SHAKESPEARE'S

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

WITH

INTRODUCTION, AND NOTES EXPLANATORY AND CRITICAL.

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND CLASSES.

BY THE

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THE POET'S LIFE.

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

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

We have no certain knowledge as to when or why Shakespeare became an actor. At the last-named date, his father, after some years of thrift, had evidently suffered a considerable decline of fortune. Perhaps this was one reason of his leaving Stratford. Another reason may have been, that, as tradition gives it, he engaged, along with others, in a rather wild poaching frolic on the grounds of Sir Thomas Lucy, who owned a large estate not far from Stratford; which act Sir Thomas resented so sharply, that Shakespeare thought it best to quit the place and go to London.

But the Drama was then a great and rising institution in England, and of course the dramatic interest had its centre in the metropolis. There were various companies of players in London, who used, at certain seasons, to go about the country, and perform in towns and villages. Stratford was often visited by such companies during the Poet's boyhood, and some of the players appear to have been natives of that section. In particular, the company that he afterwards belonged to performed there repeatedly while he was just about the right age to catch the spirit from them. And, from what he actually accomplished in the Drama, it is evident that he must have had a great natural genius for just that sort of thing. Now such genius must needs have corresponding instincts, which are uneasy and restless till they find their natural place, but spontaneously recognize and take to that
place on meeting with it. So, when dramatic performances fell under the youthful Shakespeare’s eye, his genius could hardly fail to be strongly kindled towards the Drama as its native and proper element; the pre-established harmony thus instinctively prompting and guiding him to the work for which his mind was specially attuned, and in which it would be most at home. This, no doubt, was the principal cause of his betaking himself to the stage. Nothing further was wanting but an answering opportunity; and this was supplied by the passion for dramatic entertainments which then pervaded all ranks of the English people.

Shakespeare probably left Stratford in 1586 or thereabouts. Be that as it may, the next positive information we have of him is from a pamphlet written in 1592 by Robert Greene, a poor profligate who was then dying from the effects of his vices. Greene, who had himself written a good deal for the stage, there squibs some one as being, “in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in a country.” There is no doubt that this refers to Shakespeare; and some of the terms applied to the Shake-scene clearly infer that the Poet was already getting to be well known as a writer of plays. After Greene’s death, his pamphlet was given to the public by one Henry Chettle, who, on being remonstrated with by the persons assailed, published an apology, in which he expresses regret for the attack on Shakespeare, adding, “because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

It does not appear that the Poet at any time had his family with him in London. But it is very evident that his thoughts were a good deal with them at Stratford; for he is soon found saving up money from his London business, and investing it in lands and houses in his native town. The parish register of Stratford notes the death of his only son, Hamnet, then in his twelfth year, on the 11th of August, 1596. So far as is known, he never had any children but the three already mentioned.
In the spring of 1597, he bought of William Underhill the establishment called “New Place,” and described as consisting of “one messuage, two barns, and two gardens.” This was one of the best dwelling-houses in Stratford, and was situate in one of the best parts of the town. From that time onward we have many similar tokens of his thrift, which I must not stay to note in detail. Suffice it to say that for several years he continued to make frequent investments in Stratford and the neighbourhood; thus justifying the statement of Rowe, that “he had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasions”; and that “the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends.”

None of his plays are known to have been printed till 1597, in which year three of them, King Richard II., King Richard III., and Romeo and Juliet, came from the press, separately, and in quarto form. The next year, Francis Meres published his Wit’s Treasury, in which he specifies by title the three plays already named, and also nine others. Besides these twelve, several others also are known to have been in being at that time; and it is all but certain that as many at least as eighteen of the Poet’s dramas were written before 1598, when he was thirty-four years old, and had probably been in the theatre about twelve years.

The Poet seems to have been laudably ambitious of gaining a higher social position than that to which he was born. So, in 1599, he procured from the Heralds’ College in London a coat-of-arms in the name of his father. Thus he got his yeoman sire dubbed a gentleman, doubtless that the honour might be his by inheritance, as he was his father’s eldest son. The Poet’s father was buried at Stratford, September
8th, 1601; and thenceforward we find him written down in legal documents as "William Shakespeare, Gentleman."

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

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

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

Moreover, as Dyce remarks, "it is evident that Shakespeare never ceased to turn his thoughts towards his birth-place, as the spot where he hoped to spend the evening of his days in honourable retirement." It is uncertain at what time he withdrew from the stage. The latest notice we have of his acting was in 1603, when Ben Jonson's Sejanus was performed at the Blackfriars, and one of the parts was sustained
by him. The probability is that he ceased to be an actor in the course of the next year; though it is tolerably certain that he kept up his interest in the affairs of the company some years longer, and that he continued to write more or less for the stage down to as late a period as 1613.

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

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

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

Shakespeare was by no means so little appreciated in his
time as later generations have mainly supposed. Besides the passages already cited, we have many other notes of respect and esteem from his contemporaries. No man indeed of that age was held in higher regard for his intellectual gifts; none drew forth more or stronger tributes of applause. Kings, princes, lords, gentlemen, and, what is perhaps still better, common people, all united in paying homage to his transcendent genius. And from the scattered notices of his contemporaries, we get, also, a pretty complete and very exalted idea of his personal character. How dearly he was held by those who knew him best is well shown by a passage of Ben Jonson's, written long after the Poet's death, and not published till 1640: "I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions." And we have similar testimony from John Heminge and Henry Condell, the Poet's friends and fellow-actors, and the Editors of the first folio, in the dedication of which they profess to have collected and published the plays, "without ambition of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive, as was our Shakespeare."

Thus much, or rather thus little, is about all that we are permitted to know touching the personal history of, probably, the greatest intellect that ever appeared in our world. Yet, little, very little though it be, there is enough, I think, to show that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet in his social intercourses; while, in the smooth and happy marriage which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with systematic and successful prudence in business affairs, we have an example of well-
rounded, practical manhood, such as may justly engage our admiration and respect.

Shakespeare was still in the meridian of life. There was no special cause, that we know of, why he might not live many years longer. It were vain to conjecture what he would have done, had more years been given him; possibly, instead of augmenting his legacy to us, he would have recalled and suppressed more or less of what he had written as our inheritance. For the last two or three years, at least, he seems to have left his pen unused; as if, his own ends once achieved, he set no value on that mighty sceptre with which he since sways so large a portion of mankind. That the motives and ambitions of authorship had little to do in the generation of his works, is evident from the serene carelessness with which he left them to shift for themselves; tossing those wonderful treasures from him as if he thought them good for nothing but to serve the hour.

It was in and for the theatre that his multitudinous genius was developed, and his works produced; there fortune, or rather Providence, had cast his lot. Doubtless it was his nature, in whatever he undertook, to do his best. As an honest and true man, he would, if possible, make the temple of the Drama a noble, a beautiful, and glorious place; and it was while working quietly and unobtrusively in furtherance of this end — building better than he knew — that he made his immortal preparations of wisdom and sweetness for the world.
SHYLOCK, the Jew, lived at Venice: he was an usurer, who had amassed an immense fortune by lending money at great interest to Christian merchants. Shylock, being a hard-hearted man, exacted the payment of the money he lent with such severity, that he was much disliked by all good men, and particularly by Antonio, a young merchant of Venice; and Shylock as much hated Antonio, because he used to lend money to people in distress, and would never take any interest for the money he lent; therefore there was great enmity between this covetous Jew and the generous merchant, Antonio. Whenever Antonio met Shylock on the Rialto (or Exchange) he used to reproach him with his usuries and hard dealings, which the Jew would bear with seeming patience, while he secretly meditated revenge.

Antonio was the kindest man that lived, the best conditioned, and had the most unwearied spirit in doing courtesies; indeed he was one in whom the ancient Roman honor more appeared than in any that drew breath in Italy. He was greatly beloved by all his fellow-citizens; but the friend who was nearest and dearest to his heart was Bassanio, a noble Venetian, who, having but a small patrimony, had nearly exhausted his little fortune by living in too expensive a manner for his slender means, as young men of high rank with small fortunes are too apt to do. Whenever Bassanio
wanted money, Antonio assisted him; and it seemed as if they had but one heart and one purse between them.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio, and told him that he wished to repair his fortune by a wealthy marriage with a lady whom he dearly loved, whose father, that was lately dead, had left her sole heiress to a large estate; and that in her father's lifetime he used to visit at her house, when he thought he had observed this lady had sometimes from her eyes sent speechless messages, that seemed to say he would be no unwelcome suitor; but not having money to furnish himself with an appearance befitting the lover of so rich an heiress, he besought Antonio to add to the many favors he had shown him, by lending him three thousand ducats.

Antonio had no money by him at that time to lend his friend; but expecting soon to have some ships come horn laden with merchandise, he said he would go to Shylock, the rich money-lender, and borrow the money upon the credit of those ships.

Antonio and Bassanio went together to Shylock, and Antonio asked the Jew to lend him three thousand ducats upon any interest he should require, to be paid out of the merchandise contained in his ships at sea. On this, Shylock thought within himself, "If I can once catch him on the hip, I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him: he hates our Jewish nation; he lends out money gratis; and among the merchants he rails at me and my well-earned bargains which he calls interest. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive him!" Antonio finding he was musing within himself and did not answer, and being impatient for the money, said, "Shylock, do you hear? will you lend the money?" To this question the Jew replied, "Signior Antonio, on the Rialto many a time and often you have railed at me about
my moneys and my usuries, and I have borne it with a patient shrug, for sufferance is the badge of all our tribe; and then you have called me unbeliever, cut-throat dog, and spit upon my Jewish garments, and spurned at me with your foot, as if I was a cur. Well then, it now appears you need my help; and you come to me, and say, *Shylock, lend me moneys.* Has a dog got money? Is it possible a cur should lend three thousand ducats? Shall I bend low and say, Fair sir, you spit upon me on Wednesday last, another time you call me dog, and for these courtesies I am to lend you moneys." Antonio replied, "I am as like to call you so soon again, to spit on you again, and spurn you too. If you will lend me this money, lend it not to me as to a friend, but rather lend it to me as to an enemy, that, if I break, you may with better face exact the penalty." — "Why, look you," said Shylock, "how you storm! I would be friends with you, and have your love. I will forget the shame you have put upon me. I will supply your wants, and take no interest for my money." This seemingly kind offer greatly surprised Antonio; and then Shylock, still pretending kindness, and that all he did was to gain Antonio's love, again said he would lend him the three thousand ducats, and take no interest for his money; only Antonio should go with him to a lawyer, and there sign in merry sport a bond, that if he did not repay the money by a certain day, he would forfeit a pound of flesh, to be cut off from any part of the body that Shylock pleased.

"Content," said Antonio: "I will sign to this bond, and say there is much kindness in the Jew."

Bassanio said Antonio should not sign to such a bond for him; but still Antonio insisted that he would sign it, for that before the day of payment came, his ships would return laden with many times the value of the money.
Shylock, hearing this debate, exclaimed, "O father Abraham, what suspicious people these Christians are! Their own hard dealings teach them to suspect the thoughts of others. I pray you tell me this, Bassanio: if he should break this day, what should I gain by the exaction of this forfeiture? A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man is not so estimable, nor profitable neither, as the flesh of mutton or of beef. I say, to buy his favor, I offer this friendship: if he will take it, so; if not, adieu."

At last, against the advice of Bassanio, who, notwithstanding all the Jew had said of his kind intention, did not like his friend should run the hazard of this shocking penalty for his sake, Antonio signed the bond, thinking it really was (as the Jew said) merely in sport.

The rich heiress that Bassanio wished to marry lived near Venice, at a place called Belmont: her name was Portia, and in the graces of her person and her mind she was nothing inferior to that Portia, of whom we read, who was Cato's daughter, and the wife of Brutus.

Bassanio being so kindly supplied with money by his friend Antonio, at the hazard of his life, set out for Belmont with a splendid train, and attended by a gentleman of the name of Gratiano.

Bassanio proving successful in his suit, Portia in a short time consented to accept him for a husband.

Bassanio confessed to Portia that he had no fortune, and that his high birth and noble ancestry was all that he could boast of; she, who loved him for his worthy qualities, and had riches enough not to regard wealth in a husband, answered with a graceful modesty, that she would wish herself a thousand times more fair, and ten thousand times more rich, to be more worthy of him; and then the accomplished
Portia prettily dispraised herself, and said she was an unlesioned girl, unschooled, unpractised, yet not so old but that she could learn, and that she would commit her gentle spirit to be directed and governed by him in all things; and she said, "Myself and what is mine, to you and yours is now converted. But yesterday, Bassanio, I was the lady of this fair mansion, queen of myself, and mistress over these servants; and now this house, these servants, and myself, are yours, my lord; I give them with this ring:" presenting a ring to Bassanio.

Bassanio was so overpowered with gratitude and wonder at the gracious manner in which the rich and noble Portia accepted of a man of his humble fortunes, that he could not express his joy and reverence to the dear lady who so honored him, by anything but broken words of love and thankfulness; and taking the ring, he vowed never to part with it.

Gratiano and Nerissa, Portia's waiting-maid, were in attendance upon their lord and lady, when Portia so gracefully promised to become the obedient wife of Bassanio; and Gratiano, wishing Bassanio and the generous lady joy, desired permission to be married at the same time.

"With all my heart, Gratiano," said Bassanio, "if you can get a wife."

Gratiano then said that he loved the lady, Portia's fair waiting gentlewoman Nerissa, and that she had promised to be his wife, if her lady married Bassanio. Portia asked Nerissa if this was true. Nerissa replied, "Madam, it is so, if you approve of it." Portia willingly consenting, Bassanio pleasantly said, "Then our wedding-feast shall be much honored by your marriage, Gratiano."

The happiness of these lovers was sadly crossed at this
moment by the entrance of a messenger, who brought a letter from Antonio containing fearful tidings. When Bassanio read Antonio's letter, Portia feared it was to tell him of the death of some dear friend, he looked so pale; and inquiring what was the news which had so distressed him, he said, “O sweet Portia, here are a few of the unpleasantest words that have ever blotted paper: gentle lady, when I first imparted my love to you, I freely told you all the wealth I had ran in my veins; but I should have told you that I had less than nothing, being in debt.” Bassanio then told Portia what has been here related, of his borrowing the money of Antonio, and of Antonio’s procuring it of Shylock the Jew, and of the bond by which Antonio had engaged to forfeit a pound of flesh, if it was not repaid by a certain day: and then Bassanio read Antonio’s letter; the words of which were, “Sweet Bassanio, my ships are all lost, my bond to the Jew is forfeited, and since in paying it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death; notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love for me do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.” “O my dear love,” said Portia, “despatch all business, and be gone; you shall have gold to pay the money twenty times over, before this kind-hearted friend shall lose a hair by my Bassanio’s fault; and as you are so dearly bought, I will dearly love you.” Portia then said she would be married to Bassanio before he set out, to give him a legal right to her money; and that same day they were married, and Gratiano was also married to Nerissa; and Bassanio and Gratiano, the instant they were married, set out in great haste for Venice, where Bassanio found Antonio in prison.

The day of payment being past, the cruel Jew would not accept of the money which Bassanio offered him, but insisted
upon having a pound of Antonio’s flesh. A day was appointed to try this shocking cause before the duke of Venice, and Bassanio awaited in dreadful suspense the event of the trial.

When Portia parted with her husband, she spoke cheerfully to him, and bade him bring his dear friend along with him when he returned; yet she feared it would go hard with Antonio, and when she was left alone, she began to think and consider within herself, if she could by any means be instrumental in saving the life of her dear Bassanio’s friend; and notwithstanding, when she wished to honor her Bassanio, she had said to him with such a meek and wife-like grace, that she would submit in all things to be governed by his superior wisdom, yet being now called forth into action by the peril of her honored husband’s friend, she did nothing doubt her own powers, and by the sole guidance of her own true and perfect judgment, at once resolved to go herself to Venice, and speak in Antonio’s defence.

Portia had a relation who was a counsellor in the law; to this gentleman, whose name was Bellario, she wrote, and stating the case to him, desired his opinion, and that with his advice he would also send her the dress worn by a counsellor. When the messenger returned, he brought letters from Bellario of advice how to proceed, and also everything necessary for her equipment.

Portia dressed herself and her maid Nerissa in men’s apparel, and putting on the robes of a counsellor, she took Nerissa along with her as her clerk; and setting out immediately, they arrived at Venice on the very day of the trial. The cause was just going to be heard before the duke and senators of Venice in the senate-house, when Portia entered this high court of justice, and presented a letter from Bellario, in which the learned counsellor wrote to the duke, saying, he
would have come himself to plead for Antonio, but that he was prevented by sickness, and he requested that the learned young doctor Balthazar (so he called Portia) might be permitted to plead in his stead. This the duke granted, much wondering at the youthful appearance of the stranger, who was prettily disguised by her counsellor’s robes and her large wig.

And now began this important trial. Portia looked around her, and she saw the merciless Jew; and she saw Bassanio, but he knew her not in her disguise. He was standing beside Antonio, in an agony of distress and fear for his friend.

The importance of the arduous task Portia had engaged in gave this tender lady courage, and she boldly proceeded in the duty she had undertaken to perform: and first of all she addressed herself to Shylock; and allowing that he had a right by the Venetian law to have the forfeit expressed in the bond, she spoke so sweetly of the noble quality of mercy, as would have softened any heart but the unfeeling Shylock’s; saying, that it dropped as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath; and how mercy was a double blessing, it blessed him that gave, and him that received it: and how it became monarchs better than their crowns, being an attribute of God himself; and that earthly power came nearest to God’s, in proportion as mercy tempered justice; and she bid Shylock remember that as we all pray for mercy, that same prayer should teach us to show mercy. Shylock only answered her by desiring to have the penalty forfeited in the bond. “Is he not able to pay the money?” asked Portia. Bassanio then offered the Jew the payment of the three thousand ducats as many times over as he should desire; which Shylock refusing, and still insisting upon having a pound of Antonio’s flesh, Bassanio begged the
learned young counsellor would endeavor to wrest the law a little, to save Antonio's life. But Portia gravely answered, that laws once established must never be altered. Shylock hearing Portia say that the law might not be altered, it seemed to him that she was pleading in his favor, and he said, "A Daniel is come to judgment! O, wise young judge, how I do honor you! How much elder are you than your looks!"

Portia now desired Shylock to let her look at the bond; and when she had read it, she said, "This bond is forfeited, and by this the Jew may lawfully claim a pound of flesh, to be by him cut off nearest Antonio's heart." Then she said to Shylock, "Be merciful: take the money, and bid me tear the bond." But no mercy would the cruel Shylock show; and he said, "By my soul I swear, there is no power in the tongue of man to alter me." "Why then, Antonio," said Portia, "you must prepare your bosom for the knife:" and while Shylock was sharpening a long knife with great eagerness to cut off the pound of flesh, Portia said to Antonio, "Have you anything to say?" Antonio with a calm resignation replied, that he had but little to say, for that he had prepared his mind for death. Then he said to Bassanio, "Give me your hand, Bassanio! Fare you well! Grieve not that I have fallen into this misfortune for you. Commend me to your honorable wife, and tell her how I have loved you!" Bassanio in the deepest affliction replied, "Antonio, I am married to a wife, who is as dear to me as life itself; but life itself, my wife, and all the world, are not esteemed with me above your life: I would lose all, I would sacrifice all to this devil here, to deliver you."

Portia hearing this, though the kind-hearted lady was not at all offended with her husband for expressing the love he
owed to so true a friend as Antonio in these strong terms, yet could not help answering, "Your wife would give you little thanks, if she were present, to hear you make this offer."
And then Gratiano, who loved to copy what his lord did, thought he must make a speech like Bassanio's, and he said, in Nerissa's hearing, who was writing in his clerk's dress by the side of Portia, "I have a wife, whom I protest I love; I wish she were in heaven, if she could but entreat some power there to change the cruel temper of this currish Jew."
"It is well you wish this behind her back, else you would have but an unquiet house," said Nerissa.
Shylock now cried out impatiently, "We trifle time; I pray pronounce the sentence." And now all was awful expectation in the court, and every heart was full of grief for Antonio.
Portia asked if the scales were ready to weigh the flesh; and she said to the Jew, "Shylock, you must have some surgeon by, lest he bleed to death." Shylock, whose whole intent was that Antonio should bleed to death said, "It is not so named in the bond." Portia replied, "It is not so named in the bond, but what of that? It were good you did so much for charity." To this all the answer Shylock would make was, "I cannot find it; it is not in the bond."
"Then," said Portia, "a pound of Antonio's flesh is thine. The law allows it, and the court awards it. And you may cut this flesh from off his breast. The law allows it, and the court awards it." Again Shylock exclaimed, "O wise and upright judge! A Daniel is come to judgment!" And then he sharpened his long knife again, and looking eagerly on Antonio, he said, "Come, prepare!"
"Tarry a little, Jew," said Portia; "there is something else. This bond here gives you no drop of blood; the
words expressed are, 'a pound of flesh.' If in the cutting off
the pound of flesh you shed one drop of Christian blood,
your land ar'l goods are by the law to be confiscated to
the state of Venice.' Now as it was utterly impossible
for Shylock to cut off the pound of flesh without shedding
some of Antonio's blood, this wise discovery of Portia's, that
it was flesh and not blood that was named in the bond, saved
the life of Antonio; and all admiring the wonderful sagacity
of the young counsellor, who had so happily thought of this
expedient, plaudits resounded from every part of the senates-
house; and Gratiano exclaimed in the words which Shylock
had used, "O wise and upright judge! mark, Jew, a Daniel
is come to judgment!"

Shylock, finding himself defeated in his cruel intent, said
with a disappointed look, that he would take the money;
and Bassanio, rejoiced beyond measure at Antonio's unex-
pected deliverance, cried out, "Here is the money!" But
Portia stopped him, saying, "Softly; there is no haste; the
Jew shall have nothing but the penalty: therefore prepare,
Shylock, to cut off the flesh; but mind you shed no blood;
nor do not cut off more nor less than just a pound; be it
more or less by one poor scruple, nay if the scale turn but
by the weight of a single hair, you are condemned by the
laws of Venice to die, and all your wealth is forfeit to the
senate." "Give me my money, and let me go," said Shy-
lock. "I have it ready," said Bassanio: "Here it is."

Shylock was going to take the money, when Portia again
stopped him, saying, "Tarry, Jew; I have yet another hold
upon you. By the laws of Venice, your wealth is forfeit to
the state, for having conspired against the life of one of its
citizens, and your life lies at the mercy of the duke; there-
fore down on your knees, and ask him to pardon you."
The duke then said to Shylock, "That you may see the difference of our Christian spirit I pardon you your life before you ask it; half your wealth belongs to Antonio, the other half comes to the state."

The generous Antonio then said, that he would give up his share of Shylock's wealth, if Shylock would sign a deed to make it over at his death to his daughter and her husband; for Antonio knew that the Jew had an only daughter, who had lately married against his consent to a young Christian, named Lorenzo, a friend of Antonio's, which had so offended Shylock that he had disinherited her.

The Jew agreed to this; and being thus disappointed in his revenge, and despoiled of his riches, he said, "I am ill. Let me go home; send the deed after me, and I will sign over half my riches to my daughter."—"Get thee gone, then," said the duke, "and sign it; and if you repent your cruelty and turn Christian, the state will forgive you the fine of the other half of your riches."

The duke now released Antonio, and dismissed the court. He then highly praised the wisdom and ingenuity of the young counsellor, and invited him home to dinner. Portia, who meant to return to Belmont before her husband, replied, "I humbly thank your grace, but I must away directly."
The duke said he was sorry he had not leisure to stay and dine with him; and turning to Antonio, he added, "Reward this gentleman; for in my mind you are much indebted to him."

The duke and his senators left the court; and then Bassanio said to Portia, "Most worthy gentleman, I and my friend Antonio have by your wisdom been this day acquitted of grievous penalties, and I beg you will accept of the three thousand ducats due unto the Jew." "And we shall stand
indebted to you over and above," said Antonio, "in love and service evermore."

Portia could not be prevailed upon to accept the money; but upon Bassanio still pressing her to accept some reward, she said, "Give me your gloves; I will wear them for your sake;" and then Bassanio taking off his gloves, she espied the ring which she had given him upon his finger: now it was the ring the wily lady wanted to get from him to make a merry jest when she saw her Bassanio again, that made her ask him for his gloves; and she said, when she saw the ring, "And for your love I will take this ring from you." Bassanio was sadly distressed, that the counsellor should ask him for the only thing he could not part with, and he replied in great confusion, that he could not give him that ring, because it was his wife's gift, and he had vowed never to part with it; but that he would give him the most valuable ring in Venice, and find it out by proclamation. On this Portia affected to be affronted, and left the court, saying, "You teach me, sir, how a beggar should be answered."

"Dear Bassanio," said Antonio, "let him have the ring; let my love and the great service he has done for me be valued against your wife's displeasure." Bassanio, ashamed to appear so ungrateful, yielded, and sent Gratiano after Portia with the ring; and then the clerk Nerissa, who had also given Gratiano a ring, she begged his ring, and Gratiano (not choosing to be outdone in generosity by his lord) gave it to her. And there was laughing among these ladies to think, when they got home how they would tax their husbands with giving away their rings, and swear that they had given them as a present to some woman.

Portia, when she returned, was in that happy temper of mind which never fails to attend the consciousness of having
performed a good action; her cheerful spirits enjoyed everything she saw: the moon never seemed to shine so bright before, and when that pleasant moon was hid behind a cloud, then a light which she saw from her house at Belmont as well pleased her charmed fancy, and she said to Nerissa, "That light we see is burning in my hall; how far that little candle throws its beams, so shines a good deed in a naughty world;" and hearing the sound of music from her house, she said, "Methinks that music sounds much sweeter than by day."

And now Portia and Nerissa entered the house, and dressing themselves in their own apparel, they awaited the arrival of their husbands, who soon followed them with Antonio; and Bassanio presenting his dear friend to the lady Portia, the congratulations and welcomings of that lady were hardly over, when they perceived Nerissa and her husband quarrelling in a corner of the room. "A quarrel already?" said Portia. "What is the matter?" Gratiano replied, "Lady, it is about a paltry gilt ring that Nerissa gave me, with words upon it like the poetry on a cutler's knife; Love me, and leave me not."

"What does the poetry or the value of the ring signify?" said Nerissa. "You swore to me when I gave it to you, that you would keep it till the hour of death; and now you say you gave it to the lawyer's clerk. I know you gave it to a woman."—"By this hand," replied Gratiano, "I gave it to a youth, a kind of boy, a little scrubbed boy, no higher than yourself; he was clerk to the young counsellor, that by his wise pleading saved Antonio's life: this prating boy begged it for a fee, and I could not for my life deny him." Portia said, "You were to blame, Gratiano, to part with your wife's first gift. I gave my lord Bassanio a ring, and I am sure he would not part with it for all the world." Gratiano, in
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excuse for his fault, now said, "My lord Bassanio gave his ring away to the counsellor, and then the boy, his clerk, that took some pains in writing, he begged my ring."

Portia, hearing this, seemed very angry, and reproached Bassanio for giving away her ring; and she said, Nerissa had taught her what to believe, and that she knew some woman had the ring. Bassanio was very unhappy to have so offended his dear lady, and he said with great earnestness, "No, by my honor, no woman had it, but a civil doctor, who refused three thousand ducats of me, and begged the ring, which, when I denied him, he went displeased away. What could I do, sweet Portia? I was so beset with shame for my seeming ingratitude, that I was forced to send the ring after him. Pardon me, good lady; had you been there, I think you would have begged the ring of me to give the worthy doctor."

"Ah!" said Antonio, "I am the unhappy cause of these quarrels."

Portia bid Antonio not to grieve at that, for that he was welcome notwithstanding; and then Antonio said, "I once did lend my body for Bassanio's sake; and but for him to whom your husband gave the ring, I should have now been dead. I dare be bound again, my soul upon the forfeit, your lord will never more break his faith with you."— "Then you shall be his surety," said Portia; "give him this ring, and bid him keep it better than the other."

When Bassanio looked at this ring, he was strangely surprised to find it the same he gave away; and then Portia told him, how she was the young counsellor, and Nerissa was her clerk; and Bassanio found, to his unspeakable wonder and delight, that it was by the noble courage and wisdom of his wife that Antonio's life was saved.

And Portia again welcomed Antonio, and gave him letters
which by some chance had fallen into her hands, which con-
tained an account of Antonio's ships, that were supposed
lost, being safely arrived in the harbor. So these tragical
beginnings of this rich merchant's story were all forgotten in
the unexpected good fortune which ensued; and there was
leisure to laugh at the comical adventure of the rings, and
the husbands that did not know their own wives: Gratiano
merrily swearing, in sort of rhyming speech, that

—while he lived, he'd fear no other thing
* So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUKE of Venice.
PRINCE of Morocco, \{ Suitors to Portia.
PRINCE of Aragon,
ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice.
BASSANIO, his Friend.
SOLANIO,
SALARINO, \{ Friends to Antonio and Bassanio.
GRATIANO,
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.
SHYLOCK, a Jew.
TUBAL, a Jew, his Friend.
LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Servant to Shylock.
BALTHAZAR, \{ Servants to Portia.
STEPHANO,

PORTIA, a rich Heiress.
NERISSA, her Companion.
JESSICA, Daughter to Shylock.

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

SCENE, partly at Venice and partly at Belmont.

[The omission of the first ten pages, and from 105 to 122 inclusive, and about six other pages, does not impair the value of the play for children, but, on the contrary, heightens their interest in it by introducing them at once to the leading characters.]
Scene II.—Belmont. A Room in Portia’s House.

Enter Portia and Nerissa.

Portia. By my troth,¹ Nerissa, my little body is a-weary of this great world.

Neris. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are: and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much, as they that starve with nothing. It is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs,² but competency lives longer.

Portia. Good sentences,³ and well pronounced.

Neris. They would be better, if well followed.

Portia. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men’s cottages princes’ palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions: I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood;⁴ but a hot temper leaps o’er a cold decree: such a hare is madness the youth, to skip o’er the meshes of good-counsel the cripple. But this reasoning⁵ is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. O me, the word choose! I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of

¹ Troth is merely an old form of truth.
² Superfluity, that is, one who is rich and fares sumptuously, sooner acquires white hairs, or grows old. See page 79, note 2.
³ Sentences for maxims, or axiomatic sayings; like Milton’s “brief, sententious precepts.”
⁴ Blood here means the same as temper, a little after; and both are put for passion or impulse generally.
⁵ Reasoning for talk or conversation. The Poet repeatedly has reason, both as noun and verb, in the same sense.
a living daughter curb'd by the will \(^6\) of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

_Neris._ Your father was ever virtuous; and holy \(^7\) men at their death have good inspirations: therefore, the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead — whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you — will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

_Portia._ I pray thee over-name them, and, as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at \(^8\) my affection.

_Neris._ First, there is the Neapolitan Prince.

_Portia._ Ay, that's a colt \(^9\) indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation \(^10\) to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.

_Neris._ Then is there the County Palatine.

_Portia._ He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, _If you will not have me, choose._ He hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher \(^11\)

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\(^6\) The second _will_ stands for what we call "will and testament."

\(^7\) The sense of _holy_, here, is explained by the words _virtuous_ and _good_; _upright_ and _true_. Often so.

\(^8\) _Level at_ is _guess or infer_. The Poet uses _aim_ in the same sense.

\(^9\) An equivocque on _colt_, which was used for a wild, dashing, skittish youngster. The Neapolitans were much noted for horsemanship.

\(^10\) _ Appropriation_ is used rather oddly here, — in the sense, apparently, of _addition_. The word does not occur again in Shakespeare.

\(^11\) This was Heraclitus of Ephesus, who became a complete recluse, and retreated to the mountains, where he lived on pot-herbs. He was called "the weeping philosopher" because he mourned over the follies of mankind, just as Democritus was called "the laughing philosopher" because he laughed at them. Perhaps Portia has in mind the precept, "_Rejoice with those that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep._"
when he grows old, being so full of unmannersly sadness in his youth. I had rather be married to a death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two!

**Neris.** How say you by the French lord, Monsieur le Bon?

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

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

**Portia.** You know I say nothing to him; for he understands not me, nor I him: he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor penny-worth in the English. He is a proper

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12 "What say you of, or in reference to?" By and of were often used indiscriminately. So in ii. 8, of this play: "That many may be meant by the fool multitude."

13 To fence is to manage the sword; to practise the art of defence, as it is called. Skill in handling the sword was formerly an indispensable accomplishment of a gentleman.

14 Would for should; the two being often used indiscriminately. So a little after: "You should refuse to perform."

15 Here to is used like by in note 12. In the next speech, Portia plays upon the word, using it in the ordinary sense.

16 "You will testify that I know very little of English."

17 Proper is handsome or fine-looking. Commonly so in the Poet's time. In Hebrews, xi. 23, the parents of Moses are said to have hidden him, "because they saw he was a proper child."
man's picture; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show? 18 How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, 19 and his behaviour everywhere.

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

_Portia._ That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another. 20

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

_Portia._ Very vilely in the morning when he is sober, and most vilely in the afternoon when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An 21 the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

_Neris._ 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.

_Portia._ Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket; 22 for, if

18 A _dumb-show_ is an action or character exhibited to the eye only; something like what we call a _tableau._

19 _Doublet_ was the name of a man's outside upper garment._—_ _Hose_ was used for _trousers_ or _stockings_, or both in one._—_ _Bonnet_ and _hat_ were used indifferently for a man's head-dress.

20 To _seal_ was to _subscribe_; as Antonio afterwards says, "I'll _seal_ to such a bond." The principal sealed to a bond, his surety _sealed under_. The meaning therefore is, that the Frenchman became surety for another box of the ear, to be given in repayment of the first.

21 _An_ is an old equivalent for _if_. So used continually in Shakespeare's time. And so in the common phrase, "without any _ifs_ or _ans._"

22 The _wrong_ casket. So in _King John_, iv. 2: "Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste had falsely thrust upon _contrary_ feet."
the Devil be within, and that temptation without, I know he will choose it. I will do any thing, Nerissa, ere I will be married to a sponge.

_Neris._ You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

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

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

_Sort_ appears to be here used in the sense of _lot_; from the Latin _sors_. So in _Troilus and Cressida_, i. 3: "Let blockish Ajax draw the _sort_ to fight with Hector."—"Your father's imposition" means the conditions imposed by your father.

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

Neris. True, madam: he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes look'd upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

Portia. I remember him well; and I remember him worthy of thy praise.—

_Enter a Servant._

How now! what news?

Serv. The four strangers⁵ 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.

Portia. 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 condition⁶ of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive⁷ 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."
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*Bass.* Ay, sir, for three months.

*Shy.* For three months, — well.

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

*Shy.* Antonio shall become bound, — well.

*Bass.* May you stead me? ² Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

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

*Bass.* Your answer to that.

*Shy.* Antonio is a good ³ man.

*Bass.* Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

*Shy.* Ho! no, no, no, no: my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand moreover upon the Rialto, he hath a third to Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath, squandered ⁴ abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves,—I mean, pirates: and then there is the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats; — I think I may take his bond.

*Bass.* Be assured you may.

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

*Bass.* If it please you to dine with us.

*Shy.* Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which

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² Another instance of the indiscriminate use of words: *may* for *can* or *will.* — *Stead me* is *aid* me, or let me depend on you.

³ Shylock means *good* in a business sense; of good *credit.*

⁴ *Squandered* here is simply *scattered, dispersed;* a usage of the time.
your prophet the Nazarite conjured the Devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. What news on the Rialto?—Who is he comes here?

Enter Antonio.

Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

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

6 Alluding to the permission given to the Legion of devils to enter into the herd of swine: St. Luke, viii. 33.—Habitation is used of the body; the dwelling-place, in this instance, of the devils.

6 For was often used with the exact sense of our because.

7 Usance, usury, and interest were all terms of precisely the same import in Shakespeare's time; there being then no such law or custom whereby usury has since come to mean the taking of interest above a certain rate. How the taking of interest, at whatever rate, was commonly esteemed, is shown in Lord Bacon's essay Of Usury, where he mentions the popular arguments against it: "That the usurer is the greatest Sabbath-breaker, because his plough goeth every Sunday; that the usurer breaketh the first law that was made for mankind after the fall, which was, 'in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;' that usurers should have orange-tawny bonnets because they do Judaize; that it is against nature for money to beget money, and the like." The words in Italic show that usury was regarded as a badge of Judaism.

8 Some explain this as a phrase of wrestling; others, of hunting. To have one on the hip was to have the advantage of him; as when a wrestler seized his antagonist by that part, or a hound a deer.
Which he calls interest. Cursèd be my tribe.
If I forgive him!

_Bass._ Shylock, do you hear?
_Shy._ I am debating of my present store;
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me. But, soft!⁹ how many months
Do you desire?—_[To ANTO._] Rest you fair,¹⁰ good signior!
Your Worship was the last man in our mouths.

_ANTO._ Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow,
By taking nor by giving of excess,¹¹
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom.—Is he yet possess'd¹²
How much we would?

_Shy._ Ay, ay, three thousand ducats.

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

_ANTO._ I do never use it.

⁹ Soft! is an old exclamative, meaning about the same as _hold! stay!_ or _not too fast_! Often used by Shakespeare.

¹⁰ That is, "may you continue well!" or, "good health to you!" So in _As You Like It_, v. i: "God rest you merry!"—"Your Worship" was a common title of deference, meaning somewhat less than "your Honour," in the Poet's time.

¹¹ Excess, here, has the exact sense of interest. If one lends a hundred dollars for a year at six per cent, he takes six dollars in _excess_ of the sum lent.

¹² Possess'd is _informed_; a frequent usage. So later in the play: "I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose."
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 13 possessor; ay, he was the third,—

Anto. 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 14 which were streak'd and pied
Should fall as Jacob's hire.
This was a way to thrive, and he was blest;
And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Anto. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for;
A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of Heaven.
Was this inserted 15 to make interest good?
Or is your gold and silver ewes and rams?

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

Anto. Mark you this, Bassanio,
The Devil can cite Scripture for his purpose.
An evil soul, producing holy witness,
Is like a villain with a smiling cheek,
A goodly apple rotten at the heart:
O, what a godly outside falsehood 16 hath!

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

13 The third, reckoning Abraham himself as the first. How Jacob's "wise mother wrought" is told in Genesis, xxvii.
14 Eanlings are new-born lambs.—A compromise is a contract or mutual agreement.—See Genesis, xxx. 31-43.
15 "Was this inserted in Scripture?" is the meaning, probably.
16 Falsehood for knavery, as truth sometimes for honesty.
Anto. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding \(^{17}\) to you?

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
In the Rialto,\(^ {18}\) you have rated me
About my moneys, and my usances:
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe.
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog,
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,\(^ {19}\)
And all for use of that which is mine own.
Well then, it now appears you need my help:
Go to,\(^ {20}\) then; you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneys: you say so;
You, that did void your rheum\(^ {21}\) upon my beard,
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold: moneys is your suit.
What should I say to you? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money? is it possible,

\(^{17}\) Shakespeare always has beholding, the active form, in the sense of beholden, the passive. Of course it means indebted.

\(^{18}\) In this scene we have already had "on the Rialto," and "upon the Rialto." Concerning the place meant, Rogers thus speaks in one of the notes to his poem on Italy: "Rialto is the name, not of the bridge, but of the island from which it is called; and the Venetians say il ponte di Rialto, as we say Westminster-bridge. In that island is the exchange; and I have often walked there as on classic ground. In the days of Antonio and Bassanio it was second to none."

\(^{19}\) Gaberdine was a long, coarse outer garment or frock. Caliban, in The Tempest, ii. 2, wears one big enough, it seems, to wrap both himself and Trinculo in.

\(^{20}\) Go to is an old phrase of varying import, sometimes of reproach, sometimes of encouragement. Hush up, come on, be off, and go ahead are among its meanings.

\(^{21}\) "Eject your spittle." Rheum was used indifferently of what issues from the mouth, the nose, and the eyes.—Spurn, in the next line, is kick; the same as foot.
A cur can lend three thousand ducats? or
Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
With 'bated breath and whispering humbleness,
Say this, —

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

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

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

Anto. 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,

22 Breed, here, is interest: that which is bred from the principal.
23 This doubling of the subject, who and he, in relative clauses was common with all writers. Bacon has it very often. So in his Advancement of Learning: "Which though it be true, yet I forbear to note any deficiencies."
24 Doit was a small Dutch coin, less in value than our cent."
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh,\(^{25}\) to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

_Anto._ 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\(^{26}\) in my necessity.

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

_Shy._ O, father Abraham, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect\(^{27}\)
The thoughts of others!—Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day,\(^{28}\) what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh taken from a man
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs, or goats. I say,
To buy his favour I extend this friendship:
If he will take it, so;\(^{29}\) if not, adieu;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

_Anto._ Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

\(^{25}\) The language is odd, and rather obscure. The sense will come thus:
"Let the _forfeiture_ of a pound of your flesh be _named_ or _specified_ as an _equivalent_ for the debt."

\(^{26}\) _Dwell_ here has the sense of _continue_ or _abide_.

\(^{27}\) "Teaches them to _suspect,"_ of course. The Poet often thus omits _to_ when it would defeat his rhythm.

\(^{28}\) To _break his day_ was the current phrase for breach of contract.

\(^{29}\) The use of _so for very well_, or _so be it_, was very common.
Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's:
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight; \(^{30}\)
See to my house, left in the fearful guard \(^{31}\)
Of an unthrifty knave, and presently
I will be with you. \(\text{[Exit.}\)

Anto. Hie thee, gentle Jew.
The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

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

Anto. Come on: in this there can be no dismayment;
My ships come home a month before the day. \(\text{[Exeunt.}\)

ACT II.

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

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

Moroc. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadow'd livery of the burning Sun,
To whom I am a neighbour, and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision, for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest,\(^{1}\) his or mine.

\(^{30}\) Straight for straightway, that is, immediately. Often so.
\(^{31}\) "Fearful guard" is a guard not to be trusted, or that gives cause of fear. To fear was used in an active as well as a passive sense. So in the next scene: "This aspect of mine hath fear'd the valiant."

\(^{1}\) Red blood is a traditionary sign of courage. Thus Macbeth calls his frightened servant a lily-liver'd boy; again, in this play, cowards are said to have livers white as milk; and an effeminate man is termed a milksop.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd the valiant: by my love I swear,
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

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

Moroc. 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 Soliman,—
I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring on the Earth,

2 Hath frightened or terrified. See last note of preceding scene.

3 Portia means that reason and judgment have a voice potential in her matrimonial thoughts. So in Hamlet, iv. 3: “The distracted multitude, who like not in their judgment, but their eyes.” — Nice, here, is dainty or fastidious.

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

Portia. 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. 

Moroc. Nor will not. Come, bring me unto my chance. 

Portia. First, forward to the temple: after dinner 
Your hazard shall be made. 

Moroc. Good fortune then! 
To make me blest or cursed'st among men.  

[Exeunt.

5 "Alas the while!" "Woe the while!" "Alack a day!" and "Woe worth the day!" were all phrases of the same or of similar import.

6 If they try the question of which is the braver man by a game of dice. —Lichas was the servant or page of Hercules, who ignorantly brought to his master from Dejanira the poisoned shirt. Hercules was a descendant of Alceus, and so is called, in the Greek idiom, Alcides.

7 Advised, again, for cautious or considerate. See page 87, note 33.

8 That is, to the church, to take the oath mentioned just before, and described more particularly in the eighth scene of this Act. Bibles were not kept in private houses in the Poet's time; and such an oath had to be taken on the Bible.

9 Here the force of the superlative in cursed'st retroacts on blest; so that the sense is most blest or most cursed. So in Measure for Measure, iv. 6: 
"The generous and gravest citizens."
Scene VI. — Belmont. A room in Portia's House.

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

Portia. Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets to this noble Prince. —
Now make your choice.

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

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

Moroc. Some god direct my judgment! Let me see;
I will survey th' inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.—
Must give, — for what? for lead? hazard for lead?
This casket threatens: men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages.
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.
What says the silver, with her virgin hue?
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
As much as he deserves! — Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be' st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeared of my deserving,
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve! Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I stray'd no further, but chose here?
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold:
_Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire._
Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her:
From the four corners of the Earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
Th' Hycranian deserts and the vastly wilds
Of wide Arabia are as thoroughfares now
For princes to come view fair Portia:
The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
Spits in the face of Heaven, is no bar
To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,
As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Isn't like that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation,
To think so base a thought: it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an angel
Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;
But here an angel in a golden bed
Lies all within. — Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

_PORTIA._ There, take it, Prince; and if my form lie there,
Then I am yours. [He unlocks the golden casket.

_MORO_. O Hell! what have we here?
A carrion Death, within whose empty eye
There is a written scroll! I'll read the writing.
[Reads.] _All that glisters is not gold,—_

_Often have you heard that told:
Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold:
Gilded tombs do worms infold._

_Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscroll'd:_

_Fare you well; your suit is cold._

Cold indeed, and labour lost;
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost! —
Portia, adieu! I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave: thus losers part.

_[Exit with train._

_PORTIA._ A gentle riddance. — Draw the curtains, go:
Let all of his complexion choose me so. [Exeunt.
Scene VIII. — Belmont. A Room in Portia's House.

Enter Nerissa with a Servant.

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

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

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

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

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

Arra. And so have I address'd me. Fortune now To my heart's hope! — Gold, silver, and base lead.
Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.
You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest, ha? let me see:
Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.
What many men desire! That many may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach;
Which pries not to th' interior, but, like the martlet,
Builds in the weather on the outward wall,
Even in the force and road of casualty.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump with common spirits,
And rank me with the barbarous multitude.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
And well said too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune, and be honourable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservèd 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!

2 *By*, again, where we should use *of*. See page 91, note 12.
3 *Fond* is *foolish*.
4 Where it is exposed to every accident or mischance.
5 *Jump* for *agree*. So in *The Taming of the Shrew*, i. i: "Both our inventions meet and *jump* in one." And in *1 Henry the Fourth*, i. 2: "Well, Hal, well; and in some sort it *jumps* with my humour."
6 "How many then would *keep their hats on*, who now stand *bareheaded* as before their masters or superiors." Another instance of the indiscriminate use of *should* and *would*. 
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low peasantry would then be glean’d  
From the true seed of honour! and how much honour  
Pick’d from the chaff and ruin⁷ of the times,  
To be new-varnish’d! Well, but to my choice:  
\textit{Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.}  
I will assume desert. — Give me a key,  
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.  

[\textit{He opens the silver casket.}]

\textit{Portia.} Too long a pause for that which you find there.

\textit{Arra.} 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!  
\textit{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?  

\textit{Portia.} ‘T’ offend, and judge, are distinct offices,  
And of opposed natures.⁸  

\textit{Arra.} What is here?  

\textit{The fire seven times tried this:}  
\textit{Seven times tried that judgment is}  
\textit{That did never choose amiss.}  
\textit{Some there be that shadows kiss;}  
\textit{Such have but a shadow’s bliss.}  
\textit{There be fools alive, I wis;}⁹

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⁷ \textit{Ruin} here means \textit{refuse} or \textit{rubbish}.  
⁸ Portia is something of a lawyer, and she here has in mind the old legal  
axiom, that no man is a good judge in his own case.  
⁹ To \textit{wis} is to \textit{think}, to \textit{suppose}. Nares derives it from the Saxon \textit{wissan}.  
The preterite occurs in St. Luke, ii. 49: \textit{“Wist ye not that I must be about  
my Father’s business?”}
Silver'd o'er; and so was this.  
Take what wife you will to bed,  
I will ever be your head:  
So be gone, sir; you are sped.

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

[Exeunt Arragon and Train

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

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

10 The idiot's portrait was enclosed in the silver casket, and in that sense was silver'd o'er.

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

12 "You will always have a fool's head, whether married or not."

13 That is "your case is decided, or done for." So, in Romeo and Juliet, iii. 1, Mercutio, when he has received his death-wound from Tybalt, exclaims, "A plague o' both your Houses! I am sped."

14 Wroth is used in some of the old writers for suffering. So in Chapman's 2nd Iliad: "Born all to wroth of woe and labour." The original meaning of wroth is pain, grief, anger, any thing that makes one writhe; and the text exemplifies a common form of speech, putting the effect for the cause.

15 They overreach themselves with their own shrewdness, as men are apt to do who undertake to be specially wise:—

Disasters, do the best we can,  
Will reach both great and small;  
And he is oft the wisest man  
Who is not wise at all.
Portia. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Portia. Here: what would my lord? 16

Serv. Madam, there is alighted at your gate

A young Venetian, one that comes before
To signify th' approaching of his lord,
From whom he bringeth sensible regrets; 17
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.

Portia. No more, I pray thee: I am half afeard
Thou'llt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'lt such high-day wit 18 in praising him.—
Come, come, Nerissa; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post 19 that comes so mannerly.

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

16 A sportive reply to the Servant's 'Where is my lady?' So, in 1 Henry IV., ii. 4, the Hostess says to Prince Henry, "O Jesu! my lord, the Prince!" and he replies, "How now, my lady, the hostess!"

17 Sensible regrets are feeling salutations; or salutations that may be felt, such as valuable presents. See page 127, note 8.

18 High-day is holiday; a time for finely-phrased speaking. So our Fourth of July is a high day; and we all know what Fourth-of-July eloquence is.

19 Post is postman, and so a quick traveller.
ACT III.

SCENE I.—Venice. A Street.

Enter Solanio and Salarino.

Solan. Now, what news on the Rialto?

Salar. Why, yet it lives there uncheck'd, that Antonio hath a ship of rich lading wreck'd on the narrow seas; the Goodwins,¹ I think they call the place; a very dangerous flat and fatal, where the carcases of many a tall ship lie buried, as they say, if my gossip Report be an honest woman of² her word.

Solan. I would she were as lying a gossip in that as ever knapp'd ginger,³ or made her neighbours believe she wept for the death of a third husband.⁴ But it is true, without any slips of prolixity, or crossing the plain highway of talk, that the good Antonio, the honest Antonio,—O, that I had a title good enough to keep his name company!—

Salar. Come, the full stop.⁵

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.

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

² Here, as often, of is equivalent to in respect of.

³ To knap is to snap, or to break into small pieces. So in 46th Psalm of The Psalter: "He knappeth the spear in sunder."

⁴ The presumption being that by that time she has got so used to the thing as not to mind it much.

⁵ That is, finish the sentence; or "say on till you come to a period."
Solan. Let me say amen betimes, lest the Devil cross my prayer; for here he comes in the likeness of a Jew.—

Enter Shylock.

How now, Shylock! what news among the merchants?

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

Salar. That’s certain: I, for my part, knew the tailor that made the wings she flew withal.6

Solan. And Shylock, for his own part, knew the bird was fledg’d; and then it is the complexion7 of them all to leave the dam.

Shy. She is damn’d for it.

Salar. That’s certain, if the Devil may be her judge.

Shy. My own flesh and blood to rebel!

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

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

Salar. There is more difference between thy flesh and hers than between jet and ivory; more between your bloods than there is between red wine and Rhenish.8 But tell us, do you hear whether Antonio have had any loss at sea or no?

Shy. There I have another bad match: a bankrupt, a prodigal, who dare scarce show his head on the Rialto; — a beggar, that was used to come so smug9 upon the mart. Let him look to his bond: he was wont to call me usurer; — let

6 A sly allusion, probably, to the dress in which Jessica eloped.

7 Complexion was much used for nature, natural disposition, or temperament. So, in the old tale upon which Hamlet was partly founded, the hero is spoken of as being a “Saturnist by complexion.”

8 Rhenish wines are called white wines; named from the river Rhine.

9 Smug is brisk, gay, or spruce; applied both to persons and things. Thus in King Lear, iv. 6: “I will die bravely, like a smug bridegroom: what, I will be jovial.” And in 1 Henry IV, iii. 1: “Here the smug and silver Trent shall run in a new channel, fair and evenly.”
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 hinder'd me half a million;¹⁰ laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorn'd my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies; and what's his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humilitie? revenge: if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.¹¹

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.

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

[Exeunt Solanio, Salarino, and Servant.

¹⁰ "Hinder'd me to the extent of half a million"; ducats, of course.
¹¹ "I will work mighty hard rather than fail to surpass my teachers."
Enter Tubal.

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

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

Shy. Why there, there, there, there! a diamond gone, cost me two thousand ducats in Frankfort! The curse never fell upon our nation till now; I never felt it till now:—two thousand ducats in that; and other precious, precious jewels. —I would my daughter were dead at my foot, and the jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin! No news of them?—Why, so;—and I know not what's spent in the search: why, thou loss upon loss! the thief gone with so much, and so much to find the thief; and no satisfaction, no revenge: nor no\textsuperscript{12} ill luck stirring but what lights o' my shoulders; no sighs but o' my breathing; no tears but o' my shedding.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\textsuperscript{12} This doubling of the negative occurs continually both in Shakespeare and in other authors of that time. Good grammar then.
Tub. There came divers of Antonio's creditors in my company to Venice, that swear he cannot choose but break.  

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

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

Shy. Out upon her! Thou tortuREST me, Tubal: it was my turquoise;¹³ I had it of Leah when I was a bachelor. I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkeys.  

Tub. But Antonio is certainly undone.  

Shy. Nay, that's true, that's very true. Go, Tubal, fee me an officer;¹⁴ 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.

Portia. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two  
Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,  
I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.  
There's something tells me — but it is not love—

¹³ The turquoise was held precious not only for its rarity and beauty, but for the magical properties ascribed to it. Among other virtues, it was supposed to have the power of reconciling man and wife, and of forewarning the wearer, if any danger approached him. It was also thought to be a very compassionate stone; changing its colour, and looking pale and dim, if the wearer were ill.

¹⁴ To fee an officer, or a lawyer, is to engage him by paying for his services in advance. Acceptance of such payment binds him.
I would not lose you; and you know yourself,  
Hate counsels not in such a quality.  
But, lest you should not understand me well,—  
And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought,—  
I would detain you here some month or two  
Before you venture for me. I could teach you  
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;  
So will I never be: so may you miss me;  
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,  
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,  
They have o'erlook'd 1 me, and divided me;  
One half of me is yours, th' other half yours,—  
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,  
And so all yours! O, these naughty times  
Put bars between the owners and their rights!  
And so, though yours, not yours. Prove it so,  
Let fortune go to Hell for it, not I.  
I speak too long; but 'tis to peise 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.  

_Portia._ Upon the rack, Bassanio! then confess  
What treason there is mingled with your love.

---

1 _O'erlook'd_ is _eye-bitten_; that is, _bewitched_ or _fascinated_.
2 That is, _if_ it prove so, or _should_ it prove so. — The meaning is, "If the event should prove that I, who am really yours in heart, am not to be yours in fact, or in hand, let the punishment fall upon fortune for misdirecting your choice, and not upon me."
3 _To peise_ is from _peser_, French; to _weigh_ or _poise_. So in _Richard III._: "Lest leaden slumber _peise_ me down to-morrow." In the text it is used figuratively for to _suspend_, to _retard_; as _loading_ a thing in motion naturally makes it go slower.
**Scene II.**

**The Merchant of Venice.**

Bass. None but that ugly treason of mistrust,
Which makes me fear th’ enjoying of my love:⁴
There may as well be amity and league
’Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love.

Portia. Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
Where men enforced do speak any thing.⁵

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

Portia. Well then, confess, and live.

Bass. Confess, and love,

Had been the very sum of my confession.
O happy torment, when my torturer
Doth teach me answers for deliverance!⁶
But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

Portia. Away, then! I am lock’d in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.—
Nerissa, and the rest, stand all aloof.—
Let music sound, while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music: that the comparison
May stand more proper, my eye shall be the stream
And watery death-bed for him.⁷ He may win,

⁴ The Poet often has doubt for fear or suspect; here he has fear in the sense of doubt. “Fear the not enjoying of my love.”

⁵ It is pleasant to find Shakespeare before his age in denouncing the futility of this barbarous method of extorting truth. He was old enough to remember the case of Francis Throckmorton in 1584; and that of Squires in 1598 was fresh in his mind. — Clarendon Editors.

⁶ Doubtless many a poor man whose office it was to work the rack, and whose heart had not been burnt to a cinder by theological rancour, had pity on the victim, and whispered in his ear “answers for deliverance”; prompting him to speak what might suffice for stopping the torture.

⁷ Of course the allusion is to the habit, which the swan was imagined to have, of singing herself through the process of dying, or of going out, fading, in music. The closing part of the allusion supposes the bird to sing her life away while floating passively on the water.
And what is music then? then music is
Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
To a new-crowned monarch:⁸ such it is
As are those dulcet sounds in break of day
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom’s ear,
And summon him to marriage. Now he goes,
With no less presence,⁹ but with much more love,
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy
To the sea-monster:¹⁰ I stand for sacrifice;
The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
With blearèd visages, come forth to view
The issue of th’ exploit. Go, Hercules!
Live thou, I live: with much, much more dismay
I view the fight, than thou that makest the fray.

Music, whilst Bassanio comments on the caskets to himself.

SONG.

Tell me where is fancy bred,¹¹
Or in the heart or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

⁸ At English coronations, the act of putting on the crown was signalled by a joyous flourish of trumpets; whereupon the whole assembly were to bow their homage to the sovereign.

⁹ Presence for nobility of bearing or deportment.

¹⁰ The story, as told by Ovid, is, that Hesione, daughter of the Trojan King, being demanded by the Sea-monster, and being bound to a rock, Hercules slew the monster, and delivered her. Bassanio “goes with much more love,” because Hercules went, not from love of the lady, but to gain the reward offered by Laomedon.

¹¹ This song is very artfully conceived, and carries something enigmatical or riddle-like in its face, as if on purpose to suggest or hint darkly the way to the right choice. The clue, however, is such as to be seized only by a man whose heart is thoroughly right in the matter he goes about. Fancy, as here used, means, apparently, that illusive power or action of the mind
It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell;
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.

All.  Ding, dong, bell.

_Bass._ So may the outward shows be least themselves:
The world is still 12 deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,
But, being season'd with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil?  In religion,
What damnèd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve 13 it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple, but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stayers 14 of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars;
Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk! 15

which has misled the other suitors, who, as Portia says, "have the wisdom
by their wit to lose."  And the illusion thus engender'd in the eyes, and fed
with gazing, dies just there where it is bred, as soon as it is brought to the
test of experience by opening the wrong casket.  The riddle evidently has
some effect in starting Bassanio on the right track, by causing him to dis-
trust such shows as catch the fancy or the eye,—the glitter of the gold and
silver caskets.

12 _Still_, again, in its old sense of _always_ or _continually._
13 _Approve_ it is, simply, _prove_ it, or _make_ it _good_.  This use of the word is
very frequent in Shakespeare.
14 _Stayers_ in the sense of _props_, _supports_, or _stays_.  The word is to be
pronounced, here, as one syllable; as _cowards_ also is.
15 Cowards were commonly spoken of as having white livers.  Shake-
spere has _lily-livered_ and _milk-livered_ in the same sense; and Falstaff
And these assume but valour's excrement, to render them redoubted. Look on beauty, and you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight; which therein works a miracle in nature, making them lightest that wear most of it: so are those crispéd snaky golden locks, which make such wanton gambols with the wind, upon supposed fairness, often known to be the dowry of a second head, the skull that bred them in the sepulchre. Thus ornament is but the guilèd shore to a most dangerous sea; the beauteous scarf veiling an Indian feature; in a word,

instructs us that "the second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice."

16 Excrement, from excresco, is used for every thing which appears to grow or vegetate upon the human body, as the hair, the beard, the nails.

17 The meaning, here, is not very obvious; but the words are probably to be construed in the light of what follows. It would seem that false hair, "the golden tresses of the dead," was purchased at so much an ounce; and the more one had of it, the vainer one was.

18 Another quibble upon light. See page 121, note 15. Here, however, it is between light as opposed to heavy, and light in the sense of vanity.

19 That is, imagined or imputed fairness. — The Poet has often expressed a strong dislike of the custom, then in vogue, of wearing false hair. His 68th Sonnet has a passage very like that in the text: —

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

20 "The skull being in the sepulchre." Ablative absolute.

21 Guilèd, if it be the right word, must here mean seductive, beguiling, or full of guile; the passive form with the active sense. See Critical Notes.

22 Feature is used repeatedly by Shakespeare for form, person, or personal
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
T' entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou stale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead,
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I: joy be the consequence!

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

Bass. [Opening the leaden casket.] What find I here?
Fair Portia's counterfeit! What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion? Here are sever'd lips,
Parted with sugar breath: so sweet a bar

appearance in general. So in The Two Gentlemen, ii. 4: "He is complete
in feature as in mind." Also in King Lear, iv. 2: "Thou changèd and sex-
cover'd thing, for shame, bemonster not thy feature!" And in Cymbeline,
v. 5: "For feature, laming the shrine of Venus, or straight-pight Minerva,
postures beyond brief nature"; where shrine is statue or image.

23 Midas was a mythological personage who asked of God Bacchus that
whatever he touched might be turned into gold. The request being granted,
and all his food turning to gold in the eating, he implored Bacchus to re-
voke the favour.

24 Counterfeit was used for likeness or portrait. So in The Wit of a
Woman, 1634: "I will see if I can agree with this stranger for the drawing
of my daughter's counterfeit." And Hamlet calls the pictures he shows to
his mother "the counterfeit presentment of two brothers."
Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
The painter plays the spider; and hath woven
A golden mesh t' entrap the hearts of men,
Faster than gnats in cobwebs. But her eyes!
How could he see to do them? having made one,
Methinks it should have power to steal both his,
And leave itself unfurnish'd. Yet look, how far
The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
In underprizing it, so far this shadow
Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
The continent and summary of my fortune:

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

A gentle scroll. — Fair lady, by your leave; [Kissing her.
I come by note, to give and to receive. Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,

25 Unfurnished with a companion. In Fletcher's Lover's Progress, Alcidon
says to Clarangé, on delivering Lidian's challenge, which Clarangé ac-
cepts, —

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

26 Continent, in o'd English, is simply that which contains something.
27 "I come in accordance with the written direction to give a kiss and to
receive the lady."
Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no;
So, thrice fair lady, stand I, even so;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Portia. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
Such as I am: though for myself alone
I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better; yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself;
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich;
That, only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account: but the full sum of me
Is sum of—something;\(^{28}\) which, to term in gross,
Is an unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised:
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; then happier in this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all, in that her gentle spirit
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord\(^{29}\)
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself,

\(^{28}\) The dash before *something* is to indicate that the fair speaker hesitates for a term with which to describe herself modestly, yet without any affectation of modesty.

\(^{29}\) The *lord* of a thing is, properly, the *owner* of it; hence the word is applicable to a woman as well as to a man.
Are yours, my lord: I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

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

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

*Grati.* My Lord Bassanio and my gentle lady,
I wish you all the joy that you can wish;
For I am sure you can wish none from me: 30
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.

*Grati.* 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; 31

30 "You have so much joy yourselves in each other, that you cannot grudge any to me."
31 We are not to understand by this that Nerissa is merely a servant-maid to Portia: she holds the place of companion or friend, and Portia all
You loved, I loved; for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls;
For, wooing here, until I swet again,
And swearing, till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last,—if promise last,—
I got a promise of this fair one here,
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

_Portia._ Is this true, Nerissa?
_Neris._ Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.
_Bass._ And do you, Gratiano, mean good faith?
_Grati._ Yes, faith, my lord.
_Bass._ Our feast shall be much honour'd in your marriage.
_Grati._ 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,

along treats her as such. They are as nearly equals in rank as Bassanio
and Gratiano are, who are a pair of friends, not master and servant. Nor
does it conflict with this, that Gratiano speaks of Portia as "her mistress;"
for he is in a position that requires him to plead his present cause with a
good deal of modesty and deference, lest he should seem to have abused
his privilege of accompanying Bassanio on this loving voyage.

32 Intermission is pause or delay. Gratiano means, apparently, that his
own marriage is not to be put off any more than Bassanio's. The logic in
_for is not very evident; but I suspect _for is here used with the simple force
of _and, as it often is in the Bible.

33 _Shall for will; the two being often used indiscriminately.
34 _Very, here, is real or true; like the Latin verus._
Sweet Portia, welcome.

Portia. So do I, my lord:
They are entirely welcome.

Loren. 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't. Signior Antonio
Commends him to you. [Gives Bassanio a letter.

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

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

Grati. Nerissa, cheer yond stranger; bid her welcome.—
Your hand, Solanio: what's the news from Venice?
How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
I know he will be glad of our success;
We are the Jasons, we have won the fleece.

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

Portia. There are some shrewd\textsuperscript{35} contents in yond same paper,
That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek:
Some dear friend dead; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution\textsuperscript{36}
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse!—
With leave, Bassanio; I am half yourself,

\textsuperscript{35} The proper meaning of shrewd is sharp or biting; hence painful.
\textsuperscript{36} Constitution for constitutional temper. Bassanio is naturally cheerful
and lively.
And I must have the half of any thing
That this same paper brings you.

_Bass._

O sweet Portia!

Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words
That ever blotted paper. Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had
Ran in my veins,—I was a gentleman:
And then I told you true; and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for, indeed,
I have engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady,—
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood.—But is it true, Solanio?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico, and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?

_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

---

37 _State_ and _estate_ were used interchangeably. So, a little before, we have _estate_ for _state_, that is, _condition_: "Will show you his _estate_."

38 Here, as often, _mere_ is _absolute_, _entire_. So in _Othello_, ii. 2: "Certain tidings importing the _mere_ perdicion of the Turkish fleet."

39 _Should_, again, where present usage requires _would_.
A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
So keen and greedy to confound 40 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, 41 have all persuaded with him;
But none can drive him from the envious 42 plea
Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

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

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

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied 43 spirit
In doing courtesies; and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Portia. What sum owes he the Jew?

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

40 To ruin, to destroy, is the more common meaning of to confound, in Shakespeare and the writers of his time.

41 Of greatest importance or consequence. See page 86, note 29.

42 Envious for malicious. So the word was constantly used. Also envy for malice or hatred.

43 Condition'd is tempered or disposed. See page 94, note 26. — The force of the superlative, best, is continued over unwearied, in the sense of most. So in The Witch of Middleton, i. 2: "Call me the horrid' st and unhallow'd thing that life and nature tremble at." See, also, page 104, note 9.
Portia. What, no more?
Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond;
Double six thousand, and then treble that,\(^{44}\)
Before a friend of this description\(^{45}\)
Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio’s fault.
First go with me to church and call me wife,
And then away to Venice to your friend;
For never shall you lie by Portia’s side
With an unquiet soul. You shall have gold
To pay the petty debt twenty times over;
When it is paid, bring your true friend along:
My maid Nerissa and myself, 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;\(^{46}\)
Since you are dear-bought, I will love you dear.
But let me hear the letter of your friend.

Bass. [Reads.] Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit; and since, in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are clear’d between you and I, if I

\(^{44}\) The Venetian ducat, in or near the Poet’s time, is said to have been equivalent to nearly $1.53 of our money. At this rate, Portia’s 36,000 ducats would have equalled about $55,000. And money was worth some six times as much then as it is now! — The coin took its name from the legend inscribed upon it: “Sit tibi, Christe, datus, quem tu regis, iste ducatus.”

\(^{45}\) Here, as often in this play, the ending -tion is properly dissyllabic, and was so pronounced in the Poet’s time. The same with complexion, in ii. i.; and with occasions, in i. 1. Also with -tian in Christian, i. 3; and with -cean in ocean, i. 1. This is particularly the case when such a word ends a verse. Nevertheless I would not have the pronunciation used now, save when the rhyme requires it, as is very often the case in Spenser.

\(^{46}\) Cheer is look or countenance; from the French chere. So in A Midsummer-Night’s Dream, iii. 2: “All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer.”
might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure: if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Portia. 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, Salario, Antonio, and Jailer.

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

Anto. Hear me yet, good Shylock.

Shy. I'll have my bond; speak not against my bond:
I've sworn an oath that I will have my bond.
Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause;
But, since I am a dog, beware my fangs:
The Duke shall grant me justice.—I do wonder,
'Thou naughty jailer, that thou art so fond¹
To come abroad with him at his request.

Anto. I pray thee, hear me speak.

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

[Exit Shylock.

¹ Fond, again, in its old sense of foolish.
Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept with men.

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

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

Anto. The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
For the commodity that strangers have
With us in Venice: if it be denied,
'Twill much impeach the justice of the State,
Since that the trade and profit of the city
Consisteth of all nations. Therefore, go:
These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,
That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
To-morrow to my bloody creditor.

3 Kept, here, is dwelt or lived; a common usage of the time.

3 That is, because of the commercial intercourse. For is often thus equivalent to because of. — Thomas, in his History of Italy, 1561, has the following: "Al men, specially strangers, haue so muche libertee there, that though they speake very ill by the Venetians, so they attempt nothinge in effect against theyr astate, no man shal control theim for it. And generally of all other thynges, so thou offende no man privately, no man shal ordere the: whyche vndoubtedly is one principall cause, that draweth so many straungers thither."

4 Antonio was one of the citizens, while Shylock was reckoned among the strangers of the place. And since the city was benefited as much by the trade and commerce of foreigners as of natives, justice evidently required that the law should give equal advantages to them both. But to stop the course of law in behalf of citizens against strangers, would be putting the latter at a disadvantage, and so would clearly impeach the justice of the State.
Well, jailer, on. — Pray God, Bassanio come
To see me pay his debt, and then I care not! [Exeunt.

Scene IV. — Belmont. A Room in Portia’s House.

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

Loren. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
You have a noble and a true conceit\(^1\)
Of god-like amity; which appears most strongly
In bearing thus the absence of your lord.
But, if you knew to whom you show this honour,
How true a gentleman you send relief,
How dear a lover\(^2\) of my lord your husband,
I know you would be prouder of the work
Than customary bounty can enforce you.

Portia. I never did repent for doing good,
Nor shall not now: for in companions
That do converse and waste the time\(^3\) together,
Whose souls do bear an equal yoke of love,
There must be needs a like proportion\(^4\)
Of lineaments, of manners, and of spirit;
Which makes me think that this Antonio,
Being the bosom lover of my lord,
Must needs be like my lord. If it be so,
How little is the cost I have bestow’d
In purchasing the semblance of my soul
From out the state of hellish cruelty!
This comes too near the praising of myself;

---

1 Conceit, again, for conception, idea, or judgment. See page 84, note 23.
2 Lover for friend, the two words being formerly synonymous.
3 Associate, or keep company, and spend the time.
4 Proportion sometimes has the sense of equality or resemblance.
Therefore no more of it: hear other things.
Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
The husbandry and manage of my house
Until my lord’s return: for mine own part,
I have toward Heaven breathed a secret vow
To live in prayer and contemplation,
Only attended by Nerissa here,
Until her husband and my lord’s return:
There is a monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide. I do desire you
Not to deny this imposition,6
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

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

Portia. 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.

Loren. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you!

Jess. I wish your ladyship all heart’s content.

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

[Exeunt Jessica and Lorenzo.]

Now, Balthazar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,

---

6 The _ordering_. The literal meaning of husband is house-band, which is here implied. Of course manage is management.

6 _Imposition_ is any charge, task, or duty imposed or enjoined.—Here, as also in proportion and contemplation, the ending is properly dissyllabic. Also, in companions. See page 151, note 45.
And use thou all th' endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua: see thou render this
Into my cousin's hand, Doctor Bellario;
And, look, what notes and garments he doth give thee,
Bring them, I pray thee, with imagined speed 7
Unto the Tranect, 8 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.

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

Neris. Shall they see us?

Portia. They shall, Nerissa; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplishéd
With what we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace;
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride; and speak of frays,
Like a fine-bragging youth; and tell quaint 9 lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died;

7 With the celerity of imagination. So in the Chorus preceding the third Act of Henry V.: "Thus with imagined wing our swift scene flies."
8 This word evidently implies the name of a place where the passage-boat set out, and is in some way derived from tranare, to draw. No other instance of its use has yet occurred. The Poet had most likely heard or read of the place on the Brenta, about five miles from Venice, where a boat was drawn over a dam by a crane.
9 Quaint is ingenious, clever, or cunning. See page 115, note 4.
I could not do withal: then I'll repent,
And wish, for all that, that I had not kill'd them.
And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell;
That men shall swear I've discontinued school
Above a twelvemonth. I've within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging Jacks,
Which I will practise.—
But come; I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park-gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day.  

[Exeunt]
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?
Anto. Ready, so please your Grace.
Duke. I'm sorry for thee: thou art come to answer
A stony adversary, an inhuman wretch.
SCENE I.  THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Uncapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
  
  _Anto._ I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify
His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate,
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury; and am arm'd
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage of his.

  _Duke._ Go one, and call the Jew into 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
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse, more strange
Than is thy strange-apparent cruelty:
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,—
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,—
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,

---

1 To abate, to assuage, to mitigate, are old senses of to qualify.
2 The old language in full was since that; and Shakespeare, in a second clause, often uses that, instead of repeating since. Here we should write "since—and since." It was the same with if, when, though, and some others. If that has occurred several times in this play.
3 Envy in its old sense of malice or hatred.
4 "Keepest up this manner or appearance of malice."
5 Remorse, in Shakespeare, generally means pity or compassion. The usage was common.
6 Where for whereas; the two being used interchangeably.
7 Loose, here, has the sense of remit or release.
in gentle ness and love,
the principal;

huddled on his back;
royal merchant down,

humbled in his state

Turks and Tartars, never train'd

a gentle answer, Jew.
I have possess'd your Grace of what I purpose;
our holy Sabbath have I sworn
the due and forfeit of my bond:

deny it, let the danger light
your charter and your city's freedom.

I ask me, why I rather choose to have
weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
but, say, it is my humour; is it answer'd?

1. Money is, properly half, but was used for any portion.

2. 'Royal merchant' is a complimentary phrase, to indicate the wealth
and social standing of Antonio. In the Poet's time, Sir Thomas Gresham
was so called, from his great wealth, and from his close financial relations
with the Court and the Queen. The term was also applied to great Italian
merchants, such as the Giustiniani and the Grimaldi, the Medici and the
Pazzi, some of whom held mortgages on kingdoms and acquired the titles
of princes for themselves.

10 Possess'd, again, in its old sense of informed.

11 Perhaps the Poet had London in his mind, which held certain rights
and franchises by royal charter, and was liable to have its charter revoked
for an act of flagrant injustice.

12 The meaning seems to be, "Suppose I should say," or, "What if I
should say it is my humour; is that an answer?" — In the Poet's time,
humour was used, much as conscience was at a later period, to justify any
eccentric impulse of vanity, opinion, or self-will, for which no common
What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned! What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig; Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain themselves for affection. Masters of passion sway it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a wauling bag-pipe, but of force Must yield to such inevitable shame
ground of reason could be alleged. Thus, if a man had an individual
crotchety which he meant should override the laws and conditions of our
social being, it was his humour. Corporal Nym is a burlesque on this sort
of affection.

13 *Baned* is poisoned; killed with what is called *ratsbane*.

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

15 Here, again, *for* is equivalent to *because of*. See page 153, note 30.—
*Affect* on, in this place, means much the same as *impulse*; more properly,
the state of *being affected* or *moved* by any external object or impression.

16 An axiomatic saying, brought in here with signal aptness. Even the
greatest masters of passion move and rule it according as it is predisposed:
so, for instance, in the dramatic delineation of passion; and the secret of
Shakespeare's unequalled power lies partly in that fact: hence, in his work,
the passions are rooted in the persons, instead of being merely pasted on.

17 "Wauling bag-pipe" evidently means the same as "when the bag-pipe
sings i' the nose." The effect in question is produced by the *sound* of the
bag-pipe, and not by the *sight*, as in the instances of the gaping pig and of
the cat.

18 *Of force* is the same as *perforce*; *of necessity*, or *necessarily*. 
But, touch’d with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety⁸ 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 merchant⁹ down,
And pluck commiseration of his state
From brassy bosoms and rough hearts of flint,
From stubborn Turks and Tartars, never train’d
To offices of tender courtesy.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

_Shy._ I have possess’d¹⁰ your Grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city’s freedom.¹¹
You’ll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion-flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I’ll not answer that:
But, say, it is my humour; is it answer’d?¹²

⁸ _Moiety_ is, properly _half_, but was used for any portion.
⁹ " _Royal_ merchant" is a complimentary phrase, to indicate the wealth and social standing of Antonio. In the Poet’s time, Sir Thomas Gresham was so called, from his great wealth, and from his close financial relations with the Court and the Queen. The term was also applied to great Italian merchants, such as the Giustiniani and the Grimaldi, the Medici and the Pazzi, some of whom held mortgages on kingdoms and acquired the titles of princes for themselves.
¹⁰ _Possess’d_, again, in its old sense of _informed_.
¹¹ Perhaps the Poet had London in his mind, which held certain rights and franchises by royal charter, and was liable to have its charter revoked for an act of flagrant injustice.
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What if my house be troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned! 13 What, are you answer'd yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig; 14
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain themselves for affection. 15
Masters of passion sway it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. 16 Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be render'd,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
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bag-pipe, and not by the sight, as in the instances of the gaping pig and of
the cat.

18 Of force is the same as perforce; of necessity, or necessarily.
As to offend, himself being offended;
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answer'd?

_Bass._ This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
T' excuse the current of thy cruelty.

_Shy._ I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

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

_Shy._ Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

_Bass._ Every offence is not a hate at first.

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

_Anto._ I pray you, think you question 19 with the Jew.

You may as well go stand upon the beach,
And bid the main 20 flood 'bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf,
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise,
When they are fretten with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do any thing most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But, with all brief and plain conveniency,
Let me have judgment, 21 and the Jew his will.

_Bass._ For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

19 Question, here, like reason before, has the sense of talk or converse. The usage was common, and Shakespeare has it repeatedly.

20 Great, strong, mighty are among the old senses of main.

21 "Let the sentence proceed against me with such promptness and directness as befits the administration of justice." The Poet often uses brief for quick or speedy.
Shy. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
I would not draw them: I would have my bond.

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

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

Duke. Upon my power I may dismiss this court,
Unless Bellario, a learned Doctor,
Whom I have sent for to determine this,
Come here to-day.

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.

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

   Enter Nerissa, dressed like a Lawyer's Clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario?
Neris. From both, my lord: Bellario greets your Grace.

   [Presents a letter.

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly?
Shy. To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.
Grati. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee?
Shy. No, none that thou hast wit enough to make.
Grati. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog!
And for thy life let justice be accused.
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,
That souls of animals infuse themselves
Into the trunks of men: thy currish spirit
Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,
Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,

22 This is well illustrated by a passage in 2 Henry the Fourth, iv. 4: "Thou hidest a thousand daggers in thy thoughts, which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart."

23 "Let justice be impeached or arraigned for suffering thee to live."

24 The ancient philosopher of Samos, who is said to have taught the transmigration of souls. In As You Like It, iii. 2, Rosalind says, "I was never so berhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember." And in Twelfth Night, iv. 2, the Clown says to Malvolio, "Thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wits; and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dispossess the soul of thy grandam."
And, whilst thou lay'st with thy unhallow'd dam,
Infused itself in thee; for thy desires
Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak\(^{25}\) 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?

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

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

[ Clerk reads. ] Your Grace shall understand, that at the
receipt of your letter I am very sick; but, in the instant that
your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young
doctor of Rome; his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him
with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio
the merchant: we turn'd o'er many books together: he is
furnished with my opinion; which, better'd with his own
learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend,
comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your Grace's
request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be
no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation;\(^{26}\) 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.

---

\(^{25}\) That is, \textit{in speaking}. The infinitive used gerundively again.

\(^{26}\) The meaning apparently is, "Let his youthfulness be no hindrance to
his being reverently esteemed."
Duke. You hear the learn'd Bellario, what he writes:
And here, I take it, is the Doctor come.—

Enter Portia, dressed like a Doctor of Laws.

Give me your hand: came you from old Bellario?

Portia. I did, my lord.

Duke. You're welcome: take your place.

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

Portia. I am inform'd throughly of the cause.

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Portia. Is your name Shylock?

Shylock is my name.

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

Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law

Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.—

[To Anto.] You stand within his danger, do you not?

Anto. Ay, so he says.

Portia. Do you confess the bond?

Anto. I do.

Portia. Then must the Jew be merciful.

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

---

27 "The controversy for the deciding of which the present inquiry or investigation is held." Question in its proper Latin sense.

28 Through and thorough are but different forms of the same word; and Shakespeare uses the two forms indifferently, as suits his metre. The usage was common.

29 To impugn is to controvert, to oppose; literally, to fight against.

30 "Within one's danger" properly meant within one's power or control, liable to a penalty which he might impose. Sometimes, however, it was used for being in debt to one. Here the meaning seems to be, "Your life is in his power, and so in danger from him."
Portia. The quality of mercy is not strain'd;\(^{31}\)
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice bless'd;
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes:\(^{32}\)
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest:\(^{33}\) it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty:\(^{34}\)
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—
That in the course of justice none of us
Should see salvation: we do pray for mercy;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy.\(^{35}\) I have spoke thus much,

\(^{31}\) That is, the nature of mercy is to act freely, not from constraint.
Portia had used must in a moral sense, and the Jew purposely mistook it
in a legal sense. This gives a natural occasion and impulse for her strain
of "heavenly eloquence."

\(^{32}\) A beautiful version of the divine Christian axiom, Acts xx. 35, "It is
more blessed to give than to receive."

\(^{33}\) This may mean, either that mercy exists in the greatest plenitude in
Him who is omnipotent, or that the more power one has to inflict pain, the
more he bows and subdues the heart by showing mercy. If the former, it
should be printed "in the Mightiest." It was evidently a favourite idea with
Shakespeare that the noblest and most amiable thing is power mixed with
gentleness; and that the highest style of manhood is that which knows no
fear of pain, but is a child to the touches of compassion.

\(^{34}\) The thing attributed or assigned for the purpose of inspiring awe and
of symbolising majesty.

\(^{35}\) " Portia, referring the Jew to the Christian doctrine of Salvation, and
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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

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

*Bass.* Yes, here I tender't for him in the court;
Yea, thrice 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.

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

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

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

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

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

the Lord's Prayer, is a little out of character." So says Judge Blackstone;
whereas the Lord's Prayer was itself but a compilation, all the petitions in it
being taken out of the ancient euchologies or prayer-books of the Jews. So
in Ecclesiasticus, xxviii. 2: "Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath
done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest."

86 "If you rigidly insist upon the plea of justice."

87 Truth is honesty here. A true man in old language is an honest man.
And the honesty here shown is in offering to pay thrice the money.
Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in Heaven:
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?
No, not for Venice!

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

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

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

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

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

Portia.— 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!

Portia. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

38 Forfeit for forfeited. This shortened preterite has occurred more than once before. The Poet has many preterites similarly shortened. See page 127, note 4.
39 That is, the law relating to contracts is fully applicable in this case.
40 Such double comparatives are frequent. So we have more better, more braver, and many others. Good grammar then.
Shy. Ay, his breast
So says the bond:—doth it not, noble judge?—
Nearest his heart: those are the very words.

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

Shy. I have them ready. 41

Portia. 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?

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

'Twere good you do so much for charity.

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

Portia. Come, merchant, have you any thing to say?

Anto. But little: I am arm'd and well prepared.—
Give me your hand, Bassanio: fare you well!
Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you;
For herein Fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom: it is still her use 42
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow
An age of poverty; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honourable wife:
Tell her the process of Antonio's end;
Say how I loved you, speak me fair in death; 43
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge

41 Balance, though singular in form, is used in a plural sense, referring to
the two scales which make the balance. So in Baret's Alvearie, 1580: "Bal-
ances, or a payre of ballance."

42 It is ever her custom or wont. Still and use in these senses occur very
often. The usage was common.

43 "Speak well of me when I am dead"; or, perhaps, "Tell the world
that I died like a man."
Whether Bassanio had not once a lover.
Repent not you that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt;
For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.  

_Bass._ Antonio, I am married to a wife
Which is as dear to me as life itself;
But life itself, my wife, and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life:
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

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

_Grati._ I have a wife, whom, I protest, I love:
I would she were in Heaven, so she could
Entreat some power to change this currish Jew.

_Neris._ 'Tis well you offer it behind her back;
The wish would make, else, an unquiet house.

_Shy._ [Aside.] These be the Christian husbands! I have a daughter;
Would any of the stock of Barrantas
Had been her husband rather than a Christian!—
[To Portia.] We trifle time: I pray thee, pursue sentence.

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

_Shy._ Most rightful judge!

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44 An equivocal on heart; and it rather heightens the pathos.
45 Which and who were used indifferently, both of persons and things.
So in the Lord's Prayer: "Our Father which art in Heaven."
46 Shakespeare seems to have followed the pronunciation usual in the theatre, Barabas being sounded Barubas throughout Marlowe's Jew of Malta.
Portia. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast:
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learnèd Judge! A sentence! — Come, prepare.

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

Grati. O upright judge!—Mark, Jew: O learnèd judge!

Shy. Is that the law?

Portia. Thyself shalt see the Act:
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.

Grati. O learned judge!—Mark, Jew: a learnèd judge!

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

Bass. Here is the money.

Portia. Soft!

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

Grati. O Jew, an upright judge, a learnèd judge!

Portia. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.

Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou takest more
Or less than a just pound, be't but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance
Or the division of the twentieth part

47 An exact pound: the same as "just a pound."
Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair,—
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate. 48

_Grati_. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!

Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

_Portia_. 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.

_Portia_. He hath refused it in the open court:
He shall have merely justice and his bond.

_Grati_. 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?

_Portia_. 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.

_Portia_. Tarry, Jew:

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the laws of Venice,
If it be proved against an alien
That by direct or indirect attempts
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods; the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the State;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament I say thou stand'st;
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,

48 Another shortened preterite. So the Poet has _consecrate, dedicate,
suffocate, situate_, and others.
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contrived against the very life
Of the defendant; and thou hast incur'd
The danger formally by me rehearsed.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

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

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our 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.49

Portia. Ay, for the State; not for Antonio.50

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.

Portia. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

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

Anto. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine51 for one half of his goods,
I am content; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman

49 "Submission on your part may move me to reduce it to a fine."
50 Meaning, apparently, that the reduction of the forfeiture to a fine
should apply only to that half of his goods which was to come to the coffer
of the State, not that which fell to Antonio.
51 If the court will remit the fine, or acquit Shylock of the forfeiture so
far as the claim of the State is concerned. The Poet repeatedly uses quit
thus for acquit or release.
That lately stole his daughter: 52
Two things provided more: That, for this favour,
He presently become a Christian;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess’d,
Unto his son Lorenzo and his daughter.

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

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

_Portia._ 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.

_Grati._ In christening thou shalt have two godfathers:
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more, 53
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font. [Exit SHYLOCK.

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

_Portia._ I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon: 54

52 "That is, in trust for Shylock during his life, for the purpose of secur-
ing it at his death to Lorenzo. In conveyances of land, where it is intended
to give the estate to any person after the death of another, it is necessary
that a third person should be possessed of the estate, and the _use_ be de-
clared to the one after the death of the other, or the estate would be ren-
dered insecure to the future possessor. This is called a conveyance to _uses_.”
The anonymous author of the foregoing adds, that Shakespeare has ren-
dered the old-Latin law phrase pertaining to the case, “with all the strict-
ness of a technical conveyancer, and has made Antonio desire to have one
half of Shylock’s goods in _use_, — to render it upon his death to Lorenzo.”

53 Meaning a jury of _twelve_ men to condemn him. This appears to have
been an old joke. So in _The Devil is an Ass_, by Ben Jonson: “I will
leave you to your godfathers in law. _Let twelve men work._”

54 An old English idiom now obsolete. So in _A Midsummer-Night’s
Dream_, iii. x: “I shall desire you of more acquaintance.”
I must away this night toward Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.

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

[Execunt 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,55
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope56 your courteous pains withal.

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

Portia. 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 'o pardon me.

Portia. You press me far, and therefore I will yield.—
[To Anto.] Give me your gloves, I'll wear them for your sake;—

55 In return for which, or in consideration of which. So the phrase is, I think, always used in Shakespeare. Now it means instead of.
56 The only instance I have met with of cope being used in the sense of require. A like use of the word in composition, however, occurs in Ben Jonson's Fox, iii. 5:—

He would have sold his part of Paradise
For ready money, had he met a cope-man.
[To Bass.] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.  
Do not draw back your hand: I'll take no more;  
And you in love shall not deny me this.

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

Portia. 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.

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

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

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

[Exeunt Portia and Nerissa.

Anto. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring:  
Let his deservings, and my love withal,  
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.
Bass. Go, Gratiano, run and overtake him;  
Give him the ring; and bring him, if thou canst,  
Unto Antonio’s house. Away! make haste. —  

[Exit Gratiano.

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

[Exeunt.

Scene II. — The Same. A Street.

Enter Portia and Nerissa, disguised as before.

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

Enter Gratiano.

Grati. Fair sir, you are well overta’en:  
My lord Bassanio, upon more advice,¹  
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat  
Your company at dinner.

Portia. 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.

Grati. That will I do.

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

¹Upon further consideration. See page 87, note 33. And so in Henry the Fifth, ii. 2: “It was excess of wine that set him on; and, on our more advice, we pardon him.”
Portia. Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old\(^3\) swearing
That they did give away the rings to men;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away! make haste: thou know'st where I will tarry.

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

[Exeunt.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Belmont. Avenue to Portia’s House.

Enter Lorenzo and Jessica.

Loren. The Moon shines bright. In such a night as this,
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,
And they did make no noise,—in such a night
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,
And sigh'd his soul toward\(^1\) the Grecian tents,
Where Cressid lay that night.\(^2\)

\(^2\) Old was a frequent intensive in colloquial speech; very much as huge is used now. So in Much Ado about Nothing, v. 2: “Yonder’s old coil at home.” And in The Merry Wives of Windsor, i. 4: “Here will be an old abusing of God’s patience and the king’s English.”

\(^1\) Toward, like many other words, is, with the poets, one or two syllables according to the occasions of their metre. Here it is two, with the accent on the second. At the end of iv. 1, it has the accent on the first:

And in the morning early will we both
Fly toward Belmont: come, Antonio.

\(^2\) The story of Troilus and Cressida is dramatized in Shakespeare’s play of that name. Troilus was a Trojan prince, one of King Priam’s fifty sons. He fell deeply and most honourably in love with Cressida, who, after being mighty sweet upon him, forsook him for his enemy, Diomedes the Greek; which he took to heart prodigiously.
Jess.

In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself, \(^3\)
And ran dismay'd away.

Loren. 

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow \(^4\) in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jess.

In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson. \(^5\)

\(^3\) That is, ere she saw the lion himself. The story of "Pyramus and his love Thisbe" is burlesqued in the interlude of Bottom and company in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

\(^4\) Spenser in like sort makes the willow a symbol of forsaken love. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. i. 9: "The willow, worn of forlorn paramours." Dido was Queen of Carthage. After the destruction of Troy, Æneas, a great Trojan prince, in the course of his wanderings landed at Carthage, where he was received and treated with all possible kindness and honour by the Queen. He was a splendid fellow, and she got desperately smitten with him. After thus winning her heart entirely, he jilted her, and ran away, alleging that the gods peremptorily commanded him to go and found a new nation: accordingly he became the founder of Rome.

\(^5\) Twice before in this play we have had allusions to the story of Jason and his voyage to Colchis in quest of the golden fleece. Medea, daughter to the King of Colchis, fell in love with him, helped him to win the fleece, then stole her father's treasure, and ran away with Jason to Greece. Now Jason's father was very old and decayed; and Medea was a potent enchantress, the most so of all the ancient girls: so, with "the hidden power of herbs and might of magic spell," she made a most plenipotent broth, wherewith she renewed the old man's youth. Ovid has it, that she did this by drawing the blood out of his veins, and filling them with the broth. Burke, in the following passage, seems to infer that she put him into the kettle, and boiled him into a young man: "We are taught to look with horror on the children of their country, who are rashly prompt to hack that aged parent in pieces, and put him into the kettle of magicians, in hopes that by their poisonous weeds and wild incantations they may regenerate the paternal constitution, and renovate their father's life." — *Reflections, &c.*
THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

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

Jess. And 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.

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

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

Enter Stephano.

Loren. Who comes so fast in silence of the night?

Steph. A friend.

Loren. 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.

Loren. Who comes with her?

Steph. None but a holy hermit and her maid.

6 In this play the name Stephano has the accent on the second syllable.
In The Tempest, written some years later, the same name has it, rightly, on
the first.

7 In old times crosses were set up at the intersection of roads, and in
other places specially associated with saintly or heroic names, to invite the
passers-by to devotion. And in those days Christians were much in the
habit of remembering in their prayers whatever lay nearest their hearts.
I pray you, is my master yet return’d?

_Loren._ He is not, nor we have not heard from him.—
But go we in,\(^8\) 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!
_Loren._ Who calls?
_Laun._ Sola! — did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress Lorenzo? — sola, sola!
_Loren._ Leave hollaing, man: here.
_Laun._ Sola! — Where? where?
_Loren._ Here.

_Laun._ Tell him there’s a post come from my master, with his horn full of good news: \(^9\) my master will be here ere morning.

[Exit.

_Loren._ Sweet soul, let’s in, and there expect their coming.
And yet no matter: why should we go in?—
My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
And bring your music forth into the air. — [Exit Stephano.
How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music

\(^8\) Here we have a clear instance of the first person plural, in the imperative. The Poet has many such. So in _Hamlet_, i. r.: “Well, _sit we_ down, and _let us hear_ Bernardo speak of this.” And again: “ _Break we_ our watch up.”

\(^9\) The postman used to carry a horn, and blow it to give notice of his coming, on approaching a place where he had something to deliver. Launcelot has just been imitating the notes of the horn in his exclamations, _Sola, &c._— _Expect_, in the next line, is _wait for_ or _await_. The Poet has it repeatedly in that sense. And so in Hebrews, x. 13: “From henceforth _expecting_ till his enemies be made his footstool.”
Creep in our ears: soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of Heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins:
Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.—

Enter Musicians.

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

Jess. I'm never merry when I hear sweet music.

Loren. The reason is, your spirits are attentive:
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,

10 A small plate, used in the administration of the Eucharist: it was commonly of gold, or silver-gilt.

11 Continually sounding an accompaniment.—Of course everybody has heard of “the music of the spheres,”—an ancient mystery which taught that the heavenly bodies in their revolutions sing together in a concert so loud, various, and sweet, as to exceed all proportion to the human ear. And the greatest souls, from Plato to Wordsworth, have been lifted above themselves, with the idea that the universe was knit together by a principle of which musical harmony is the aptest and clearest expression. Milton touches it with surpassing sweetness in the morning hymn of Adam and Eve, Paradise Lost, v. 177: “And ye five other wandering fires, that move in mystic dance not without song, resound His praise,” &c. See, also, Milton's Arcades, and Coleridge's Remorse, Act iii, scene 1, and Wordsworth's great poem On the Power of Sound, stanza xii.

12 So in Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, v. 38: “Touching musical harmony, such is the force thereof, and so pleasing effects it hath in that very part of man which is most divine, that some have thereby been induced to think that the soul itself by nature is or hath in it harmony.
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing, and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;
If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,
You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
Their savage eyes turn'd to a modest gaze,
By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones, and floods;
Since nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature.
The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not 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: 13
Let no such man be trusted. 14 Mark the music.

Enter Portia and Nerissa at a distance.

Portia. 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.

13 Erebus was the darkest and gloomiest region of Hades.
14 Upon the general subject of this splendid strain touching music and
musical harmony, it seems but just to quote a passage hardly inferior from
Sir Thomas Browne, Religio Medici; Part ii. Sect. 9: "There is a music
wherever there is harmony, order, or proportion; and thus far we may
maintain 'the music of the spheres': for those well-ordered motions and
regular paces, though they give no sound unto the ear, yet to the under-
standing they strike a note most full of harmony. Whatsoever is harmoni-
cally composed delights in harmony; which makes me much distrust the
symmetry of those heads which declaim against all church-music. For my-
self, not only from my obedience but my particular genius I do embrace it:
for even that vulgar and tavern music which makes one man merry, another
mad, strikes in me a deep fit of devotion, and a profound contemplation of
Neris. When the Moon shone we did not see the candle.

Portia. So doth the greater glory dim the less:
A substitute shines brightly as a king,
Until a king be by; and then his state
Empties itself, as doth an inland brook,
Into the main of waters. Music! hark!

Neris. It is your music, madam, of the house.

Portia. Nothing is good, I see, without respect:15
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Neris. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Portia. 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.16

the first Composer. There is something in it of divinity more than the ear
discovers: it is an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson of the whole world
and creatures of God,—such a melody to the ear as the whole world, well
understood, would afford the understanding. In brief, it is a sensible fit of
that harmony which intellectually sounds in the ear of God. I will not say,
with Plato, the soul is an harmony, but harmonical, and hath its nearest
sympathy unto music."

15 Nothing is good unless it be regarded, heeded, or attended to. Hence
the music sounds much better when there is nothing to distract or divert
the attention.

16 "The difference is in the hearer's mind, and not in the songs them-
selves; and the nightingale is reputed the first of songsters because she sings
at the time when she can best be heard." We have a like thought in the
Poet's 102d Sonnet:

Our love was new, and then but in the Spring,
When I was wont to greet it in my lays;
As Philomel in Summer's front doth sing,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
Not that the Summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night;
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
How many things by season season'd\textsuperscript{17} are
To their right praise and true perfection!—
Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion,
And would not be awaked!\textsuperscript{18} [Music ceases.

Loren. That is the voice,
Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

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

Loren. Dear lady, welcome home.

Portia. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
Are they return'd?

Loren. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Portia. Go in, Nerissa:
Give order to my servants that they take

\textsuperscript{17} A rather unpleasant jingle in \textit{season} and \textit{season'd}. The meaning is, that, by being rightly \textit{timed}, the things are tempered and made fit for their purpose; hence \textit{relished}.

\textsuperscript{18} Endymion was a very beautiful youth: Juno took a fancy to him, whereupon Jupiter grew jealous of him, and cast him into a perpetual sleep on Mount Latmos. While he was there asleep, Luna got so smitten with his beauty, that she used to come down and kiss him, and lie by his side. Some said, however, that Luna herself put him asleep, that she might have the pleasure of kissing him without his knowing it, the youth being somewhat shy when awake. The story was naturally a favourite with the poets. Fletcher, in \textit{The Faithful Shepherdess}, tells the tale charmingly,—

How the pale Phoebe, hunting in a grove,
First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
She took eternal fire that never dies;
How she convey'd him softly in a sleep,
His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
Head of old Latmus, where she stoops each night,
Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
To kiss her sweetest.
SCENE I. THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. 189

No note at all of our being absent hence;—
Nor you, Lorenzo;—Jessica, nor you. [A Tucket19 sounds.

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

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

Enter Bassanio, Antonio, Gratiano, and their Followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,20
If you would walk in absence of the Sun.

Portia. Let me give light, but let me not be light;21
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me:
But God sort all!22 You're welcome home, my lord.

Bass. I thank you, madam. Give welcome to my friend:
This is the man, this is Antonio,
To whom I am so infinitely bound.

Portia. You should in all sense23 be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Anto. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Portia. Sir, you are very welcome to our house:

---

19 A tucket is a peculiar series of notes on a trumpet. Probably the word is from the Italian toccata, which is said to mean a prelude to a sonata.

20 This is making Portia pretty luminous or radiant. To "hold day with the Antipodes" is to have day at the same time with them. But Bassanio is deep in love with Portia: and so am I. Who is not?

21 Twice before in these scenes, we had had playing upon light: here it is especially graceful and happy. See page 142, note 18.

22 Sort here has the sense of the Latin sortior: "God allot all," or dispose all.

23 Is sense used for reason here? So it would seem. Or does it mean in all feeling or sensibility? Perhaps all sense is put for every sense or all senses.
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.\(^{24}\)

**Grati.** [To Neris.] By yonder Moon I swear you do me
wrong;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk.

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

**Grati.** About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring
That she did give to me; whose posy was
For all the world like cutler's poetry
Upon a knife,\(^{25}\) *Love me, and leave me not.*

**Neris.** What talk you of the posy or the value?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death;
And that it should lie with you in your grave:
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective,\(^{26}\) and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk! no, God's my judge!
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

**Neris.** Ay, if a woman live to be a man.

**Grati.** Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy; a little scrubbed\(^{27}\) boy,
No higher than thyself, the judge's clerk;

---

\(^{24}\) This complimentary form, made up only of *breath.*

\(^{25}\) Knives were formerly inscribed, by means of *aqua fortis,* with short sentences in distich. The *posy* of a ring was the motto.

\(^{26}\) *Respective* is *considerate* or *regardful;* in the same sense as *respect* is explained, page 83, note 20. The word is repeatedly used thus by Shakespeare; as in *Romeo and Juliet,* iii. 1: "Away to Heaven respective lenity, and fire-eyed fury be my conduct now!"

\(^{27}\) *Scrubbed* is here used in the sense of *stunted;* as in Holland's Pliny: "Such will never prove fair trees, but *scrubs* only." And Verplanck observes that the name *scrub oak* was from the first settlement of this country given to the dwarf or bush oak.
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee:
I could not for my heart deny it him.

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

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

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

Portia. 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.

Portia. Even so void is your false heart of truth.
By Heaven, I will ne'er come in your bed
Until I see the ring.

Neris. 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.

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

Bass. No, by mine honour, madam, by my soul,
No woman had it; but a Civil Doctor,
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him,
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;
Even he that did uphold the very life
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
I was enforced to send it after him:
I was beset with shame and courtesy;

28 Contain was sometimes used in the sense of retain. So in Bacon's Essays: "To contain anger from mischiefe, though it take hold of a man, there be two things."

29 A Civil Doctor is a doctor of the Civil Law.

30 "Shame and courtesy" is here put for shame of discourtesy. The Poet has several like expressions. In King Lear, i. 2: "This policy and reverence of age"; which means "This policy, or custom, of reverencing age." Also in i. 5: "This milky gentleness and course of yours"; that is, milky and
My honour would not let ingratitude
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;
For, by these blessèd candles of the night, 31
Had you been there, I think you would have begg’d
The ring of me to give the worthy Doctor.

Portia. Let not that Doctor e’er come near my house.
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,
And that which you did swear to keep for me,
I will become as liberal as you:
I’ll not deny him any thing I have.

Neris. Nor I his clerk; therefore be well advised 39
How you do leave me to mine own protection.

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

Anto. I am th’ unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Portia. Sir, grieve not you; you’re welcome notwithstanding.

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

Portia. 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:

gentle course. And Hamlet, i. 1: “Well ratified by law and heraldry”: meaning the law of heraldry.

31 The “candles of the night” are the Moon and stars. So in Romeo and Juliet, iii. 5: “Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day stand tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.”

32 Advised, as before, for cautious or circumspect. See page 87, note 33.
— Well, here, has the force of very.
Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.

_Anto._ I once did lend my body for his wealth;[^33]
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.^[34]

_Portia._ Then you shall be his surety: give him this;
And bid him keep it better than the other.

_Anto._ Here, Lord Bassanio; swear to keep this ring.

_Bass._ By Heaven, it is the same I gave the Doctor!

_Portia._ I had it of him; pardon me, Bassanio.

_Neriss._ And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano.

_Grati._ Why, this is like the mending of highways

_In Summer, when the ways are fair enough.

_Portia._ You are all amazed:
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the Doctor;
Nerissa there her clerk. Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now return'd; I have not yet
Enter'd my house.—Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbour suddenly.^[35]

[^33]: That is, for his _welfare_ or his _good_. _Wealth_ is only another form of _weal_: we say indifferently common-_weal_ or common-_wealth_; and the commonwealth is the good that men have in common.—_Which_, in the next line, refers to the _loan_ of Antonio's body.

[^34]: _Advisedly_ is _deliberately_; much the same as in note 32.

[^35]: _Suddenly_ for _unexpectedly_; as in the _Litany_ we pray to be delivered from "sudden death."
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancéd on this letter.

_Anto._ I am dumb.
_Bass._ Were you the Doctor, and I knew you not?
_Anto._ Sweet lady, you have given me life and living;  
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.  

_Portia._ How now, Lorenzo!  
My clerk hath some good comforts too for you.

_Neris._ Ay, and I'll give them him without a fee. —
There do I give to you and Jessica,
From the rich Jew, a special deed of gift,
After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

_Loren._ Fair ladies, you drop manna in the way
Of starvèd people.

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

_Grati._ Well, while I live, I'll fear  
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring.  

_[Exeunt._

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36 Life and the _means of living._ Portia has given Antonio _life_ in delivering him from the clutches of Shylock.
37 For some comment on this part of the scene, see the Introduction, page 75.
38 In the Court of Queen's Bench, when a complaint is made against a person for a "contempt," the practice is that, before sentence is finally pronounced, he is sent into the Crown Office, and, being there "charged upon interrogatories," he is made to swear that he will "answer all things faithfully." — LORD CAMPBELL.
39 Fear, again, in the sense of _fear for, or be anxious about_. See page 157, note 1.
Press of
Harrick & Smith,
Boston.
CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

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THE series of Classics for Children consists of standard works, edited for the use of children between the ages of nine and fifteen in the Public Schools. It was suggested by seeing the result of setting children of nine and eleven years to reading THE LADY OF THE LAKE. They soon became so much interested in it that they began not only to read with greater ease, but voluntarily committed to memory large portions of the poem.

This result led to making numerous inquiries of thoughtful men and women, in various walks of life, in regard to their early reading. The evidence thus gained shows that children are capable of enjoying good books at an early age, and the chances of forming in them a taste for good literature are then much better than at a later period.

In order that this course of reading might be removed still further from an experimental basis, a list of questions about the works of standard authors was sent to leading men in the various professions, from whom many valuable answers, suggestions, and offers of assistance have been received. The kind of matter having been decided on, the next thing to be considered was the editorial work. It seems best, as far as practicable, to publish complete works; but some, like Scott's novels
CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

contain much matter beyond the years of the children for whom the books are designed, besides being too bulky for our purpose. Though it is not an easy task to abridge Scott, we are fortunate in finding a person equal to it, as Miss Yonge's QUENTIN DURWARD shows.

It is designed to give such notes at the foot of the page as will enable children to read understandably without the aid of other books. It may be thought that we have given too many definitions of words readily found; but these books are designed for children in the Public Schools, few of whom are supplied with dictionaries. Besides, a pupil having a vague idea of the meaning of a word may not take the trouble to look it up; but, if a glance at the bottom of the page would give him more definite information, without loss of time or interest, he would be glad to avail himself of it.

It may be urged that many pupils of this age will not take any interest in such works. Very likely. For such we would prescribe a liberal amount of committing to memory. It may prove quite as interesting to the children, and as valuable, from an educational point of view, as memorizing the ten thousand bays, capes, rivers, islands, lakes, mountains, inlets, counties, towns, and cities now required. The one-tenth that could be recalled by some law of association, as the relation of rivers to mountain chains, the occupations of the people as modified by climate, etc., has been retained and assimilated, but the other nine-tenths have been gotten rid of as useless lumber. It may have had some beneficial influence in exercising the memory, but how much better to have used the same amount of effort in
memorizing the choicest pages of the best authors, which would have had a lasting influence in forming correct literary tastes, as well as in storing the mind with healthful sentiments, to be recalled always with delight.

It seems to us a sad abuse of time to require children to learn such facts as the date of election, term of service, and the state in which each of the Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the United States was born, and the details of every unimportant battle or skirmish in the Colonial, French, and Indian wars. Let them but spend the same amount of time in reading such works as Irving's "Life of Washington," Scott's "Tales of a Grandfather," and Macaulay's "History of England," and they will obtain not only more valuable information, but, what is vastly more important, they will be acquiring a taste for good reading and a love for history which will be of inestimable value to them in after life. Besides, they will learn to use better English from constant use of such models than by studying technical grammar and poring over innumerable examples of true and false syntax.

The child should have only the best set before him, for otherwise he is more liable to copy the imperfect, or to become confused between the true and the false, than to be guided aright.

But to arithmetic we must look for the greatest misappropriation of time. In the country school it consumes about three-fourths of all the time. It is common to find young men who can solve every one of the thousand puzzles in the bulky arithmetics, but cannot write a common letter without making half a dozen
mistakes in grammar and spelling. The pupils in the Grammar Schools must spend years over the long and tedious examples in compound fractions, compound numbers, compound proportion, profit and loss, partnership, alligation, involution, square and cube roots, geometrical progression, permutations, annuities, and what not, though they have not time to read a single play of Shak.-speare or a volume of history or other standard literature.

Much valuable time is wasted by reversing the true order of studies, and giving so much attention to exhibitions, examinations, and methods.

The child with a little knowledge and a good memory may make a far better showing than the one who knows a great deal more of the subject. Memory commands a premium; intelligence is at a discount.

It is necessary for children to read a great deal, to acquire that facility of expression which will enable them to perform the merely mechanical operation of reading without conscious effort. The mind should be entirely free to concentrate itself on the subject-matter. Now, since it is not natural for them to apply themselves closely enough and long enough to accomplish this work, we should aid them by supplying an abundance of interesting material. It is not, therefore, of so much importance, at this stage of the child's education, that the highest moral truths be presented, as that the matter be of such intense interest as to catch and hold the whole attention of the pupil. The highest moral law he should now know is to learn the command of words, and the most effective use of his faculties. Care should be taken that in a English should be simple and forcible, and nothing harmful in ethics should be allowed
CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

It is a waste of time to try to teach morals, in his reading lesson, to a child who has to spell out his words, and almost as bad to try to teach geography, grammar, arithmetic, and the other subjects. Words are to him as tools to the mechanic. Until he has learned to use them effectively, he should not be put to serious work, where his attention is distracted from his first duty,—the perfecting himself in his trade, the command of words. If a part of the time now given to spelling out words, in geography, arithmetic, grammar, and stupid reading-lessons, were devoted at first, wholly or mostly, to reading only, our children would not only become much better scholars in these various branches, but read more literature in the Grammar Schools than the college student now gets before graduating; besides, they would acquire a literary taste and a love for good reading, of inestimable value to them in their future life, which will never be so busy but that they will find the time for a few moments' gratification of it. People are ignorant, not so much because of being overworked, as from want of a love for good reading. Give the children a chance, a glimpse into the great storehouses of knowledge in books, wherein they may commune with the greatest minds at their best.

After the child has learned to read with ease simple stories from all sources, the course should assume more definite form, including the standard works of fiction, history, biography, natural history, etc., all well graded, keeping constantly in mind these three points: interest, moral power, and style; selecting those only which embody these all in the greatest degree.

It is of the greatest importance to develop a love for
history in early life, as no one can be well read without a fair knowledge of the past. In fact, one must know a people in order to understand their literature. Some of the best thoughts of a writer, depending upon allusions to historical persons or events, are entirely lost to the reader not familiar with history. Nor is this the only reason of its value. The tracing of great events unfolds the mind. We suffer and enjoy with the struggling mortals of the past, and, as it were, pass through their very experiences, and are able to reap their rewards while we avoid their mistakes. One who really loves history will find time to read it, but none for cheap novels. Leading epochs should be selected from the great historians, adding such information as may be necessary for a complete understanding of the extracts. The historical novel and biography are especially well calculated to create a love for history, and the whole course should be so graded that biography, natural history, novels, travels, history, and the various departments of literature should be made mutually helpful and dependent, covering the same periods and illustrating one another.

This work cannot be left to the High School, for we find, on a careful examination of the reports from several of our largest cities, where the schools have attained their greatest perfection, that only one in twenty-five of the whole number of pupils ever reaches that grade.

It has been urged against the use of Shakespeare, Scott, and such writers, in the grammar grades; that it will interfere with the course in the high school, where these authors are studied. If only one out of twenty-five ever reaches the high school, and the twenty-four can read these authors to advantage in the lower grades,
would it not be wise to remodel the entire course of study in such a way as to secure the greatest good to the greatest number?

The series will be well printed in large type, on good paper, and firmly bound, and will be furnished at a price so low as to bring within the reach of every pupil in the land these books, which have hitherto been confined to the homes of those in more favored circumstances.

It is hoped that this attempt to put standard literature into the hands of young children will receive encouragement, and that a free discussion of the subject may lead to such changes in the course of instruction in the Public Schools as shall give to each study the proportion of time its importance may fairly claim.

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**Robinson Crusoe.** The famous English Classic. Edited, for Supplementary Reading in Schools, by W. H. LAMBERT. 12mo. 204 pages. Boards. Mailing price, 40 cts.; Introduction, 35 cts. It has been slightly abridged by the omission of unimportant matter, and ends with his leaving the island. Great care has been taken to preserve Defoe’s original language.

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**Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice.** HUDSON & LAMB. 12mo. 110 pages. Boards. Mailing price, 30 cts.; Introduction, 25 cts. It contains Hudson’s “Life of Shakespeare,” and about two-thirds of the Text and Notes of his School Edition. Nothing is omitted that impairs the value of the work for children; but, on the contrary, introducing them
directly to the leading characters increases their interest in it. The story of the play is taken directly from Charles and Mary Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare."

**Scott's Quentin Durward.** Edited especially for this Series, with an Historical Introduction, by Charlotte M. Yonge, of England. 12mo. 312 pages. Boards. Mailing price, 45 cts.; Introduction, 40 cts. In this edition the violence of the old times is mitigated, while the interest of the story and its lessons of fidelity, courage, and sturdy manhood are not weakened.

**Scott's Lady of the Lake.** Edited by Edwin Ginn. 12mo. 268 pages. Boards. Mailing price, 40 cts.; Introduction, 35 cts. It contains a brief life of Scott, and his critical notes on the poem carefully abridged, with sufficient annotation to be easily read by children ten years old. This poem, with its beautiful descriptions of scenery, its vivid pictures of life, and the charming melody of its rhythm, seems especially well suited to interest the young.

**Kingsley's Water-Babies.** Edited by Miss J. H. Stickney. 12mo. 204 pages. Illustrated. Boards. Mailing price, 40 cts.; Introduction, 35 cts. Nothing more wholesome and delightful can be placed before children. Combining, as it does, the excellences of a sermon and of a fairy story, with a great deal of information and an admirable style, it will, we are sure, be heartily welcomed.

**Kingsley's Greek Heroes.** Edited by John Tetlow, Master of the Girls' Latin School, Boston. 12mo. 168 pages. Illustrated. Boards. Mailing price, 40 cts.; Introduction, 35 cts. It is surprising that this book has never before been edited for school use. It is particularly fitted to please the young, while its character and style are the very best. The lessons of heroism which it teaches in the most forcible way — by example — cannot fail of their effect.

In preparation:

**Swiss Family Robinson.**

**Scott's Tales of a Grandfather, Vol. I.**

Published by Ginn & Company.

Boston, New York, and Chicago.
CLASSICS FOR CHILDREN.

Wm. T. Harris, LL.D., Supt. St. Louis Schools, 1868-80.

I think the editing of both "The Lady of the Lake" and Kingsley’s "Water-Babies" admirable. I am very glad to see the "Outlines" prefixed to each canto of the poem, and to observe that you have placed your very useful notes and explanations at the bottom of the page rather than at the end of the book. The omissions in the "Water-Babies" do not destroy or injure the connection of the story, but have the happy effect of making it a real fairy story, that children can understand and read with great benefit.

This series of books ought to be in each school in the land. If loaned to the pupils to read at home, I believe that the children will progress rapidly in their ability to seize the meaning of words in the literary vocabulary, and to use them with skill, besides (what is more important) gaining insight into human life.


I have looked over the notes to your Scott's "Lady of the Lake" with interest, keeping in my mind all the while the question of adaptation to Grammar Schools, and with almost unqualified approval. You seem to me to have hit, in general, the exact words on which the schoolboy would need help, and to have given the help in the form most likely to be available.

But I have felt even greater interest in your little prefatory essay on "Classics for Children." Would that every teacher and every committee-man in the country were full of its sound doctrine and healthful spirit. When I had the honor of being upon the School Committee in Waltham, the town gave us a small annual appropriation to be expended in purchasing English classics, in sufficient numbers to supply classes on loan. Having the same view of arithmetic which you state so well (pp. vii. and viii.), we reduced the time given to that branch to one-half what was given in other places in Eastern Massachusetts, and the scholars acquired in that half time three times the former facility in applying
arithmetic to practical questions. The time thus saved was largely given to reading classical English. The books were the property of the town, and loaned to the scholars,—scholars who could afford it buying copies if they chose. The benefits of this course were soon as apparent in the literary as in the mathematical side of the education.

There is not one of the dozen pages of your essay which does not suggest to me thoughts strongly confirmatory of your views; and I would earnestly recommend not only the use of your editions of English classics, but the careful study of that essay.

John Tetlow, Head Master Girls' Latin School, Boston.

I have examined your "Lady of the Lake" with much interest and pleasure. The extracts from Scott and Lockhart, introduced at the beginning of the book, will be of great value as a means of arousing interest in the author and of aiding in the interpretation of the poem. The notes seem to me very judicious and helpful,—just such notes as will be needed by those for whom the "Classics for Children" are intended.


Your "Lady of the Lake" is a fine piece of editing. In the first place, the "Lady of the Lake" is the best romantic poem for children; and in this form, so attractive to the eye, so well interpreted by notes, map, and introductions, it will please the teachers and the pupils alike. In the second place, the price is such that it can go where it ought to go.


I am very glad to see the specimens of your "Classics for Children." It is of the greatest consequence that children should read in school, and in their school-days, books that shall form their taste and inspire them with a love of knowledge. It is shown in these books how this work can be accomplished. They are admirably edited, with just enough of explanatory matter to meet the young reader's need without wearying him. I am especially struck with this in the
“Lady of the Lake,” which I well remember reading in my early boyhood, and with precisely such difficulties and voids in my understanding of it as are here solved and supplied. Thus edited, it is a book which will be sure to attract any intelligent child.


The copy of Scott’s “Lady of the Lake” came duly to hand. I am much pleased to learn of this new movement to assist, by such admirable reproductions, in creating a taste for good literature among the public-school children.

I hope to hear further of the success of the enterprise.

Prof. Edward S. Joynes, South Carolina College.

I am much pleased with the design and the execution of this edition of the “Lady of the Lake.” It is in all respects admirably adapted to its purpose. The editor has done his work with judgment, taste, and skill, and the publishers have made of it a beautiful book. Especially am I pleased with the views expressed in the introductory essay on “Classics for Children”—so much so, that I wish that, even apart from the volumes of the series, this essay might have a wide circulation among teachers.

Joseph Cook, Boston.


Prof. N. S. Shaler, Harvard College.

I have read with great pleasure your admirable school edition of the “Lady of the Lake.” I feel that, in common with all those who are interested in the improvement of our elementary schools, I owe you hearty thanks for your good work in popularizing our English classics. The preface and notes of the poem seem to me all that could be desired; the commentary gives an admirable clearness to the text