

37. *to-night* means here the "coming night," while in line 18 it means the "night before."

42. *worth a Jewess' eye*, worth looking at, to a Jewess. Launcelot puns on the old proverb, "Worth a Jew's eye," used to express something very precious. The reading of the early editions is "worth a Jewes eye."

43. *Hagar's offspring*. As a Gentile and as a servant Launcelot is, to Shylock, a child of "the bond-woman, not of the free."

46. Launcelot's laziness is so extreme as to stir Shylock's fancy. He compares him to three different animals in two lines.

52. Shylock's suspicion was, in this case, well-founded, but it is suspicion of such a kind and expressed in such a way that "human" relations had ceased to be possible with him.

54-7. Notice here the *rhyming* close, frequent in the play. The rhyme marks not only the two "exits" but also the proverbial or epigrammatic sayings with which father and daughter take leave for the last time.

*Fast bind, fast find*, as Shylock's last words to his daughter, are again full of "dramatic irony" — as much so, in a different way, as old King Duncan's last message from his bed-chamber to Lady Macbeth, his "most kind hostess." We are prepared for the frightful shock and convulsion which the news of his daughter's flight will cause to Shylock. Irving goes the length of introducing a "dumb-show" scene for which there is no warrant in the text. He shows the old Jew at the end of scene 6 returning after supper at Bassanio's, knocking at the door of his empty house, and staring up in fear and anger when no answer comes.

## SCENE 6

*How Lorenzo, helped by Gratiano and Salarino, runs away with the miser's daughter in the disguise of a page.*

5. *Venus' pigeons*, the doves that drew the airy chariot of Venus.

6. *wont*, *i.e.* "wont to do."

7. *obliged*. Be careful to sound the *-ed* in reading this and similar lines, *e.g.* lines 13 and 16. The word here signifies "pledged previously," and continues the metaphor begun in the preceding line.

10. = What horse retraces a long distance with the same spirit with which he first traversed it?

14. The simile is a striking one, all the more too that it is in harmony with a main "motive" of the play. *Scarfed* means "ornamented with flags, streamers, and the like."

18. *over-weather'd ribs*. "Weather" is here used in the same sense as that in which stone or brick is said to "weather," *i.e.* change shape and color.

24. Scan the line. What irregularity of metre is there, and how is it to be explained?

26. *Enter Jessica, above*, *i.e.* in a balcony.

27. The metre is irregular in much the same way as in line 24, and for a similar reason.

30. *who love I*. "The inflection of *who* is frequently neglected. Cf. 'Who I myself struck down,' *Macbeth*, iii. 1. 123" (Abbott, § 274).

32. How many syllables in *Heaven* here? Scan the line.

42. *too light*, a play between "light," meaning "bright," and "light," meaning "frivolous," as in v. 1. 129:

"Let me give light, but let me not be light;  
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband."

43. *office of discovery*, *i.e.* the duty of a torch-bearer is to show things up.

47. *The close night*, the secret or concealing night. So the witches in *Macbeth* are called "close contrivers of all harms."

48. *stay'd for*, waited for. Cf. note on iv. 1. 340.

65. *presently*, not in its modern sense, but "immediately." Generations of unpunctuality have weakened the force of the word (cf. ii. 9. 3). And compare the similar change of meaning in "anon," "just now," "by and by," "soon."

67. *I am glad on 't*. Here "on" is interchangeable in usage with "of," as actually found above, ii. 2. 101 and 102. Abbott (§ 181) cites:

"God ha' mercy on his soul,  
And of all Christian souls" (*Hamlet*, iv. 5. 200).

## SCENE 7

*Of the three caskets, the Prince of Morocco chooses the golden.*

4, 6. "who" and "which" used interchangeably (see Abbott, §§ 264, 265).

20. *A golden mind*: "golden" here has the general sense of

"precious," "excellent," as elsewhere in Shakespeare, and generally at that time, "golden opinions," "golden joys," etc.

25. The Moor's good opinion of himself betrays the self-confidence of a born aristocrat and prince rather than personal vanity. His choice of the golden casket is in accord with this trait of his character.

29. = To be doubtful of my own merits would be only a spiritless disparagement of myself.

The feeling is much the same as that in Montrose's famous lines:

"He either fears his fate too much  
Or his deserts are small,  
Who fears to put it to the touch  
To win or lose it all."

31. *Why that's the lady.* The first time this phrase occurs, all the emphasis is on "*lady*." Lower down, in line 38, it is on "*that's*."

38. The rhythm of the speech changes from the broken style of indecision to a rapid and continuous flow of excited eloquence. The generous Moor loses the thought of his own merits in the picture, which his mind's eye calls up, of the universal pilgrimage to the shrine of Portia.

40. *Mortal breathing*, opposed to the sculptured figures of the saints to be found at most shrines.

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

43. How many syllables has *Portia* here? Repeated four lines below, the word becomes a kind of refrain, marking the lyrical character of this part of Morocco's speech.

44. *whose ambitious head spits in the face of heaven.* The expression is overstrained and the metaphor forced. Such a phrase is called a "conceit." Over-elaborate fancy was a common fault in the style of the Elizabethan Age. Shakespeare often makes fun of it (*e.g.* below, ii. 9. 98), but he also is sometimes guilty of it himself. This play, however, is singularly free from "conceits." It is quite in keeping that the Prince of Morocco should use them.

50. = It would be too common to inclose her shroud in the darkness of the grave (see Glossary for the words).

51. *obscure*. How accented? See note on i. 1. 54.

53. *being undervalued*. The "ratio" of value between gold and silver in Shakespeare's time was about 10:1. Since then silver has greatly "depreciated."

57. *insculp'd upon*, *i.e.* engraved on the surface of the coin. Coins of this kind were struck by Edward IV, and were in use from his reign to that of Charles I. They were of gold, containing a weight of metal that would be valued now at something between 6s. 8d. and 10s. The name "angel" was given to them from the figure which they bore of St. Michael subduing the dragon.

64. *a carrion Death*, a fleshless skull.

65. Scan the lines on the scroll. What metre are they written in? See Appendix C, 12 (c).

69. *tombs*. The two first Quartos and the F I have "timber," a mistake which Johnson was the first to correct. A similar blunder in all the early editions occurs, ii. 1. 35 (where see note). For the inference to be made from such a "state of the text," see Appendix A.

75. *welcome, frost*. This, says Halliwell, is an inversion of the old proverb, "farewell, frost," used on the departure of anything displeasing.

## SCENE 8

*How two gentlemen of Venice describe the rage of Shylock at finding his daughter flown, and the grief of Antonio at the departure of his friend for Belmont.*

From ii. 2 to ii. 7 we seem to be dealing with the events of a single day. Apparently we are to understand that the choice of the Prince of Morocco took place on the very night that Bassanio sailed. But at the opening of the present scene, a night has elapsed since Bassanio's departure. We hear that Shylock has discovered Jessica's flight, and has suspected Bassanio of being concerned in it. We hear also of that for which i. 1 had somewhat prepared us, namely, of Antonio's losses at sea.

13. *outrageous*. See the meaning of the word in the Glossary.

16. *Fled with a Christian*, and so had cut herself off from the number of the chosen people. Shylock's passion is of a piece with the convictions which the Jews held, at any rate after the return from the Babylonish captivity. So when Ezra heard of the "mixed marriages," he says of himself, "I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished" (*Ezra*, ix. 3).

20. How many syllables in *jewels* here?

27. *reason'd* = talked, its usual sense in Shakespeare.

33. *You were best*, *i.e.* it would be best for you. "You" is the

indirect object in this phrase, and "were" an impersonal verb, as comparison with Anglo-Saxon usage shows. But by Shakespeare's time the origin of the phrase had been forgotten, and we find such expressions as "I were better to leave him," "She were better love a dream" (for "me were," "her were"). See Abbott, § 230, and note on v. i. 177 below.

38. *of*. See note on ii. 5. 2.

42. *mind of love* for "loving mind"; so in iii. 1. 12, "slips of prolixity" = prolix slips.

45. *conveniently*, suitably.

48. *sensible*, having or expressing feeling; sensitive. The alteration in modern English of the use of the words "sensible" and "sensibly" gives a strange sound to certain passages from sixteenth and seventeenth century English, e.g.:

"What remains past cure

Bear not too *sensibly*,"

says Dalila, in *Samson Agonistes*, meaning, "Be not too sensitive about what cannot be helped."

52. *embraced heaviness* = grief which he hugs, or cherishes. Cf. "rash-embraced despair" in iii. 2. 109.

#### SCENE 9

*The Prince of Arragon makes his choice among the caskets, and chooses the silver one.*

While Bassanio is on his way to Belmont, another suitor tries his fortune. This is a grandee of Spain. He is similar in some respects, in rank and splendor, to the Prince of Morocco. But his pride is of another kind altogether from that of the Moor—a far less generous and magnanimous kind. A passage in Strachan-Davidson's *Cicero* (Heroes of the Nations series, pp. 192, 193) illustrates the difference: "Two faults, of very different degrees of blackness, are liable to be confused under the common name of vanity or self-conceit. There are men into whose souls the poison seems to have eaten deep; they are pompous, overweening, repellent; their power of judgment and of action is impaired; . . . Sometimes, on the other hand, vanity is a mere superficial weakness, the accompaniment of a light heart, a quick, sensitive temperament, an unsuspecting loquacity, and an innocent love of display. Carlyle has hit off the difference very happily in the contrast which

he draws between Boswell and his father: 'Old Auchinleck had, if not the gay tail-spreading peacock vanity of his son, no little of the slow-stalking contentious hissing vanity of the gander, a still more fatal species.'"

Arragon's vanity is of the "gander-species." He does not, like Morocco, allow himself to be carried away by an impulsive and generous fancy. He scarcely makes any reference to Portia at all, and chooses on grounds wholly unconnected with her, or with anything but a belief in himself. She takes his measure in the biting phrase,

"O, these deliberate fools! When they do choose,  
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose,"

and treats him with a scarcely concealed dislike very different from the courtesy she had shown to the Moor.

3. *presently*. See note on ii. 6. 65.

19. *Fortune now to my heart's hope*, may good success attend me in winning what my heart hopes for.

26. *meant by the fool multitude*, i.e. meant to apply to the fool multitude.

27. *fond* = foolish. So in iii. 3. 9.

32. *jump with* = "be at one with." Cf. *Richard III*, iii. 1. 11, (a man's outward show) "seldom or never jumpeth with the heart," and the common proverb, "Great minds jump together."

34. *then to thee*. What must be supplied here? See note on ii. 2. 119.

38. *honourable*, i.e. enjoying honor or public esteem.

41. *degrees*, steps or grades in distinction. The word in Shakespeare's time was not limited, as it is now, to "degrees" in university rank. Compare the ballad-phrase "a squire of low degree."

42. *clear honour*, i.e. "honor innocently won." Similarly "clear" is applied to allegiance in *Macbeth* in the sense of "unstained loyalty."

Note that "clear" is not an ordinary attributive adjective here, but that its meaning is as it were diffused through the whole sentence; "Would that honor were won by merit and so won innocently." See note on iii. 2. 165.

44. *cover*, i.e. keep the hat on, as a sign of superiority of rank. Cf. iii. 5. 58-60.

46. *How much low peasantry*, etc. The metaphor of the threshing floor is begun here and continued in the two following lines, *seed*

meaning the grain, and *ruin* meaning nearly the same as chaff, *i.e.* rubbish or refuse.

61. Means "You must not wish to be both defendant and judge in your own cause, for the two offices are inconsistent with one another."

63. The lines on the scroll, and also Arragon's speech concerning them, are all in trochaic measure except two. Which are these two?

Both *fire* and *seven* are here dissyllabic.

68. *I wis*. See *wis* in the Glossary.

72. *You are sped*, your destiny is decided.

85. *What would my lord?* Portia jestingly imitates the formal manner of her gentleman-in-waiting. Mr. Beeching quotes, as parallel, *Richard II*, v. 5. 67—

Groom. "Hail royal prince."

King. "Thanks, noble peer."

89. *sensible*, capable of being observed by the senses; substantial, tangible. For *regreets*, see Glossary.

90. *commends and courteous breath*, greetings and verbal courtesy. For "courteous breath" compare

"It must appear in other ways than words,  
Therefore I scant this *breathing courtesy*," v. 1. 141.

93-95. This servant, like some others in Shakespeare, has a singularly fine vein of beautiful language. Portia's jesting with him shows that she admits him to a certain degree of familiarity. At the same time it expresses the high spirits which both she and Nerissa feel as a result of Arragon's failure.

98. *high-day wit*, *i.e.* holiday wit, the opposite of "work-a-day words." So in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, young Fenton is said to "speak holiday."

101. *lord Love*: an appeal to Cupid.

### ACT III

In the preceding act the main subject was the elopement of the miser's daughter. In this it is the choice of the right casket by Bassanio. But, to begin with, we have a scene that shows the consequences of Jessica's flight, and prepares us for Shylock's insistence on his bond.

### SCENE 1

*Of Antonio's losses at sea, and of Shylock's intended revenge.*

2. *It lives there unchecked*, *i.e.* the report remains uncontradicted. This phrase and what follows show that a long time had elapsed in the interval between the second and third acts. Tubal has had time to go to Genoa and return. The bond is within a fortnight of expiry (line 106).

4. *The Goodwins*: probably the Goodwin Sands, off the south-eastern coast of England, dangerous to vessels coming out of the Thames.

8. *my gossip Report*. Report is figured as a talkative old woman, fond of ginger, and full of pretended emotions. (For other such "picture-phrases" in Shakespeare, see i. 2. 20, 21.)

*honest of her word*, another specimen for a collection of idiomatic uses of the preposition *of*. See also "slips of prolixity" in line 12 below.

10. *knapped* = not "snapped," as in "he knappeth the spear in sunder," but "gnawed" or "nibbled." See Glossary, and Furness' note in his Variorum Edition.

13. *the plain highway of talk*. Similarly Hamlet calls conventional conversation "the beaten way of friendship" (*Hamlet*, ii. 2. 276).

21. *cross my prayer*, that is, come between Salanio and Salarino before the former could say his prayer, "Amen" or "so be it," to confirm the latter's good wishes.

27. *none so well, none so well*. Though weeks have passed since Jessica's flight, Shylock's rage is not abated. His own fury, the mockery of his enemies, the jeering of the boys in the streets have driven him to a point not far short of madness; and his passion appears in his convulsive and broken sentences, and the repetition of phrases. He has a "hunted" look, and seems older, wilder, and more neglectful of himself than in the earlier scenes.

32. *fledged*. What is the meaning of the word?

44. *thenish*, a "hock," or white wine, is contrasted with red wine. Cf. i. 2. 104.

46. *bankrupt*, one whose "bank" is broken, either

(a) referring to the original meaning of "bank," the bench or wooden stall at which a merchant sat, or

(b) referring to the use of "bank" for capital or stock of money. Cf. below, line 120, "he cannot choose but break."

47. *a prodigal*. This word, as applied to Antonio, has given some trouble to the critics. But Shylock's peculiar habit of regarding money naturally comes out in his use of words, which are, so to say, scaled on a different principle from that of the rest of mankind. Launcelot thought himself starved in the Jew's service, but to Shylock he appeared to be a "huge feeder," and to "gormandise." So Antonio is a "prodigal," though others would only have called him "generous" or "munificent."

55. It has been pointed out that Shakespeare is in prose-writing not less great than in verse. The paragraph that follows is a superb instance of his skill in "oratory," so rhythmical in sound, so keen in argument, so overwhelming in passion. Yet it is so true to the character and the "situation" that it appears inevitable and necessary, an effect of nature, not of art. On the stage, in the mouth of a great actor, the speech excites the hearers, almost beyond endurance, to pity and terror. Even Salanio and Salarino have no answer to it.

74. *sufferance*, endurance or patience, as in i. 3. 111.

76. *it shall go hard but*, etc., *i.e.* if I fail to improve upon my pattern, it will not be for want of endeavor.

77. Antonio *sends for* his friends. His troubles have depressed him, and he avoids coming out of doors. The intimacy of Antonio with those who had helped in Jessica's elopement, expressed in such a message as this, still further inflames Shylock's anger.

87. For the omission of the relative, see note on i. 1. 175.

89. *The curse* seems to refer to some such place in the Bible as that in *Daniel*, ix. 11: "All Israel have transgressed thy law; . . . therefore *the curse* is poured upon us, and the oath that is written in the law of Moses." This again refers back to the terrible curse denounced against Israel, if it should not keep the Law, in *Deuteronomy*, xxviii. 15-68, many of the points of which would apply to Shylock's state, *e.g.* "Thy daughters shall be given unto another people, and thine eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day long. All thy labors shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up; and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed away."

92. *would my daughter were dead*. Such "wild and whirling words" must not in fairness be pressed further against Shylock than similar speeches against Lear. And in any case they are not merely the utterance of disappointed avarice. Jessica was already "dead" to him and to his nation in Shylock's belief; she had "cut herself off" from her people.

95. *Why, so*. Shylock mutters as he makes a rough calculation of the different sums lost.

125. *Out upon her!* The expression "out upon" seems an extension of such a phrase as that found in the *Lucrece*,

"*Out, idle words! servants to shallow fools.*"

126. *Leah*. The touch comes unexpectedly, and carries the mind of the hearer back to other days in Shylock's life with a bitterness of contrast hardly less sharp than in the terrible place in *Macbeth*, ii. 2. 4.

135. *at our synagogue*. Places of worship were common resorts for business in Shakespeare's day (*e.g.* St. Paul's, in London). So that it is perhaps fanciful to press the reference here as François Victor Hugo does in a passage quoted by Furness: "The Jew invokes the Ancient of Days who spoke unto Moses aforesaid: 'If a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth.' In entering his synagogue, Shylock entrusts his hatred to the safeguard of his Faith." Yet it is certainly true that Shylock regards himself as "the depository of the vengeance of his race" and religion. (Compare, at the trial, "I have an oath in heaven," and above, on hearing of Antonio's losses, "I thank God, I thank God." See also iv. 1. 36.)

## SCENE 2

*How Bassanio, by discerning truth from show, makes choice of the right casket, and so achieves his quest; how news arrives from Venice that Antonio has lost all his ships and is in prison for Bassanio's sake; how Portia speeds Bassanio on his way to save his friend.*

This is the middle point of the action where the intricacy of the plot is at its greatest. In the course of this scene the three stories become one, the issue of which Portia takes upon herself.

An interval of more than a fortnight has elapsed since the last scene. The bond is forfeit, and a messenger will, ere the scene be over, have had time to arrive from Venice to report Antonio's danger.

"Enter Bassanio, Portia, etc., and Attendants." They must woo, like sovereign princes, each at the head of a retinue. How nobly and gracefully it is done!

6. *quality*. See Glossary for different uses of this word in the play.

8. *a maiden*, etc.; *i.e.* she cannot think one thing and say another.

15. *o'erlook'd*. To "overlook" was to cast a spell upon, by means of the "glamour" or power of the eye. So it comes to have the meaning of "to blight" with the evil eye, as in *Merry Wives*, v. 5. 87:

"Vile worm, thou wast o'erlook'd even in thy birth."

18. *naughty*. See note on iii. 3. 9.

20. The line must be read:

"An so', | though yo' | urs, not' | yours, prove' | it so'."

"Yours" is dissyllabic at first, then monosyllabic, after the strongly accented "not." Compare the line in *The Tempest*:

"Twelve ye' | är since', | Miran' | da, twelve' | year since'."

See Abbott, § 475 and § 480.

22, 23. *peize* and *eke*. "Peize" means to keep suspended, "eke" to make longer; together they mean "to delay."

29. *fear the enjoying*, *i.e.* "fear that I shall not enjoy;" as in v. 1. 306, "fear keeping safe" means "fear that I may not keep safe."

33. As late as 1690, torture was applied in Great Britain to a prisoner suspected of treason. The opinion that Portia utters here of its uselessness became established by the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was never sanctioned by English Common Law, but inflicted by ministers of the crown with sovereign authority. "The rack seldom stood idle in the Tower for all the latter part of Elizabeth's reign" (Hallam, *Const. Hist.*, vol. i).

39. Verb of motion omitted, as in ii. 2. 119, etc.

41. True love will give the necessary insight. Cf. i. 2. 35.

44. The legend of the swan's death-song is found in Greek literature. Tennyson has given a poem to it, *The Dying Swan*, and a fine simile in *The Passing of Arthur*:

"the barge with oar and sail  
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan  
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,  
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood  
With swarthy webs."

49. *flourish*, a certain sound of trumpets used on such occasions as that described.

55. *young Alcides*. The story of the rescue of Hesione, daughter of Laomedon, by Hercules, is told by Ovid, *Metam.* xi. 199 ff. The

love of Hercules is here said to have been not so great as that of Bassanio, because he saved Hesione for the sake of certain horses which Laomedon offered him. He gave Hesione to Telamon. All the detail of this picture is Shakespeare's.

56. *howling Troy*, *i.e.* loudly lamenting. So in the Authorized Version of *Isaiah*, xxiii. 6, "howl, ye inhabitants of the isle."

In the splendid series of images with which this speech is filled, Portia shows how deeply her heart and imagination are touched.

*Song*. What is the metre of the song?

63. *fancy*, that is, love, in which sense the word is common in Elizabethan English, *e.g.* —

"In maiden meditation, fancy-free,"

a line in which the last two words are often misquoted and misunderstood.

73. *So may the outward shows*. Probably the "so" does not refer to anything in the song, but to some previous thought of the speaker's. We hear only the conclusion of Bassanio's comments.

*least themselves*, *i.e.* least like the reality within.

74. *still* = always.

82. *his*, where we should expect "its." See Abbott, § 228, where it is shown that "its" was a new word, only formed in Shakespeare's lifetime, and scarcely used by him except in his later plays.

84. *stairs of sand*. The phrase is a curious but most expressive one. Nothing could be imagined more untrustworthy than a stair of sand. There is therefore no need to press the spelling of the early editions — "stayers" or "staiers," — and to suppose that the word means "props," as Knight suggested.

85. *beards*, used for hair on the face generally, and sometimes for "moustache" or "whiskers," particularly the military moustache, *e.g.* in the famous phrase which Jaques uses of the soldier, "bearded like a pard."

86. *white livers*. See note on ii. 1. 7.

87. *excrement*. Cf. *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 1. 109: "Dally with my excrement, with my mustachio." See Glossary.

88. *beauty*. There are many references in Shakespeare and elsewhere in Elizabethan literature to the practice of "making up" complexions, *e.g.* *Hamlet*, iii. 1. 51, a cheek "beautied with plastering art"; and 149, "I have heard of your paintings, too; God has given you one face and you make yourselves another."

91. *lightest*, *i.e.* fickle, "light o' love."

92. *golden locks*. Bassanio is so absorbed in his reflections that he seems to have forgotten the color of his own lady's hair. See i. 1. 169, 170.

94. *supposed fairness*, false beauty; "known" does not qualify "fairness" but "locks."

95. *The dowry of a second head*, *v.e.* left or bequeathed to it by the head that originally wore it.

96. *The skull that bred them in the sepulchre*. What word might be inserted after "them" to make the construction plainer? What is such a construction called?

97. *guiled* = treacherous. See Glossary.

99. *an Indian beauty*. If the text be right, the last word is used ironically in contrast with the direct sense of "beauteous" in the previous line. But the repetition of the word suggests a printer's error, and it is possible that we have not the passage as Shakespeare wrote it. It has been proposed to alter the punctuation, and to put a semicolon after "Indian."

100. *times*. The word offers a pretty exercise in interpretation. What does Shakespeare signify by it? and what similar uses can you quote? (You will find one in *Timon of Athens*, iv. 3. 519 —

"Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late:  
You should have feared *false times* when you did feast.")

102. *hard food for Midas*: a whole story in a phrase. The tale is told by Ovid, in the eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses*. King Midas of Phrygia, having obtained from the god the power to turn all to gold by his touch, discovered that the food he was about to eat, the water he went to bathe in, were among the things that felt his power.

103. *pale and common drudge*. It is curious that the "pale-ness" of silver repels Bassanio, while that of lead moves him "more than eloquence." Taking the words as they stand, we must be careful to emphasize "thy" at the beginning of line 106, and suppose a contrast between the paleness of the public slave and that of the stern challenger. But here also, as in 99, the repetition of the word suggests a printer's error. Warburton's emendation of "paleness" to "plainness" (in l. 106) seems likely to be right.

109. *thoughts*, anxieties, as in the common Elizabethan phrase, "to take thought," *i.e.* to brood over cares.

115. *What demi-god*, etc. The artist who made the picture is compared to a god because he makes his pictures seem to live.

125. *having made one*. Analyze the whole sentence. In what respect does it differ from the usual grammatical forms?

127. *Unfurnish'd*, *i.e.* unprovided with its companion, the other eye.

131. *continent*. Shakespeare, in spite of his "small Latin," uses derivatives from that language with a clear feeling for their original senses. As he gives to "continent" the meaning of "that which holds," so in *Hamlet*, to "extravagant and erring," that of "roaming and straying."

140. Notice the effect produced here, as in line 110 and the following, by the rhymed passage. The speech of the lovers grows musical with happiness.

141. *By note*, by direction of the scroll.

142. *contending in a prize*, that is, in a race for a prize.

158. *livings*, properties.

159. *account, sum, in gross*. The metaphors are drawn from a merchant's books. With noble courage and grace Portia speaks openly of that which any woman less sincere or less wise would have tried to pass over or to disparage, — her wealth, — wishes it sixty times as great as it is, then by one gift abolishes it, and presents herself to Bassanio, as she is, by herself alone. The simplicity and humanity of the words here are more "symptomatic" of the real nature of Portia than the oratory in the trial scene.

163, 164. *may learn, can learn*. The original distinction in meaning between "can" and "may" is here maintained. To "can" is to know, to have the wit or skill to do something. To "may" is to have the thing in one's might or power. Thus "may" here means "I am not disabled by age;" "can" means further, "I have the faculty to learn."

165. *her gentle spirit commits itself*, is equivalent to "her spirit gently commits itself." The force of the adjective is diffused over the whole phrase. Compare the expression in *Macbeth*, i. 6: "the air Nimble and sweetly recommends itself Unto our gentle senses:" or in this play, iii. 4. 36, where "fair" similarly seems to qualify more than the substantive to which it is attached.

176. *Be my vantage*, etc., give me an opportunity to blame and cry out against you.

179. The excited feelings are compared here to a crowd of loyal subjects in a state of joyous uproar, as in *Julius Cæsar* they are compared to subjects in insurrection:

"The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council, and the state of man —  
Like to a little kingdom — suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection."

183. Each cry is a "something," a word with a meaning, but when all are mixed together they become inarticulate, "a wild of nothing," a chaos without meaning; and yet not without meaning, for the very noise is expressive of delight. Schlegel's German translation is an admirable commentary on this passage:

"Wo jedes Etwas in einander flieszend,  
Zu einem Chaos wird von nichts als Freude,  
Laut und doch sprachlos."

193. *from me*. There is a play here on the double meaning of the preposition, either "given by" or "taken from." Taken in the second sense, the phrase means, as Johnson points out, "none away from me, none that I shall lose if you gain it." The quibble is slight enough, but any quip is worth making to relieve the solemn insipidity of a formal congratulation; and at all events Gratiano habitually speaks "an infinite deal of nothing" (see his two following speeches). Here again Schlegel is the best commentary:

"Ich wünsch' euch was für Freud' ihr wünschen könnt  
Denn sicher wünscht ihr keine von mir weg."

195. *bargain*, that is, contract.

197. *so* = provided that.

222. *Salanio*, spelled variously in the early editions. The Cambridge editors understand a new personage to be introduced here, called "Salerio." I prefer to follow Dyce and Furness and Beeching, and to regard the variations as printer's errors. In the previous scene Antonio had sent for Salanio and Salarino. One of them remained in Venice to comfort the Merchant, the other sped to Belmont to procure rescue.

229. Lorenzo excuses himself for his appearance without invitation. Salanio had pressed him to come, with a "reason for it." He wished to summon all Antonio's friends into council.

239. *estate*, condition, state. *Estate* and *state* are "doublets," *i.e.* they were originally the same word. Compare the gradual differentiation of "history" and "story," "to" and "too," "of" and "off." In line 262 below, contrariwise, "state" is used where we should say "estate."

242. *royal merchant*, not in any technical sense of "privileged," as some of the commentators suppose, but "princely," "munificent," as Antony calls Cæsar "royal and loving."

244. *We are the Jasons*. The story of the *Life and Death of Jason* should, by any who are not familiar with it, be read in William Morris' poem. The story is alluded to elsewhere in this play (see i. 1. 170-2). This line contains a clear reminiscence of one in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (in rhythm as well as in meaning): "I'll be thy Jason, thou my golden fleece" (Act. iv. sc. 4).

246. *shrewd*, spiteful, bad; means literally "accursed."

251. *I am half yourself*. Compare what Brutus' Portia says to him (*Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1. 267):

"No, my Brutus;  
You have some sick offence within your mind,  
Which by the right and virtue of my place,  
I ought to know of; . . .  
. . . unfold to me, *your self, your half,*  
Why you are heavy."

265. *his mere enemy*. *Mere*, by derivation, means unmixed, pure. In modern usages, *e.g.* a "mere trifle," it has a depreciatory sense, "nothing more than." In this passage it signifies "thorough-going," "intense."

279. *confound* = overthrow, as in the "let me never be confounded" of the *Te Deum* in the Book of Common Prayer.

281. *impeach the freedom*, *i.e.* he threatens an action to annul the city's charter. Shakespeare uses terms that would be vividly understood by English citizens possessed of rights to administer justice by royal charter. Cf. iv. 1. 39, where Shylock says:

"If you deny it, let the danger light  
Upon your charter and your city's freedom."

Venice, of course, was not a "free city" in the sense that her judicial powers depended on a charter; she was an independent sovereign state. In such points as this Shakespeare used the terms of his own country and his own time, as being to his hearers the truest and most vivid; just as the "Old Masters" painted the persons of Hebrew history in the dress of their own Italian countrymen.

Ruskin, in an interesting place, extracted in the *Frondes Agrætes*, defends the Shakespearean practice as being right and true, in contrast with modern "realism."



285. *envious* = hateful, as "envy" = hatred, in iv. 1. 126.

288. *Chus*, i.e. Cush, a name taken, like Tubal, from one of the early chapters of *Genesis*.

Jessica's recollections here make it certain that an interval of some length of time must be supposed to elapse between the events in Act i and those in Act ii.

296. That is, "the best-condition'd and most unwearied spirit." Refer back to note on ii. 1. 46.

305. Either *hair* is to be read as two syllables, or *through* is for *thorough*. *Through* and *thorough* were exact equivalents in meaning at this time. Cf. *throughfare* in ii. 7. 42.

314. *you shall hence*, verb of motion implied, as in ii. 2. 119.

316. *Since you are dear bought, I will love you dear*. Portia has a delightful way of relieving from embarrassment those on whom she bestows kindness. Here she covers her generosity under what seems a rather spiteful pun, and so escapes, and gives escape to her friends. For a similar instance of her "tact," see v. 1. 137.

So rapidly and brilliantly does she rise to the occasion here that she hardly gives us time to realize the sacrifice she is making. It is all the more heroic that she spares us the "heroics." By an effort of clear imagination, she sees that Bassanio would never afterwards have forgiven himself if he had hesitated now. By prompt self-suppression she makes it easy for him to do the right thing.

321. *between you and I*. Jespersen, *Progress in Language*, p. 248, says, "I was preferred to *me* after *and* because the group of words "you and I" would occur in everyday speech so frequently as to make it practically a sort of stock-phrase taken as a whole, the last word of which was therefore not inflected." He quotes a number of instances similar to this from great writers, to which we may add that "Mr. Perker" uses this very phrase in chapter x of the *Pickwick Papers*.

### SCENE 3

*The three months having expired, and the bond being forfeit, Antonio has been cast into prison; guarded by a gaoler, he now seeks an interview with Shylock, who refuses to hear him.*

A short interval of time has elapsed since the last scene. The trial is fixed for the morrow. Antonio is expecting the arrival of Bassanio.

9. *naughty, fond*, have altered in sense somewhat since Shakespeare's time. "Naughty" was not then confined to children, nor

used in a half-humorous way, but meant as much as "wicked," "worthless." Cf., above, iii. 2. 18, and, below, v. 1. 91:

"So shines a good deed in a *naughty* world."

What is the derivation of the word?

For "fond," see Glossary.

18. *impenetrable*, whose heart cannot be touched.

19. *kept*, lived. To "keep" remains in this sense among undergraduates at Cambridge University, England.

27. The reading followed here is Theobald's. See Appendix A. The meaning of *commodity* here is "advantages," "benefits," "conveniences." But in another interpretation it would mean "traffic," "business" (see Glossary). Either makes a good sense.

### SCENE 4

*How Portia, leaving the charge of her house to Lorenzo and Jessica, departs, under pretence of a vow, for Venice, to aid her husband in the rescue of Antonio.*

The time is the afternoon of the day on which Bassanio made his choice among the caskets. After a hasty ceremony of marriage, he has parted from his wife at the door of the church. She and the rest of the company have just returned to the house. (From v. 1. 249, it appears that Portia left Belmont almost immediately after Bassanio.) Full of the daring plan she has devised, she astonishes Lorenzo by the courage she shows at her lord's departure.

2. *conceit* is by derivation the same word as "concept," from which it has become "differentiated" gradually, both in spelling and in sense (compare "estate" and "state," "history" and "story"). In meaning, "conceit" has passed from a notion or idea in general to a quaint or fanciful notion, and finally to a notion of one's own importance. Here it still bears its original meaning of idea or conception. Cf. i. 1. 92.

3. *god-like amity*. Lorenzo means that Portia shows her esteem of friendship as something higher than human by speeding Bassanio on his way at such a moment. There is not a *conflict* here, as has been sometimes said, between love and friendship. It is more correct to say that Portia feels the truth of her husband's love involved in the loyalty of his friendship.

9. = Than commonplace kindness can oblige you to be.

11. For the double negative, cf. iv. 1. 59, 76, 162.

The ending *-ion* (*-tion*, *-sion*, etc.) is sometimes pronounced as two syllables, sometimes as one syllable, in Shakespeare's verse. In this speech of Portia's it is pronounced four times (each time in a word at the end of the line) as two syllables.

12. *waste the time*, spend the time (just as Valentine says in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, ii. 4. 63, "We have conversed and spent our hours together"). "Waste" has here no sense of unprofitableness. Rolfe compares Milton (Sonnet to Mr. Lawrence),

"Help waste a sullen day."

15. *manners*, cf. note on ii. 3. 19.

20. *semblance*, likeness, image.

25. *husbandry and manage*, stewardship and control. See each of these words in the Glossary.

27. *I have toward heaven breathed a secret vow*. This vow is not a mere pretext to cover her journey. It is in keeping with the many small touches by which we learn to think of Portia as contemplative and devout (e.g. i. 2. 13-22, 60, 116, 142; iii. 2. 13; iv. 1. 184-205; v. 1. 89-91). As she returns home, after the trial,

"She doth stray about  
By holy crosses, where she kneels and prays  
For happy wedlock hours" (v. 1. 30-32).

On this side of her character Portia is like Imogen or Desdemona; but in her capacity for rapid and decisive action she is more like Rosalind or Beatrice.

33. *imposition*, something "put upon" a person, but without any of the secondary idea of fraud, which the word often carries in modern English. Cf. i. 2. 114.

Another instance of Portia's generosity of mind; she represents her hospitality and trust as a *task* laid upon Lorenzo, and so tries to relieve him from a sense of obligation.

36. *in all fair commands*, the adjective colors the whole phrase, not "commands" only. See note on iii. 2. 165.

45. *Now, Balthasar*. The incident of Balthasar's ride from Belmont to Padua, and from Padua to the Ferry, is one of the most exciting in the play, though it is only by slight touches here and there that we are enabled to follow it.

Bassanio had only been gone an hour or two before the solution occurred to Portia (v. i. 271). She must go herself to Venice. But she wants a lawyer's robes and some notes on technical points of legal procedure. How to get them? There is her kinsman, Dr.

Bellario of Padua, the most famous jurisconsult in Italy. Her trusty man, Balthasar, must ride on the spur to Padua with a letter to the doctor. Arrived at Padua he finds the lawyer laid up with sickness, but also pen in hand, answering an invitation from the Doge of Venice to come and decide the very case on which Portia had written to him. Cannot the two messages be made to work together? Portia shall be Bellario's deputy to the Doge. While the robes are being fetched, the doctor writes two letters, one, afterwards read aloud in court, to His Grace the Doge, recommending Portia as substitute for himself, under the name Balthasar, borrowed from her messenger; the other to Portia.

Armed with these letters and the precious robes, Balthasar gallops off again to ride through the night, so that he may catch his Lady at the Ferry in the morning. There was no time to be lost, for even Bassanio, travelling straight, would arrive only on the evening before the trial (iii. 3. 34), and he had some hours' start. Balthasar reaches the Ferry in time to meet the lumbering coach which had brought Portia along one side of the triangle, while he had been riding the other two. Portia reaches the court just at the critical instant.

52. *imagined speed*, the speed of imagination or thought. Cf. *Sonnet* xlv —

"For nimble thought can jump both sea and land  
As soon as think the place where he would be."

53. *traject*, Rowe's correction for the printer's error, "tranect." Hunter quotes from Coryat's *Crudities*, "There are in Venice thirteen ferries or passages, which they commonly call Traghetti."

56. *convenient speed*, the speed that suits the occasion.

67. *reed voice*, *voix flûtée*, as F. Victor Hugo translates it.

69. *quaint lies*, ingenious lies.

72. *I could not do withal*, "I could not help it." Dyce quotes from *Lesclaircissement de la Langue Française* (1530), "I can nat do withal, a thyng lyeth nat in me, or I am nat in faulte that a thyng is done."

77. *Jacks*, fellows, a term of contempt common in Shakespeare.

82. *in my coach, which stays for us At the park gate*. Portia throughout this scene shows not only infinite spirit and courage, but a power of combination and decisive command equal to that of Lady Macbeth herself. Compare the words to Balthasar —

"Waste no time in words,  
But get thee gone: I shall be there before thee."