choosing:
But, if my father had not scanted me,⁶
And hedged me by his wit to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,
Yourself, renowned prince, then stood as fair ⁷
As any comer I have looked on yet,
For my affection.

was a traditio

¹ His or mine] These are possessive pronouns in the nominative case;—to prove his is reddest or mine is.—The use of the superlative reddest, in a comparison of two things, is perfectly good English. See the Editor's 'Text-Book of Grammar,' p. 98, § 5.
² Feared] Made fearful, inspired with fear, intimidated.
³ To steal your thoughts] As a thief disguised.
⁴ By nice direction] By the fastidious estimation.
⁵ Bars me the right] Debars me from the privilege.
⁶ Scanted me] Limited me, and by his restricting judgment bound me to consent to be the wife of him who, &c.
⁷ Then stood as fair] In that case would have stood as fair a chance of having my affection as any previous suitor.—Portia disliked them all. The word fair is allusive to the Moor's tawny complexion.
**Mor.**

Even for that I thank you; Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets, To try my fortune. By this scimitar, That slew the Sophy, and a Persian prince That won three fields of sultan Solyman, I would out-stare the sternest eyes that look, Out-brave the heart most daring on the earth, Pluck the young sucking-cubs from the she-bear, Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey, To win thee, lady: But, alas the while! If Hercules and Lichas play at dice Which is the better man, the greater throw May turn by fortune from the weaker hand: So is Alcides beaten by his page. And so may I, blind fortune leading me, Miss that which one unworthier may attain, And die with grieving.

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1. *Even*] An adverb modifying the adverbial phrase for that.
2. *The Sophy*] This name was a title of the Kings of Persia.
3. *That won*] Slew a Persian prince who had won three battles from the Turkish Sultan Solyman.—The most famous Sultan of this name was Solyman the Magnificent, who, however, reigned from 1520 to 1566, a period not early enough for the action of the play.
4. *Out-stare*] Another reading is o'er-stare.
5. *Alas the while!*] Alas for the present state of things, viz. that occasioned by the casket lottery. *Woe the while* (Julius Caesar, i. 3) is a phrase of similar import.
6. *If Hercules and Lichas*] If even the powerful Hercules have to compete with his servant Lichas by playing at dice in order to decide which of the two is the better man, the higher throw may accidentally proceed from the inferior hand, and thus is Hercules defeated by his servant.—Lichas was the servant who brought to Hercules the poisoned robe from Dejanira; his master dashed him to pieces against a rock.
7. *Blind fortune leading me*] A parenthetic adverbial clause of the nominative absolute.
Por. You must take your chance; And either not attempt to choose at all, Or swear, before you choose,—if you choose wrong, Never to speak to lady afterward In way of marriage; therefore be advised. ¹

Mor. Nor will not ²; come, bring me unto my chance.

Por. First, forward to the temple ³; after dinner Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then ⁴ [Cornets. To make me blessed, or cursed' st among men. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Launcelot Gobbo. ⁵

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me ⁶ 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 ⁷; take heed, honest

—Be advised] Be considerate or cautious.

—Nor will not] Nor will I ever speak to any other in way of marriage.

—Forward to the temple] Repair to the church to take there the requisite preliminary oath. See the terms of the oath, in the Prince of Arragon's first speech, Sc. 9.

—Good fortune then] Fortune, according to her own good pleasure, being then to make me blest, or else, &c.

—Launcelot Gobbo] He is commonly called 'The Clown,' in the old stage directions. The word Gobbo in Italian means hump-backed; but this does not warrant the supposition that Shakspere meant either Launcelot or old Gobbo to be so deformed.

—Will serve me] My conscience as a Christian will justify me in running away from an infidel master.

—Honest Launcelot] The epithet honest here implies that con-
Gobbo; or (as aforesaid) honest Launcelot Gobbo; do not run: scorn running with thy heels. Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack. Via! says the fiend; away! says the fiend; for the heavens, rouse up a brave mind, says the fiend, and run. Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me,—my honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son, or rather an honest woman's son;—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 incarnation; and, in my conscience, my conscience appeals to the principle of honesty against the design of running away.

1 Scorn running with thy heels] There is here an intended play on words, making the preposition phrase seem to modify running; scorn (with thy heels) running with thy heels.—To scorn with the heels means to indicate scorn by 'lifting up the heel;' so in Much Ado About Nothing, iii. 4, 'I scorn that with my heels;' and in Romeo and Juliet, iii. 1, Mercutio's saying 'by my heel I care not,' is intended to express great scorn.

2 Via] An Italian word, meaning away! be off! The original quartos have sia.

3 For the heavens] For heaven's sake; a petty oath, ascribed in jesting profanity to the fiend.

4 Bless the mark] The probable meaning of the expressions 'bless the mark,' 'save the mark,' is 'heaven bless, heaven preserve or guard the distinction;' the noun mark signifying denotement or distinction. There is, of course, a profane absurdity intended in invoking heaven's blessing on 'a kind of devil.' See note 1, p. 42.

5 Saving your reverence] This is a ludicrous form of apology derived from the Latin salvâ reverentid.
science is a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew: The fiend gives the more friendly counsel: I will run, fiend; my heels are at your commandment, I will run.

Enter Old Gobbo, with a basket.

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 conclusions with him.

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

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

Gob. By God’s sonties, ’t will be a hard way to hit.

1 True-begotten father] Incongruity of associated meanings will be found in most of the speeches of Launcelot and his father.

2 Sand-blind] So in Fletcher’s Pilgrim, iv. 1, ‘Am I twice sand-blind?’ Sand-blind was a term suggested by stone-blind; sand being in some degree penetrable by light. Sand-blind eyes were faintly sensible of light, but could not distinguish objects. Launcelot jocularly exaggerates his father’s infirmity by calling him high gravel-blind.

3 Conclusions] Issues of experiment. So in Hamlet, near the end of Act iii., ‘And like the famous ape, to try conclusions, in the basket creep.’

4 Marry] By Mary: a corrupt form of profane asseveration.

5 Sonties] This is possibly an awkward imitation of the French word santé, as used in the oath santé de Dieu.

6 A hard way to hit] The infinitive here is governed by the adjective, and is adverbial to it, the sense being ‘a way hard to hit,’ or ‘a way hard for me to hit it;’ it should be observed, too, that to hit is strictly transitive, though without an expressed object.
Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him, or no?  

Laun. Talk you of young master Launcelot?—Mark me now—even—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 houest 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.

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

1 Dwell with him or no] See note 1, p. 42.—No an abbreviation for not.

2 Mark me now] This is, as it were, addressed by Launcelot to his own ear. Raising the waters means exciting controversy respecting the propriety of the title 'Master Launcelot.'

3 Honest exceeding poor man] For 'exceedingly honest poor man.'

4 Well to live] Well as regards living or means of living; having means of decent maintenance. See again note 1, p. 42.

5 What a will] We often find a for he in old English dialogue; it should be pronounced, not as the indefinite article, but with the shortened name sound of the letter.

6 Talk you] The verb here is imperative:—I pray you, therefore, speak of him as young master Launcelot.—The ergo refers to old Gobbo having said 'Your worship's friend.'

7 Ergo, master Launcelot] The logical term ergo now refers to the father having said 'an it please your mastership.'—Therefore master Launcelot is his proper title.

8 The sisters three] The fates of classic fable were three sisters, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos.
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; murther cannot be hid long; a man's son may; but, in the end, truth will out.

[Kneels.

_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.

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1 *In plain terms*] The humour here is, that to speak of one as deceased is to use plainer terms than to say he is gone to heaven. The following exclamation 'God forbid!' is intended to sound in some degree unsuitably in relation to the words 'gone to heaven.'

2 *Hovel-post*] A post which supports the roof of a hovel or shed.

3 *Alack the day*] Alas for the day when I say it.

4 *Alive or dead*] To ask if the boy is alive or dead after saying 'God rest his soul!' is another of the incongruities referred to in a previous note.

5 *Your boy that was*] Launcelot here makes a blundering inversion; the proper order being 'your child that was, your boy that is, your son that shall be.'
Laun. I know not what I shall think of that: but I am
Launcelot, the Jew’s man; and I am sure Margery, your
wife, is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed: I’ll be sworn, if
thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood.
Lord-worshipped might he be! what a beard hast thou
got! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my
phill-horse 2 has on his tail.

Laun. It should seem then that Dobbin’s tail grows
backward 3: 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 4 to run away, so I will not rest till I have run
some ground. 5 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 6 I have with my ribs. Father,

1 Lord-worshipped might he be] He might be a lord worshipful.
—This refers to the supposed beard, and the arrogated mastership.
2 Phill-horse] This is a corruption of thill-horse, the horse that
goes between the shafts. Launcelot is to be supposed as kneeling to
receive the blessing, but with his back towards his father, who mis-
takes the long back hair of Launcelot’s head for a beard. There is
here, no doubt, some reference to Jacob’s deception.
3 Grows backward] Grows contrary to the natural direction.
4 Set up my rest] To set up one’s rest (meaning originally
‘to stake one’s all at the gaming table’) is to settle or come to a
determination; the phrase is here used ludicrously in relation to
running away. In Romeo and Juliet, iv. 5, the nurse says, ‘The
county Paris hath set up his rest that you shall rest but little.’
5 Run some ground] This is a poor pun, as if Launcelot had
previously spoken of running a way.
6 Every finger] An absurd inversion; Launcelot means ‘every
rib I have with my fingers.’
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.

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 reverence) are scarce cater-cousins:

---

1 Give me your present] The me is expletive; as in the phrases 'seal me there your bond,' 'pilled me certain wands,' &c. See note 1, p. 31.

2 As far as God has any ground] This perhaps refers to the limited amount of walking space in Venice.

3 To him] That is, speak to him, accost him.


5 Infection] Meaning affection, that is, desire or inclination.

6 Cater-cousins] Cater is the French quatre, four, cousins in the fourth degree of removal. The meaning is that Launcelot and the Jew are of very different natures.
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 1 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 2 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 3 of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well, thou hast obtained thy suit: Shylock, thy master, spoke with me this day, And hath preferred thee 4, 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 5 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: 6— Take leave of thy old master, and enquire My lodging out;—give him a livery [To his Followers. More guarded 7 than his fellows': See it done.

1 Frutify] This word is of Launcelot's own coining, and seems to mean fruitfully expound.

2 Impertinent] Used by Launcelot for pertinent, that is, relative to myself.

3 Defect] Gobbo means the effect or substance of the matter.

4 Preferred thee] Recommended thee.

5 Well parted] May appropriately be divided.—The old proverb referred to is 'He that hath the grace of God hath wealth enough.'

6 With thy son] This is said in consideration of the old man's blindness.

7 More guarded] More richly braided or ornamented. The term
Laun. Father, in:—I cannot get a service, no!—I have ne'er a tongue in my head!—Well; [looking on his palm] if any man in Italy have a fairer table¹; which doth offer² to swear upon a book I shall have good fortune! Go to, here's a simple line of life³! here's a small trifle of wives: Alas, fifteen wives is nothing: eleven widows and nine maids, is a simple coming in⁴ for one man: and then, to scape drowning thrice; and to be in peril of my life with the edge of a feather bed⁵; here are simple 'scapes! Well, if fortune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear.⁶—Father, come. I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye. [Exeunt Laun. and Old Gob. Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this: These things being bought, and orderly bestowed, Return in haste, for I do feast to-night My best esteemed acquaintance: hie thee, go. Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

guarded, as applied to a garment, originally signified bound or protected at the edges, so as to be kept from being frayed or torn.

¹ A fairer table] In chiromancy, or palmistry, the middle or depressed part of the palm of the hand was called the table; the indentation or line passing round the root of the thumb was the line of life; that which begins under the root of the little finger and extends towards the root of the fore finger, was the table line or line of fortune.

² Which doth offer] Which table, or hand, as if it were ready to swear upon a book, distinctly and positively affirms that I shall have good fortune.

³ A simple line of life] Launcelot uses the word simple in a jesting way for complicated.

⁴ Coming in] Prospect, fortune in store.

⁵ Edge] This word is absurdly borrowed by Launcelot from the phrase the edge of the sword.

⁶ This gear] This state of things, or this store of blessings. See note 2, p. 12.
Enter Gratiano.

Gra. Where's your master?
Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [Exit Leon.
Gra. Signior Bassanio,—
Bass. Gratiano!
Gra. I have a suit to you.
Bass. You have obtained it.
Gra. You must not deny me: I must go with you to Belmont.
Bass. Why, then you must.—But hear thee¹, Gratiano;
Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice;
Parts, that become thee happily enough,
And in such eyes as ours² appear not faults;
But where they are not known, why, there they show
Something too liberal³:—pray thee, take pain
To allay with some cold drops of modesty⁴
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,

¹ Hear thee] Thee was often thus used for thou in the older English; compare 'hie thee,' 'haste thee,' 'fare thee well.'
² As ours] Ours is a possessive pronoun, plural nominative to are, understood.
³ Show something too liberal] Appear somewhat too free (or licentious.) See note 2, p. 13.
⁴ Thy skipping spirit] Thy frisking levity of disposition; thy frolicsome humour. So in Hamlet, iii. 4, 'Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper sprinkle cool patience,' and in Henry VIII. (i. 1.) 'If with the sap of reason you would quench, or but allay, the fire of passion.'
Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely;
Nay more, while grace is saying 1, hood mine eyes 2
Thus with my hat, and sigh, and say Amen;
Use all the observance of civility,
Like one well studied in a sad ostent 3
To please his grandam,—never trust me more.

_Bass._ Well, we shall see your bearing.

_Gra._ Nay, but I bar to-night 4; you shall not gage me
By what we do to-night.

_Bass._ No, that were pity;
I would entreat you rather to put on
Your boldest suit of mirth 5, 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.


_Enter Jessica and Launcelot._

_Jess._ I am sorry thou wilt leave my father so;
Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
Didst rob it of some taste 6 of tediousness.

1 _Is saying_ An example of the imperfect participle used passively as when we say 'the house is building.' We now more commonly employ _being said_, _being built._

2 _Hood mine eyes_ An allusion to the manner of covering a hawk's eyes, to make it tame.

3 _Studied in a sad ostent_ Practised in the art of putting on a serious aspect.

4 _I bar to-night_ I except to-night; you are not to make the restriction apply to what we do at the feast to-night.

5 _Suit_ Style or fashion.

6 _Rob it of some taste_ Relieve or lighten it of some sense.
SCENE IV.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

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

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

_Jes._ Farewell, good Launcelot. 

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

[Exit. 

SCENE IV.—Venice.  A Street.

_Enter_ Gratiano, Lorenzo, Salarino, and Solanio._

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

---

1 _Exhibit_ This is Launcelot's ludicrous mistake for _inhibit_, that is, restrain.

2 _Do not play the knave_ If some Christian do not play a cunning game and get thee for his wife.—In the First Folio, the reading is _did not_, which makes _get_ signify _beget._  

3 _What heinous sin_ This may mean 'what a heinous sin;' but if the article be not understood, _sin_ means _sinfulness_.

4 _This strife_ This struggle between duty and inclination.
GRA. We have not made good preparation.

SALAR. We have not spoke us yet of torchbearers.

SOLAN. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly ordered; 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.

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: go.

Gentlemen, [Exit LAUN.

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of a torchbearer.

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

SOLAN. And so will I.

1 Spoke us] Bespoke torch-bearers for us.—'A torch-bearer,' says Steevens, 'seems to have been a constant appendage on every troop of masks.'—Such forms as spoke, undertook, &c., for spoken, undertaken, &c., are of usual occurrence in Shakspeare.

2 Unless it may be quaintly ordered] Unless we have time to prepare and arrange it nicely, it will be a miserable affair, and, in my opinion, had better be let alone.

3 By your leave, sir] By your leave, sir, may I take my leave.

4 Take this] An offer of money is here meant.
Lor. Meet me and Gratiano
At Gratiano’s lodging some hour hence.¹

Salar. ’Tis good we do so. [Ex. Salar. and Solan.
Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?
Lor. I must needs ² tell thee all:—She hath directed ³
How I shall take her from her father’s house;
What gold and jewels she is furnished with;
What page’s suit she hath in readiness.
If e’er the Jew ⁴ 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 torchbearer.


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!

¹ Some hour hence] In about an hour from this time.
² Needs] That is, of needs or necessity: an adverb.
³ Directed] Given me to understand.—We are here obliged to strain the meaning of the verb, to make it applicable to the third and fourth lines.
⁴ If e’er the Jew] The import of the next five lines is, that if the Jew be blessed, it will be for his daughter’s goodness; and if the daughter have an adverse fate, it will be on account of her father being an infidel Jew.
Lawn. Why, Jessica!


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

Enter Jessica.

Jes. Call you? What is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica; There are my keys:—But wherefore should I go? I am not bid for love; they flatter me:¹ But yet I'll go in hate,² to feed upon The prodigal Christian.—Jessica, my girl, Look to my house:—I am right ³ loth to go; There is some ill a brewing towards my rest,⁴ For I did dream of money-bags to-night.

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

Shy. So do I his.⁵

Lawn. And they have conspired together,—I will not say you shall see a masque; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a bleeding on Black-Monday⁶

¹ Flatter me] Pretend friendship towards me.
² Yet I'll go in hate] See note 2. p. 27.
³ Right] Truly or very: an adverb.
⁴ Towards my rest] Against my quiet, or peace of mind.
⁵ His] That is, his reproach; Shylock having been used to such treatment; Launcelot, of course, used reproach for approach.
⁶ Black-Monday.] On the 14th of April, 1360, being Easter Monday, Edward III. was encamped with his army before Paris; the day was very stormy, intensely cold, and dark with mist; and many of the soldiers died from the severity of the weather; hence, it is said, Easter-Monday came to be called Black-Monday. The absurdity contained in this speech of Launcelot is, of course, on his own part, intentional nonsense. He is, indeed, throughout, an imitator of the character called the fool or jester.
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-necked fife,¹ See Var. Ed.

Clamber not you up to the casements then,
Nor thrust your head into the public street,
To gaze on Christian fools with varnished faces:
But stop my house's ears, I mean my casements;
Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
My sober house. — By Jacob's staff² I swear,
I have no mind of feasting forth ³ 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; ⁴

There will come a Christian by,
Will be worth a Jewess' eye.⁵ [Exit LAUN.

_Shy._ What says that fool of Hagar's offspring, ha? ⁶

¹ The wry-necked fife] This refers not to the instrument, but to the player. The fife, being blown not at the end but at the side, makes the player turn his neck awry.—Holinshed (Chron. III. 805) refers to 'a drum and fife apparelled in white damask and green bonnets.'

² Jacob's staff] See Gen. xxxii. 10, and Heb. xi. 21.

³ Feasting forth] Forth often means out in Shakspeare.

⁴ For all this] Notwithstanding all that your father has just said.

⁵ Worth a Jewess' eye] Worthy of a Jewess's regard.—There is, here, however, a playful allusion to the common saying 'worth a Jew's eye,' which became descriptive of anything very costly, from the circumstance of rich Jews having been often threatened with mutilation, such as putting out an eye, drawing out of teeth, &c., in order to extort treasure from them.

⁶ Fool of Hagar's offspring] When Mohammed made attempts to win over the numerous Jews resident in Arabia, they refused to own as a prophet one who was descended from Hagar the bondwoman.—There is, of course, no reference to Arabian descent or Mohammedan
56 THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. ACT II.

Jes. His words were, Farewell, mistress; nothing else.\(^1\)

Shy. The patch\(^2\) is kind enough; but a huge feeder, Snail-slow in profit\(^3\), and he sleeps by day More than the wild cat: drones hive not with me,\(^4\)
Therefore I part with him; and part with him To one that I would have him help to waste\(^5\) His borrowed purse. — Well, Jessica, go in; Perhaps, I will return immediately; Do as I bid you; shut doors after you: Fast bind, fast find;\(^6\)
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind. \([\text{Exit.}]\)

Jes. Farewell; and if my fortune be not crossed, I have a father, you a daughter lost. \([\text{Exit.}]\)

faith in calling Launcelot one of Hagar’s offspring; all that is meant is, that he is an outcast Gentile and a menial.\(^1\) See Gen. xxi. 10, ‘cast out the bondwoman and her son,’ &c.

\(^1\) Nothing else\] Jessica here utters a falsehood through timidity as well as cunning. We find Portia afterwards speaking falsely of her purpose, to Lorenzo, when she is about to set out from Belmont to Venice, Act iii. sc. 4. Such deceptions are to be put down to the account of dramatic expediency. There is less marring of character, when a princess of ancient Britain, the nobly virtuous Imogen, says, ‘If I do lie, and do no harm by it, though the gods hear, I hope they’ll pardon it.’\(^2\) See Cymbeline, iv. 2.

\(^2\) The patch\] The fool; so called in allusion to the parti-coloured dress of fools being composed of patch-work.

\(^3\) In profit\] In working for his master’s profit.

\(^4\) Hive not with me\] Are not for my hive.

\(^5\) That I would have\] Whom I would have Launcelot to assist in wasting the 3000 ducats.—That, a relative pronoun objective to help.

\(^6\) Fast bind, fast find\] What is securely bound will be readily found.
SCENE VI. — The same.

Enter Gratiano and Salerno, masqued.

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

Salar. His hour is almost past.

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

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

Gra. That ever holds: who riseth from a feast, With that keen appetite that he sits down? Where is the horse that doth untread again His tedious measures with the unbated fire That he did pace them first? All things that are, Are with more spirit chased than enjoyed. How like a younker, or a prodigal, The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,

1 Pent-house] A shed against a wall, with a roof of one slope. French, pente, downward slope.
2 Out-dwells] Awaits the completion of.
3 Venus' pigeons] Venus was represented with her son Cupid in a chariot drawn by doves.
4 To keep obliged faith] To maintain undishonoured their bond of faith after it has been contracted.
5 That he sits down] That he sits down with.—Such elliptical phraseology was in Shakspeare's time allowed to be good colloquial English. See note 2, p. 124.
6 Untread again] Tread back again; retrace his tedious steps with all the spirit that he paced them with the first time.
7 A younker] A gay young fellow.
9 Which hath devoured thy living with harlots.'
10 Scarfed] Dressed with streamers.
Hugged and embraced by the strumpet wind!
How like a prodigal doth she return;
With over-weathered\(^1\) ribs, and ragged sails,
Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!

**Enter Lorenzo.**

_Salar._ Here comes Lorenzo; — more of this hereafter.

_Lor._ Sweet friends, your patience\(^2\) 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.\(^3\)

_Jes._ Lorenzo, certain; and my love, indeed;
For who love I\(^4\) so much? and now who knows
But you, Lorenzo, whether I am yours?\(^5\)

_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,\(^6\)
For I am much ashamed of my exchange:

---

\(^1\) _Over-weathered_ — All weather-beaten.

\(^2\) _Your patience_ — I entreat your patience for my long tarrying.

\(^3\) _Love_ — Lover.—Jessica in her next speech uses Lorenzo's word to denote him as the object of her love.

\(^4\) _Who love I_ — Who for whom, and I for me, are common irregularities in Shakspeare.

\(^5\) _Yours_ — Your love; the object of your love.

\(^6\) _You do not look on me_ — So that you cannot see me well: for I am much ashamed of this exchange of woman's apparel for a page's suit.
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 torchbearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too too-light.¹
Why, 'tis an office of discovery², love;
And I should be obscured.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.
But come at once;
For the close night doth play the runaway,³
And we are staid 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, from above.

Gra. Now, by my hood⁴, a Gentile⁵ and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me⁶, but I love her heartily:
For she is wise, if I can judge of her;

¹ *Too too-light*] Too excessively conspicuous.—Jessica has here a punning reference to lightness or levity of conduct. The first *too* is an adverb modifying the adjective *too-light*; see the Editor's *Hamlet* of Shakspeare, p. 18, note 2.

² *An office of discovery*] The office of a torch-bearer is for showing what is in the way, whereas I ought to be shaded with concealment.

³ *The close night*] The secret stealthy night itself is running away.

⁴ *By my hood*] Gratiano wore a hood for concealment, and swears, as a monk might do, by his hood, that is, by his monastic character.

⁵ *A gentile*] That is, a maiden of genteel spirit, and no niggard like a Jew. *Gentile* is the feminine of a French adjective.

⁶ *Beshrew me*] Curse me, let be be accursed, if I do not love her. Othello (iii. 3) uses the still stronger language 'Perdition catch my soul, but I do love thee!'
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 Jes. and Salar.

_Enter Antonio._

_Ant. Who's there?_

_Gra. Signior Antonio?_

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

_Gra. I am glad on't; I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night._

[Exeunt.

1 _If that_] In this old form of speech, _if had_, no doubt, its original meaning of an imperative, that is, _gif_ or _give_, _grant_, _suppose_ that circumstance; but in grammatical analysis the two words may be taken together as a complex conjunction.

2 _Like herself_] In her true likeness, or as she really is.

3 _No masque to-night_] Antonio seeing Gratiano with a mask tells him that there will be no masque to-night, for the wind has come round favourably for Bassanio's departure to Belmont.

4 _On't_] A corruption for _of it._
SCENE VII.—Belmont.  A room in Portia's House.

Flourish of Cornets.  Enter Portia, with the Prince of Morocco, and both their Trains.

Por. Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover obj. 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: ¹
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.

How shall I know if I do choose the right?

Por. The one of them contains ² my picture, prince,—
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.³ S. Schm. My.²

Mor. Some god direct my judgment!  Let me see.
I will survey the inscriptions back again: ⁴
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

¹ All as blunt] Quite as rude or ungenteel as the lead itself.
² Contains] Supply which or that as nominative; the one of them which contains, &c. One is objective in apposition to the demonstrative that in the next line. The suppression of a relative pronoun of the nominative case is a frequent usage with Shakspeare, and is still tolerated, though not approved, in poetry.
³ Withal] Along with the picture.—Yours is a possessive pronoun, nominative case.
⁴ Back again] In reverse order.
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give, nor hazard, aught for lead.
What says the silver, with her virgin hue? ¹

Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.

As much as he deserves?—Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand: ²
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,³
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 ⁴ of myself.
As much as I deserve!—Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding; ⁵
But more than these ⁶, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no farther, but chose here?—
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:

Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.

Why, that's the lady: all the world desires her:
From the four corners of the earth they come,

¹ Virgin hue] There is here an allusion to the silvery moon, the
emblem of chastity, Luna being often confounded with the virgin
goddess Diana.

² With an even hand] With a steady hand, poising the scales
evenly.


⁴ Weak disabling] Weak-minded disparaging of my real nobleness.

⁵ In graces and in qualities] In the manners and accomplishments that pertain to good breeding.

⁶ But more than these] But what is more than these, I am deserving as regards my love for her.
To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing saint.
The Hyrcanian deserts, and the vasty wilds
Of wide Arabia, are as through-fares now,
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
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

---

1 *To kiss this shrine*] As pilgrims to kiss this lady in whom so much excellence is enshrined, and who is, as it were, a saint, yet breathing the breath of this mortal life.
2 *Hyrcanian deserts*] Hyrcania was a large tract of country in Asia, south-east of the Caspian Sea.
3 *Vasty wilds*] Vasty, from the Latin *vastus*, means waste.
4 *Through-fares*] Fare is from the Saxon *faran*, to go.
5 *Whose ambitious head*] Whose towering surge throws up froth and spray.—The poet likens the ocean to a kingdom whose sovereign is so domineering that he threatens destruction to foreign travellers, and even treats heaven itself with haughty contempt.
6 *That lead contains her*] An allusion to leaden coffins.
7 *Damnation*] The ruin of my hope.
8 *It were too gross*] Lead would be too coarse a material even to enclose her cerecloth in the dark grave.
9 *Ten times undervalued*] Silver being ten times less precious than assayed gold.—This was the proportional value of these metals from the Anglo-Saxon period to the discovery of America: at present it is about fourteen times; the mint price of silver being 5s. 6d. an ounce, and of gold 77s. 10½d.
A coin, that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold; but that's insculped upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within.—Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

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

Mor. O hell! what have we here?
A carrion death 3, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll? I'll read the writing.

All that glisters is not gold,
Often have you heard that told;
Many a man his life hath sold 4
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs 5 do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,—
Young in limbs 6,—in judgment old,

---

1 An angel] The value of the coin called au angel, once current in England, was ten shillings. The insculping of an angel on this coin is said to have originated in a reference to Pope Gregory's association of Angli and Angeli.

2 Thrive I] Though I thrive as I may; I choose here, and I do so whatever my success may be.

3 A carrion death] A skull, or a skeleton figure of death.

4 His life hath sold] This explains the inscription 'Who chooseth me shall get what many men desire.' Many have sacrificed all real enjoyment of life by chiefly desiring and striving to obtain gold, from which after all they have derived nothing better than the mere sight of it. The prince of Morocco had, as it were, sold his life for the sight of gold, because he was bound 'never to speak to lady afterward in way of marriage.'

5 Tombs] The reading of the old copies is timber, which, if it be the true one, must have been used in a plural sense.

6 Young in limbs] Had you been as old in judgment as you are young in limbs that have brought you such a distance.—The construction is 'Had you, young in limbs, been old in judgment.'
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.  

Por. A gentle riddance:—Draw the curtains, go;—
Let all of his complexion choose me so.

SCENE VIII.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Salarino and Solanio.

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

Solan. 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.

1 Inscrolled] The answer for you had not been found written here.
2 Is cold] Has missed its aim.
3 Part] Take their leave; depart.
4 Go] This is said to the servant:—go, draw the curtains.
5 Given to understand] The infinitive is here used like an objective noun, and is retained as an objective after the passive participle, as is usual when the verb, in its active voice, has both a direct and an indirect object. Compare Milton, P. L. i. 735, 'Whom the supreme King gave to rule the orders bright.
Solan. I never heard a passion\(^1\) so confused,  
So strange, outrageous\(^2\), and so variable,  
As\(^3\) 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\(^4\), stolen from me by my daughter!  
And jewels; two stones, two rich and precious stones,  
Stolen by my daughter!—Justice! find the girl!  
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats!  

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,  
Crying,—his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.  
Solan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,  
Or he shall pay for this.  

Salar. Marry, well remembered:  
I reasoned\(^5\) with a Frenchman yesterday,  
Who told me,—in the narrow seas that part  
The French and English, there miscarried  
A vessel of our country, richly fraught:  
I thought upon Antonio when he told me,  
And wished in silence\(^6\) that it were not his.  

Solan. You were best\(^7\) to tell Antonio what you hear;  
Yet do not suddenly, for it may grieve him.  

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.

---

\(^1\) *A passion*] An agitation of mind.  
\(^2\) *Outrageous*] From the French *outré* and *agir*, corresponding to the Latin *ultra*, beyond, and *agere*, to act.  
\(^3\) *As*] This word is not here used as a relative pronoun; the sense being 'as that passion was which,' &c.  
\(^4\) *Double ducats*] Coins of twice the value of a ducat.  
\(^5\) *I reasoned*] I was discussing some matters.  
\(^6\) *In silence*] Within my own mind.  
\(^7\) *You were best*] It was best for you. See the Editor's *Julius Caesar*, p. 96, note 2.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part:
Bassanio told him, he would make some speed
Of his return: he answered—Do not so,
Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio, do not stay the very riping of the time;
And for the Jew's bond, which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love;
Be merry; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there:

And even there, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And, with affection wondrous sensible,
He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted.

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

Salar. Do we so. [Exeunt.

1 Slubber not] Do not huddle up your business.
2 Riping of the time] Stay as long as is requisite to mature all your prospects; or, await the most favourable opportunity.
3 Mind of love] Let it not intrude among the thoughts of love with which your mind will be engaged.
4 Ostents of love] Such generous manifestations of love as shall be suitable to the capacity in which you are a visitor there.
5 Affection wondrous sensible] Marvellously keen affection: most affectionate emotion.
6 Quicken his embraced heaviness] Enliven that dullness to which he clings; the melancholy which he indulges so strongly.
7 Do we so] An imperative verb of the first person, equivalent to 'let us do so.' See note 1, p. 131.
SCENE IX.—Belmont. A Room in Portia’s House.

Enter Nerissa, with a Servant.

Ner. Quick, quick, I pray thee, draw the curtain straight;
The prince of Arragon hath ta’en his oath,¹
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 contained,
Straight shall our nuptial rites be solemnized;
But if you fail, without more speech, my lord,
You must be gone from hence² immediately.

Ar. I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket ’t was I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage; lastly,
If I do fail in fortune of my choice,³
Immediately to leave you and be gone.

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

¹ Hath ta’en his oath] By swearing upon the book in church. See note 3, p. 40. The terms of the oath are specified in the next speech but one.
² From hence] An adverb used like a noun, and governed by a preposition. Compare for ever, till now, at once, &c.
³ In fortune of my choice] In the fortune which I myself choose.
Ar. And so have I addressed me¹: Fortune now² is
To my heart's hope! — Gold, silver, and base lead.

Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.

You shall look fairer, ere I give, or hazard.

What says the golden chest? ha! let me see:

Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.

What many men desire. — That many may be meant
By the fool multitude³, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach,⁴
Which pries not to th' interior, but, like the martlet,⁵
Builds in the weather⁶ on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.⁷

I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump⁸ with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.

¹ Addressed me] Prepared myself; disposed of myself.
² Fortune now] Success now to the hope of my heart!
³ By the fool multitude] In reference to; respecting. See note 3, p. 20.—That word many may be meant to refer to the undiscerning or witless multitude.—Many, a noun, in apposition to the demonstrative that; fool, an adjective to multitude, the meaning being the multitude composed of fools; compare fool gudgeon (note 7, p. 11), that is, the gudgeon which is the fool's prize,—which the most unskilful angler can easily catch.
⁴ Not learning more] Not understanding anything beyond what the too quickly pleased, easily beguiled eye informs them of.
⁵ Martlet] The martinet, or house-martin, a species of swallow.
⁶ In the weather] In the open air.—The martlet often builds its nest against a perpendicular wall, with generally a north or north-east aspect.
⁷ Even in the force] In direct exposure to the assaults of accident.
⁸ Jump] Be on a level.—To jump is to agree exactly; sometimes it means to risk or hazard.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;  
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:  

_Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves._

And well said too. For who shall go about  
To cozen fortune, and be honourable  
Without the stamp of merit! Let none presume  
To wear an undeserved dignity.  
O, that estates, degrees, and offices,  
Were not derived corruptly! and that clear honour  
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!  
How many then should cover that stand bare!  
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low peasantry would then be gleaned  
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour  
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times,  
To be new varnished! Well, but to my choice:  

_Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves._

I will assume desert:—Give me a key for this,  
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.  

_Por._ Too long a pause for that which you find there.

---

1 _To thee_ [Let me go or come to thee. See note 4, p. 131.]
2 _Go about to cozen_ [Seek opportunity to cheat; aim at cheating. Compare John vii. 19, 'Why go ye about to kill me?']
3 _Estates_ [Ranks.—Oh how it is to be desired that estates, &c.
4 _And that clear honour_ [And that honour amongst us were clear, that is, pure or genuine, being purchased, &c.
5 _Cover_ [How many should wear their hats who now stand uncovered before superiors.
6 _Would be gleaned_ [Would be found mixed with and would be separated from.
7 _Picked_ [Would be picked out among the neglected and degraded, to be adorned with the outward signs of dignity.
8 _Too long a pause_ [Viz. even the instant unlocking.]
SCENE IX.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.  71

Ar. What's here? the portrait of a blinking idiot, Presenting me a schedule? I will read it.— How much unlike art thou to Portia! How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!  

Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.

Did I deserve no more than a fool's head? Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Por. To offend, and judge, are distinct offices, And of opposed natures.

Ar. What is here?

The fire seven times tried this; 
Seven times tried that judgment is 
That did never choose amiss: 
Some there be that shadows kiss; 
Such have but a shadow's bliss; 
There be fools alive, I wis, 
Silvered o'er; and so was this.

1 Blinking] Peeping with twinkling eyes.
2 To offend and judge] You must not be both offender and judge, thus assuming two distinct and contrary capacities.
3 The fire] Fire is here used as a dissyllable; so is tried, which however, is monosyllabic in the line following. Shakspeare extends or contracts such words as suits the metre; and in this way we often find him requiring a dissyllabic pronunciation of the common terminations -tion, -sion, as in the line, 'Lie all unlocked to your occasions,' p. 14.
4 Seven times tried this] Tried this silver seven times.—The Psalmist (xii. 6) speaks of 'pure words, as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.'
5 I wis] This expression, Professor Craik says, 'ought to be written ywis or ywiss, corresponding as it does exactly to the modern German gewiss:'—'It is one word, and that an adverb, signifying certainly, probably.' It is commonly regarded as a verb of present tense, signifying I know, or as I deem.
6 So was this] So was this inanimate picture of one.
Take what wife you will to bed,
I will ever be your head: ¹
So begone; you are sped.

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

[Exeunt Arragon and Train.

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.² —
O these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom ³ by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy; ⁴—
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? ⁵

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate

¹ I will ever be your head] I, a fool's head, will ever be your representative.—There is allusion here to the husband being the head of the wife, and to the prince being now debarred from marrying.

² Thus hath the candle] Thus hath the dazzling attraction of the silver proved to him as the candle that singes the moth.—Portia adds this rhyming line in playful mimicry.

³ They have the wisdom] That is, fortunately for me.

⁴ No heresy] No false proverb. So in Fletcher's Wife for a Month, ii. 1: 'Marriage and hanging go by destiny.'

⁵ Here; what would my lord] Here is your lady, as you call her; what does my lord want?—a jesting freedom with the title my lady. So in Henry IV. Act ii. sc. 4, the hostess, addressing the Prince of Wales, says 'My lord the prince;' upon which he says, 'How now, my lady the hostess?'
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,
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.

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

---

1 *A young Venetian* Gratiano.
2 *Sensible regrets* Tangible tokens of respect; substantial greetings or salutations.
3 *To wit* From the Saxon verb, *witan*, to know. It now means 'that you may know,' or 'to let you know,' or 'namely;' corresponding to the Latin *scilicet*, i.e. *scire licet*, or to *videlicet* (viz.), i.e. *videre licet*.
4 *Commends* Commendings, or expressions of respect, and courteous words.
5 *Yet I have not* I have not yet, or never yet.
6 *Likely* Pleasing, attracting one's liking; so in Julius Caesar, iii. 3, 'Things unlikely charge my fantasy.'
7 *Fore-spurrer* Precursor, announcing messenger.
8 *High-day wit* A high-day is a day of special ceremony, a special holiday. See John xix. 31. Hence, in the Merry Wives, iii. 2, the host says of Fenton, 'he speaks holiday,' that is, 'in holiday terms,' according to Hotspur (1 Henry IV., Act i. Sc. 3).
9 *Bassanio, lord Love* O may it be Bassanio, lord Cupid, if it is agreeable to thy will.
ACT III.

SCENE I.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Solanio and Salarino.

Solan. 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.

Solan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that, as ever knapped ginger, or made her neighbours believe she wept.

1 Yet it lives The report still prevails there unchecked.

2 The Goodwins] The Goodwin sand lies opposite the coast of Kent; according to tradition, it was once an island forming the estate of Goodwin, Earl of Kent, and was destroyed by the sea in 1097. The sand was thought to possess a peculiarly "voracious and ingurgitating property," so that a ship of the largest size, happening to strike on it, would in a few days be entirely swallowed up.

3 Gossip] Gossip or gossip, is an Anglo-Saxon compound of God and sib, the latter word meaning akin or related; it originally denoted a sponsor at baptism, and has come to denote an idle news-teller, probably from the tattling conversation carried on among the gossips at the usual festive meeting after the baptism of a child.

4 Knapped ginger] Broke or crushed pieces of ginger to produce watering of the eyes for a pretence of weeping.—To knap is the same as to snap.
for the death of a third husband: But it is true,—without any slips 1 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.

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

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

Solan. Let me say Amën betimes, lest the devil cross my prayer 2; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.

Enter Shylock.

How now, Shylock? what news among the merchants?

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

Salar. That's certain. I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal. 3

Solan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledged; and then it is the complexion of them all to leave the dam. 4

Shy. She is damned for it. 5

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1 Slips] Slippings aside; digressions.
2 Cross my prayer] Thwart or obstruct my prayer.
3 The tailor] The parent-bird; the mother.—Salarino here jests very cruelly.
4 The complexion] The natural disposition of all birds when fledged. See note 1, p. 37.
5 Damned] It may be thought that this punning reference to the word dam is inconsistent with Shylock's present state of mind; but it was meant to express a wrathful not a jesting humour. See notes 1, p. 113, and 6, p. 119.
Salar. That's certain, if the devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel! ¹

Solan. Out upon it², old carrion! rebels it at these years?³

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 Rhenish⁴:— But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match⁵: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; a beggar, that was used to come so smug⁶ 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 million⁷; laughed at my losses,

¹ To rebel] An infinitive of exclamation.
² Out upon it] Away with your flesh and blood!—Out is here a kind of interjection; the phrase has reference to pronouncing sentence of expulsion upon anything.
³ At these years?] At your time of life?
⁴ Rhenish] Rhenish wine is of a very light colour.
⁵ Match] Connection. Jessica being a low match.
⁷ Half a million] From half a million ducats: adverbial to hindered. Half may be considered adjective to a million, as all is in the phrase all the world.
mocked at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies;—and what’s his reason? I am a Jew: Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions\(^1\), 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?\(^2\) revenge: If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance\(^3\) be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villany\(^4\) you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.\(^5\)

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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.

---

1. **Dimensions** Qualities of stature, as tallness, stoutness, &c.
2. **His humility** The meekness with which the Christian bears the wrong.
3. **Sufferance** Forbearance.
4. **The villany** The wickedness, as you call it, but which you nevertheless teach by your example.—Objective to execute.
5. **It shall go hard** However hard it may be for me, I will surpass you in revenge. See Matt. v. 38—48, 'An eye for an eye,' &c. So in Hamlet (last speech of Act iii.), 'It shall go hard but I will delve one yard below their mines.'
Enter Tubal.

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

[Exeunt Solanio, Salarino 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 how much is spent in the search: Why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no ill luck stirring but what lights o’ my shoulders; no sighs but o’ my breathing; no tears but o’ my shedding.

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

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

1 Till now] See note 2, p. 68.—All the calamity that has yet fallen upon our nation is as nothing compared with this.

2 In that] In the diamond.

3 So] So ends that endeavour.

4 Loss upon loss] The meaning here is not one loss after another, but loss arising out of loss; one loss having been the means of incurring the other.
SCENE I.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.  79

Tub.—hath an argosy cast away\(^1\); coming from Tripolis.

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

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

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

Tub. Your daughter spent in Genoa, as I heard, one night\(^2\), fourscore ducats!

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

Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors, in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose\(^3\) 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;\(^4\) Thou torturkest me, Tubal: it was my turquoise\(^5\); I had it of Leah, when I was a

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\(^1\) Hath an argosy cast away\] It would appear that one, if not more, of Antonio's argosies had really miscarried, and that thus there was a partial foundation for the report respecting the loss of all the ships. Towards the conclusion of the play, we learn that three of the argosies have 'richly come to harbour suddenly.'

\(^2\) One night\] Spent in one night.

\(^3\) Choose\] This is the word usually understood in such ellipses as 'he cannot but break.' Break is an infinitive: he cannot choose to do otherwise than to break.

\(^4\) Out upon her\] See note 1, p. 76.

\(^5\) Turquoise\] The French form of the word Turkois, which denotes a bluish-green gem brought from Persia. This stone was supposed to have the mysterious property of moving spontaneously
bachelor: I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.

Shy. Nay,¹ that's true, that's very true: Go, Tubal, fee me an officer, bespeak him a fortnight before; I will have the heart of him, if he forfeit; for were he out of Venice, I can make what merchandise I will: Go, Tubal, and meet me at our synagogue, go, good Tubal; at our synagogue, Tubal. [Exeunt.

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

Enter Bassanio, Portia, Gratiano, Nerissa, and Attendants. The caskets are set out.

Por. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two, Before you hazard²; for, in choosing wrong,³ I lose your company; therefore, forbear a while:

when its possessor was in danger from some impending calamity; it was also imagined to be so sympathetic as to lose lustre when the wearer was ill or sorrowful; and it was even credited with the power of promoting love's continuance, and of reconciling alienated friends. Shylock mentions his having had the turquoise of Leah when he was a bachelor, to signify how dear it was in his esteem, and how long he had preserved it. He would not have given it for as many monkeys as might fill a wilderness.

¹ Nay] The negative import of this word here has reference to there being no necessity of urging a thing so certain.—In the preceding dialogue Shakspeare has ingeniously shown us the Jew swayed alternately by avarice and revenge.

² Before you hazard] An adverbial clause.—In such phraseology as this, before is really a preposition governing a noun clause, but is generally called a conjunction.

³ In choosing wrong] In your choosing wrongly is involved my loss of your society.
There's something tells me, (but it is not love,) I would not lose you; and you know yourself, Hate counsels not in such a quality: But lest you should not understand me well, (And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,) I would detain you here some month or two, Before you venture for me. I could teach you How to choose right, but then I am forsworn; So will I never be: so may you miss me; But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin, That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes, They have o'erlooked 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;

1 *There's something tells me*  There is something in my mind which tells me I am unwilling to lose you.—There is a beautiful suggestive delicacy in this way of speaking, and in the parenthetic reserve 'but it is not love.'

2 *In such a quality*  And yet you know that it cannot be hatred which makes promptings of that kind.

3 *Understand me well*  Lest your knowledge of me should be too scanty to justify you in making the hazard you intend, I would detain you, &c.; and yet a maiden cannot utter her thoughts freely so as to make known to any other than herself what she is.

4 *Then I am*  In doing so I should be.

5 *So may you*  And, accordingly, there is the chance that you may.

6 *That I had*  Namely, wish that I had.

7 *Beshrew your eyes*  A plague of your eyes, they have overlooked me with a bewitching gaze.—There is here an allusion to the popular superstition regarding the enchanting power of the glance of a witch or a fairy.—In Merry Wives, v. 5, Pistol uses *o'erlooked* in the sense of bewitched.

8 *Divided me*  Made two persons of me.
And so, though yours, not yours.\(^1\)—Prove it so,\(^2\)
Let fortune go to hell for it,—not I.
I speak too long; but 't is to peize\(^3\) 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\(^4\) there is mingled with your love.

_Bass._ None, but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear the enjoying of my love:
There may as well be amity and life
'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

_Por._ Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak anything.

_Bass._ Promise me life, and I'll confess the truth.

_Por._ Well, then, confess, and live.

_Bass._ Confess, and love,\(^5\)

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 locked in one of them;
If you do love me, you will find me out.

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\(^1\) *Though yours, not yours*] Though yours by my heart's giving, yet not yours in actual possession.

\(^2\) *Prove it so*] Let the case be thus argued in defence of his right to claim my hand who has my heart, and let fortune bear the penalty of perjury, not me. The same thought occurs in B. Jonson's _Silent Woman_.

\(^3\) *To peize*] To poise; to keep the time hanging on.

\(^4\) *Confess what treason*] Alluding to the infliction of the rack employed to extort confession of treason.

\(^5\) *Confess and love*] Had you bid me confess and love, you would have expressed the whole of my confession.
SCENE II.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.  

Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof.
Let music sound, while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music:<sup>1</sup> 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:<sup>2</sup>
To a new-crowned monarch: such it is,
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day,
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,<sup>3</sup>
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,<sup>4</sup>
With bleared visages, come forth to view
The issue of the exploit. Go, Hercules,

<sup>1</sup> *Fading in music*  Making his departure in the midst of music, as the swan is said to sing at the approach of death.

<sup>2</sup> *When true subjects bow*  This refers to her becoming an obedient wife to Bassanio when he is her newly-installed lord.

<sup>3</sup> *Now he goes*  Now Bassanio goes to the trial with no less dignity of mien, but with far greater love, than young Hercules, when that hero rescued the virgin Hesione, whom bewailing Troy was obliged to surrender to the sea-monster.—Laomédon, king of Troy, having offended Neptune, the sea-god threatened the ruin of Troy by an inundation, unless Laomedon should sacrifice his daughter Hesione, who, accordingly, (like Andromeda whom Perseus had delivered,) was fastened to a rock on the sea-shore, to become the prey of a sea-monster. Hercules did not show much generosity in rescuing Hesione, for he demanded of her father, as a recompense, a valuable pair of horses.

<sup>4</sup> *Dardanian wives*  The Trojan women.—The word *wives* was formerly not restricted to denote married women.
Live thou, I live:—With much much more dismay
I view the fight, than thou that mak' st the fray.

Music, whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself.

SONG.

1. Tell me where is fancy bred,
   Or in the heart, or in the head?^  
   How begot, how nowished?
   Reply, reply.

2. It is engendered in the eyes,
   With gazing fed; and fancy dies  
   In the cradle where it lies:
   Let us all ring fancy's knell;  
   I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All. Ding, dong, bell.

Bass. So may the outward shows be least themselves;  

1 Live thou, I live If thou savest thy own life, in this attempt to release me, thou savest mine.
2 Mak' st the fray] Riskest the encounter with fortune.
3 Or in the heart] Whether is it in the heart or in the head that fancy grows?—By fancy is here denoted illusion; the song having reference to that beguilement by which suitors preferring the gold and silver were influenced.
4 Fancy dies] As illusion is produced through the eye being captivated with false show, so is it soon dissipated by the eye beholding the vanity of what at first appeared so desirable.
5 Ring fancy's knell] This implies Portia's desire that in Bassanio's case fancy may have no power to mislead; and possibly the dramatist intended that Bassanio hearing the song might feel encouraged by it in his inclination to make choice of the leaden casket.
6 Be least themselves] Be as unlike as possible to what they really are;—this paradoxical mode of expression is quite in Shakespeare's manner: compare what Iago says of himself in Othello, i. 1, 'I am not what I am.' Least, meaning in least propriety, is adverbial to be.
The world is still 1 deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being seasoned 2 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, 3
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple 4, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts. 5
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stayers 6 of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk, 7
And these assume but valour's excrement, 8
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest 9 that wear most of it:

1 Still] Ever. See note 1, p. 5.
2 Seasoned] Recommended with fair words or eloquent advocacy, hides the appearance of evil.
3 Bless it] Give it a character of sanctity, and justify it with some passage of Scripture.
4 So simple] So unmixed; simply and entirely consisting of vice.
5 His outward parts] Its external aspect.
6 Stayers] Barriers or supports.
7 Livers white as milk] See note 5, p. 37.
8 Excrement] The word here means outgrowth, that which grows on the outside, referring to the beards of Hercules and Mars.
9 Making them lightest] There is allusion here to the weight of false hair worn by ladies in the time of Elizabeth, and making them light because of its light colour. It is in compliment to Elizabeth, whose hair was of a sandy colour, that Shakspeare makes fair hair a constituent of beauty.
So are those crisped snaky golden locks,
Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,
Upon supposed fairness,⁠¹ often known
To be the dowry of a second head,
The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.
Thus ornament is but the guiled ² shore
To a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf,
Veiling an Indian beauty ³; in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas ⁴, I will none of thee;

¹ Upon supposed fairness] On the heads of women who are thereby imagined to be fair.—So are those golden locks often known to be the possession of a second head, the skull on which they were grown having been shorn of them at death.—It appears that the dead were often thus deprived of ‘golden tresses’ to adorn the living. Shakspeare, in his 69th sonnet, speaks of a former time—

‘When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
Before these bastard signs of fair were borne,
Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
Before the golden tresses of the dead,
The right of sepulchres, were shorn away.
To live a second life on second head,
Ere beauty’s dead fleece made another gay.’

² Guiled] Characterised by guile; beguiling.

³ An Indian beauty] The swarthy complexion of an Indian beauty, that is of one who really is not beautiful.—This expression is merely an antiphrasis like that referred to by Puttenham in his Arte of Poesie (1589),—saying ‘to a Negro or woman blackemore, In good sooth ye are a faire one.’ Montaigne (Essays, ii. 12, Florio’s Translation) says of beauty: ‘The Indians describe it black and swarthy, with blabbered thick lips, with a broad and flat nose.’

⁴ Midas] A king of Phrygia, who prayed that whatever he touched might become gold, and who, in consequence of Bacchus answering his prayer, found that his very food was thus transmuted, so that he was glad to petition the god to withdraw the gift.
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge 1
'Tween man and man. But thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest 2 than dost promise aught,
Thy paleness moves me more than eloquence,
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

Por. How all the other passions 3 fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shudd'ring fear, and green-eyed jealousy! 4
O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,
In measure rain thy joy, scant this excess;
I feel too much thy blessing 5, make it less,
For fear I surfeit! 6

Bass. What find I here?  
[Opening the leaden casket.
Fair Portia's counterfeit! 7 What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes!
Or whether 8, riding on the balls of mine,

1 Drudge] Silver, passing from hand to hand, as a general drudge in the service of men.—The epithet pale has reference to the hue of silver, and at the same time to the complexion of an over-wrought drudge.

2 Rather threatenest] The inscription on the lead casket was a warning; those on the other caskets were promises.

3 How all the other passions] O how every other passion by which I have been actuated vanishes.—Portia means that the joy which Bassanio has just wished for has dispelled anxious uncertainty, &c.

4 Green-eyed jealousy] In Othello, iii. 3, jealousy is called 'the green-eyed monster.' It is like the sleepless dragon so often mentioned in fables, as continually watching some precious treasure.

5 I feel too much thy blessing] The same figurative description of superabundance occurs in Scripture. See Mal. iii. 10.

6 For fear I surfeit] An elliptical construction:—for fear of the risk that I may surfeit.

7 Counterfeit] Image or portrait. So in Hamlet a portrait is called a 'counterfeit presentment,' iii. 4.

8 Whether] This word, which is really an interrogatively used
Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips, Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs The painter plays the spider, and hath woven A golden mesh, to entrap the hearts of men 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 unfurnished. Yet look, how far The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow In underpraising it, so far this shadow Doth limp behind the substance.—Here's the scroll, The continent and summary of my fortune.

distributed pronoun, is here parenthetic, and means 'whether of the two things is the real case; whether do these eyes move, or do they only seem to move by their image being impressed on my own moving eye-balls.'

1 Parted with sugar breath] Looking as if the breath of life were passing between them.

2 A golden mesh] A web of golden threads. See note 2, p. 16.

3 Her eyes] An exclamatory nominative: compare Zech. i. 5, Your fathers—where are they? and the prophets—do they live for ever?

4 Having] That is, he having: the nominative absolute.

5 Unfurnished] That is, with the other eye, or rather with the other features by which it ought to be accompanied.

6 Yet look] This indicates a reference to Portia herself standing near.—But behold, in proportion as the realities of my praise fail of doing justice to this picture, so does this picture fail of coming up to Portia herself.—Compare the language of the Psalter, (ciii. 12,) 'Look how wide the east is from the west: so far hath he set our sins from us.'

7 Continent] That which contains or comprehends.

8 Chance as fair] The meaning, perhaps, is—'Who chance as is fair and choose as is true;' that is, who submit to the fair condition
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 confirmed, signed, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am. Though, for myself alone,
I would not be ambitious in my wish;
To wish myself much better; yet, for you,
of giving and hazarding all you have, and who make your choice
according to the true meaning of love and marriage.

1 Hold your fortune Consider you have made a blissful choice.
2 I come by note In reference to the word claim the scroll is
called a note; it is, however, a note which not only entitles the
holder to receive a payment, but also obliges him to make one; that
is, it expresses his right to claim Portia, and his duty to give her a
kiss while he claims her.
3 A prize A prize competition. contest for a reward
4 As doubtful As being doubtful.
5 Where I stand I is emphatic; alluding to Bassanio's saying
'so stand I.'
6 I would not be ambitious It would be no improper ambition
in me, did I, simply for my own sake, wish myself much better than
I am.
I would be trebled twenty times myself;¹ A thousand times more fair, Ten thousand times more rich; That, only to stand high in your account, I might in virtues, beauties, livings²; friends, Exceed account.³ But the full sum of me Is sum of nothing⁴; which, to term in gross⁵, Is an unlesson'd girl, unschooled, unpractised: Happy in this⁶, she is not yet so old But she may learn; happier than this, She is not bred so dull but she can learn; Happiest of all⁷ is, that her gentle spirit Commits itself to yours to be directed,⁸ As from her lord, her governor, her king. Myself, and what is mine, to you and yours⁹ Is now converted. But now¹⁰ I was the lord Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,

¹ Myself] I wish I were myself trebled twenty times; myself means 'whatever I am worth in virtues.'
² Livings] Sources of income.
³ Exceed account] Exceed description; be indescribably precious.
⁴ Sum of nothing] The reading in both the original quartos is 'sum of something;' but the word nothing seems to correspond best with the negative characteristics that follow.
⁵ To term in gross] To describe in the aggregate, amounts only to the negative character of unlessoned, unschooled, unpractised.
⁶ Happy in this] The word happy here means fortunate, or having an advantage.
⁷ Happiest of all] This superlative does not qualify girl, but means what is the most fortunate circumstance.
⁸ To be directed] To take or receive direction.
⁹ To you and yours] Myself is now to give place to you, and what is mine is now to be called yours.
¹⁰ But now] But this moment, I was, as it were, the lord, &c., and even now, just at the same instant, this house, &c. See note 4, p. 6; and compare Milton, P. L. i. 177.
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; ¹
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage ² to exclaim on you.

Bass. Madam, you have bereft me of all words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins;
And there is such confusion in my powers,
As, after some oration fairly spoke
By a beloved prince, there doth appear ³
Among the buzzing pleased multitude;
Where every something ⁴, being blent together,
Turns to a wild of nothing, save ⁵ of joy,
Expressed and not expressed: But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from henee;
O, then be bold to say, Bassanio's dead.

Ner. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That ⁶ have stood by, and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy;—Good joy, my lord and lady!

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

¹ I give them with this ring] Bassanio thus obtains confirmation, sign, and ratification, as he had desired.
² Be my vantage] Be for me a strong and sufficient reason to cry out against you; be a vantage ground from which I may pour forth reproaches on you.
³ Doth appear] The nominative to this verb is the relative pronoun as.
⁴ Every something] The distributive adjective every is here used with the meaning of the collective all.
⁵ Save] Here used as a conjunction connecting the phrases of nothing and of joy.
⁶ That] The antecedent to this relative is involved in the word our.
For I am sure you can wish none from me: ¹
And, when your honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

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

_Gra._ I thank your lordship; you have got me one.

My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid;
You loved, I loved; for intermission ³
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there;
And so did mine too, as the matter falls:
For wooing here, until I sweat again, ⁴
And swearing, till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last,—if promise last,—
I got a promise of this fair one here,
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.⁶

_Por._ Is this true, Nerissa?

_Ner._ Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.⁷

_Bass._ And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?

_Gra._ Yes, faith,⁸ my lord.

¹ _Wish none from me_ Gratiano says this in playful reference to the double meaning of _from_; you can wish no joy to be kept from me; you will not begrudge my having Nerissa for a wife.

² _So_ A frequent meaning of _so_ in the old writers.

³ _Intermission_ Delay.

⁴ _Sweat again_ The word _again_ used in this manner means _in opposition, or in the endeavour to overcome_; it is still in provincial use for _against_.

⁵ _Provided that_ An abridgment for _it being provided that._

⁶ _Achieved_ Should obtain or win for you.

⁷ _So you stand pleased withal_ If you have no objection to my saying it.

⁸ _Faith_ In faith; sincerely: a play on Bassanio's question.
Scene II. The Merchant of Venice.

Bass. Our feast shall be much honoured in your marriage.

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

Enter Lorenzo, Jessica, and Solanio.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 If that the youth] If, in my newly acquired position here, I may take the liberty to, &c. See note 1, p. 60.
2 To have seen] It was not my purpose to visit.—After expressions of intention, expectation, and the like, the present infinitive is usually more correct than the perfect; but see the Editor's First Book of Milton, note on l. 40.
3 Past] A preposition.—In spite of all refusal.
Nerissa, cheer yon stranger; bid her welcome.
Your hand, Solanio. What's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant⁴, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.²

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

Por. There are some shrewd³ 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 constant⁴ man. What, worse and worse?—
With leave, Bassanio: I am half yourself,
And I must freely have the half of anything
That this same paper brings you.

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

¹ Royal merchant] Royal means here pre-eminent among merchants.—Sir Thomas Gresham was called 'the royal merchant' on account of his princely wealth and munificence, and partly, perhaps, from the distinction with which he was treated by Queen Elizabeth, who frequently consulted him with reference to commercial matters.
² Won the fleece] See note 3, p. 16.
⁴ Constant] Sober-minded.
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, Solanio? Have all his ventures failed? What, not one hit? From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England, From Lisbon, Barbary, and India,— And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch Of merchant-marring rocks?

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

1 *Mere enemy*] The original sense of *mere* is pure, unmixed.—I have bound over my friend to his very enemy.

2 *The paper as the body*] The paper of it being as, &c.

3 *Hit*] Succeeded; literally, hit the mark.

4 *Touch*] Contact, encounter.—To have vessels from Tripolis, &c., and not one to steer clear of those rocks that are so injurious to merchants.

5 *Impeach the freedom*] Impeach the state of a violation of those laws by which it engages to protect the rights of strangers.

6 *Magnificoes of greatest port*] Grandees of greatest importance.

7 *Persuaded*] Tried or used persuasion.

8 *Envious*] Malicious.
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,
If law, authority, and power deny not,\(^1\)
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 conditioned and unwearied\(^2\) spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more\(^3\) appears,
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me\(^4\), three thousand ducats.

Por. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,
Before a friend of this description
Shall lose a hair\(^5\) through Bassanio's fault.
First, go with me to church, and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia's side

\(^1\) Deny not\] Do not refuse to sanction it, and interfere to forbid it.
\(^2\) Unwearied\] This word is out of grammatical propriety, but may be allowed to borrow a superlative meaning from the adverb best.
\(^3\) Ancient Roman honour\] This is appropriately said with reference to modern Italy.

\(^4\) For me\] Bassanio uses this expression to modify the phrase owes he.

\(^5\) Before a friend shall lose a hair\] Before, a conjunction. See note 2, p. 80.—The word hair is here used as a dissyllable. See note 3, p. 71; also 1 Kings i. 52.
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over;¹
When it is paid, bring your true friend along:
My maid Nerissa and myself, meantime,
Will live as maids and widows. Come, away;
For you shall hence upon your wedding-day:
Bid your friends welcome, show a merry cheer:²
Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [Reads.]

"Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit³; and since, in paying it, it is impossible that I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

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

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

SCENE III.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Shylock, Salarino, Antonio and Gaoler.

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

¹ Over] Adverb to counted understood.
² Cheer] Countenance: from the Italian ciera.
³ Forfeit] A perfect participle, for forfeited.
⁴ You and I] A common colloquial error, in the use of I for me. See line 2, p. 82.
Ant. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond; I have sworn an oath that I will have my bond: Thou call'dst me dog, before thou hadst a cause; But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs: The duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder, Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so fond To come abroad with him at his request.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

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

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. He seeks my life; his reason well I know; I oft delivered from his forfeitures Many that have at times made moan to me; Therefore he hates me.

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

Ant. The duke cannot deny the course of law,

1 So fond] So easy-tempered, or soft.
2 Dull-eyed] Viz., through sorrows pity.
3 Christian intercessors] That is, the duke, the merchants, &c. referred to in the preceding scene.
4 Kept] Dwelt, or associated.
5 Forfeitures] The penalties of exorbitant interest under which he bound those who could not meet his claims, and who solicited further credit.
6 To hold] To hold good; or to be carried out.
For the commodity[^1] that strangers have
With us in Venice; if it be denied,
'Twill much impeach[^2] the justice of the state,
Since that[^3] the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go.
These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,[^4]
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![^5] [Exeunt.

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**SCENE IV.** — Belmont. A Room in Portia’s House.

_Enter Portia, Nerissa, Lorenzo, Jessica, and Balthazar._

_Lor._ Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit
Of godlike amity[^5]; which appears most strongly

[^1]: For the commodity — On account of the accommodation or convenience: the arrangement by which Venice affords to foreigners great pecuniary facilities.

[^2]: 'Twill much impeach — The old copies have 'Will much impeach,' which makes it difficult to extract a good sense from the passage.—If the course of law be disallowed or resisted, it will expose the state to the imputation of gross injustice.

[^3]: Since that — It was formerly customary to indicate by the word that the substantive character of clauses following the words since, after, for, &c.; these words being really prepositions, although now, when they govern clauses, they are usually and conveniently regarded as conjunctions. Compare what is said in note 2, p. 80, and in note 1, p. 60. 'The trade and profit' signifies that part of the community which brings trade and profit to the city.

[^4]: So 'bated me — So reduced, wasted, or emaciated me.

[^5]: Godlike amity — You regard with a noble and just estimation the godlike spirit of friendship, as is strongly proved by your con-
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.¹

Por. I never did repent for doing good;
Nor shall not now: for in companions ²
That do converse and waste ³ the time together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke ⁴ of love,
There must be needs a like proportion
Of lineaments ⁵, 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 bestowed,
In purchasing the semblance ⁶ of my soul

senting thus to endure Bassanio’s absence on account of his friend
Antonio.

¹ Enforce you] Supply to be.—Can have power to make you.
² For in companions] The word for introduces a reason why
Portia says ‘nor shall not now,’ that is, and much less shall I do so
on the present occasion.
³ Waste] The word here means spend.
⁴ An equal yoke] The allusion is to two horses or oxen, of similar
appearance, yoked together.
⁵ A like proportion of lineaments] A similarity in those features
that form the mind’s expression in the face.—With regard to the
moral resemblance between friends, Cicero, (De Amicitia,) adopting
the definition of Aristotle, calls a true friend ‘alter idem,’ a second
self, and says ‘Amicum qui intuetur, tanquam exemplar aliquod
intuetur sui.’
⁶ Purchasing the semblance] Redeeming (as it were from pur
gatory) the counterpart of him who is my soul, from a state of sub-
jection to hellish punishment.—From out is for out from. See
note 1, p. 114.
From out the state of hellish cruelty!  
This comes too near the praising of myself;  
Therefore, no more of it: hear other things.  
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands  
The husbandry and manage [1] of my house,  
Until my lord's return. For mine own part,  
I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow,  
To live in prayer and contemplation,  
Only attended by Nerissa here,  
Until her husband and my lord's return;  
There is a monastery two miles off,  
And there we will abide. I do desire you  
Not to deny this imposition; [2]  
The which my love, and some necessity,  
Now lays upon you.

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

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

  Lor. Fair thoughts [3] 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 Jes. and Lor.

Now Balthazar,  
As I have ever found thee honest, true,  
So let me find thee still: Take this same letter,  
And use thou all the endeavour of a man

[3] Fair thoughts] May good or agreeable thoughts.—The verb attend is used here optatively.
In speed to Padua; see thou render this
Into my cousin’s hand, doctor Bellario; 1
And look 2, what notes and garments he doth give thee—
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed
Unto the tranect 3, 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.4

Ner. Shall they see us?

Por. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplished
With that we lack.5 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,6

1 Bellario] A parenthetic nominative, explaining cousin’s.
2 Look] Mark me, or observe, whatever papers, &c. he shall give
you, bring them with all imaginable speed.
3 Tranect] Probably a misprint for trajec t (Fr. trajet, It. traghetti); a place of crossing, a ferry. Coryat, in his ‘Crudities’
(1611), p. 168, says, ‘there are in Venice thirteen ferries or passages, which they commonly call Traghetti, where passengers may be trans-
ported in a gondola to what place of the city they will.’
4 Of us] Of us seeing them.
5 What we lack] Those manly qualities which do not naturally
belong to women.
6 Between the change] Between the two different voices of man
and hoy.—This is a reference to the first physiological change, or
cracking of the tone, of the voice: the second, viz. that which occurs
in old age, is referred to in As you Like It, ii. 7, where Jaques, in
describing the seven stages of life, speaks of the ‘big manly voice
turning again toward childish treble.’
With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps ¹
Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies,²
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died
I could not do withal ³; then I 'll repent,⁴
And wish, for all that, that I had not killed them:
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
That men shall swear I have discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth.—I have within my mind
A thousand raw ⁶ tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.
But come, I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach ⁷, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away.
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.  [Exeunt.

¹ _Turn two mincing steps_] Convert two of the usual short steps of a lady's walk into one manly stride.
² _Quaint lies_] Artfully framed lies (respecting) how, &c.
³ _I could not do withal_] That is, they fell sick and died whom I could not agree with.—Gifford thinks that the expression signifies 'I could not help it;' but this does not seem consistent with the context. See note 2, p. 125.
⁴ _I'll repent_] I will express regret.
⁵ _That_] Shakspeare frequently, as in the present instance, uses that to mean so that.
⁶ _Raw_] Youthful; savouring of youthful levity.—A Jack was a common name for a knave, or pert youth.
⁷ _In my coach_] This is one of Shakspeare's anachronistic liberties, for coaches were but of recent introduction in the poet's own day. He even makes Ophelia, in Hamlet, call for her coach.
Enter Launcelot and Jessica.

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

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

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

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 enough before; e’en as many as could well live, one by another: This making of Christians will raise the price of hogs! if we grow all to be pork-eaters we shall not shortly have a rasher on the coals for money.

1 I fear you) I fear for you.
2 Agitation] The clown’s blunder for cogitation.
3 Bastard hope] Spurious, illegitimate hope.
4 Charybdis] Scylla was a dangerous rock and whirlpool on the coast of Italy, opposite to which was the whirlpool Charybdis, near Messina, on the coast of Sicily. The danger of attempting to steer between these gave rise to the proverb which Philip Gualtier, a modern Latin poet, expressed in the words ‘Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim.’
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. Go in, sirrah; bid them prepare for dinner.

Laun. That is done, sir; they have all stomachs.¹

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.²

Lor. Will you cover then, sir?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither; I know my duty.³

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion! ⁴ 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.

¹ They have all stomachs] They all have appetites, and therefore are prepared for dinner.

² Cover is the word] Cover is the word that expresses what is wanted.—To cover, or to lay covers on, the table, is, to place knife, fork, and spoon (what the French call couvert,) on the table for each of the company.

³ I know my duty] Launcelot here jests with another meaning of to cover, viz., to wear one's hat;—I know my duty as a servant in the presence of his master.

⁴ Quarrelling with occasion] Wrestling words from their applicability to the occasion.
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 humors and conceits shall
govern. [Exit Laun.

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

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of heaven here on earth;
And if on earth he do not mean it, then

---

1 For the table] As regards the table.—The table served in, and
the meat covered, is, of course, Launcelot's absurd transposition.

2 O dear discretion] O dear discrimination, how this fellow's words
are invested with meanings.

3 Good words] A literal translation of the French bons mots, words
adapted for quibbling.—An army of good words ready for contradic-
tion or opposition.

4 A many fools] The expression a many is now only provincial,
though the corresponding expression a few is national and reputable,
English.—A great many fools who occupy a higher position in the
world, furnished as he is, who on account of a word that gives scope
for quibbling, disown, or resist, the intended meaning.

5 Past all expressing] Beyond all that language can express.—
This is an adverbal phrase modifying like; past being a preposition
governing a participial noun.

6 He do not mean it] The sense here is considered obscure; but we
apprehend that it is elucidated by regarding mean it as signifying 'ob-
serve the middle course of moderate attachment to earthly objects.'—
It is highly requisite that Bassanio live an upright life, for he pos-
In reason he should never come to heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawned with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband

Hast thou of me, as she is for a wife.

Jes. Nay, but ask my opinion too of that.  

Lor. I will anon; first, let us go to dinner.

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

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

Jes. Well, I'll set you forth.  

[Exeunt.]

sesses such a treasure in Portia as makes the world a heavenly
paradise to him, instead of a scene of cares and trials; and if on earth
he do not moderate his pleasures, it is not to he expected that he
should hereafter be rewarded with admission into heaven.—There
is, perhaps, some reference intended to the parable of Dives and La-
zarus, 'Son, remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good
things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted,
and thou art tormented.' Luke xvi. 25.—The above interpretation
seems to reflect some light on that passage in Othello, i. 1, where Iago
speaks of Cassio as 'a fellow almost damned in a fair wife.'

1 My opinion too of that] The word too refers to Lorenzo having
just asked Jessica's opinion of 'lord Bassanio's wife.'

2 A stomach] The word is here sportively used in the double sense
of appetite, and humour or inclination.

3 Howsoe'er thou speakest] Whatever be the manner in which you
speak of me, I shall digest it along with the rest of my dinner.—To
digest involves the import of receiving and putting up with.

4 I'll set you forth] I'll tell you what you are.
ACT IV.

SCENE I.—Venice. *A Court of Justice.*

*Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes; Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Salarino, Solanio, and others.*

Duke. What, is Antonio here?

Ant. Ready, so please your grace.

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

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

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

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

*Enter Shylock.*

Duke. Make room, and let him stand before our face. Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too, That thou but lead’st this fashion of thy malice To the last hour of act; and then, ’tis thought

1 *Lead’st this fashion*] Carriest on, or continuest this show of a malicious purpose, only till the final hour for execution shall arrive.
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse 1 more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty:
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
(Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,)
Thou wilt not only lose 2 the forfeiture,
But, touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enough to press a royal merchant 3 down,
And pluck commiseration 4 of his state
From brassy bosoms, and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never trained
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

Shy. I have possessed your grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn,
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter 5, and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh, than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that.
But say, it is my humour: Is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig; 6

1 Remorse] Relenting; pity.
2 Lose] Dispense with; let go; consent to lose.
3 A royal merchant] See note 1, p. 94.
4 Pluck commiseration] Extort pity for his condition.
5 Your charter] The charter by which you define and guarantee the rights of strangers.
6 Love not] That cannot endure, have a peculiar antipathy to, a roasted pig being brought on the table.
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat: 1—

Now, for your answer: 2—

As there is no firm reason to be rendered,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate, and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow 3 thus

A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

Bass. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current 4 of thy cruelty.

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

Bass. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

Shy. Hates any man 5 the thing he would not kill?

1 Are mad] Are frantic if a cat come near them; cannot endure the presence of a cat.—Bertram in All’s Well, iv. 3, says, ‘I could endure anything before but a cat;’ and Dr. Bucknill, commenting on this passage, in his ‘Medical Knowledge of Shakspeare, p. 104, says, the antipathy to cats ‘is one of the most unquestionable and curious of the emotions of repulsion.’ On the subject of antipathies, the Sixth Meditation in Dr. Donne’s ‘Devotions’ (3rd edit. 1626) contains the following passage:—‘A man that is not afraid of a lion is afraid of a cat; not afraid of starving, and yet is afraid of some joint of meat at the table, presented to feed him; not afraid of the sound of drums and trumpets and shot, and those which they seek to drown—the last cries of men, and is afraid of some particular harmonious instrument: so much afraid, that with any of these the enemy might drive this man, otherwise valiant enough, out of the field.’ So in Montaigne’s Essays, i. 25 (Florio’s Translation), ‘I have seen some to startle at the smell of an apple more than at the shot of a piece; some to be frightened with a mouse,’ &c.

2 Your answer] My answer to you.

3 That I follow] So can I give no reason that, or why, I follow. The noun clause here is governed by for, or respecting, understood.

4 To excuse the current] In defence of the persisting course.

5 Hates any man] Does any man really hate any creature, and yet feel unwilling that it should be killed?—Compare 1 John, iii. 15.
SCENE I.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Bass. Every offence 1 is not a hate at first.

Shy. What, wouldst thou have a serpent sting thee twice?

Ant. I pray you, think you question 2 with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main flood 3 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 4 no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that (than which what's harder?)
His Jewish heart.—Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But, with all brief and plain conveniency, 5
Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

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

Duke. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rend'ring none? 6

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts, 7

1 Offence] Taking of offence, or feeling of dislike.
2 Think you question] Consider that you are expostulating.
3 Main flood] Ocean tide.
4 To make] That they make.
5 Conveniency] Conformity to the necessity of circumstances.
6 Rendering none] When thou renderest none to others.—Compare James i 13, 'He shall have judgment without mercy,' &c.
7 Parts] Duties or employments.
Because you bought them:—Shall I say to you,
Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be seasoned with such viands? You will answer,
The slaves are ours:—So do I answer you.
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine; and I will have it:
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment: answer, shall I have it?
   Duke. Upon my power ¹, I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,²
Come here to-day.
   Solan. My lord, here stays without
'A messenger with letters from the doctor,
New come from Padua.
   Duke. Bring us the letters. Call the messenger.
   Bass. Good cheer, Antonio! What, man! courage yet!
The Jew shall have my flesh, blood, bones, and all,
Ere thou shalt lose for me one drop of blood.
   Ant. I am a tainted wether ³ of the flock,
Meetest for death; the weakest kind of fruit
Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me:
You cannot better be employed, Bassanio,
Than to live still, and write mine epitaph.

¹ Upon my power] In virtue of my prerogative.
² Whom I have sent for] It is dramatically allowable to suppose Portia to have known, by some means or other, that the Duke had been advised to send for her cousin Bellario.
³ A tainted wether] Tainted means dishonoured, arraigned, attainted, besides its literal meaning, stained; 'marked to die.'
Enter Nerissa, dressed like a lawyer's clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?

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

[B Presents a letter.

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?

Shy. To cut the forfeiture from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,

Thou mak'st thy knife keen; but no metal can,

No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keeness

Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?

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

Gra. O, be thou damned, inexorable dog!

And for thy life let justice be accused.

Thou almost mak'st me waver in my faith,

'To hold opinion with Pythagoras,

That souls of animals infuse themselves

Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit

Governed a wolf, who, hanged for human slaughter,

Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallowed dam,

Infused itself in thee; for thy desires

1 On thy soul] From this pun, suggested by Shylock whetting the knife on the sole of his shoe, it would appear that sole and soul were pronounced somewhat differently in Shakspeare's time. Gratiano means that the Jew's heart is hard as a whetstone.

2 Inexorable] The old copies have inexcrerable.

3 For thy life] For permitting thee to live.

4 Pythagoras] This sage of Samos held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

5 Governed] Inhabited and actuated a wolf, who being hanged for having destroyed human life.—Who is a nominative absolute. In Massinger's Parliament of Love, iv. 2, one describes himself as possessed by 'the soul of some fierce tigress, or a wolf's new hanged for human slaughter.'

6 Thy unhallowed dam] The womb of thy unhallowed mother.
Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

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

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

Duke. You hear the learned Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the doctor come.—

1 From off] For off from. See note 6, p. 100.
2 At the receipt] At the time of my receipt.
3 Balthazar] The name of the servant sent by Portia to Bellario.
4 To fill up] To fulfil the purpose of your request, in lieu of my personal appearance.
5 To let him lack] By causing to be withheld from him the regard due to reverend doctors of the law.
6 I take it] I apprehend.
Enter Portia, dressed like a Doctor of Laws.

Give me your hand. Came you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You are welcome: take your place.

Are you acquainted with the difference

That holds this present question in the court?

Por. I am informed thoroughly 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?

[To Ant.]

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

Por. The quality of mercy is not strained;

It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,

Upon the place beneath: it is twice blessed;

---

1 The difference The difference of opinion upon which is held this controversy or debate.

2 In such rule In such legal order.

3 Within his danger Within his legal power to hurt you; under a dangerous liability to him.

4 Must I Must is emphatic.

5 Strained Called into exercise by compulsion.

6 The place beneath This is beautifully expressive of the condition of one who lies at the mercy of another.

7 Is twice blessed Involves a twofold blessing.—Shakspeare often uses the passive participle actively.
It blesseth him that gives 1, and him that takes;
'T is mightiest 2 in the mightiest; it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown:
His sceptre shows 3 the force of temporal power,
The attribute 4 to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear 5 of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway,
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show 6 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; 7
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 8, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

1 *Him that gives*] ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’
Acts xx. 35. See also Prov. xi. 17.
2 *Mightiest*] Noblest in those who have most power to hurt or punish.
3 *Shows*] Represents.
4 *The attribute*] It being the token of that awe and majesty
in which, &c.
5 *Dread and fear*] This, like the phrase ‘void and empty’ is an
example of a redundancy of speech very common with Shakspeare.
6 *Show*] Look, appear, show itself.—The verb show is often need
by the ancient writers in this intransitive way.
7 *We do pray for mercy*] The poet here seems to refer to the
words ‘forgive us our trespasses as we forgive,’ &c. occurring in the
Lord's prayer, and therefore, as some think, unsuitably appealed to
in remonstrating with a Jew.
8 *Which if thou follow*] Which justice if thou persist in carrying
out.
SCENE I.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shy. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.  
Por. Is he not able to discharge the money?  
Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court;  
Yea, twice the sum: if that will not suffice,  
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,  
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart:  
If this will not suffice, it must appear,  
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,  
Wrest once the law to your authority:  
To do a great right do a little wrong;  
And curb this cruel devil of his will.  
Por. It must not be; there is no power in Venice.  
Can alter a decree established:  
'T will be recorded for a precedent;  
And many an error, by the same example,  
Will rush into the state: it cannot be.  
Shy. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!  
O wise young judge, how do I honour thee!  
Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.  
Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.  
Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offer'd thee.  
Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven:  
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?  
No, not for Venice.  
Por. Why, this bond is forfeit;  
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim  
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut off

1 For him] For Antonio.  
2 Ten times o'er] See note 1, p. 97.  
3 Truth] Honesty; that is, the honesty which shows such liberal readiness to pay the debt.  
4 Wrest once] Make the law for once give way.
Nearest the merchant’s heart:—Be merciful;  
Take thrice thy money; bid me tear the bond.

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

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

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

Shy. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

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

Shy. ’Tis very true: O wise and upright judge!
How much more elder art thou than thy looks!

Por. Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

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

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

Shy. I have them ready.

1 Stay] Rest in fixed determination.

2 The intent and purpose] The law in its meaning and intention, 
not merely in the letter of it, thoroughly recognises, &c.

3 More elder] Double comparatives and superlatives are not 
unusual in Shakspeare.

4 Balance] Here used as a plural: compare bellows, tongs, spectacles.
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 expressed; but what of that? 'T were good you do so much for charity.

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

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

Ant. But little; I am armed, 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, An age of poverty! from which lingering penance Of such misery does she cut me off. Commend me to your honourable wife: Tell her the process of Antonio's end; Say, how I loved you; speak me fair in death; And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge Whether Bassanio had not once a love.

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

1 On your charge] At your own expense.
2 What of that?] What is the signification or importance of that?
3 Speak me fair] Describe me favourably as regards the spirit in which I died.—The verb speak in the sense of describe, is of frequent occurrence in Shakspeare.
4 A love] A lover indeed.
5 Repent not you] 'Repent not you and he repents not,' means 'he does not repent if you do not repent.'
6 With all my heart] There is here an instance of punning, even
Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife,  
Which is as dear to me as life itself;  
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,  
Are not with me esteemed above thy life;  
I would lose all, ay sacrifice them all  
Here to this devil, to deliver you.¹  

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,  
If she were by to hear you make the offer.  

Gra. I have a wife, whom I protest I love:  
I would she were in heaven, so she could ²  
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 ³  
Had been her husband rather than a Christian! [Aside.  
We trifle time; I pray thee pursue sentence.  

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

Shy. Most rightful judge!  

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

Shy. Most learned judge!—A sentence! come, prepare.  

Por. Tarry a little;—There is something else.—

in the expression of pathetic sentiment, for Antonio refers to paying the debt with his heart's blood. See notes 5, p. 75, and 1, p. 113.  
¹ To this devil] 'They sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils.' Ps. cvi. 37.  
² So she could] If being there she might as a saint intercede with some heavenly power.  
³ Barrabas] The usual form of the word is Barabbas:—'Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.' Luke xxiii. 19.
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
The words expressly are a pound of flesh;
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh;
But, in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

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

Shy. Is that the law?

Por. Thyself shall see the act: 1

For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice more than thou desirest.

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

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

Bass. Here is the money.

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

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

Por. Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more,
But just 2 a pound of flesh: if thou tak’st more,
Or less, than a just pound,—be it but so much
As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance 3
Or the division of the twentieth part
Of one poor scruple,—nay, if the scale do turn

1 The act] The decree or statute.

2 Just] The adverb just, that is, exactly, modifies the adjective meaning of the article following.

3 In the substance] In the amount of a twentieth, or even the fraction of a twentieth.—The twentieth part of a scruple is a grain.
But in the estimation of a hair,—
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

_Gra._ A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

_Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip._

_Por._ Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

_Shy._ Give me my principal, and let me go.

_Bass._ I have it ready for thee; here it is.

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

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

_Shy._ Shall I not have barely my principal?

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

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

_Por._ Tarry, Jew;
The law hath yet another hold on you.

It is enacted in the laws of Venice,—
If it be proved against an alien,
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy

---

1 _In the estimation_ In the degree corresponding, or amount equivalent, to the weight of a hair.

2 _On the hip_ See note 1, p. 28.

3 _The law hath yet another hold_ The charge now to be brought against the Jew is probably what Bellario's letter refers to in the words 'he is furnished with my opinion;' the mode in which Shylock has been already defeated appears to be the suggestion of Portia's own ingenuity: Bellario stated that his opinion would be _bettered with the young doctor's learning._
Of the duke only, 'gainst all other voice. In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st: For it appears by manifest proceeding, That indirectly, and directly too, Thou hast contrived against the very life Of the defendant; and thou hast incurred The danger formerly by me rehearsed. Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

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

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

Por. Ay, for the state; not for Antonio.

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

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

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

Ant. So please my lord the duke, and all the court, To quit the fine for one half of his goods;

1. *All other voice*] Voice here means judgment.

2. *That*] In order that.

3. *For half*] As for half; as regards half.

4. *Which humbleness may drive*] Which humble solicitation on thy part may prevail to have commuted for a fine.

5. *Ay, for the state*] Yes, the half which goes to the state may be thus commuted, but not that which goes to Antonio.

6. *To quit the fine*] To free him from the fine that applies to one half of his goods.
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use¹, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter;
Two things provided more.—That for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possessed,²
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

_Duke._ He shall do this; or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

_Por._ Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?
_Shy._ I am content.

_Por._ Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

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

_Duke._ Get thee gone, but do it.

_Gra._ In christening, thou shalt have two godfathers;
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,³
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [Ex. Shy

_Duke._ Sir, I entreat you with me home to dinner.

_Por._ I humbly do desire your grace of pardon.
I must away this night towards Padua;
And it is meet I presently set forth.

_Duke._ I am sorry that your leisure serves you not.⁴

¹ _In use_] In trust for Shylock. _Use_ here does not mean _interest_, which Antonio disapproved.

² _Possessed_] Supply _of_. _See note 5, p. 57._

³ _Ten more_] To make up twelve jurymen. This vein of humour occurs in Randolph’s _Muse’s Looking Glass_, iv. 4: ‘I had rather see him remitted to the jail, and have his twelve godfathers, good men and true, condemn him to the gallows.’

⁴ _Serves you not_] Suits you not; is not now at your command.
Antonio, gratify this gentleman; 
For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

Exeunt Duke, Magnificoes, and Train.

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

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

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

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

Por. You press me far, and therefore I will yield. 
Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake; 
And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you:— 
Do not draw back your hand; I'll take no more; 
And you in love shall not deny me this.

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

1 Gratify] Requite or recompense. So in Ford's Broken Heart, iv. 1, 'I want a fee to gratify thy merit.'
2 Cope] Meet in the way of recompense.—Withal, used for with, governs the noun ducats.
3 Over and above] A common pleonastic expression. See note 7, p. 32.
4 More mercenary] More mercenary than you now find me to be.
5 Of force] Of necessity; I cannot help trying you further.
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 answered.

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

[Exeunt Por. and Ner.

Ant. My lord Bassanio, let him have the ring; 
Let his deservings, and my love withal, 
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandement.²

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

¹ An if] An followed by if redundant. See note 6, p. 19.
² Commandement] This quadrisyllabic form occurs also in Henry VI. (i. 3), ‘From him I have express commandement.’
SCENE II.—Venice.  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 1 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, 2 Hath sent you here this ring; and doth entreat Your company at dinner.

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

Gra. That will I do.

Ner. Sir, I would speak with you:— I’ll see if I can get my husband’s ring, Which I did make him swear to keep for ever.

Por. Thou may’st, I warrant. We shall have old swearing, 3 That they did give the rings away to men; But we’ll outface them, and outswear them too. Away, make haste; thou know’st where I will tarry.

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

[Exeunt.

1 A day] For by a day; adverbial to the phrase before our husbands.
2 Advice] Consideration.
3 Old swearing] Swearing in abundance, or in rare style.  See Macbeth, ii. 3: “He should have old turning the key.” See also K. Henry IV., Act ii. Sc. 4; Merry Wives, i. 4; Much Ado, v. 2. 98.
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 1, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls, And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents, Where Cressid lay that night.

Jes. In such a night, Did Thisbe fearfully o’ertrip the dew; And saw the lion’s shadow ere himself, 2 And ran dismayed away.

Lor. In such a night, Stood Dido 3 with a willow in her hand

1 Troilus] Son of the Trojan king Priam. Shakspeare in the play of Troilus and Cressida, makes Cressida the daughter of the soothsayer Calchas; but her name does not appear in ancient story. Chaucer, in his Troilus and Creseide, describes the prince as looking from the wall of Troy with anxious expectation of Cressida’s coming.

2 Ere himself] The story of the Babylonian lovers Pyramus and Thisbe is well known. Ovid tells us that Thisbe saw, by the light of the moon, a lioness afar off, and ran terrified into a cave. An interlude founded on this story occurs in the Midsummer Night’s Dream.

3 Dido] The unhappy queen of Carthage, who, on account of the departure of Æneas, destroyed herself, as related in the 4th book of Virgil’s Æneid.—What Shakspeare here says of her is not in accordance with Virgil’s narrative. Dido sent messages by her sister, imploring Æneas to return.
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night,
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.

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

Jes. In such a night,
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well;
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,
And ne'er a true one.

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

1 Medea] A renowned enchantress, daughter of Æstes king of Colchis. She fell in love with Jason, and having helped him to rescue the golden fleece, fled with him to Greece, where by her magic art she restored Æson, the father of Jason, from the debility of age to youthful vigour. Ovid tells us that she rejuvenated the old man by drawing blood from his veins, and replenishing them with the juice of certain herbs. The old herbalists, as Dr. Bucknill remarks, 'attributed peculiar virtues to plants gathered during particular phases of the moon and hours of the night.' In the Confessio Amantis of old Gower, is a beautiful description of Medea going forth at midnight to gather herbs for her incantations.

2 Steal] This word, besides meaning 'slip away secretly,' implies allusion to Jessica's having stolen the wealthy Jew's treasure.

3 Stealing her soul] A retort on Lorenzo for accusing Jessica of stealing from Shylock.

4 Ne'er a true one] Not one honest vow among them.—The adverb never, meaning in no instance, modifies the understood expression there being.

5 Forgave it her] That is, to her. The direct object of the verb forgive is never properly the person, but always the thing; and in
Jes. I would next-night you, did no body come:
But, hark, I hear the footing of a man.

'Enter Stephano.

Lor. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?
Steph. A friend.
Lor. A friend? what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?
Steph. Stephano is my name; and I bring word,
My mistress will before the break of day
Be here at Belmont; she doth stray about
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
For happy wedlock hours.
Lor. Who comes with her?
Steph. Noné but a holy hermit and her maid.
I pray you, is my master yet returned?
Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—

the phrases forgive me, forgive him, &c., the verb is strictly intransitive, and means grant forgiveness, the pronoun being governed by to understood.

1 Out-night you] The verb here refers to the sportive contention between Lorenzo and Jessica, always introducing the phrase in such a night.—I would go farther than you, and leave you nothing to add in reply about the night.

2 Your name, I pray you, friend?] Stephano is satirically called friend, as Lorenzo was not disposed to welcome the intruder.

3 By holy crosses] Crosses erected at the intersection of roads and at other places, to inspire the traveller with religious thought. At the foot of these crosses pilgrims used to kneel and pray.

4 Is my master yet returned?] Returned, the perfect participle of an intransitive verb, is here used passively, and this is a frequent usage with Shakspeare; but, in strict propriety, none but transitive verbs admit of a passive use of their perfect participles; the correct phrase is has returned.

5 Nor we have not] In our older poets, a negative clause is often
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,  
And ceremoniously let us prepare  
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter Launcelot.

Laun. Sola, sola, wo, ha, ho, sola, sola!  
Lor. Who calls?  
Laun. Sola! Did you see master Lorenzo, and mistress Lorenzo? sola! sola!  
Lor. Leave hollaing, man; — here.  
Laun. Sola! Where? where?  
Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master,  
with his horn full of good news! 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?

introduced by the conjunction nor, with the signification of and in further negation.

1 Go we in] Simple imperatives of the first and third persons are of frequent occurrence in poetry: the accident of English grammar usually assigns to the simple imperative mood the second person only. In the next line we have let us prepare, as the ordinary substitute for prepare we, in which case let is a simple imperative of the second person addressing Jessica, and governing us along with the infinitive prepare.

2 Sola!] Launcelot imitates the post-horn, because he brings news of Bassanio's approach.

3 There's a post] A courier.—The 'horn full of good news' is an allusion to the cornucopia, or horn of plenty, which by the ancients was represented full of fruits and flowers, as an emblem of fertility.

4 Let's in] Let us go in.—The use of an adverb, or preposition phrase, modifying go understood, is very common, as in the expressions Away!—You shall hence.—I must to Lorenzo.
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music \[Exit Steph.\]
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 \(^2\) of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven \(^3\)
Is thick inlaid with patines \(^4\) of bright gold,—
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion \(^5\) like an angel sings,
Still quiring \(^6\) to the young-eyed cherubims:

1. Music] This word was sometimes used to denote musical instruments or a band of music; thus in Henry VIII. (iv. 2) Katharine says 'Bid the music leave: they are harsh and heavy to me.' See note 7, p. 134.

2. Become the touches] Accord well with the tones.—The word touches refers to tones, as varied by stoppings or touches of the musician's fingers.

3. Look how the floor of heaven] The first clause here is merely a preliminary calling of attention to the object about which Lorenzo says 'There's not the smallest orb,' &c. It is equivalent to the question, 'Do you see the immense multitude of stars in the sky?'

4. Patines] Patines, or patens, are plates; from the Latin patina.
—The chalice and paten are the cup and plate, commonly of silver, used in the service of the altar.—It may be remarked, that our poet's transition from the metaphor of 'a floor inlaid with patines,' to the description of these same 'patines' as 'orbs in motion singing,' seems rather abrupt, unless we understand Lorenzo as if saying Look at the sky, resembling as it does, a floor,' &c.

5. In his motion] While it moves or revolves.

6. Still quiring] Continually sounding an harmonious accompaniment to the voices of the bright-eyed cherubim.—The poet refers to the ancient doctrine of the music of the spheres, the rapid motion of the planets having been supposed to produce musical sounds in concert, but too loud and constant to be perceptible to mortal sense. Several of our poets have beautiful allusions to this subject: Camp-
Such harmony is in immortal souls; ¹
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.—

_Enter_ Musicians.

Come, ho, and wake Diana ² with a hymn;
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

_Jes._ I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

[Music.

_Lor._ The reason is your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled ³ colts,
Fetching ⁴ mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,⁵
Which is⁶ the hot condition of their blood;—
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,

bell, in the concluding paragraph of his 'Pleasures of Hope,' speaks of the spheres, when first created, as having then 'pealed their first notes to sound the march of time'; Milton (P. L. v. 177) refers to 'wandering fires that move in mystic dance, not without song.' See Addison's hymn 'The spacious firmament on high,' &c.

¹ _In immortal souls_]. There is in human souls a harmony analogous to that; but while the harmony is shut in by this gross earthly fabric of mortality, we cannot hear it. A notion was anciently entertained that the soul had in it the harmony to which Shakespeare refers.

² _Diana_] This goddess was often confounded with Luna, the goddess of the moon.

³ _Unhandled_] Running wild, not broken or trained.

⁴ _Fetching_] Taking or performing. So in Acts xxviii. 13, 'We fetched a compass,' that is, took a circuitous course.

⁵ _Bellowing and neighing_] The herd bellowing, and the colts neighing.

⁶ _Which is_] Which indicates.
Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music. Therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;* The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus: Let no such man be trusted. — Mark the music.

Enter Portia and Nerissa at a distance.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams! 
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the moon shone we did not see the candle.

Por. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empty itself, as doth an inland brook
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

Ner. It is your music, madam, of the house.

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1 The poet Some one of the ancient poets.
2 Orpheus One of the early poets and musicians of Greece, whose song was fabled to have such magic power, that trees, rocks, and rivers seemed to listen with responsive movements.
3 Nor is not moved See note 5, p. 130.
4 Spoils Robbery, spoliation.
5 Erebus The gloomiest part of the infernal regions.
6 A substitute A viceroy, or representative of a sovereign.
7 Your music Your band of music belonging to the house. See note 1, p. 132.
Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:1 Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.2

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 seasoned are To their right praise and true perfection!— Peace, ho!5 the moon sleeps with Endymion, And would not be awaked. [Music ceases.

Lor. That is the voice, Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

Por. He knows me, as the blind man knows the cuckoo, By the bad voice.6

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1 Without respect] Of itself; irrespectively of circumstances or associations.

2 Silence] The silence of night imparts to the music that peculiar sweetness.

3 Attended] Accompanied by the other; when either of them is alone. The effect of the crow's voice may be as enlivening as that of the lark, in the ear of a person roaming amidst the scenes of nature.

4 By season seasoned are] By fitness of occasion are adapted or qualified to obtain their just appreciation, and to show their true excellence.

5 Peace, ho!] The old copies have 'Peace! How the moon,' &c. Portia requests that the music be stopped, as the moonlight is now very faint, and the music has ceased to be in season. The beautiful and handsome sportsman Endymion spent the day in sleep in a cave of Mount Latmus, in Caria. He delighted in pursuing by moonlight the chase of the deer through the forest, and was the beloved favourite of the goddess Luna or Diana.

6 By the bad voice] The voice of the cuckoo is monotonous; but
Dear lady, welcome home.

We have been praying for our husbands' welfare, Which speed[^1], we hope, the better for our words. Are they returned?

Madam, they are not yet; But there is come a messenger before, To signify their coming.

Go in, Nerissa; Give order to my servants, that they take No note at all of our being absent hence; Nor you[^2], Lorenzo:—Jessica, nor you. [A tocket[^3] sounds.

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

This night, methinks, is but the daylight sick: It looks a little paler: 't is a day Such as the day is when the sun is hid.

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their Followers.

We should hold day[^4] with the antipodes, If you would walk in absence of the sun.

[^1] Which speed] And we hope they prosper all the better through our intercessions.—Portia intends a reference to speedy return.

[^2] Nor you] A colloquial ellipsis for 'nor do you,' that is, and do not you take any notice of it.

[^3] Tocket] A flourish on a trumpet.—The Italian word toccata, from which tocket is perhaps derived, means a prelude to a sonata.

[^4] Hold day] We should have day along with the antipodes, if you, Portia, should walk abroad when the sun is absent.
Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light; ¹
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me;
But God sort all! ² 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 ³ be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore, I scant this breathing courtesy.⁴

[Gra. and Ner. seem to talk apart.

Gra. By yonder moon, I swear, you do me wrong;
In faith, I gave it ⁵ to the judge’s clerk.

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

Gra. About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give me; whose posy ⁶ was
For all the world ⁷, like cutler’s poetry
Upon a knife,—Love me and leave me not.⁸

Ner. What talk you of the posy, or the value? ⁹

¹ Be light] I am willing enough that I should give light, but I
would not be light myself:—a quibble.

² Sort all] Dispose all things well.

³ In all sense] In all reason.

⁴ I scant] I cut short this verbal courtesy.

⁵ It] The ring; I gave it not to a woman.

⁶ Posy] A posy, or poesy, is a device or motto on a ring.

⁷ For all the world] Out of all the comparisons that the world
supplies.

⁸ Leave me not] Leave here means part with.

⁹ What talk you] Why do you talk of the posy or the value of
the ring itself?—What adverbially signifies for what reason.
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\(^1\), and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! — but well I know
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

\(\text{Gra.} \) He will, an if he live\(^2\) to be a man.
\(\text{Ner.} \) Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

\(\text{Gra.} \) Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,—
A kind of boy; a little scrubbed\(^3\) boy,
No higher than thyself; the judge's clerk;
A prating boy, that begged it as a fee;
I could not for my heart deny it him.

\(\text{Por.} \) 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
Never to part with it; and here he stands,—
I dare be sworn\(^4\) for him, he would not leave it,\(^5\)
Nor pluck it from his finger, for the wealth
That the world masters. Now, in faith, Gratianio,
You give your wife too unkind a cause of grief;
An 't were to me, I should be mad at it.

\(\text{Bass.} \) Why, I were best\(^6\) to cut my left hand off.

---

\(^1\) Respective\] Heedful.
\(^2\) An if he live\] See note 6, p. 19.
\(^3\) Scrubbed\] Of stunted growth; short, like a scrubbed or worn-out broom.
\(^4\) Sworn\] Put on my oath.
\(^5\) Leave it\] See note 8, p. 137.
\(^6\) I were best\] A corrupt idiom, originating in the phrase 'it were best for me.' See note 7, p. 66.
And swear, I lost the ring defending it.  

_Gra._ My lord Bassanio gave his ring away 
Unto the judge, that begged it, and, indeed, 
Deserved it too; and then the boy, his clerk,  
That took some pains in writing, he begged mine: 
And neither man, nor master, would take aught 
But the two rings.

_Por._ What ring gave you, my lord? 
Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

_Bass._ If I could add a lie unto a fault, 
I would deny it; but you see, my finger 
Hath not the ring upon it; it is gone.

_Por._ Even so void¹ is your false heart of truth. 
By Heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed 
Until I see the ring.

_Ner._ Nor I in yours, 
Till I again see mine.

_Bass._ Sweet Portia, 
If you did know to whom I gave the ring, 
If you did know for whom I gave the ring; 
And would conceive for what I gave the ring, 
And how unwillingly I left the ring, 
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,² 
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 
Or your own honour to contain³ the ring, 
You would not then have parted with the ring. 
What man is there so much unreasonable,

¹ _Even so void_ As your finger is void of the ring, even so, &c.  
² _The virtue of the ring_ The power it has; the right over me which belongs to its possessor. _See_ p. 91, 'This house,' &c.  
³ _To contain_ As involved in your retaining.
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 mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it, but a civil doctor, Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begged the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffered him to go displeased away;
Even he that had held up the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him;
I was beset with shame and courtesy;
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it: Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessed candles of the night, Had you been there, I think, you would have begged
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;

1. _Wanted the modesty_] That would have been so void of modesty as to urge you to give what you kept as a thing ceremonially sacred.

2. _A civil doctor_] This is a punning title for a doctor of civil law.

3. _Even he_] Strict grammar requires _him_.

4. _Held up_] That is, from sinking to destruction.

5. _Beset_] Urged by a sense of shame and by the demands of courtesy.

6. _Candles of the night_] Stars.—There is here an allusion to the blessed or consecrated candles of the altar.—Compare _Romeo’s_ saying to _Juliet_, (iii. 5,) 'Night's candles are burnt out.'
I'll not deny him anything I have;  
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;  
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.

---

1 _Argus_] A personage in classic fable who had a hundred eyes, of which only two were asleep at one time; Juno set him to watch her priestess Io, of whom Jupiter was enamoured.

2 _Well advised_] Very heedful or cautious.

3 _Do you so_] If you do so.

4 _Subject_] Foundation, source, or occasion.

5 _Notwithstanding_] That circumstance not notwithstanding.

6 _Enforced wrong_] Wrong which I was forced to commit.

7 _There's an oath_] That truly will be an oath worthy of being trusted.
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; 
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 
Shall witness, I set forth as soon as you, 
And but e'en now returned; I have not yet 
Entered my house.—Antonio, you are welcome;

1 Which] Which lending would have ended in utter loss.

2 I dare be bound] Yet I have the confidence to become bound again, and to hazard even my soul upon the forfeit.

3 By this ring] By the right which this ring gave him.—Nerissa's phrase 'in lieu of this' has the same meaning. See note 2, p. 139.

4 Ere we have deserved it] Before our wives have found any cause for trying to mend their condition.
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. ¹

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

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; ²
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. ³—

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

Lor. Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way

Of starved people.

Por. It is almost morning,

And yet, I am sure, you are not satisfied

Of these events at full: ⁴ Let us go in;

¹ *I am dumb* | *Scil. with amazement.*

² *Living* | *Given me means of living, as well as life.—So in Romeo and Juliet, iv. 5, ‘Life, living, all is death’s.’*

³ *Without a fee* | *Alluding to Gratiano’s words, ‘A prating boy that begged it as a fee.’*

⁴ *At full* | *Fully.—You do not feel thoroughly assured of the reality of all these events.*
And charge us\(^1\) there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

_Gra._ Let it be so.—
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore\(^2\), as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.  

—

\(^1\) *Charge us*] Charge ye us there solemnly, or upon oath, to answer whatever questions ye shall put to us.—The elided form *inter'gatories* was common in Shakspeare's time. *See All's Well, iv. 3.*

\(^2\) *So sore*] So sensitively._To fear keeping the ring safe_ here means to be actuated by fear in keeping it, lest it be lost.
Shakspeare's comedy of The merchant of V