own deliverer in the wife of his dearest friend; here we learn that his 'argosies with portly sail', in the fate of which we were interested at the opening of the play (i. 1. 9), have come richly to harbour; here also the romance of the flight of the miser's daughter comes to a comfortable end; by Portia's care her future fortune is assured.

259. **living**=property, as in iii. 2. 158.

261. **road**, compare i. 1. 19.

267. **manna**, one more reference to a Bible story. How many other such references can you recall from the play?

271. **inter'gatories**, a clipped form of 'interrogatories', questions which a witness was sworn to give true replies to; a phrase, as Lord Campbell tells us, that belongs to the Court of Queen's Bench. Portia speaks once more as the 'Civil Doctor'.

APPENDIX A.

THE TEXT.

Beginners in Shakespearean study need not concern themselves with minute questions of textual criticism, but it is important they should know some preliminary points.

We have good reason for thinking that in many obscurely-worded passages of Shakespeare, the obscurity arises from the fact that we have not got the words as he wrote them.

Half his plays were not printed at all during his lifetime. The other half show no traces of having been printed under his supervision or with his correction.

The plays printed during his lifetime were printed singly and in quarto size (called *quarto* because each page is of the size of the *fourth* part of a full sheet of foolscap). The first collected edition of the plays was printed in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare's death, and was edited by two fellow-actors of his, Heminge and Condell. This edition is known as the First Folio (called *Folio* because each page has the full length of a foolscap sheet or *leaf*).

The Merchant of Venice is one of the plays printed in Shakespeare's lifetime. Two Quarto editions of the play appeared, both in 1600; one certainly, and the other almost certainly, printed by J. Roberts. The edition known as the First Quarto was not only printed but also *published* by J. Roberts. The so-called Second Quarto was published by Thomas Heyes.

The play was not printed again until it appeared in the First Folio, 1623.[1]

Even nowadays when elementary schools, machine-printing, and systematic revision of proofs have greatly reduced the number of printers' errors, an editor finds much to correct before a book can be published. But in Shakespeare's time, when spelling was so uncertain, when printing was often done by ill-educated journeymen with insufficient type at

[1] These three editions are known to critics by the symbols Q1, Q2, F1.

their own houses, when authors were indifferent as to how their plays appeared or whether they appeared at all, it is not wonderful to find editions full of mistakes in punctuation, spelling, grammar, and sense.

It might be thought, however, that where there are three early editions (as in the case of *The Merchant of Venice*) one would serve to correct another. In printing from manuscript, different printers would make different mistakes, but in each instance probably one at least would preserve the true version.

Unhappily this does not prove to be the fact. The three editions often contain in the same form what is manifestly a printer's blunder, *e.g.* in iii. 4. 49, 'Mantua' for 'Padua', and in ii. 7. 69, 'Gilded timber' for 'Gilded tombs', and in punctuation, ii. 7. 18, 'This casket threatens men that hazard all' for 'This casket threatens. Men that hazard all'. [See also Notes on ii. 1. 35; iv. 1. 50.]

These cases show that the three editions are really one edition. They are not independent sources from which we can derive a text by comparison, but are printed one from another. The variations which do occur (and there are hundreds of them, chiefly slight) are only so many more proofs of general inaccuracy.

Under these circumstances, Shakespearean scholars and editors have in many places had to exercise their own judgment in endeavouring to restore the words of the play as Shakespeare wrote them. Such an attempted restoration is called a '*conjectural emendation*'. The most famous of all Shakespearean emendations is one in the description of Falstaff's death in *Henry V.* where 'a table of green frieze' has been altered into ''a babbled of green fields'. This emendation is due to Theobald, who edited Shakespeare early in the eighteenth century. Other famous commentators on the text of Shakespeare are Rowe, Pope, Capell, Johnson, Steevens, Malone, Dyce, and Collier.

The emendations of these different scholars and critics, along with the readings of the early editions, are printed in the 'Cambridge' edition, and in Furness' 'Variorum' edition, so that the student has there the materials for making up his own mind as to what Shakespeare wrote in the disputed passages.

In this edition the text of the 'Globe'[1] edition, as reprinted

[1] Edited by Clark & Wright, the editors of the 'Cambridge' edition and the 'Clarendon Press' edition of Shakespeare.

in 1887, has been mainly followed. Necessary omissions have been made, and a few alterations, of which the chief are these:

- ii. 7. 40—Omit hyphen between 'mortal' and 'breathing', inserted first by Dyce. The curiously parallel phrase in *Richard III.*, iv. 4. 26, 'mortal living ghost', shows the hyphen to be unnecessary.
- iii. 2. 111—Print as one line, 'O love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy'.
- iii. 2. 112—'rain thy joy' with the Ff., not 'rein' as in Globe ed.
- iii. 2. 163—'happier, then, in this' for 'happier than this' with F2, &c.
- iii. 2. 165[1]—'Happiest of all in' for 'Happiest of all is', with Collier, ed. 2.
- iii. 2. 201—Punctuate with Theobald. No stop at 'intermission'.
- iii. 2. 217—'Salanio' for 'Salerio', with Rowe, and so throughout.
- iii. 2. 317—Punctuate as suggested by Charles Kemble.
- iii. 3. 26, 28, 29—Punctuate and emend as suggested in Theobald's letter to Warburton (see *Furness*, p. 171).
- iii. 4. 53—'traject' for 'tranect' with Rowe.
- iii. 5. 52, 53—the reading 'meane it, it' of the Folios should be 'merit it', and 'Is' should be ''T is' (S. Walker).
- iv. 1. 125—'inexorable' with F3.
- iv. 1. 323—'Of' for 'Or' with Keightley.
- iv. 1. 376—Punctuate with Johnson.
- iv. 1. 383—'possess'd *of*' with Capell, as in v. 1. 266.
- v. 1. 65—'us in' for 'it in' with Rowe, ed. 2.
- v. 1. 167—Omit 'so' before 'riveted'. It has come in from the last line but one.

[1] As a proof that 'in' and 'is' are exchanged by printers even in a careful modern book, see p. 65 of the 1870 edition of Mrs. Jameson's *Characteristics of Women*, where—

"which to term in gross
Is an unlesson'd girl"

is printed—

"which to term is gross
Is an unlesson'd girl".

For an amusing instance of a typical printer's error, see leading article in the *Daily News*, London, 24th December, 1896, where a phrase (used by Mr. Gladstone of book-collecting) "quirks and eccentricities" is quoted as "quicksand eccentricities".

APPENDIX B.

PROSODY.

1. **Metre and Rhythm.**—Fully to enjoy reading Shakespeare, whether to oneself or aloud, it is necessary to feel the effect of his use of *metre*.

Metre is one form of rhythm. The nature of *rhythm* may be understood by a comparison of dancing with walking. In walking, the movement comes, as we say, 'anyhow', without system or scheme. But in dancing there occurs from time to time among the steps a more emphatic step, made with a special *stress* or *beat* or *accent*. This accented step returns so regularly as to divide the movements of the dancer into groups occupying equal times. The motion thus becomes periodic, and the periods are marked by a pulsation, or recurrence of stress. Such periodicity is called *rhythm*. Alike in dance, in verse, and in music, rhythm is a necessary element.

Rhythm in uttered speech, if so precise as to be reducible to a formula or scheme, is called *metre*. Rhythm, of a less regular kind, is also found in prose, especially in oratorical prose. But metre is proper to verse only.

2. **Blank Verse.**—The metre used by Shakespeare for the main body of his plays is called Blank Verse. In this, rhythm is produced by an alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, as in the word ago'. A pair of syllables, the second of which carries the metrical stress, is called an 'iambus', or an 'iambic foot'. If the stress falls on the first of the two syllables, the foot is said to be a 'trochee'. In Blank Verse the first are grouped in sets or 'lines' of five. A line of five iambic feet is called an 'iambic pentameter', *e.g.*—

> 'Tis nine' o'clock': our friends' all stay' for you'.
> No masque' to-night': the wind' is come' about'.

These are normal Blank Verse lines; or unrhymed Iambic Pentameters.

3. **Cautions to be observed in Reading Verse.**—It is to be carefully noted here that though the metrical stresses, as metrical, have all the same value, yet neither the above lines nor any others in Shakespeare are to be *read* with five equal stresses. The reason for this caution lies in the fact that there is *emphasis* as well as metrical stress to be expressed, and that the amount of the emphasis depends on the importance of each word to the meaning of the sentence. Thus on the word "nine" there is not only a metrical stress equal to that on "clock", but also an emphasis of meaning which makes it necessary to utter the former much more forcibly than the latter. Similarly, the metrical accent on the last syllable of 'Jessica' may be the same as on the first, but the *accent of English pronunciation* puts a strong stress on the first and only a weak or secondary stress on the last.

Another equally important caution in reading is that the words must be grouped by their phrases, not divided at the ends of the feet. It is one of the chief beauties of good verse that the phrase-groups, into which the words fall, do not coincide with the metrical groups of feet and lines, but form, as it were, patterns of their own upon the pattern of the metre. It is in this counterplay between the metre and the sense that the charm of versification lies. From this it follows as a practical corollary that to read verse well one must so mark the rhythm as not to injure the sense, and so render the sense as not to spoil the rhythm. Thus the ends of the lines must always be indicated, but where there is no pause in the sense, the pause in the rhythm must be so brief as not to impair the continuity of the meaning. Similarly the metrical beat must always be rendered, but along with it the accent required by pronunciation and the emphasis demanded by the sense must be so clearly given as to prevent the 'sing-song' or 'see-saw' effect produced by reading lines simply according to their scansion. So also while, considered metrically, the time of all Blank Verse lines is equal, the metrical effect is not impaired by differences of time in actual reading, if, and so far as, these differences are accounted for by something in the thought or feeling expressed by the various lines.

4. **Prose Passages.**—More than one-fifth of *The Merchant of Venice* is written in prose. The transition from verse to prose or from prose to verse is often made within the limits of the same scene (*e.g.* i. 1. 112–120, i. 3. 1–33, &c. &c.). The principle on which the change is made is so subtle, that it does not admit of being formulated except in very general terms. It holds good that passages where the tone of the dialogue is light, and free from strong feeling, are usually in prose. Thus Launcelot never[1] speaks in blank verse, but

[1] As evidence that blank verse was felt to be unsuited to the expression of "casual" talk, see what Jaques says to Orlando when he changes to it from

(except for a few lines of rhymed doggerel) uses prose only. The confidential talk between Portia and her lady-in-waiting is in prose. In the second scene of Act ii., Bassanio's replies in blank verse to Launcelot's pieces of prose, give an impression of good-humoured Dignity talking to Impudence. On the other hand Shylock speaks in prose, not only in his meditations on matters of business (i. 3. 1–33), but also in his most passionate denunciations of Jessica and Antonio, and even in his great assertion of the human nature of Jews (iii. 1.), while, in the Trial Scene, his speeches are entirely in Blank Verse. Perhaps we shall not be wrong in concluding that while blank verse was felt to be unsuitable to the talk of clowns or to familiar 'chat' of any kind, prose was used not only in these cases, but also for the sake of variety or contrast in passages of every mood of feeling. The reason for the transition will be found in the circumstances of each case, but often we can say no more than that the change is itself the object aimed at, and that therefore the same effect would have been produced by an alteration from prose to verse as is got by one from verse to prose.

5. **Heroic Couplets.**—Besides this introduction of Prose, other means are taken to vary the Blank Verse. Sometimes the lines are *rhymed* in 'couplets', called, to distinguish them from Lyric Metres, 'Heroic Couplets'. This device is used in *The Merchant of Venice* for two main purposes:—

(i) To mark the close of a scene or the exit of one of the dramatis personæ (ii. 6. 58, 59, and 67, 68). Here the rhyme has the effect, as it were, of the striking of a little bell.

(ii) To give point to an epigram or proverb, that 'clenches' an argument, or sums up a point of view. There is an excellent instance of this in ii. 9. 80, and following lines—

> O these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
> They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

To which Nerissa replies—

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

In two notable places in iii. 2. there occur sequences of couplets, spoken first by Portia, second by Bassanio (108–113 and 140–149), where the effect of the musical chime is to enhance the strong emotions of relief and joy felt by both

prose, "Nay, then, God be wi' you, an you talk in blank verse," *As You Like It*, iv. 1. 31.

when the crisis is happily past. (See also the 'quatrain' of pentameter lines at the close of the same scene.)

6. **Decreasing use of Rhyme by Shakespeare.**—But Shakespeare used rhymed couplets less and less, the more experienced he grew, during the course of twenty-two years, in writing for the stage. In the earliest comedies, for instance in *Love's Labour's Lost*, there is so great a proportion of rhymed couplets to blank verse as to show that he was in doubt which of the two forms of metre was the more suited to drama. At this early period he was also writing poems, such as *Venus and Adonis*, which are rhymed throughout. As he gradually discarded rhyme in his plays, there came an alteration in the style of his blank verse. So vitally connected are these two changes that we can best understand them by treating them together. This treatment will also best enable us to realize some of the more obvious and measurable characteristics of the versification of *The Merchant of Venice*.

7. **Effects of Rhyming on the Style of Versification.**—The change, then, in metrical style in Shakespeare's plays, is a progressive relinquishment of rhyme and of those features in verse which are fostered by rhyming, particularly by rhyming in couplets.

How does Rhyming in Couplets affect Verse? Read, and listen to, these couplets by Pope, the great master of that form of metre—

> For forms of government let fools contest,
> Whate'er is best administer'd, is best:
> For moods of faith let graceless zealots fight,
> His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right;
> In Faith and Hope the world will disagree,
> But all mankind's concern is Charity.

Here you will notice the effect of rhyme is threefold:—

i. By inducing the ear to listen for the close of the lines, and by making a couplet a whole in itself, Rhyme has a tendency

(*a*) To bring the sense-pauses to the end of the lines.
(*b*) To make final words important.

ii. By calling attention to the correspondence and echo between one line and another, Rhyme tends to regulate or formalize metre, *i.e.* by making one similarity prominent, it encourages others.

iii. Rhyme limits the possibilities of sentence-construction, and—by causing one line to answer another—favours a style of epigrammatic contrast.

It is natural, then, that in the earliest comedies, we should find, in connection with abundant use of rhyme, certain characteristics in the Blank Verse, which may be summed up as —an even and somewhat formal rhythm, almost exclusively iambic, with sense-pauses regularly placed at the end of lines.

8. The Blank Verse of "The Merchant of Venice" marked by Flexibility.—In *The Merchant of Venice*, written when Shakespeare had been at work some seven or eight years, we find certain changes in versification which give it greater flexibility and freedom. The structure of the sentence, as it were, outgrows and overlaps the metrical framework, wreathing and twining about it 'like a rose upon a trellis'.

9. Freer Treatment of the End of the Line. — These changes may thus be classified:—

(*a*) The sense-pauses are not so regularly placed at the ends of lines, but are distributed over different parts, and thus greater variety and greater continuity are given to the verse.

(*b*) An unaccented syllable occurs frequently at the end of the fifth foot in a line, so making the ending *double* or *feminine*, as it is technically called. Sometimes there are two such extra syllables, particularly in the case of proper names, *e.g.*—

> I would have stay'd till I had made you merry.
> To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
> And I must freely have the half of anything.
> How doth that royal merchant, good Antonio?
> But who comes here? Lorenzo and his infidel?

By partly filling the line-pause, this device links the lines together.

(*c*) A similar effect, in linking the lines together, is produced by putting a lightly-accented monosyllable under the last metrical stress in a line, *e.g.*—

> In such a place, such sum or sums as are
> Express'd in the condition (i. 3. 136).

> 'A cur can lend three thousand ducats?' or
> Shall I bend low (i. 3. 112).

Shakespeare became increasingly fond of this device (see Dowden, *Shakespeare Primer*, p. 41), but it is very rare in *The Merchant of Venice*.

10. Varied Rhythm.

(*a*) Trochees are commonly used, especially just after a pause or at the beginning of a line.

> Gao'ler, look' to him: tell' not me' of mer'cy.
> On'ly my blood' speaks' to you' in my veins'.
> Must give'—for what'? for lead'? ha'zard for lead'?
> Emp'ties itself', as doth' an in'land brook'.

The trochee produces a specially characteristic effect in the last foot in the line.

> Have all | his ven | tures failed? | What, not | one' hit? (iii. 2. 264).
> I know' | the hand': | in faith' | 't is' a | fair' hand (ii. 4. 12).
> At Grat' | ian' | o's lodg' | ing, some' | hour' hence (ii. 4. 26).
> Did I' | deserve' | no more' | than' a | fool's' head? (ii. ix. 59).

When a trochee comes at the beginning of a line, and an extra syllable at the end, the character of the rhythm seems quite altered, *e.g.*—

> This' is the pent'-house un'der which' Loren'zo
> Sit', like his grand'sire, cut' in al'abas'ter;

(which have just the rhythm of "Need'y knife-grind'er, whi'ther art' thou go'ing?")

(*b*) Syllables of equal emphatic value are placed together so that the effect of a *spondee* is produced (*i.e.* of a foot of two syllables equally accented)—

> To my' | heart's' hope'! | Gold'; sil' | ver, and' | base lead' (ii. 9. 20).
> The moon' | shines' bright': | in such a night as this (v. 1. 1).
> And they' | did make' | no' noise' | in such a night (v. 1. 3).
> Sit', Jess' | ica'. | Look' how the floor of heaven (v. 1. 58).
> Did feign' that Or'pheus drew' trees', stones', and floods' (v. 1. 80).

Notice the particularly happy effect of this variation in the line—

> And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark! (i. 1. 94).

(*c*) In cases where there is a sense-pause elsewhere than at the end of a line, the same advantage is taken of it to admit one or even two extra syllables. These extra syllables

occupy part of the time mentally allotted to the pause, and are therefore said to be 'hypermetric' or outside the metre. But, like the feminine endings, they produce a subtle variation on the character of the rhythm. The student should carefully collect for himself all instances of 'internal hypermetric syllables'. Neglect of them may spoil reading. Here are some typical cases:—

My Lord' Bassan' | *io*, since' you | have found' | Anton' | *io* (i. 1. 69).
By be' | ing pee' | *vish*? I tell' | thee what', | Anto' | *nio* (i. 1. 86).
Exact' | the pen' | *alty*.
Why, look' | you, how' | you storm' (1. 3. 127).
Which pries' | not' to | the inte' | *rior*, but', like' | the mart' | *let*, (ii. 9. 28).
Without' | the stamp' | of mer' | *it*? Let none' | presume' (ii. 9. 39).
Were not' | derived' | corrupt' | *ly*, and' that | clear hon' | *our* (ii. 9. 42).
I lose' | your com' | *pany*: there'fore | forbear | awhile' (iii. 2. 3).
O love' | be mod' | *erate*; allay' | thy ec' | stasy' (iii. 2. 111).
How could' | he see' | to do' | *them*? Hav'ing | made one' (iii. 2. 124).
Fad'ing | in mus' | *ic*: that' the compar' | ison'
May stand' | more prop' | *er*, my eye' | shall be' | the stream' (iii. 2. 45-6).
To entrap' | the wis' | *est*, there'fore | thou gau' | dy gold' (iii. 2. 101).
Defy' the mat' | *ter*. How cheerst' | thou Jess' | ica'? (iii. 5. 45)

Such 'hypermetric syllables' are specially common where a line is divided between two speakers, because here the reader or hearer allows for a special pause. See the instance quoted above from i. 3., and compare with it—

To come' | again' | to Car' | thage.
In such' | a night' (v. 1. 12).

(*d*) The above case of extra syllables before pauses, must be distinguished from instances where two syllables lightly and quickly pronounced are counted as occupying the time of one.

The prod' | igal Chris' | tian. Jess' | ica', | my girl'.
The con' | tinent' | and sum' | mary of' | my for'tune.
E'ven in | the force' | and road' | of cas' | ualty'.

In such instances the light vowels should not be slurred or omitted in reading, for then the variety[1] in rhythm that

[1] This variety may be be used to convey a special effect, as in Tennyson's "Myriads of rivulets hurrying through the lawn".

should be produced by them is lost. Moreover they occur in cases where it is wholly impossible to omit them, *e.g.*—

All broken implements of a ruined house (*Timon of Athens*, iv. 2. 16),

where the third foot must be read either as a tribrach (three unaccented syllables) or as an anapæst (two unaccented followed by one accented syllable); or perhaps the fourth foot may be an anapæst.

The light pronunciation of some vowels in Elizabethan English makes it possible to understand how 'ocean' can be scanned as in i. 1. 8—

Your mind is tossing on | the oc' | ean',

or 'marriage' as in—

To woo a maid in way | of marr' | iage' (ii. 9. 13),

or 'interest' in—

And what of him? did he | take int' | erest'? (i. 3. 69).

compared with—

Was this inserted to | make in' | terest good' | (i. 3. 84).

or Portia in the two lines—

Her name is Portia; nothing undervalued
To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia.

Similarly while 'Antonio' is in some cases scanned as a full quadrisyllable, in others the last two syllables are to be uttered so quickly as only to take the time of one. (Compare i. 1. 73 with i. 1. 69.) Compare also—

With pur' | pose to' | be dressed' | in an' | opin' | ion (i. 1. 91)

with—

With this' | fool gudg' | eon, this' | opin' | ion' (i. 1. 102).

In like manner, the first two syllables of Gratiano only count as taking the time of one in i. 1. 77, but in i. 1. 107 the word is a full quadrisyllable.

The same word may even be differently 'timed' in different places in the same line, *e.g.*—

A se' | cond Dan' | iel', | a Da' | niel, Jew' | (iv. 1. 327).
And so', | though yours', | not' yours: Prove' | it so' (iii. 2. 20).

The terminations *-sion*, and *-tion*, are often allowed the time of two syllables, *e.g.*—

> Before' | a friend' | of this' | descrip' | tion',
> You' loved, | I' loved, | for in' | termiss' | ion',

and in the words imposition, preparation, occasion, perfection, contemplation, and others in this play.

On the other hand they often have the time of only one syllable, *e.g.*—

> Hath come' | so near' | crea' | tion? Move' | these eyes'?
> Of this' | fair man' | sion, mas' | ter of' | my ser' | vants.

A few other cases of words timed in a manner different from modern usage may be quoted, *e.g.*—

> There is' | no pow' | er in' | the tongue' | of man' (iv. 1. 235).
> Shall lose' | a ha' | ir by' | Bassan' | io's fault' (iii. 2. 299).
> Do you' | desi' | re? Rest | you fair', | good sign' | ior (i. 3. 53).

Caution. At this point falls to be mentioned a point which requires careful attention. Neglect of it is a common cause of bad reading. The termination *-ed* has in Shakespeare very often the time of a full syllable, *e.g.*—

> The self-same way with more | advi' | sed watch'.
> The French' | and Eng' | lish there' | miscar' | ried'.
> Can al' | ter a' | decree' | estab' | lished', &c. &c.

Failure to notice this ruins the metre of the line. Similar caution is needed to observe the old pronunciation 'command*e*ment', iv. 1. 451, and 'aspéct', ii. 1. 8.

11. Incomplete Lines.

Certain other variations in the even flow of the Blank Verse arise from the fact that Shakespeare's words were written to be spoken, with action and gesture. Part of the time of a line may be filled by a significant pause, which has the value of a 'rest' in musical time, *e.g.*—

> As far | as Bel | mont.
> — | In such | a night | (v. 1. 17).
> And ne'er | a true | one
> — | In such | a night (v. i. 20).
> That she' | did give' | me — | whose po' | sy was' (v. 1. 146).
> I'll wait' | as long' | for you' | then. — | Approach (ii. 6. 24).

Such pauses may sometimes be filled with a movement or gesture. For instance, when Bassanio is opening the leaden casket, we find the line divided between Portio and Bassanio—

> For fear | I sur | feit!
> — | What find' | I here'?

So when Morocco picks up the leaden casket to examine its inscription, we have the incomplete verse—

> What says this leaden casket?

Salutes and bows may well fill up the time left by the short lines in i. 1. 65, and 72. See also ii. 2. 158, 187; ii. 3. 9; ii. 4. 27, 6. 28, 9. 83, &c., where 'stage business' of some kind, such as the exit of a person or the drawing of a curtain, occupies the pause in the rhythm. This helps us to understand why there are so many incomplete lines in Shakespeare's dramas, while there are none in a narrative poem like Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

12. Other Metres.

Other forms of metre besides the Iambic Pentameter occur in *The Merchant of Venice*, of which the chief are—

(*a*) *Anapæstic* (that is, a rhythm of which the characteristic foot consists of two unaccented followed by one accented syllable; as in Wordsworth's "At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight appears"), *e.g.*—

> Thanks, i' faith' | for si' | lence is on' | ly commend' | able (i. 1. 111).
> Whiles we shut' | the gates' | upon one' | wooer, ano' | ther knocks' | at the door' (i. 2. 116).

(*b*) *Alexandrine*, of six iambic feet, or Iambic Hexameter. This is found in the inscription on the three caskets,

> "Who choo' | seth me', | shall get' | as much' | as he' | deserves'",

and in odd lines, here and there, *e.g.*—

> Because you are not sad. Now by two-headed Janus (i. 1. 50).
> To find the other forth; and by adventuring both (i. 1. 143).
> What many men desire! that many may be meant (ii. 9. 25).
> I will assume desert. Give me a key for this (ii. 9. 51).
> Desired us to make stand. His hour is almost past (ii. 6. 2).
> What, is Antonio here? Ready, so please your grace (iv. 1. 1).

In all these cases of single Alexandrines there is a pause almost in the middle of the line, and the second half seems to be finished with only casual reference to the first.

(c) Short *lyric* metres, as for the scrolls found within the caskets. These vary between lines of four trochees, the last of which is cut off at the accented syllable, *e.g.*—

> All' that | glis'ters | is' not | gold',
> Of'ten | have' you | heard' that | told'.
>
> There' will | come' a | Chris'tian | by'
> Will' be | worth' a | Jew'ess' | eye'.

and lines of four iambic feet—

> Your ans' | wer had' | not been' | inscrolled'.

The one song that occurs in the play, viz., "Tell me where is fancy bred", is composed in a similar way, of mingled iambic and trochaic lines.

APPENDIX C.

THE 'MEANING' OF THE PLAY.

The 'meaning' of a work of art is all that it suggests, whether of feeling or of thought, to those who study it. Its 'true meaning' is that which it has for a student perfectly fitted to enjoy and understand it. If the work of art be great and the student apt, the suggestions which it makes to him will be rich and manifold beyond his power of statement, and will keep on increasing in volume and in interest as his experience of life and of art becomes greater. Thus it is a commonplace to hear people say that the more they 'go through', the more they 'see in Shakespeare'. Even such a line as Antonio's—

> "Say how I loved you. Speak me fair in death",

though it is in words of one syllable, 'means' more to some than to others. So does the beautiful picture drawn in the lines in Act v.—

> "She doth stray about
> By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays
> For happy wedlock hours".

Still more is this true of the play as a whole. Its meaning lives and grows, nourishing, and nourished by, the rest of experience.

No formula or maxim or 'view of life' can be an adequate rendering of the meaning of a poem. At the best it can only give a part of its meaning, for the value of poetry, as of music and of painting, consists just in this, that it expresses by its special means what cannot be so well expressed in any other way. That part of the meaning of a poem which can be adequately rendered in prose is, therefore, just that part which is least characteristically poetic.

If this be realized, and if we further guard ourselves from the dangerous belief that the 'moral' which we disengage from the poetry is the core or central point round which the poet himself worked in composing the play, it will not be unsafe to try to state some ideas as conspicuously prominent in it.

1. **Love and friendship.**—Companionship, as the main thing in life, seems a vital part of the story of the play. It appears under the two main forms of friendship and love. Shakespeare does not, in word, distinguish the two, but speaks of Antonio as a 'true lover' of Bassanio (see iii. 4. 7; iv. 1. 271). With Antonio friendship is a pursuit, a fine art—

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

This heroic passion appears in another form in Portia. She also has, in this respect, something of the 'antique Roman' in her; and in spirit and loyalty does not fall short of "Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia". She loves Bassanio so truly that she 'loves' his 'honour more'. The sacrifice she makes in sending him off in an instant, at a time when there was every selfish motive for delay, becomes heroic from the gaiety and grace with which she covers the generosity of her sympathy. In the court of justice these two forms of companionship appear together. Antonio there offers the last proof of love, and is ready to give his life for his friend; Portia, with a brilliant activity not less moving than his dignified passiveness, rescues him by her wit and courage. The last act sets companionship in the richest frame of poetry and humour, and shows the very stars in harmony with it. In contrast to Antonio and Portia, with their troops of friends, stands the lonely figure of Shylock, who isolates himself from human kindness.

2. **Conflict between the letter and the spirit of law.**—Some

critics have seen in the play an illustration of two different ways of treating law. According to these critics, Shylock represents the Hebraic idea that right consists in the fulfilment of the letter of law. Thus when he says—

"What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?"

he interprets 'wrong' to mean 'a violation of written enactment'. So, too, he replies to Portia's saying, "Then *must* the Jew be merciful" (by which she means 'he *ought* to be merciful', or 'it would be better if he were merciful'), by "On what compulsion *must* I?" refusing to recognize any principle but a legal one. And he sums up his case by declaring, "I stand here for *law*".

On the other side Portia represents the idea of equity. This does not mean laxity of interpretation. For instance, she regards her father's will as completely binding upon herself, and refuses to tamper with it even to secure her dearest wishes. So, again, she declines to 'wrest the law' against Shylock, and declares that, for the sake of the state, contracts must be upheld. Yet she so far represents the equitable interpretations, common in Roman law, that, by something not unlike a legal fiction, she saves the spirit by pushing the letter to extreme. As by the old maxim '*summum jus*' may be '*summa injuria*', she restores the balance by an interpretation so rigid as to make execution impossible.

A pleasant example of the principle appears in her treatment of the compact between herself and Bassanio in the matter of the ring. Here Bassanio directly breaks the letter of his pledge. But he is true to its spirit. To believe that Portia would be angry with him for giving the ring to the saviour of Antonio would have been a case of the 'ugly treason of mistrust'; it would have shown a doubt of her good sense and temper. In this way, of course, she takes his conduct, and it is easy to see under her pretended anger that she likes him all the better for showing living confidence instead of mechanical and formal adherence to the letter of their compact.

3. **The evil of usury.**—Other critics have thought the play to be meant as an attack on the practice of usury. There is nothing, however, to show that any special stress is laid on this point by Shakespeare. Antonio's principle that the loan of money should never be made upon a 'business consideration' appears to rest on a confusion between two quite different sorts of loans: (1) those made to 'a friend in need'. (2) those made in the regular way of commercial transaction,

In early days of trade, when business was confined to a few people in each centre, there was practically no distinction between the two, and then the taking of usury seemed to be a mean advantage on a friend's necessities. But afterwards, when commerce began to be international, and to be carried on in enormously greater volume, a 'money market' and a system of regular loans came to be an essential part of the machinery of trade. To confine financial transactions to a merchant's circle of personal friends would now be as inconvenient as it would be to abolish the system of public hotels and to leave all travellers to the chances of private hospitality. 'Friendly loans', as Polonius pointed out, are apt to turn out badly both for business and friendship.

4. **Different ways of using wealth.**—The German critic Gervinus regards the play as illustrating different ideas of the value of *wealth*. Thus Shylock pursues it for its own sake, or for the sake of the power which it gives him over other men. He ends not only by cutting himself off altogether from his kind, but by losing all his property, except such as is given back to him in pity by his enemies. Jessica, by a natural reaction, punishes the miserliness of her father by a childish wastefulness, flings his money about, and exchanges a valuable turquoise ring for a monkey. Antonio is magnificently generous in his use of wealth, regards as its chief value the power which it confers of helping a friend in need, and yet allows himself to appear so over-anxious that he comes in for the wise rebuke of the light-headed Gratiano—

"You have too much respect upon the world,
They lose it, that do buy it with much care".

Portia's wooers fail in the riddle of the caskets from a shallow view of the comparative values of things, and are taught by experience that "all that glisters is not gold", but that folly and death may lie under precious metals. Bassanio gives an instance of the most difficult kind of high-mindedness about money, frankness in accepting a loan or a gift. With Portia he represents the just view of wealth, that it is a mighty help to pleasurable living, and that for the sake of friends one cannot have too much of it (iii. 2. 156). Yet that it is simply not comparable to the really important things in life, such as friendship and love, for which it must be freely given and hazarded (iii. 2. 304).

There are many other views of the 'meaning' of the play, some of which it is good practice to try to work out for one-

self, *e.g.* that it illustrates the contrast between the shows of things and their reality, Bassanio's speech over the caskets being taken as the 'key-note' to the whole play. These different interpretations show how much there is in the plays of Shakespeare, and that the 'morals' drawn from them are as various as those from life itself. But they all start from the assumption that he wrote 'with a purpose', in the narrow sense of the phrase, whereas it seems that 'the purpose of his playing' ought not to be defined otherwise than in Hamlet's description of it, "to hold the mirror up to nature".

GLOSSARY.

abode (ii. 6. 21), stay, or delay; not, as in modern use, the place of such stay.

accoutred (iii. 4. 63), arrayed. Der. from Old French *accoustrer*, of uncertain origin, but most probably from *custor*, secondary form of *custos*, in the special sense of a verger. Thus 'accoutre' would originally mean to array in ecclesiastical garments.

advised (i. 1. 142; ii. 1. 42, &c.), thoughtful, deliberate, careful. 'Advice' meant 'opinion', or 'thought', not necessarily 'counsel offered to another'. 'Advise' meant 'to reflect' as well as 'to offer an opinion' in Elizabethan English.

albeit (ii. vi. 27)=though it be the case that, notwithstanding. 'Al' is found by itself in Chaucer in the sense of 'although'.

amity (iii. 4. 3), friendship. Fr. *amitié*, Lat. *amicitia*.

an (ii. 4. 10, &c.) is another form of the copulative conjunction 'and', used conditionally, like the cognate word in Scandinavian dialect. 'An' was gradually differentiated in use from 'and', like 'to' from 'too'. When this conditional sense of 'and' became obscure and half-forgotten, the word was 'reduplicated' by the addition of 'if', in 'an if' or 'and if', *e.g.* Authorized Version of St. Matt., xxiv. 48. *Vide* Abbott, §§ 101, 102, 103.

anon (ii. 2. 105), in one moment, immediately; der. from 'on' and 'one'.

argosy (i. 1. 9; i. 3. 15), a merchant vessel. Skeat agrees with Clark and Wright in deriving the word from the name of Jason's famous ship, the *Argo*, rather than from *Ragosie*, a ship of Ragusa. But see the article in the *New English Dictionary*, ed. Dr. Murray, where evidence for the latter derivation is given.

bate (iii. 3. 32; iv. 1. 69), a shortened form of 'abate', meaning to 'beat down', or 'diminish'. Der. from *abattre*, which is French for the Low Lat. *ab-batuere*.

bechanced (i. 1. 38), participle of 'bechance', meaning 'to occur', 'befall'.

beholding (i. 3. 95). See note on the passage.

beshrew (ii. 6. 52, &c.), verb, to call plague upon something; often playfully used, as when Portia says to Bassanio, "Beshrew your eyes"=plague upon your eyes. Der. from 'shrew'= scolding, cutting, harmful.

betimes (iii. 1. 17), adverb, early. Der. from 'by', preposition, and 'time'. Formerly 'betime'. The 's' is added on the analogy of adverbs like 'whiles', 'needs', &c., where the possessive case is used adverbially. A similar false analogy has formed 'besides' for 'beside'.