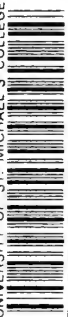
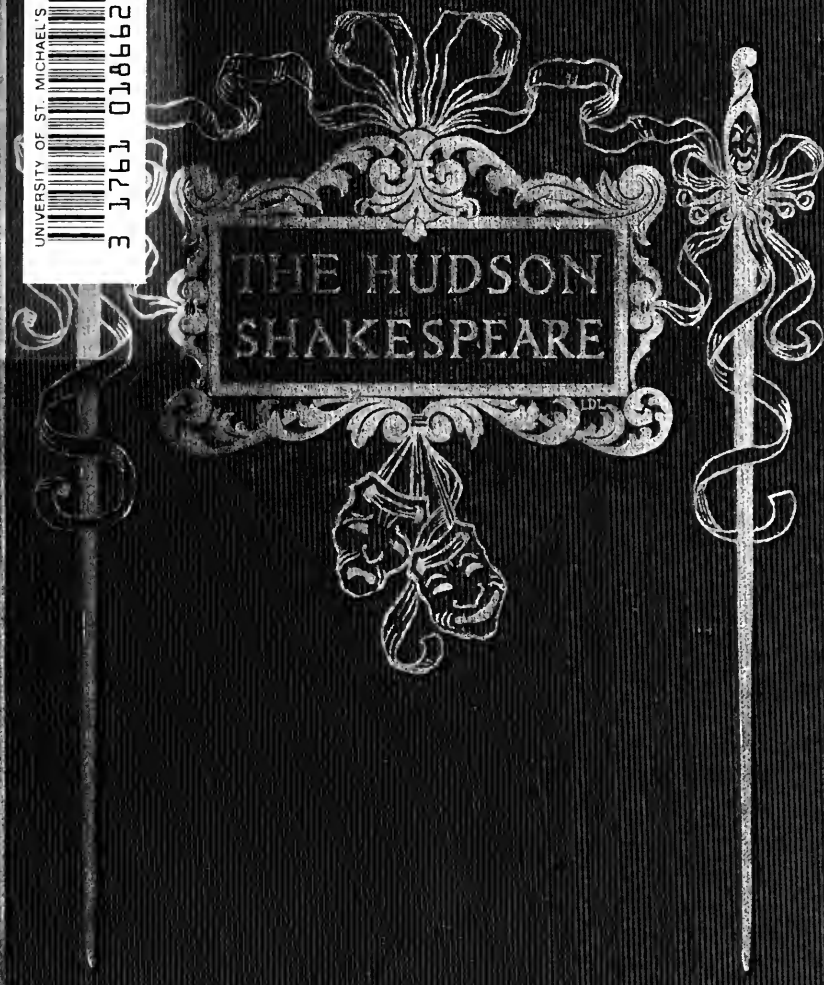


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THE HUDSON
SHAKESPEARE



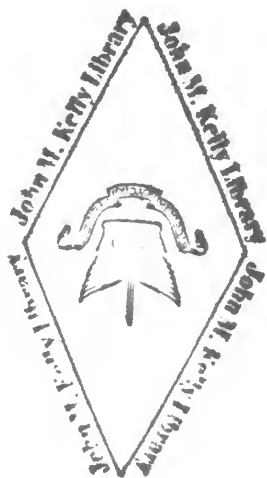


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111

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Bot. "I cry your Worship's mercy heartly,—I beseech your Worship's name."
Cob. "Cobweb."

Midsummer-Night's Dream. Act 3, Scene 1.

THE
COMPLETE WORKS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

WITH
A LIFE OF THE POET, EXPLANATORY FOOT-NOTES, CRITICAL
NOTES, AND A GLOSSARIAL INDEX.

Harvard Edition.

BY THE
REV. HENRY N. HUDSON, LL.D.

IN TWENTY VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

REGISTERED at the Stationers' October 8, 1600, and two quarto editions of it published in the course of that year. The play is not known to have been printed again till it reappeared in the folio of 1623, where the repetition of certain misprints shows it to have been printed from one of the quarto copies. Few of the Poet's dramas have reached us in a more satisfactory state as regards the text.

The play is first heard of in the list given by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, 1598. But it was no doubt written several years before that time; and I am not aware that any editor places the writing later than 1594. This brings it into the same period with *King John*, *King Richard the Second*, and the finished *Romeo and Juliet*; and the internal marks of style naturally sort it into the same company. Verplanck, however, thinks there are some passages which relish strongly of an earlier time; while, again, there are others that have such an energetic compactness of thought and imagery, mingled occasionally with the deeper tonings of "years that bring the philosophic mind," as to argue that they were wrought into the structure of the play not long before it came from the press. The part of the Athenian lovers certainly has a good deal that, viewed by itself, would scarce do credit even to such a boyhood as Shakespeare's must have been. On the other hand, there is a large philosophy in Theseus' discourse of "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," a manly judgment in his reasons for preferring the "tedious brief scene of young Pyramus and his love Thisbe," and a bracing freshness in the short dialogue of the chase, all in the best style of the author's second period.

There is at least a rather curious coincidence, which used to

be regarded as proving that the play was not written till after the Summer of 1594. I refer to Titania's description, in ii. 1, of the strange misbehaviour of the weather, which she ascribes to the fairy bickerings. For the other part of the coincidence, Strype in his *Annals* gives the following from a discourse by the Rev. Dr. King: "And see whether the Lord doth not threaten us much more, by sending such unseasonable weather and storms of rain among us; which if we will observe, and compare it with what is past, we may say that the course of Nature is very much inverted. Our years are turned upside down: our Summers are no Summers; our harvests are no harvests; our seed-times are no seed-times. For a great space of time scant any day hath been seen that it hath not rained." Dyce, indeed, scouts the supposal that Shakespeare had any allusion to this eccentric conduct of the elements in the Summer of 1594, pronouncing it "ridiculous"; but I do not quite see it so, albeit I am apt enough to believe that most of the play was written before that date.

The Poet has been commonly supposed to have taken the ground-work of this play from *The Knight's Tale* of Chaucer. But the play has hardly any notes of connection with the *Tale* except the mere names of Theseus, Hippolyta, and Philostrate, the latter of which is the name assumed by Arcite in the *Tale*. *The Life of Theseus*, in North's translation of Plutarch doubtless furnished something towards the parts of the hero and his "bouncing Amazon"; while Golding's translation of Ovid's story of Pyramus and Thisbe probably supplied hints towards the interlude. So much as relates to Bottom and his fellows evidently came fresh from Nature as she had passed under the Poet's eye. The linking of these clowns with the ancient tragic tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, so as to draw the latter within the region of modern farce, is not less original than droll. The names of Oberon, Titania, and Robin Goodfellow were made familiar by the surviving relics of Gothic and Druidical mythology. But it was for Shakespeare to let the fairies speak for themselves. So that there need be no scruple about receiving Hallam's statement of the matter: "*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet, — the fairy machinery. A

few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner with popular superstitions; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood, and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals' among the personages of the drama."

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.	OBERON, King of the Fairies.
EGEUS, Father to Hermia.	TITANIA, Queen of the Fairies.
LYSANDER, } in love with Hermia.	PUCK, or ROBIN-GOODFELLOW, a
DEMETRIUS, }	Fairy.
PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels	PEAS-BLOSSOM, } Fairies.
to Theseus.	COBWEB, }
QUINCE, a Carpenter.	MOTH, }
SNUG, a Joiner.	MUSTARD-SEED, }
BOTTOM, a Weaver.	
FLUTE, a Bellows-mender.	PYRAMUS, } Characters in the In-
SNOUT, a Tinker.	THISBE, }
STARVELING, a Tailor.	WALL, }
	MOONSHINE, }
HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons.	LION, }
HERMIA, in love with Lysander.	
HELENA, in love with Demetrius.	
Other Fairies attending their King and Queen.	Attendants on Theseus
	and Hippolyta.

SCENE.— *Athens, and a Wood near it.*

ACT I.

SCENE I.— *Athens. A Room in the Palace of THESEUS.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, and Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace ; four happy days bring in
Another Moon : but, O, methinks, how slow
This old Moon wanes ! she lingers my desires,

Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,¹
 Long withering out a young man's révenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights ;
 Four nights will quickly dream away the time ;
 And then the Moon, like to a silver bow
 New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
 Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate,
 Stir up th' Athenian youth to merriments ;
 Awake the pert² and nimble spirit of mirth :
 Turn melancholy forth to funerals, —
 The pale companion is not for our pomp.—[*Exit PHILOSTRATE.*
 Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
 And won thy love, doing thee injuries ;
 But I will wed thee in another key,
 With pomp, with triumph,³ and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renownèd Duke !⁴

The. Thanks, good Egeus : what's the news with thee ?

Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
 Against my child, my daughter Hermia. —
 Stand forth, Demetrius. — My noble lord,
 This man hath my consent to marry her. —

¹ A *dowager* is a widow with rights of dower, that is, with a portion of her husband's property secured to her by law. Of course, so long as she lives, a part of the inheritance is withheld from the children, whose revenue is said to be *withered out*, because their youth gets withered while they are waiting for it.

² *Pert* had not always the ill meaning now attached to it. Skinner derives it from the Latin *peritus*, which means *expert, skilful, prompt*.

³ *Triumph* was used in a much more inclusive sense than it now bears ; for various kinds of festive or public *display* or *pageantry*.

⁴ The application of *duke* to the heroes of antiquity was quite common ; the word being from the Latin *dux*, which means a chief or leader of any sort. Thus in 1 *Chronicles*, i. 51, we have a list of "the *dukes* of Edom."

Stand forth, Lysander : — and, my gracious Duke,
 This man hath witch'd the bosom of my child : —
 Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
 And interchanged love-tokens with my child :
 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
 With feigning voice, verses of feigning love ;⁵
 And stol'n th' impression of her fantasy
 With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
 Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, — messengers
 Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth :
 With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart ;
 Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
 To stubborn harshness : — and, my gracious Duke,
 Be't so she will not here before your Grace
 Consent to marry with Demetrius,
 I beg the ancient privilege of Athens, —
 As she is mine, I may dispose of her :
 Which shall be either to this gentleman
 Or to her death, according to our law
 Immediately provided in that case.

The. What say you, Hermia ? be advised,⁶ fair maid :
 To you your father should be as a god ;
 One that composed your beauties ; yea, and one
 To whom you are but as a form in wax,
 By him imprinted, and within his power
 To leave the figure, or disfigure it.⁷

⁵ According to present usage, this should be "verses of *feigned* love." Probably it is but an instance of the indifferent use of the active and passive forms so common in the Poet's time. So we have *discontenting* for *discontented*, and *all-obeying* for *all-obeyed*.

⁶ *Be advised* is old language for *bethink yourself*; that is, *deliberate* or *consider*. Very often so in Shakespeare.

⁷ The language is something odd and obscure; but the meaning appears to be, "It is in his power either to let the form remain as it is, that is, to leave it undefaced, or to destroy it altogether." In the Poet's earlier period, such jingles as *figure* and *disfigure* were too much affected by him.

Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.

Her. So is Lysander.

The. In himself he is ;

But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.

Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.

The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.

Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.

I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts ;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.

The. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires ;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,⁸
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun ;
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,⁹
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless Moon.
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage ;
But earthlier-happy¹⁰ is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.

Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,

⁸ *Blood* was continually put for *passions, impulses, and affections.*

⁹ To *mew* was a term in falconry ; a *mew* being a *cage* or *coop* in which hawks were confined during the season of moulting.

¹⁰ The meaning probably is, "happy in a more earthly and perishable kind of happiness."

Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
 Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd yoke
 My soul consents not to give sovereignty.¹¹

The. Take time to pause ; and, by the next new Moon, —
 The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
 For everlasting bond of fellowship, —
 Upon that day either prepare to die
 For disobedience to your father's will,
 Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would ;
 Or on Diana's altar to protest
 For aye austerity and single life.

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia : — and, Lysander, yield
 Thy crazèd title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius ;
 Let me have Hermia's : do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander ! true, he hath my love,
 And what is mine my love shall render him ;
 And she is mine, and all my right of her
 I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
 As well possess'd ; my love is more than his ;
 My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd —
 If not with vantage — as Demetrius' ;
 And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
 I am beloved of beauteous Hermia :
 Why should not I, then, prosecute my right ?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul ; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
 Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
 Upon this spotted¹² and inconstant man.

¹¹ *Lordship* here means *dominion* or *government* ; and *give* is used with two accusatives, *yoke* and *sovereignty*.

¹² *Spotted* for *wicked* or *false*, the opposite of *spotless*. So in Cavendish's *Metrical Visions* : "*Spotted* with pride, viciousness, and cruelty."

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
 And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
 But, being over-full of self-affairs,
 My mind did lose it. — But, Demetrius, come;
 And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
 I have some private schooling for you both. —
 For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
 To fit your fancies to your father's will;
 Or else the law of Athens yields you up —
 Which by no means we may extenuate —
 To death, or to a vow of single life. —
 Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love? —
 Demetrius, and Egeus, go along:
 I must employ you in some business¹³
 Against our nuptial; and confer with you
 Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt* THES., HIP., EGE., DEM., and *Train.*]

Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
 How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
 Beteem¹⁴ them from the tempest of mine eyes.

Lys. Ah me! for aught that ever I could read,
 Could ever hear by tale or history,
 The course of true love never did run smooth;
 But, either it was different in blood, —

Her. O cross! too high to be enthralld to low!

Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years, —

Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young!

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends, —

¹³ Here, as in many other places, *business* is a trisyllable.

¹⁴ *Beteem* here clearly has the sense of *allow* or *permit*; as in *Hamlet*, i. 2: "So loving to my mother, that he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven visit her face too roughly."

Her. O Hell! to choose love by another's eyes!

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary¹⁵ as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied¹⁶ night,
That, in a spleen,¹⁷ unfolds both heaven and earth,
And, ere a man hath power to say, *Behold!*
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If, then, true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,¹⁸
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's¹⁹ followers.

Lys. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue,²⁰ and she hath no child;

¹⁵ *Momentary* is an old form of *momentary*.

¹⁶ *Smuttèd* or *black*; a word derived from the collieries.

¹⁷ *Spleen* for a *fit of passion* or *violence*, because the spleen was supposed to be the special seat of eruptive or explosive emotions. So in *King John*, ii. 1:

This union shall do more than battery can
To our fast-closèd gates; for, at this match,
With swifter *spleen* than powder can enforce,
The mouth of passage shall we fling wide ope,
And give you entrance.

¹⁸ The old poets very often make two syllables where modern usage allows but one. So, here, *patience* is properly a trisyllable. Various other words ending in *-ence* are sometimes used thus by Shakespeare; as also many words ending in *-ion*, *-ian*, and *-ious*. So it is with *confusion*, third line above.

¹⁹ The Poet often uses *fancy* for *love*. So, afterwards, in this play: "Fair Helena in *fancy* following me." And in the celebrated passage applied to Queen Elizabeth: "In maiden meditation *fancy*-free."

²⁰ This word has occurred once before, but with the accent on the first

And she respects²¹ me as her only son.
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues :
 There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee ;
 And to that place the sharp Athenian law
 Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me, then,
 Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night ;
 And in the wood, a league without the town,
 Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
 To do observance to a morn of May,²²
 There will I stay for thee.

Her.

My good Lysander !

I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow ;
 By his best arrow with the golden head, —
 By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves ;
 By the simplicity of Venus' doves ;
 And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,

syllable: here the accent is on the second syllable, as it ought to be. Shakespeare has it repeatedly in both ways: all the other English poets, I think, used it as in this place; at least so I have marked it in Spenser, Daniel, Dryden, Young, and Thomson. I have not met with the word in Milton's poetry, or in Wordsworth's.

²¹ To *respect* in the sense of to *regard*; the two words being formerly used as equivalent expressions.

²² This refers to the old English custom of observing May-day, as it was called, with a frolic in the fields and woods. Stowe, the chronicler, tells us how our ancestors were wont to go out into "the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kind." The celebration of May-day in this manner was a favourite theme with the old poets from Chaucer downwards. Wordsworth sings it charmingly in his two *Odes to May*; one stanza of which I must add:

Time was, blest Power! when youths and maids
 At peep of dawn would rise
 And wander forth, in forest glades
 Thy birth to solemnize,
 Though mute the song, — to grace the rite
 Untouch'd the hawthorn bough,
 Thy Spirit triumphs o'er the slight;
 Man changes, but not thou.

When the false Trojan under sail was seen ;
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,
 In number more than ever women spoke ; —
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

Her. God speed fair Helena ! whither away ?

Hel. Call you me fair ? that *fair* again unsay.
 Demetrius loves your fair : O happy fair !²³
 Your eyes are lode-stars ;²⁴ and your tongue's sweet air
 More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
 When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
 Sickness is catching : O, were favour²⁵ so,
 Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go ;
 My hair should catch your hair, my eye your eye,
 My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
 Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
 The rest I'd give, to be to you translated.
 O, teach me how you look ; and with what art
 You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart !

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill !

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O, that my prayers could such affection move !

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helen, is no fault of mine.

²³ *Fair* for *fairness* or *beauty* ; a common usage of the time.

²⁴ The *lode-star* is the *leading* or *guiding* star ; that is, the *polar star*. The magnet is for the same reason called the *lode-stone*.

²⁵ *Favour* here has reference to the general aspect, and means about the same as *looks* or *personal appearance*. Repeatedly so.

Hel. None but your beauty's : would that fault were mine !

Her. Take comfort : he no more shall see my face ;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me :
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turned a heaven into a hell !

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold :
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass, —
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal, —
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet ;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.²⁶
Farewell, sweet playfellow : pray thou for us ;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius ! —
Keep word, Lysander : we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. — [*Exit* HERM.]

Helena, adieu :

As you on him, Demetrius dote on you ! [*Exit.*

Hel. How happy some o'er other-some can be !
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that ? Demetrius thinks not so ;
He will not know what all but he do know :
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.

²⁶ *Companies* for *companions*. So in *King Henry V.*, i. 1.: "His *companies* unletter'd, rude, and shallow."

Things base and vile, holding no quantity,²⁷
Love can transpose to form and dignity :
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind ;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind :
Nor hath love's mind of any judgment taste ;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste :
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere :
For, ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,²⁸
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine ;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight :
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her ; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense :²⁹
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again.

[*Exit.*

²⁷ Here *quantity* appears to have the sense of *strength*, *virtue*, or *efficacy*. A like use of the word occurs in *Hamlet*, iii. 4: "Sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd, but it reserved some *quantity* of choice, to serve in such a difference."

²⁸ *Eyne*, for *eye* or *eyes*, was often used by the poets whenever that sound was wanted for the rhyme.

²⁹ The force and fitness of *expense*, here, are partly shown by *pain* in the next line. Staunton aptly notes that, as, to gratify Demetrius with this intelligence, "she makes a most painful sacrifice of her feelings, his thanks, even if obtained, are dearly bought."

SCENE II. — *The Same. A Room in QUINCE'S House.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.¹

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the Duke and the Duchess on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is *The most lamentable Comedy and most cruel Death of Pyramus and Thisbe*.²

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. — Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. — Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. — Nick Bottom the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallantly for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest. — Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.³

¹ *Scrip*, from *scriptum*, is *writing*; the *scroll* mentioned just below.

² Probably a burlesque upon the titles of some of the old dramas.

³ *Ercles* is Bottom's version of *Hercules*. Hercules was one of the ranters and roarers of the old moral-plays; and his Twelve Labours formed a popular subject of entertainment. In Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592, a player tells how he had "terribly thundered" the Twelve Labours of Hercules. In *Histrionastix*, 1610, some soldiers drag in a company of

*The raging rocks
And shivering shocks
Shall break the locks
Of prison-gates ;
And Phibbus' car
Shall shine from far,
And make and mar
The foolish Fates.*

This was lofty !— Now name the rest of the players. — This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover's is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisbe on you.

Flu. What is Thisbe ? a wandering knight ?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman ; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one : you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.⁴

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisbe too : I'll speak in a monstrous little voice ;— *Thisne, Thisne, — Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear ! thy Thisbe dear, and lady dear !*

Quin. No, no ; you must play Pyramus :— and, Flute, you Thisbe.

Bot. Well, proceed.

players ; and the captain says to one of them, " Sirrah, this is you that would rend and *tear a cat* upon the stage." And in *The Roaring Girl*, 1611, one of the persons is called *Tear-cat*. The phrase *to make all split* is met with repeatedly. So in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, ii. 3: " Two roaring boys of Rome, that *made all split*." Also in *The Widow's Tears*, by Chapman, i. 4: " Her wit I must employ upon this business to prepare my next encounter, but in such a fashion as shall *make all split*."

⁴ In *The Merry Wives*, i. 1, Slender says of Anne Page, " She has brown hair, and *speaks small* like a woman." This speech of Peter Quince's shows, what is known from other sources, that the parts of women were used to be played by boys, or, if these could not be had, by men in masks.

Quin. Robin Starveling the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisbe's mother.
— Tom Snout the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father ; myself, Thisbe's father ; — Snug the joiner, you, the lion's part : — and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me ; I will roar, that I will make the Duke say, *Let him roar again, let him roar again.*

Quin. An ⁵ you should do it too terribly, you would fright the Duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek ; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us : but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove ; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus ; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man ; a proper ⁶ man as one shall see in a Summer's day ; a most lovely, gentleman-like man : therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

⁵ *An* is an old colloquial equivalent for *if*. So the Poet uses, indifferently, *an*, or *if*, or both together, *an if*. And so in the common phrase, "without any *ifs* or *ans*."

⁶ *Proper* is *handsome* or *fine-looking*. Commonly so in Shakespeare.

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.⁷

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced.⁸— But, masters, here are your parts : and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night ; and meet me in the palace-wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight : there will we rehearse ; for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties,⁹ such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet ; and there we may rehearse more obscenely and courageously.

Quin. Take pains ; be perfect : adieu. At the Duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough ; hold, or cut bow-strings.¹⁰ [Exeunt.]

⁷ It seems to have been a custom to stain or dye the beard. So Ben Jonson in *The Alchemist* : "He has dyed his beard and all."

⁸ An allusion to the baldness attendant upon a particular stage of what was then termed the *French* disease.

⁹ The *properties* were the furnishings of the stage, and the keeper of them is, I think, still called the *property-man*.

¹⁰ This saying is no doubt rightly explained by Capell : "When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase ; the sense of the person using them being, that he would *hold*, or keep, his promise, or they might '*cut his bowstrings*,' demolish him for an archer."

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *A Wood near Athens.*

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, and PUCK.

Puck. How now, spirit ! whither wander you ?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough brier,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
 I do wander everywhere,
 Swifter than the moony sphere ;¹
 And I serve the Fairy Queen,
 To dew her orbs² upon the green.
 The cowslips tall her pensioners be :³
 In their gold coats spots you see :
 Those be rubies, fairy favours,
 In those freckles live their savours :
 I must go seek some dewdrops here,

¹ Collier informs us that "Coleridge, in his lectures in 1818, was very emphatic in his praise of the beauty of these lines: 'the measure,' he said, 'had been invented and employed by Shakespeare for the sake of its appropriateness to the rapid and airy motion of the Fairy by whom the passage is delivered.'" And in his *Literary Remains*, after analyzing the measure, he speaks of the "delightful effect on the ear," caused by "the sweet transition" from the amphimacers of the first four lines to the trochaic of the next two.

² These *orbs* were the verdant circles which the old superstition here delineated called fairy-rings, supposing them to be made by the night-tripping fairies dancing their merry roundels. As the ground became parched under the feet of the moonlight dancers, Puck's office was to refresh it with sprinklings of dew, thus making it greener than ever.

³ The allusion is to Elizabeth's band of Gentleman *Pensioners*, who were chosen from among the handsomest and tallest young men of family and fortune ; they were dressed in habits richly garnished with *gold lace*.

And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
 Farewell, thou lob of spirits ;⁴ I'll be gone :
 Our Queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The King doth keep his revels here to-night :
 Take heed the Queen come not within his sight ;
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
 Because that she, as her attendant, hath
 A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king ;
 She never had so sweet a changeling :⁵
 And jealous Oberon would have the child

⁴ It would seem that Puck, though he could "put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes," was heavy and sluggish in comparison with the other fairies: he was the *lubber* of the spirit tribe. Shakespeare's "lob of spirits" is the same as Milton's "*lubbar fiend*," in *L'Allegro* :

And he, by friar's lantern led,
 Tells how the drudging goblin swet
 'T'o earn his cream-bowl duly set,
 When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
 His shadowy flail hath thresh'd the corn,
 That ten day-labourers could not end:
 Then lies him down the lubbar fiend,
 And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
 Basks at the fire his hairy strength.

⁵ A *changeling* was a child taken or given in *exchange*; it being a roguish custom of the fairies, if a child of great promise were born, to steal it away, and leave an ugly, or foolish, or ill-conditioned one in its stead. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. 10, 65:

From thence a Faery thee unweeting reft,
 There, as thou slepst in tender swadling band,
 And her base-Elfin brood there for thee left:
 Such, men do *chaungelings* call, so chaung'd by Faeries theft.

How much comfort this old belief sometimes gave to parents, may be seen from Drayton's *Nymphidia* :

And when a child haps to be got,
 Which after proves an idiot,
 When folk perceive it thriveth not,
 The fault therein to smother,
 Some silly, doating, brainless calf,
 That understands things by the half,
 Says that the fairy left this aulf,
 And took away the other.

Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild ;
 But she perforce withholds the lovèd boy,
 Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy :
 And now they never meet in grove or green,
 By fountain clear or spangled starlight sheen,
 But they do square,⁶ that all their elves, for fear,
 Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
 Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
 Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are you not he
 That frights the maidens of the villagery ;
 Skims milk, and sometime labours in the quern,⁷
 And bootless makes the breathless housewife churn ;
 And sometime makes the drink to bear no barm ;⁸
 Misleads night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
 Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
 You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
 Are not you he ?⁹

Puck. Fairy, thou speak'st aright ;
 I am that merry wanderer of the night.
 I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
 When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

⁶ The Poet repeatedly uses to *square* for to *quarrel* ; *squarer* for *quarreller*. This use of the word probably grew from the posture or attitude men take when they stand to a fight.

⁷ *Sometime* and *sometimes* were used indiscriminately.—A *quern* was a *hand-mill* for grinding corn.

⁸ *Barm* is *yeast*. So in Holland's *Pliny* : " Now the froth or *barm*, that riseth from these ales or beers, have a property to keep the skin fair and clear in women's faces."

⁹ This account of Puck was gathered from the popular notions of the time. So in Harsnet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures* : " And if that the bowl of curds and cream were not duly set out for Robin Goodfellow, the friar, and Sisse the dairy-maid, why, then either the pottage was burnt next day in the pot, or the cheeses would not curdle, or the butter would not come, or the ale in the fat never would have good head." Likewise, in Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft* : " Your grandames' maids were wont to

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal :¹⁰
 And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
 In very likeness of a roasted crab ;¹¹
 And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
 And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
 The wisest aunt,¹² telling the saddest tale,
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
 Then slip I from her bum, down topples she,
 And *tailor* cries,¹³ and falls into a cough ;
 And then the whole quire hold their hips and loff,
 And waxen in their mirth,¹⁴ and neeze, and swear
 A merrier hour was never wasted there.
 But room now, fairy ! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone !

Enter, from one side, OBERON, with his Train ; from the other, TITANIA, with hers.

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

set a bowl of milk for him, for his pains in grinding malt and mustard, and sweeping the house at midnight ; — this white bread and milk was his standing fee." And in Drayton's *Nymphidia* :

This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,
 Still walking like a ragged colt,
 And oft out of a bush doth bolt,
 Of purpose to deceive us ;
 And, leading us, makes us to stray
 Long winter nights out of the way,
 And when we stick in mire and clay,
 He doth with laughter leave us.

¹⁰ *Filly-foal* is a female colt, or a young mare. Neighing *like*, or *in the manner of*, a filly foal, is the meaning.

¹¹ It is the apple crab, not the animal crab, that is meant.

¹² *Aunt* and *uncle* were common titles of address to aged people ; as they still are, or were of late, to aged servants in the Southern States.

¹³ Dr. Johnson thought he remembered to have heard this ludicrous exclamation upon a person's seat slipping from under him. He that slips from his chair falls as a *tailor* squats upon his board.

¹⁴ *Waxen* is an old plural form of the verb to *wax*. Of course it means "increase in their mirth."

Tita. What, jealous Oberon? — Fairies, skip hence :
I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton : am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady : but I know
When thou hast stol'n away from Fairy-land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn,¹⁵ and versing love
To amorous Phyllida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India,
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded? and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravishéd?
And make him with fair Æglè break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy :
And never, since the middle Summer's spring,¹⁶
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
Or on the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.

¹⁵ A *pipe of corn* is an ancient musical instrument, made of the straw of wheat, oats, or rye; straws of different size being selected, and cut of different lengths, and then fastened together in a small frame or holder. Such was the shepherd's pipe, though sometimes made of reeds, so much celebrated in classic poetry.

¹⁶ *Spring* is here used in the sense of *beginning*. The Poet has elsewhere "*spring of day*" in the same sense. So in Job xxxviii. 12: "Hast thou caused the day-*spring* to know his place?"

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
 As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
 Contagious fogs ; which falling in the land
 Have every pelting¹⁷ river made so proud,
 That they have overborne their continents :¹⁸
 The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
 The ploughman lost his sweat ; and the green corn
 Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard :
 The fold stands empty in the drownèd field,
 And crows are fatted with the murrain flock ;
 The nine-men's-morris¹⁹ is fill'd up with mud ;
 And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
 For lack of tread, are undistinguishable :
 The human mortals want²⁰ their minstrelsy, —
 No night is now with hymn or carol blest :
 Therefore the Moon, the governess of floods,
 Pale in her anger, washes all the air ;

¹⁷ *Pelting* was often used for *petty* or *paltry*.

¹⁸ *Continent* was formerly used of that which *contains* any thing ; as a river is contained within its banks.

¹⁹ This was a plat of green turf cut into a sort of chess board, for the rustic youth to exercise their skill upon. The game was called nine-men's-morris, because the players had each nine men, which they moved along the lines cut in the ground, until one side had taken or penned up all those on the other. "The quaint mazes in the wanton green" were where the youths and maidens led their happy dances in the open air.

²⁰ To *want* was not unfrequently used in the sense of to *lack*, or to *be without*. — All through this speech the Poet probably had in mind the Summer of 1594, which was much celebrated for the strange misbehaviour of the weather. So in Dr. Forman's *Diary* : "This monethes of June and July were very wet and wonderful cold, like winter, that the 10 dae of Julii many did syt by the fyer, yt was so cold ; and soe was it in Maye and June ; and scarce too fair dais all that tyme, but it rayned every day more or lesse." Also in Churchyard's poem, *Charitie*, published in 1595 :

A colder time in world was never seen :
 The skies do lour, the sun and moon wax dim ;
 Summer scarce known, but that the leaves are green :
 The winter's waste drives water o'er the brim ; &c.

And thorough this distemperature we see
 That rheumatic diseases do abound :
 The seasons alter ; hoary-headed frosts
 Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose ;
 And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
 An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 Is, as in mockery, set : the Spring, the Summer,
 The childing²¹ Autumn, angry Winter, change
 Their wonted liveries ; and the mazèd world,
 By their increase, now knows not which is which.
 And this same progeny of evils comes
 From our debate, from our dissension ;
 We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it, then ; it lies in you :
 Why should Titania cross her Oberon ?
 I do but beg a little changeling boy,
 To be my henchman.²²

Tita. Set your heart at rest :
 The Fairy-land buys not the child of me.
 His mother was a votaress of my order :
 And, in the spicèd Indian air, by night,
 Full often hath she gossip'd by my side ;
 And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
 Marking th' embarkèd traders on the flood ;
 When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
 And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind ;
 Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

²¹ *Childing*, here, is *teeming* or *fruitful*. In the second line below, *their increase* is the *produce* of the several seasons, which is supposed to have become so mixed and confounded, that mankind are *bewildered*, or *in a maze*. This use of *childing* and *increase* is well illustrated in the Poet's 97th Sonnet: "The *teeming* Autumn, big with rich *increase*, bearing the wanton burden of the prime," &c.

²² *Henchman* is an *attendant* or *page* ; probably from the Saxon *hengst*, a *groom*.

Following, — her womb then rich with my young squire, —
 Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
 To fetch me trifles, and return again,
 As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
 But she, being mortal, of that boy did die ;
 And for her sake I do rear up her boy ;
 And for her sake I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay ?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.

If you will patiently dance in our round,
 And see our moonlight revels, go with us ;
 If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy Fairy kingdom. — Fairies, away !
 We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit* TITANIA with her train.

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this grove
 Till I torment thee for this injury. —
 My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
 Since ²³ once I sat upon a promontory,
 And heard a mermaid, ²⁴ on a dolphin's back,
 Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
 That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
 And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
 To hear ²⁵ the sea-maid's music.

Puck.

I remember.

²³ *Since* was sometimes used for *when* ; and such is clearly the sense of it here. So in *2 Henry IV.*, iii. 2 : " Do you remember *since* we lay all night in the windmill in Saint George's fields ? "

²⁴ In Shakespeare's time, *mermaid* appears to have been sometimes used for *siren*.

²⁵ *To hear* is an instance of what is called the gerundial infinitive, and so is equivalent to *at hearing* ; the hearing of the seamaid's music being assigned, not as the *purpose*, but as the *cause* of the stars shooting madly from their spheres. See vol. i., page 207, note 12.

Obe. That very time I saw — but thou couldst not —
 Flying between the cold Moon and the Earth,
 Cupid all arm'd : a certain aim he took
 At a fair vestal thronèd by the West,
 And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
 As it should pierce a hundred-thousand hearts :
 But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
 Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery Moon,
 And the imperial votaress passèd on,
 In maiden meditation, fancy-free.²⁶
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
 It fell upon a little western flower,
 Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.²⁷
 Fetch me that flower ; the herb I show'd thee once :
 The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
 Will make or man or woman madly dote
 Upon the next live creature that it sees.
 Fetch me this herb ; and be thou here again
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'd put a girdle round about the Earth
 In forty minutes.

[*Exit.*

Obe. Having once this juice,
 I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
 And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
 The next thing then she waking looks upon, —
 Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
 On meddling monkey or on busy ape, —
 She shall pursue it with the soul of love :

²⁶ This delectable passage is universally understood as a compliment to Queen Elizabeth.

²⁷ The tri-coloured violet, commonly called pansies, or hearts-ease, is here meant : one or two of its petals are of a purple colour. It has other fanciful and expressive names, such as Cuddle-me-to-you, Three-faces-under-a-hood, Herb-trinity, &c.

And, ere I take this charm off from her sight, —
 As I can take it with another herb, —
 I'll make her render up her page to me.
 But who comes here? I am invisible ;
 And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
 Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
 The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
 Thou told'st me they were stol'n into this wood ;
 And here am I, and wood²⁸ within this wood,
 Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.

Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant ;²⁹
 But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
 Is true as steel : leave you your power to draw,
 And I shall have no power to follow you.

Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
 Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
 Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?

Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
 I am your spaniel ; and, Demetrius,
 The more you beat me, I will fawn on you :
 Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
 Neglect me, lose me ; only give me leave,
 Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
 What worser place can I beg in your love, —
 And yet a place of high respect with me, —

²⁸ *Wood* is an old word for *frantic* or *mad*. See vol. i., page 184, note 3.

²⁹ "There is now a dayes a kind of *adamant* which draweth unto it fleshe, and the same so strongly, that it hath power to knit and tie together two mouthes of contrary persons, and drawe the heart of a man out of his bodie without offending any part of him." — *Certaine Secrete Wonders of Nature*, by Edward Fenton, 1569.

Than to be usèd as you use your dog?

Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit ;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.

Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.

Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not ;
To trust the opportunity of night,
And the ill counsel of a desert place,
With the rich worth of your virginity.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege for that.
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night ;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world :
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild-beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed, —
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase ;
The dove pursues the griffin ; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger, — bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies !

Dem. I will not stay thy question ;³⁰ let me go :
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius !
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex :
We cannot fight for love, as men may do ;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

³⁰ Here, as often, *question* is *talk* or *conversation*.

I'll follow thee, and make a Heaven of Hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well.

[*Exeunt* DEM. and HEL.

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph : ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love. —

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, here it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows ;
Quite over-canopied with lush³¹ woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine ;
And where the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in this bower with dances and delight ;
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove :
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth : anoint his eyes ;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady : thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love :
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*

³¹ *Lush* is *luscious* or *luxuriant*. So in *The Tempest*, ii. 1 : "How lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!"

SCENE II: — *Another Part of the Wood.**Enter* TITANIA, *with her Train.*

Tita. Come, now a roundel¹ and a fairy song ;
 'Then, 'fore the third part of a minute, hence ;
 Some, to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds ;
 Some, war with rere-mice² for their leathern wings,
 To make my small elves coats ; and some, keep back
 The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
 At our quaint³ spirits. Sing me now asleep ;
 Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG.

- 1 Fairy. *You spotted snakes with double tongue,
 Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen ;
 Newts and blind-worms,⁴ do no wrong,
 Come not near our fairy Queen.-*
- Chorus. *Philomel, with melody
 Sing in our sweet lullaby ;
 Lulla, lulla, lullaby ; lulla, lulla, lullaby :
 Never harm, nor spell nor charm,
 Come our lovely lady nigh ;
 So, good night, with lullaby.*
- 2 Fairy. *Weaving spiders, come not here ;
 Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence !
 Beetles black, approach not near ;
 Worm nor snail, do no offence.*
- Chorus. *Philomel, with melody, &c.*

¹ *Roundel* was the name of a dance in which the parties joined hands and formed a ring ; sometimes called a *roundelay*.

² *Rere-mice* is an old name for *bats*.

³ *Quaint* is *ingenious, adroit, cunning*. See vol. i., page 180, note 9.

⁴ The *blind-worm* is what is now called the *slow-worm*. It is, I believe, quite harmless, but did not use to be thought so.

I Fairy. Hence, away ! now all is well :
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt* Fairies. TITANIA *sleeps.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. What thou see'st when thou dost wake,
[*Squeezes the flower on* TITANIA'S *eyelids.*

Do it for thy true-love take ;
Love and languish for his sake :
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
Pard,⁵ or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear :
Wake when some vile thing is near.

[*Exit.*

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood ;
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way :
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be't so, Lysander : find you out a bed ;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.

Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both ;
One heart, one bed, two bosoms, and one troth.

Her. Nay, good Lysander ; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.

Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence !⁶
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit,
So that but one heart we can make of it :
Two bosoms interchainèd with an oath ;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.

⁵ *Pard* is an old name for *leopard*.

⁶ That is, "understand the meaning of my innocence," or "my innocent meaning."

Then by your side no bed-room me deny ;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.

Her. Lysander riddles very prettily :
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say, Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off ; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant ; and, good night, sweet friend :
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end !

Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I ;
And then end life when I end loyalty !
Here is my bed : sleep give thee all his rest !

Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd !

[*They sleep.*]

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence ! who is here ?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear :
This is he my master said
Despisèd the Athenian maid ;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground :
Pretty soul ! she durst not lie
Nearer this lack-love, this kill-courtesy. —
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.⁷

[*Squeezes the flower on* LYSANDER'S *eyelids.*]

⁷ *Owe* is continually used by the old poets for *own* or *possess*.

When thou wakest, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid :
 So awake when I am gone ;
 For I must now to Oberon.

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? ⁸ do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril : I alone will go. [*Exit.*

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase !

The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ;

For she hath blessèd and attractive eyes.

How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears :

If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.

No, no, I am as ugly as a bear ;

For beasts that meet me run away for fear :

Therefore no marvel though Demetrius

Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?

But who is here? Lysander ! on the ground !

Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound. —

Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. [*Starting up.*] And run through fire I will for thy
 sweet sake.

Transparent Helen, Nature shows her art,

That through thy bosom makes me see my heart.

Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword !

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander ; say not so.

⁸ An old phrase, meaning, "wilt thou leave me *in the dark?*" So in *King Lear*, i. 4: "So, out went the candle, and we were left *darkling.*"

What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you : then be content.

Lys. Content with Hermia ! No ; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia, but Helen now I love :
Who will not change a raven for a dove ?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd ;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season :
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason ;
And, touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes ; where I o'erlook
Love-stories, written in Love's richest book.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born ?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn ?
Is't not enough, is't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency ?
Good troth, you do me wrong, — good sooth, you do, —
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well : perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refused,
Should of another therefore be abused ! [*Exit.*

Lys. She sees not Hermia. — Hermia, sleep thou there :
And never mayst thou come Lysander near !
For, as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings ;
Or, as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive ;
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me !

And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen, and to be her knight ! [Exit.

Her. [Awaking.] Help me, Lysander, help me ! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast !

Ah me, for pity ! what a dream was here !

Lysander, look how I do quake with fear :

Methought a serpent eat my heart away,

And you sat smiling at his cruel prey. —

Lysander ! — what, removed ? — Lysander ! lord ! —

What, out of hearing ? gone ? no sound, no word ?

Alack, where are you ? speak, an if you hear ;

Speak, of all loves !⁹ I swoon almost with fear.

No ? then I well perceive you are not nigh :

Either death or you I'll find immediately. [Exit.

ACT III.

SCENE I. — *The Wood.* TITANIA *lying asleep.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Bot. Are we all met ?

Quin. Pat, pat ; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our 'tiring-house ; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the Duke.

Bot. Peter Quince, —

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom ?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of *Pyramus and Thisbe* that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself ; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that ?

⁹ A petty adjuration of the time, equivalent to *by all means*.

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.¹

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not kill'd indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.²

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in — God shield us! — a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, — *Ladies,* — or, *Fair ladies,* — *I would wish you,* — or, *I would request you,* — or, *I would entreat you,* — *not to fear, not to tremble: my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:* — and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.³

¹ *By'r lakin* is a diminutive of *by'r Lady*, which, again, is a contraction of *by our Lady*, an old oath of frequent occurrence in these plays; *Lady* meaning the Virgin Mary. *Parlous* is a corruption of *perilous*.

² In alternate verses of eight and six syllables.

³ Shakespeare may here allude to an incident said to have occurred in

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things, — that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisbe meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the Moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber-window, where we play, open, and the Moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lantern, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moonshine. Then there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisbe, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You can never bring in a wall. — What say you, Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisbe whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin: when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; — and so every one according to his cue.

his time, which is recorded in a collection entitled *Merry Passages and Jestes*: "There was a spectacle presented to Queen Elizabeth upon the water, and among others Harry Goldingham was to represent Arion upon the Dolphin's backe; but finding his voice to be verye hoarse and unpleas-ant when he came to perform it, he tears off his disguise, and swears he was none of Arion, not he, but even honest Harry Goldenham; which blunt discoverie pleased the queen better than if he had gone through in the right way: — yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well."

Enter PUCK behind.

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,

So near the cradle of the fairy Queen?

What, a play toward!⁴ I'll be an auditor;

An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. — Thisbe, stand forth.

Pyr. *Thisbe, the flowers of odious savour sweet,* —

Quin. *Odours, odours.*

Pyr. — *odours savour sweet:*

So doth thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear.

But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,

And by-and-by I will to thee appear.

[*Exit.*

Puck. [*Aside.*] A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.

[*Exit.*

This. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. *Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal,⁵ and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.*

Quin. *Ninus' tomb, man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues⁶ and all. — Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, never tire.*

This. O, — *As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.*

⁴ *Toward*, here, is *at hand, in hand, or forthcoming*. Very often used so by the Poet. Nor is the usage altogether out of date now.

⁵ *Juvenal* is *youth*; so used several times by Shakespeare.

⁶ The *cues* were the last words of the preceding speech, which served as a hint to him who was to speak next.

Re-enter PUCK, and BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

Pyr. *An if I were, fair Thisbe, I were only thine:—*

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted.— Pray, masters! fly, masters!— Help!

[Exit with SNUG, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn.⁷ *[Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afraid.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee!

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? *[Exit* SNOUT.

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. *[Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

*[Sings.] The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,⁸*

⁷ The Protean versatility of Puck is celebrated in whatsoever has come down to us respecting him. Thus in an old tract entitled *Robin Goodfellow, his Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*:

Thou hast the power to change thy shape
To horse, to hog, to dog, to ape.

⁸ In the opinion of some commentators, the Poet or Bottom is a little out here in his ornithology. This opinion has probably arisen from a change in the use of the name since Shakespeare's day; *ousel* being then used to

*The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill; —*

Tita. [*Awaking.*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings.*]

*The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo⁹ gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay; —*

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry *cuckoo* never so?¹⁰

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again :
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note ;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape ;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that : and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days ; — the more the pity that some

denote the *blackbird*. Bottom's *orange-tawny* bill accords with what Yarrel says of the blackbird : " The beak and the edges of the eyelids in the adult male are *gamboge yellow*." The *whistling* of the blackbird is thus noted in Spenser's *Epithalamion* :

The merry Larke hir mattins sings aloft ;
The Thrush replies ; the Mavis descant playes ;
The *Ouzell shrills* ; the Ruddock warbles soft.

⁹ The cuckoo is called *plain-song*, as having no variety of note, but singing in a monotone, after the manner of the ancient simple *chant*.

¹⁰ " Set his wit to a bird " is *contradict, argue with, or match himself against* a bird. In *Troilus and Cressida*, ii. i, Achilles says to Ajax, " Will you set your wit to a Fool's?" and Thersites replies, " No, I warrant you; for a fool's will shame it." — " Though he cry *cuckoo* " refers to the likeness of sound in *cuckoo* and *cuckold*. So in the song at the end of *Love's Labours Lost* : " *Cuckoo, cuckoo, — O word of fear, unpleasing to a married ear!*" See, also, vol. ii., page 47, note II.

honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can glee¹¹ upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither : but if I had wit¹² enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go :
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.

I am a spirit of no common rate, —

The Summer still doth tend upon my state ;

And I do love thee : therefore go with me ;

I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee ;

And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,

And sing, while thou on pressèd flowers dost sleep :

And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,

That thou shalt like an airy spirit go. —

Peas-blossom ! Cobweb ! Moth ! and Mustard-seed !

Enter PEAS-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARD-SEED.

Peas. Ready.

Cob. And I.

Moth. And I.

Mus. And I.

All Four. Where shall we go ?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman, —

Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes ;

Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries ;

The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,¹³

And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,

¹¹ Bottom is chuckling over the wit he has just vented. *Glee* is from the Anglo-Saxon *glig*, and means *catch, entrap, play upon, scoff at*. So says Richardson. *Glee* is from the same original.

¹² This is one instance out of many in these plays, showing that *wit* and *wisdom* were used as equivalents.

¹³ What we call *bumble-bees* ; so called from their loud *humming*.

And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
 To have my love to bed and to arise ;
 And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
 To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes :
 Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal !

Cob. Hail !

Moth. Hail !

Mus. Hail !

Bot. I cry your Worships mercy¹⁴ heartily. — I beseech your Worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance,¹⁵ good Master Cobweb : if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. — Your name, honest gentleman ?

Peas. Peas-blossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash,¹⁶ your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peas-blossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. — Your name, I beseech you, sir ?

Mus. Mustard-seed.

Bot. Good Master Mustard-seed, I know your patience well :¹⁷ that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your House : I promise you your kin-

¹⁴ "I cry you mercy" is an old phrase for "I ask your pardon."

¹⁵ A common form of speech in the Poet's time. So in *The Merchant*, iv. 1: "I humbly do desire your *Grace of pardon*."

¹⁶ *Squash* seems to have been originally used of such immature vegetables as were eaten in the state of immaturity. In Shakespeare's time, the word had got appropriated to an immature peascod. When or how it came to its present meaning I cannot say.

¹⁷ Bottom here seems rather too deep for the editors. Does he mean "your patience" in suffering "that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef" to devour "many a gentleman of your House"? It has been proposed to read "*passing well*"; but this might be a parlous defeature of Bottom's idiom.

dred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Mustard-seed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him ; lead him to my bower. The Moon methinks looks with a watery eye ; And when she weeps, weeps every little flower, Lamenting some enforced chastity. Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *Another Part of the Wood.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awaked ; Then, what it was that next came in her eye, Which she must dote on in extremity. Here comes my messenger. —

Enter PUCK.

How now, mad spirit !
What night-rule¹ now about this haunted grove ?
Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches,² rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,³

¹ *Night-rule* is such rule as is apt to govern in the *night ; revelry.*

² This use of *patch* is said to have grown from the motley or *patch-work* dress worn by the "allowed Fool." At all events, it came to be used generally as a term of contempt for a simpleton or a clown. Shakespeare has it repeatedly in that sense. See vol. i., page 104, note 6.

³ *Sort* here means *pack, or company*; the same as *crew*, a little before. The Poet has several instances of such use; as, "a *sort* of traitors," and "a *sort* of tinkers," and "a *sort* of vagabonds." "Many in a *sort*," a little after, is another instance.

Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
 Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake :
 When I did him at this advantage take,
 An ass's nowl⁴ I fixèd on his head :
 Anon his Thisbe must be answerèd,
 And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
 As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
 Or russet-pated choughs,⁵ many in sort,
 Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
 Sever themselves, and madly sweep the sky ;
 So, at his sight, away his fellows fly ;
 And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls ;
 He *murder* cries, and help from Athens calls.
 Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
 Made senseless things begin to do them wrong ;
 For briars and thorns at their apparel snatch ;
 Some, sleeves, — some, hats ; — from yielders all things
 catch.

I led them on in this distracted⁶ fear,
 And left sweet Pyramus translated there :
 When, in that moment, — so it came to pass, —
 Titania waked, and straightway loved an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
 But hast thou yet latch'd⁷ the Athenian's eyes
 With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do ?

⁴ *Nowl* is an old word for *head*. Perhaps it is but a special application of *knoll*; that use growing from the rounded shape of what we now mean by that word.

⁵ Yarrell, in his *History of British Birds*, says that Shakespeare here "speaks of the russet-pated (grey-headed) Choughs; which term is applicable to the Jackdaw, but not the real Choughs."

⁶ *Distracted* for *distracting*; the passive form with the active tense. See page 9, note 5.

⁷ *Latch'd*, or *letch'd*, is *licked* or *smear'd over*. From the French *lecher*.

Puck. I took him sleeping, — that is finish'd too, —
And the Athenian woman by his side ;
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA and DEMETRIUS.

Obe. Stand close : this is the same Athenian.

Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.

Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so ?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide ; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.

If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in knee-deep,
And kill me too.

The Sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me : would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia ? I'll believe as soon
This whole Earth may be bored ; and that the Moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with th' Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him ;
So should a murderer look, — so dread, so grim.

Dem. So should the murder'd look ; and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty :
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.

Her. What's this to my Lysander ? where is he ?
Ah, good Demètrius, wilt thou give him me ?

Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.

Her. Out, dog ! out, cur ! thou drivest me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then ?
Henceforth be never number'd among men !
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake !
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,

And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!⁸
 Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
 An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
 Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

Dem. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:⁹
 I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
 Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me, then, that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefor?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more.

And from thy hated presence part I so:

See me no more, whether he be dead or no.

[*Exit.*

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
 Here therefore for a while I will remain.
 So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
 For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
 Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
 If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
 And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
 Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
 Some true-love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. 'Then fate o'er-rules; that, one man holding troth,
 A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
 And Helena of Athens look thou find:
 All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer¹⁰

⁸ A *touch* anciently signified a *trick* or *feat*. Ascham has "The shrewd *touches* of many curst boys." And, in the old story of *Howleglas*, "For at all times he did some mad *touch*."

⁹ "On a misprised mood" probably means *in a mistaken manner*. *On* and *in* were sometimes used interchangeably; as also *mood* and *mode* appear to have been. To *misprise* is to *prise amiss*, or to *misapprehend*.

¹⁰ *Cheer* is from the old French *chère*, which Cotgrave thus explains:

With sighs of love, that cost the fresh blood dear :¹¹
 By some illusion see thou bring her here :
 I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Puck. I go, I go ; look how I go, —
 Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow.

[*Exit.*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
 Hit with Cupid's archery,
 Sink in apple of his eye !

[*Squeezes the flower on DEMETRIUS'S eyelids.*

When his love he doth espy,
 Let her shine as gloriously
 As the Venus of the sky. —
 When thou wakest, if she be by,
 Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
 Helena is here at hand ;
 And the youth, mistook by me,
 Pleading for a lover's fee.
 Shall we their fond pageant see ?
 Lord, what fools these mortals be !

Obe. Stand aside : the noise they make
 Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one, —
 That must needs be sport alone ;¹²
 And those things do best please me
 That befall preposterously.

"The face, visage, countenance, favour, looks, aspect." Hence it naturally came to mean that which *affects* the face, or gives it expression. — Here, again, *fancy-sick* is *love-sick*. See page 13, note 19.

¹¹ According to the old notion, that every sigh consumed a drop of blood. So Shakespeare has the phrases, "blood-consuming sighs," "blood-drinking sighs," and blood-sucking sighs."

¹² *Rare* sport ; sport so good as to spoil all other.

Re-enter HELENA and LYSANDER.

Lys. Why should you think that I should¹³ woo in scorn?

Scorn and derision never come in tears :

Look, when I vow, I weep : and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.

How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.

When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray !

These vows are Hermia's : will you give her o'er?

Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh :

Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,

Will even weigh ; and both as light as tales.

Lys. I had no judgment when to her I swore.

Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

Dem. [*Awaking.*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine !

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?

Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show

Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow !

That pure congealèd white, high Taurus' snow,

Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow

When thou hold'st up thy hand : O, let me kiss

This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss !¹⁴

¹³ *Should* where present usage requires *would*. The auxiliaries *could*, *should*, and *would* were often used indiscriminately.

¹⁴ So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 13 : " My playfellow, your hand ; this kingly *seal*, and plighter of high hearts." *Princess* here plainly has the force of the surperlative ; the *paragon*, the *purest* of white. — This pretty piece of extravagance reminds me of Spenser's *Una* :

A lovely ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly ass more white than snow ;
Yet she much whiter.

Hel. O spite ! O Hell ! I see you all are bent
 To set against me for your merriment :
 If you were civil and knew courtesy,
 You would not do me thus much injury.
 Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
 But you must join in souls¹⁵ to mock me too ?
 If you were men, as men you are in show,
 You would not use a gentle lady so ;
 To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
 When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
 You both are rivals, and love Hermia ;
 And now both rivals, to mock Helena :
 A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
 To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
 With your derision ! none of noble sort¹⁶
 Would so offend a virgin, and extort
 A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.

Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius ; be not so ;
 For you love Hermia : this you know I know :
 And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
 In Hermia's love I yield you up my part ;
 And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
 Whom I do love, and will do to my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia ; I will none :
 If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
 My heart with her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
 And now to Helen is it home return'd,
 There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

¹⁵ That is, join *heartily*, or *in earnest* ; be of the same *mind*.

¹⁶ *Sort* here means *rank* or *quality* ; a common use of the word in Shakespeare's time. So in *Henry V.*, iv. 7 : " It may be his enemy is a gentleman of great *sort*."

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby¹⁷ it dear.
Look where thy love comes ; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes ;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense. —
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found ;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so ?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go ?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side ?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide, —
Fair Helena ; who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery O's and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me ? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so ?

Her. You speak not as you think : it cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy !
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me. —
Injurious Hermia ! most ungrateful maid !
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait¹⁸ me with this foul derision ?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,

¹⁷ *Aby* or *abie* means to *suffer for*. Skinner thinks it is formed, not from *abide* but from *buy*; though the two are often confounded. So in *The Faerie Queene*, ii. 8, 33: "That direfull stroke thou dearely shalt *aby*." And in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*: "Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt *aby* this fond reproach; thy body will I bang."

¹⁸ To *bait* is to *worry*, to *bark at*, as bears used to be baited by dogs in the old bear-baiting times. So in *The Faerie Queene*, ii. 8, 42: "A salvage bull, whom two fierce mastives *bayt*."

The sister-vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, — O, and is all forgot?
All school-day friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial¹⁹ gods,
Have with our needls²⁰ created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate.²¹ So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
But yet a union in partition,
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest.²²
And will you rend our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for't,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. I am amazèd at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

¹⁹ *Artificial* is here used for the *worker* in art, not the *work*; like its Latin original *artifex*, artist, or artificer.

²⁰ *Needl* was a common contraction of *needle*.

²¹ Gibbon, in his account of the friendship between the great Cappadocian saints, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, *Decline and Fall*, chap. xxvii., note 29, refers to this passage, and quotes a parallel passage from Gregory's Poem on his own Life. The historian adds, "Shakespeare had never read the poems of Gregory Nazianzen, he was ignorant of the Greek language; but his mother-tongue, the language of Nature, is the same in Cappadocia and in Britain."

²² Douce thus explains this passage: "We had *two of the first*, i.e., *bodies*, like the double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as *one person*, but which, like our *single heart*, have but *one crest*."

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
 To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?
 And made your other love, Demetrius —
 Who even but now did spurn me with his foot —
 To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
 Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
 To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
 Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
 And tender me, forsooth, affection,
 But by your setting on, by your consent?
 What though I be not so in grace as you,
 So hung upon with love, so fortunate;
 But miserable most, to love unloved?
 This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Ay, do, perséver, counterfeit sad looks;
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
 Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
 If you had any pity, grace, or manners,
 You would not make me such an argument.²³
 But, fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault;
 Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
 My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
 Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers. —
 Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
 I swear by that which I will lose for thee,

²³ *Argument*, here, is *subject* or *theme of sport*.

To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. Quick, come !

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this ?

Lys. Away, you Ethiop !

Dem. No, no, sir : — do ;

Seem to break loose, take on as you would follow,

But yet come not : you are a tame man, go !

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr ! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent !

Her. Why are you grown so rude ? what change is this,
Sweet love ?

Lys. Thy love ! out, tawny Tartar, out !
Out, loathèd medicine ! hated potion, hence !

Her. Do you not jest ?

Hel. Yes, sooth ;²⁴ and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you : I'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead ?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate ?
Hate me ! wherefore ? O me ! what means my love ?
Am not I Hermia ? are you not Lysander ?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.

Since night you loved me ; yet since night you left me :
Why, then you left me, — O, the gods forbid ! —
In earnest, shall I say ?

Lys. Ay, by my life ;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt ;

²⁴ *Sooth* is *truth* ; as in *soothsayer*, which originally meant *truth-speaker*.

Be certain, nothing truer ; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

Her. O me ! — you juggler ! you canker-blossom !²⁵
You thief of love ! what, have you come by night
And stol'n my love's heart from him ?

Hel. Fine, i'faith !

Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness ? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue ?
Fie, fie ! you counterfeit, you puppet, you !

Her. Puppet ! why, so ; ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures ; she hath urged her height ;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him. —
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low ?
How low am I, thou painted maypole ? speak ;
How low am I ? I am not yet so low
But that my náils can reach unto thine eyes.

Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me : I was never curst ;²⁶
I have no gift at all in shrewishness ;
I am a right maid for my cowardice :
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she's something lower than myself,
That I can match her.

Her. Lower ! hárk, again.

²⁵ The *canker* is a worm that preys on the leaves or buds of flowers, always beginning in the middle. So before, in this play: "Some to kill *cankers* in the musk-rose buds." — The verse requires *juggler* here to be a trisyllable. It appears that divers similar words were sometimes so pronounced.

²⁶ *Curst* is *shrewish, spiteful, scolding* ; often so used.

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
 I evermore did love you, Hermia,
 Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you ;
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
 He follow'd you ; for love I follow'd him ;
 But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
 To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too :
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back,
 And follow you no further : let me go :
 You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone : who is't that hinders you ?

Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.

Her. What, with Lysander ?

Hel. With Demetrius.

Lys. Be not afraid ; she shall not harm thee, Helen.

Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.

Hel. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd !
 She was a vixen when she went to school ;
 And, though she be but little, she is fierce.

Her. Little again ! nothing but low and little ! —
 Why will you suffer her to flout me thus ?
 Let me come to her.

Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf ;
 You minimus, of hindering knot-grass²⁷ made ;
 You bead, you acorn.

Dem. You are too officious
 In her behalf that scorns your services.

²⁷ *Knot-grass*, it seems, was anciently supposed to stop the growth of those to whom it was applied. So in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, ii. 2: "The child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than *knot-grass*; he would never grow after it."

Let her alone : speak not of Helena ;
 Take not her part ; for, if thou dost intend²⁸
 Never so little show of love to her,
 Thou shalt aby it.²⁹

Lys. Now she holds me not ;
 Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
 Of thine or mine,³⁰ is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow ! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jowl.³¹

[*Exeunt* LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.]

Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long³² of you :
 Nay, go not back.

Hel. I will not trust you, I,
 Nor longer stay in your curst company.
 Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray ;
 My legs are longer though, to run away.

[*Exit.*

Her. I am amazed, and know not what to say.

[*Exit.*

Obe. This is thy negligence : still thou mistakest,
 Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, King of shadows, I mistook.
 Did you not tell me I should know the man
 By the Athenian garments he had on?
 And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
 That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes ;

²⁸ *Intend* with the sense of *pretend* ; the Poet has it repeatedly so. In fact, the two words were used interchangeably, and we often have either in the sense of the other. See vol. ii., page 209, note 4.

²⁹ *Suffer* or *pay dearly* for it ; *rue* it. See page 54, note 17.

³⁰ This is in accordance with old usage. We have another instance in *The Tempest*, ii. 1 : " Which, of *he* or *Adrian*, for a good wager, first begins to crow? "

³¹ That is, *side by side*, or *with cheeks close together*. *Jowl* is, properly, *jaw*, or *jaw-bone*.

³² *Along of* is an old phrase exactly equivalent to *because of* ; so used by all writers in Shakespeare's time, and occasionally used still. — *Coil* is *stir*, *bustle*, *turmoil*. See vol. i., page 105, note 8.

And so far am I glad it so did sort,³³
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight :
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night ;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron ;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime³⁴ frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong ;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius ;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep :
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye ;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his³⁵ might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision ;
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my Queen and beg her Indian boy ;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For Night's swift dragons³⁶ cut the clouds full fast,

³³ *Sort*, here, is *fall out, happen, or come to pass*. 'So in *Much Ado*, v. 4 :
" I am glad that all things *sort* so well." The usage was common.

³⁴ *Sometime* for *sometimes*. See page 24, note 7.

³⁵ *His* for *its*, referring to *liquor* ; *its* not being then an accepted word.
See vol. i., page 90, note 1.

³⁶ The chariot of Madam Night was anciently drawn by a team of drag-

And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ;
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
 Troop home to churchyards : damnèd spirits all,
 That in crossways and floods have burial,³⁷
 Already to their wormy beds are gone ;
 For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
 They wilfully themselves exile from light,
 And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort :
 I with the Morning's love³⁸ have oft made sport ;
 And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
 Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
 Opening on Neptune, with fair-blessèd beams
 Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.
 But, notwithstanding, haste ; make no delay :
 We may effect this business yet ere day.

[*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
 I will lead them up and down :
 I am fear'd in field and town :
 Goblin, lead them up and down.

Here comes one.

ons, that is, serpents, who were thought to be always awake, because they slept with their eyes open ; and therefore were selected for this purpose. So in *Cymbeline*, ii. 2 : " Swift, swift, ye *dragons* of the night." And in Milton's *Il Penseroso* :

Smoothing the rugged brow of night,
 While Cynthia checks her *dragon* yoke.

³⁷ The ghosts of self-murderers, who were buried in crossroads ; and of those who being drowned were condemned (according to the opinion of the ancients) to wander for a hundred years, as the rites of sepulture had never been regularly bestowed on their bodies. See the passage in *Hamlet*, act i., sc. 1 : " I have heard, the cock that is the trumpet to the morn," &c.

³⁸ The allusion is, probably, to Cephalus, who was a mighty hunter. Aurora became enamoured of him, and took him for her *love*. So in *The Phoenix Nest*, 1593 : " Aurora now began to rise againe from watrie couch and from old Tithon's side, in hope to *kisse* upon Acteian plaine yong *Cephalus*."

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

Puck. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

Puck. Follow me, then,

To plainer ground. [*Exit* LYSANDER, *as following the voice.*]

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:

Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?

Speak! in some bush? where dost thou hide thy head?

Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,

Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,

And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;

I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled

That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.

[*Exeunt.*]

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:

When I come where he calls, then he is gone.

The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:

I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;

That fall'n am I in dark uneven way,

And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] — Come, thou gentle
day!

For, if but once thou show me thy gray light,

I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.

[*Sleeps.*]

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho, ho!³⁹ Coward, why comest thou not?

³⁹ A strong dash of malignant, or mischievous sportiveness belongs to this character. There was an old local proverb, "To laugh like Robin

Dem. Abide me, if thou darest ; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now ?

Puck. Come hither : I am here.

Dem. Nay, then thou mock'st me. Thou shalt 'by⁴⁰
this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see :
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. [*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours ! Shine comforts from the East,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest :
And sleep, that sometime shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. Yet but three ? Come one more ;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad :
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe ;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briars ;

Goodfellow" ; which probably meant, to laugh in mockery or scorn. In the old Moral-plays, as also in the older Miracle-plays, the Devil was generally one of the leading characters, and his laughter of fiendish mirth was always expressed as in the text. So in *Gammer Gurton's Needle* : "But, Diccon, Diccon, did not the Devil cry *ho, ho, ho ?*"

⁴⁰ 'By for *aby*, as before explained ; page 60, note 29.

I can no further crawl, no further go ;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray !

[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

Puck. On the ground sleep sound :

I'll apply to your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

[*Squeezing the herb on LYSANDER'S eyelids.*]

When thou wakest, thou takest
True delight in the sight
Of thy former lady's eye :
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown :

Jack shall have Jill ;⁴¹

Nought shall go ill ;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit.*]

⁴¹ This proverb is quoted repeatedly in old plays; and its meaning is much the same as that of the other proverbial sayings here clustered with it. So in *Love's Labours Lost*, v. 2: "Our wooing doth not end like an old play; *Jack hath not Jill.*" And in Heywood, 1598: "Come chat at home, *all is well, Jack shall have Jill.*" See, also, vol. ii., page 203, note 10.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. — *The Wood.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA,
and HERMIA, *lying asleep.*

Enter TITANIA and BOTTOM; PEAS-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH,
MUSTARD-SEED, and other Fairies attending; OBERON be-
hind unseen.

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,¹
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Peas-blossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peas-blossom. — Where's Monsieur
Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Monsieur Cobweb, good monsieur, get your weapons
in your hand, and kill me a red-hipp'd humble-bee on the
top of a thistle; and, good monsieur, bring me the honey-
bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, monsieur;
and, good monsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I
would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, sig-
nior. — Where's Monsieur Mustard-seed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neif,² Monsieur Mustard-seed. Pray
you, leave your courtesy, good monsieur.

Mus. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cob-

¹ To *coy* is to *stroke* with the hand, to *fondle*, or *caress*.

² *Neif* is an old word for *fst*. So in *2 Henry IV.*, ii. 4: "Sweet knight,
I kiss thy *neif*."

web³ to scratch. I must to the barber's, monsieur ; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face ; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love ?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music : let us have the tongs and the bones. [*Rough music.*

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender : I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle⁴ of hay : good hay, sweet hay hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee thence new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me : I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Fairies, be gone, and be awhile away. —

[*Exeunt Fairies.*

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms :

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle

Gently entwist ;⁵ the female ivy so

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

O, how I love thee ! how I dote on thee ! [*They sleep.*

³ Bottom is here in a strange predicament, and has not had time to perfect himself in the nomenclature of his fairy attendants ; and so he gets the names somewhat mixed. Probably he is here addressing Cavalery Peas-blossom, but gives him the wrong name.

⁴ *Bottle* is an old word for *bundle*, from the French *boteau*. Richardson says, " It is still common in the northern parts of England to call a truss or bundle of hay a *bottle*."

⁵ Odd work has sometimes been made with this passage by explaining *woodbine* and *honeysuckle* as meaning the same thing ; and Singer's explanation still proceeds upon an identity of the two plants. In Jonson's *Vision of Delight* we have the following : " Behold, how the blue *bindweed* doth itself infold with *honeysuckle*." Upon this passage Gifford notes as follows : " The woodbine of Shakespeare is the blue bindweed of Jonson : in many of our counties woodbine is still the name for the great convolvulus."

Enter PUCK.

Obe. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou
this sweet sight?

Her dotage now I do begin to pity :
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours ⁶ for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her ;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers ;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child ;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairies sent,
To bear him to my bower in Fairy-land.
And, now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes :
And, gentle Puck, take this transformèd scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain ;
That he, awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy Queen.

Be as th'ou wast wont to be ;

[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*

See as thou wast wont to see :

⁶ So in Greene's *Quip for an Upstart Courtier*, quoted by Dyce : " These with syren-like allurement so entised these quaint squires, that they bestowed all their *flowers* upon them for *favours*."

Dian's bud⁷ o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania ; wake you, my sweet Queen.

Tita. My Oberon ! what visions have I seen !
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass ?
O, how mine eyes do loath his visage now !

Obe. Silence awhile. — Robin, take off this head. —
Titania, music call ; and strike more dead
Than common sleep, of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho ! music, such as charmeth sleep !

Puck. Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes
peep.

Obe. Sound, music ! [*Still music.*] — Come, my Queen,
take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair posterity :
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy King, attend, and mark :
I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my Queen, in silence sad,⁸
Trip we after the night's shade :
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering Moon.

⁷ *Dian's Bud* is the bud of the *Agnus Castus*, or *Chaste Tree*. "The vertue of this hearbe is, that he will kepe man and woman *chaste*." Macer's *Herbal*, by Lynacre. Cupid's flower is the *Viola tricolour*, or *Love-in-Idleness*.

⁸ *Sad* here signifies only *grave*, *serious*. Often so.

Tita. Come, my lord ; and in our flight
 Tell me how it came this night
 That I sleeping here was found
 With these mortals on the ground. [Exeunt.
 [Horns winded within.]

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and Train.

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester ;
 For now our observation⁹ is perform'd ;
 And, since we have the vaward¹⁰ of the day,
 My love shall hear the music of my hounds :
 Uncouple in the western valley ; let them go ;—
 Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. — [Exit an Attend.
 We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top,
 And mark the musical confusion
 Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
 When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the boar
 With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear
 Such gallant chiding ;¹¹ for, besides the groves,
 The skies, the fountains, every region near
 Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard
 So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
 So flew'd, so sanded ;¹² and their heads are hung
 With ears that sweep away the morning dew ;
 Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls ;

⁹ The honours due to the morning of *May*. So in a former scene: "To do *observance* to a morn of *May*."

¹⁰ The early part, the *vanward*, of the day.

¹¹ *Chiding* means here the *cry of hounds*. To *chide* is used sometimes for to *sound*, or *make a noise*, without any reference to scolding. So in *Henry VIII.*: "As doth a rock against the *chiding* flood."

¹² The *flews* are the large chops of a deep-mouthed hound.—*Sanded* means of a *sandy colour*, which is one of the true denotements of a blood-hound.

Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
 Each under each.¹³ A cry more tuneable
 Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
 In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly :
 Judge when you hear. — But, soft ! what nymphs are these ?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep ;
 And this, Lysander ; this Demetrius is ;
 This Helena, old Nedar's Helena :
 I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
 The rite of May ; and, hearing our intent,
 Came here in grace of our solemnity. —
 But speak, Egeus ; is not this the day
 That Hermia should give answer of her choice ?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. —

[*Exit an Attendant. Horns and shout within. LYS.,
 DEM., HEL., and HER., awake and start up.*]

Good morrow, friends. — Saint Valentine is past :
 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ?

Lys. Pardon, my lord. [*He and the rest kneel to THESEUS.*]

The. I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies :
 How comes this gentle concord in the world,
 That hatred is so far from jealousy,
 To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity ?

¹³ "Match'd in mouth like bells" is with their several barking-tones so pitched as to harmonize with each other, like a chime of bells. This is shown by *The Edinburgh Review* for October, 1872. "It was a ruling consideration," says the writer, "in the formation of a pack, that it should possess the musical fulness and strength of a perfect canine quire. And hounds of good voice were selected and arranged in the hunting chorus on the same general principles that govern the formation of a cathedral or any other more articulate choir." And this is fully justified by extracts from a writer contemporary with the Poet ; which, however, are too long for quotation here.

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking : but as yet, I swear,
I cannot truly say how I came here ;
But, as I think, — for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is, —
I came with Hermia hither : our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without¹⁴ the peril of th' Athenian law, —

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord ; you have enough :
I beg the law, the law, upon his head. —
They would have stol'n away ; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent, —
Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood ;
And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power, —
But by some power it is, — my love to Hermia,
Melted as melts the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon ;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia :
But, like¹⁵ in sickness, did I loathe this food ;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now do I wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

¹⁴ *Without* is here equivalent to *beyond*. The Poet has it repeatedly so.

¹⁵ *Like* was sometimes used with the force of the conjunction *as*. The usage still holds in some parts of the United States.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met :
 Of this discourse we more will hear anon. —
 Egeus, I will overbear your will ;
 For in the temple, by-and-by, with us,
 These couples shall eternally be knit :
 And, for¹⁶ the morning now is something worn,
 Our purposed hunting shall be set aside. —
 Away with us to Athens ! three and three,
 We'll hold a feast in great solemnity. —
 Come, my Hippolyta. [*Exeunt THE., HIP., EGE., and train.*]

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
 Like far-off mountains turnèd into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,¹⁷
 When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks :
 And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
 Mine own, and not mine own.¹⁸

Dem. But are you sure
 That we are well awake ? It seems to me
 That yet we sleep, we dream. — Do you not think
 The Duke was here, and bid us follow him !

Her. Yea ; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then we are awake : let's follow him ;
 And, by the way, let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*]

Bot. [*Awaking.*] When my cue comes, call me, and I

¹⁶ Here, as often, *for* is equivalent to *because*, *inasmuch as*, or *since*.

¹⁷ " With *parted eye* " means, apparently, with the *two eyes* acting *separately* or independently, and not together or *as one*.

¹⁸ " As the jewel which one finds is his own and not his own ; his own, unless the loser claims it." Not a very satisfactory explanation, perhaps ; but the best that is forthcoming. How Demetrius has been Helen's own and not her own, and thus like a double man, is plain enough ; but the simile of the jewel is not so clear.

will answer : my next is, *Most fair Pyramus*. — Heigh-ho ! — Peter Quince ! Flute the bellows-mender ! Snout the tinker ! Starveling ! — God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep ! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, — past the wit of man to say what dream it was : man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was — there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had, — but man is but a patch'd fool,¹⁹ if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream : it shall be called *Bottom's Dream*, because it hath no bottom ; and I will sing it in the latter end of our play before the Duke : peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it after death.²⁰ [Exit.

SCENE II. — *Athens. A Room in QUINCE'S House.*

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, and STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.¹

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marr'd : it goes not forward, doth it?

¹⁹ I have several times noted the Poet's frequent use of *patch* for *fool*. In illustration of the matter, Staunton tells of his having seen a Flemish picture of the sixteenth century, " which represents a procession of masquers and mummers, led by a Fool or jester, whose dress is covered with many-coloured coarse patches from head to heel." See page 47, note 2.

²⁰ Of course Bottom means the make-believe death which is to form the catastrophe of " our play."

¹ Starveling's *transported* means the same as Snout's *translated*, used before ; that is, *transformed* or *metamorphosed*.

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.²

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a-day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a-day: an the Duke had not given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hang'd; he would have deserved it: sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom!—O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for, if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the Duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred.³ In any

² To *make a man* is an old phrase for making a man *rich* or *setting him up*; making his *fortune*.

³ *Preferred* is here used in a way somewhat peculiar, meaning, not that

case, let Thisbe have clean linen ; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath ; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words : away ! go ; away !

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Athens. An Apartment in the Palace of THESEUS.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, and Attendants.

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true : I never may believe
 These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
 Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,¹
 Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
 More than cool reason ever comprehends.
 The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
 Are of imagination all compact :²
 One sees more devils than vast Hell can hold,—
 That is the madman : the lover, all as frantic,
 Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt :
 The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

the play is chosen in preference to others, but that it is put forward to a chance of favour ; that is, *recommended*.

¹ To *seethe* is to *boil* ; and the notion of the brains boiling in such cases was very common. So in *The Tempest*, v. 1 : " The brains, now useless, *boil'd* within the skull." And in *The Winter's Tale*, iii. 3 : " Would any but these *boil'd* brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt this weather ? "

² That is, *altogether composed* or *made up* of imagination. Spenser often uses *all* for *altogether* ; and Shakespeare has both *all* and *compact* repeatedly in these senses. See vol. i., page 109, note 22.

Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ;
 And, as imagination bodies forth
 The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
 Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,
 That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
 It comprehends some bringer of that joy ;
 Or in the night, imagining some fear,³
 How easy is a bush supposed a bear !

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
 And all their minds transfigured so together,
 More witnesseth than fancy's images,
 And grows to something of great constancy ;⁴
 But, howsoever, strange and admirable.⁵

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth. —

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends ! joy and fresh days of love
 Accompany your hearts !

Lys. More than to us
 Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed !

The. Come now ; what masques, what dances shall we
 have,

To wear away this long age of three hours
 Between our after-supper and bed-time ?

Where is our usual manager of mirth ?

What revels are in hand ? Is there no play,
 To ease the anguish of a torturing hour ?

³ *Fear* for *danger*, or the *thing feared* ; a frequent usage.

⁴ *Constancy* for *consistency* or *congruity* ; such as makes a story credible.
 One of the Latin senses of the word.

⁵ *Howsoever* in the old sense of *at all events* ; and *admirable* in its proper Latin sense of *wonderful*.

Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement⁶ have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe :
Make choice of which your Highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*]

The. [Reads.] *The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.*

We'll none of that : that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules. —

[Reads.] *The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.*

That is an old device ; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror. —

[Reads.] *The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.*

That is some satire, keen and critical,⁷
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony. —

[Reads.] *A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe ; very tragical mirth.*

Merry and tragical ! tedious and brief !
That is, hot ice and wondrous swarthy snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil. A play it is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play ;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,

⁶ *Abridgment* probably means something that *abridges*, or *shortens*, the time ; a *pastime*. Or it may mean a dramatic performance, that crowds the events of a long period into a brief space of time.

⁷ *Critical* was sometimes used in the sense of *cynical* or *censorious*. So in Iago's well-known saying, *Othello*, ii. 1: "For I am nothing, if not *critical*."

Which makes it tedious ; for in all the play
 There is not one word apt, one player fitted :
 And tragical, my noble lord, it is ;
 For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
 Made mine eyes water ; but more merry tears
 The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it ?

Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
 Which never labour'd in their minds till now ;
 And now have toil'd their unbreathed⁸ memories
 With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord ;
 It is not for you : I have heard it over,
 And it is nothing, nothing in the world,
 (Unless you can find sport in their intents,)
 Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
 To do you service.

The. I will hear that play ;
 For never any thing can be amiss,
 When simpleness and duty tender it.
 Go, bring them in : — and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit PHILOSTRATE.*]

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged,
 And duty in his service perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
 Our sport shall be to take what they mistake :
 And what poor willing duty cannot do,

⁸ *Unbreathed* is *unpractised* or *unexercised*. The Poet has to *breathe* repeatedly in the opposite sense. So in *Timon of Athens*, i. i. : "A man *breathed*, as it were, to an untirable and continue goodness."

Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.⁹
 Where I have come, great clerks have purposéd
 To greet me with premeditated welcomes ;
 When I have seen them shiver and look pale,
 Make periods in the midst of sentences,
 Throttle their practised accent in their fears,
 And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
 Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
 Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome ;
 And in the modesty of fearful duty
 I read as much as from the rattling tongue
 Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
 Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,
 In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phil. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.¹⁰

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of Trumpets.*]

Enter the Prologue.

Pro. *If we offend, it is with our good-will.
 That you should think, we come not to offend,
 But with good-will. To show our simple skill,
 That is the true beginning of our end.
 Consider, then, we come but in despite.
 We do not come as minding to content you,
 Our true intent is. All for your delight,
 We are not here. That you should here repent you,
 The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,*

⁹ According to the ability of the doer, not according to the worth of the thing done. Here, as often, *respect* is *consideration* or *regard*. — *Clerks*, in the next line, is *learned men*, or *scholars*; the old meaning of the word.

¹⁰ *Address'd* is *ready, prepared*; a common use of the word. So in *Love's Labours Lost*, ii. 1: "And he and his competitors in oath were all *address'd* to meet you, gentle lady, before I came."

*You shall know all that you are like to know.*¹¹ [Exit.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath play'd on his prologue like a child on a recorder; ¹² a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter the Presenter, with PYRAMUS and THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, and LION, as in dumb-show.

Pres. *Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.*

This man is Pyramus, if you would know;

This beauteous lady, Thisbe is certain.

This man, with loam and rough-cast, doth present

Wall, that vile wall which did these lovers sunder;

And through wall's chink, poor souls, they are content

To whisper; at the which let no man wonder.

This man, with lantern, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,

¹¹ Had "this fellow" stood "upon points," his speech would have read nearly as follows:

If we offend, it is with our good-will
That you should think we come not to offend;
But with good-will to show our simple skill:
That is the true beginning. Of our end
Consider then: we come; but in despite
We do not come: as minding to content you,
Our true intent is all for your delight.
We are not here, that you should here repent you.
The actors are at hand; and, by their show,
You shall know all that you are like to know.

¹² *Recorder* was the name of a soft-toned instrument, something like the flute. So in *Paradise Lost*, i. 550: "Anon they move in perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood of flutes and soft *recorders*."

*By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
 To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
 This grisly beast, which Lion hight¹³ by name,
 The trusty Thisbe, coming first by night,
 Did scare away, or rather did affright;
 And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
 Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
 Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
 And finds his trusty Thisbe's mantle slain:
 Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
 He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;
 And Thisbe, tarrying in mulberry shade,
 His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
 Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
 At large discourse, while here they do remain.*

[*Exeunt* Presenter, PYRAMUS, THISBE,
 LION, and MOONSHINE.]

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. *In this same interlude it doth befall
 That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
 And such a wall, as I would have you think,
 That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
 Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisbe,
 Did whisper often very secretly.*

*This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
 That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
 And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
 Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.*

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

¹³ *Hight* is an old word for *is called*. So in *Love's Labours Lost*, i. 1: "This child of fancy, that Armado *hight*, for interim to our studies, shall relate," &c.

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse,¹⁴ my lord.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall : silence !

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. *O grim-look'd night ! O night with hue so black !
O night, which ever art when day is not !
O night, O night ! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisbe's promise is forgot ! —
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine !
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne !*

[WALL holds up his fingers.

*Thanks, courteous wall : Jove shield thee well for this !
But what see I ? No Thisbe do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss !
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me !*

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. *Deceiving me* is Thisbe's cue : she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE.

This. *O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me !
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.*

Pyr. *I see a voice : now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisbe's face. —
Thisbe !*

¹⁴ An equivoque or pun was no doubt intended here ; one sense of *partition* being that of *dividing* a theme of discourse into heads or topics. See Critical Notes.

This. *My love ! thou art my love, I think.*

Pyr. *Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's Grace ;
And, like Limander,¹⁵ am I trusty still.*

This. *And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.*

Pyr. *Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.*

This. *As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.*

Pyr. *O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall !*

This. *I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.*

Pyr. *Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway ?*

This. *'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.*

[EXEUNT PYRAMUS and THISBE.]

Wall. *Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so ;*

And, being done, thus wall away doth go. [Exit.]

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.¹⁶

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows ; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.

Enter LION and MOONSHINE.

Lion. *You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,*

¹⁵ *Limander* and *Helen*, blunderingly, for *Leander* and *Hero* ; as, a little after, *Shafalus* and *Procrus* for *Cephalus* and *Procris*. *Procris*, or *Procne* was the wife of *Cephalus* ; and when *Aurora* fell in love with him, and tried to win his heart, he stuck to his *Procne*. See page 62, note 38.

¹⁶ Alluding to the old proverb, "Walls have ears" ; which probably grew from the aptness of walls or partitions to transmit sound.

*When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I one Snug the joiner am,
No lion fell, nor else no lion's dam ;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.*

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True ; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord ; for his valour cannot carry his discretion ; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour ; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well : leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the Moon.

Moon. *This lantern doth the hornèd Moon present ; —*

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is not crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. *This lantern doth the hornèd Moon present ;*

Myself the Man-i'-the-Moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest : the man should be put into the lantern. How is it else the Man-i'-the-Moon ?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle ; for, you see, it is already in snuff.¹⁷

Hip. I am a-weary of this Moon : would he would change !

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane ; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lantern

¹⁷ A quibble between *snuff* as meaning the cinder of a candle and as meaning sudden anger. Shakespeare has it repeatedly.

is the Moon ; I, the Man-in-the-Moon ; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush ; and this dog, my dog.¹⁸

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lantern ; for all these are in the Moon. But, silence ! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE.

This. *This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love ?*

Lion. [Roaring.] *O——* [THISBE runs off.

Dem. Well roar'd, lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. — Truly, the Moon shines with a good grace. [*Lion tears THISBE's mantle, and exit.*

The. Well moused,¹⁹ lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. *Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams ;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright ;*

¹⁸ The legend of the Man-in-the-Moon is very ancient, and is often alluded to by the old Poets. Perhaps it took its origin from the rude and faint resemblance to a man's face which the full Moon presents. At all events, the notion was common in the days of my boyhood : the man was talked of by everybody, and I often saw him. And it appears that he was sometimes introduced upon the English stage. Ben Jonson, in his masque entitled "News from the New World discovered in the Moon," 1620, makes some of the persons tell how Poetry, "the mistress of all discovery," has sent one of her servants to the Moon "in search of truth," and he has just returned ; whereupon we have the following :

. *Fact.* Where ? which is he ? I must see his dog at his girdle, and the bush of thorns at his back, ere I believe it.

1 *Herald.* Do not trouble your faith then ; for, if the bush of thorns should prove a goodly grove of oaks, in what case were you and your expectation ?

2 *Herald.* These are stale ensigns of the *stage's Man in the Moon*, delivered down to you by musty antiquity, and are of as doubtful credit as the makers.

¹⁹ To *mouse* is to *tear in pieces*, as a cat tears a mouse. So in *King John*, ii. 1 :

O, now doth Death line his dead chops with steel ;
The swords of soldiers are his teeth, his fangs ;
And now he feasts, *mousing* the flesh of men.

*For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to taste of truest Thisbe's sight.*

*But stay, — O spite! — but mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see? how can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good, what, stain'd with blood?
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come, cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!*

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart but I pity the man.

Pyr. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
*Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is — no, no — which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.*

*Come, tears, confound; out, sword and wound
The pap of Pyramus, —
Ay, that left pap, where heart doth hop:
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus. [Stabs himself.
Now am I dead, now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light! Moon, take thy flight!*
[Exit MOONSHINE.

Now die, die, die, die, die.

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes ; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus : I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better ; he for a man, God warrant us, — she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she moans, *videlicet* :

This. *Asleep, my love ? what, dead, my dove ?*

O Pyramus, arise !

*Speak, speak. Quite dumb ? Dead, dead ? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.*

These lily lips, this cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Are gone, are gone : lovers, make moan :

His eyes were green as leeks.

O Sisters Three, come, come to me,

With hands as pale as milk ;

Lay them in gore, since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word : come, trusty sword ;

Come, blade, my breast imbrue : [Stabs herself.

And, farewell, friends, — thus Thisbe ends, —

Adieu, adieu, adieu.

[Dies.

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. No, I assure you ; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance²⁰ between two of our company ?

²⁰ A rustic dance framed in imitation of the people of *Bergamasco*, (a province in the state of Venice,) who are ridiculed as being more clownish

The. No epilogue, I pray you ; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse ; for, when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had play'd Pyramus and hang'd himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy : and so it is, truly ; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask : let your epilogue alone. —

[*A dance by two of the Clowns.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve : —

Lovers, to bed ; 'tis almost fairy-time.

I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn,

As much as we this night have overwatch'd.

This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled

The heavy gait of night. — Sweet friends, to bed. —

A fortnight hold we this solemnity

In nightly revels and new jollity.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK, with a broom.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,²¹
 And the wolf behowls the Moon ;
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
 All with weary task fordone.
 Now the wasted brands do glow,
 Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
 Puts the wretch that lies in woe
 In remembrance of a shroud.
 Now it is the time of night,

in their manners and dialect than any other people of Italy. The *lingua rustica* of the buffoons, in the old Italian comedies, is an imitation of their jargon.

²¹ Upon this passage Coleridge thus remarks in his *Literary Remains* : "Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity ! So far it is Greek ; — but then add, what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation, of English fancy ! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond."

That the graves, all gaping wide,
 Every one lets forth his sprite,
 In the church-way paths to glide :
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecate's team
 From the presence of the Sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolic : not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house :
 I am sent, with broom, before,
 To sweep the dust behind the door.²²

Enter OBERON and TITANIA, with their Train.

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
 By²³ the dead and drowsy fire ;
 Every elf and fairy sprite
 Hop as light as bird from brier ;
 And this ditty, after me,
 Sing, and dance it trippingly.

²² That is, " To sweep the dust *from* behind the door." Collier informs us that on the title-page of the tract, *Robin Goodfellow, his Mad Pranks and Merry Jests*, Puck is represented in a wood-cut with a broom over his shoulder. The whole fairy nation, for which he served as prime minister, were great sticklers for cleanliness. In the old ballad entitled *The Merry Pranks of Robin Goodfellow*, and generally ascribed to Ben Jonson, we have the following :

When house or hearth doth sluttish lie,
 I pinch the maidens black and blue ;
 The bed-clothes from the bed pull I,
 And lay them naked all to view :
 'Twixt sleep and wake I do them take,
 And on the key-cold floor them throw :
 If out they cry, then forth I fly,
 And loudly laugh out, ho, ho, ho!

²³ *By* seems here to have the force of *by means of*,—no uncommon use of the word.—Milton was probably thinking of this passage in his *Il Penseroso* :

Where glowing embers through the room
 Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note :
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.

SONG, AND DANCE.

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessèd be ;²⁴
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be ;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand ;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious,²⁵ such as are
Despisèd in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait ;²⁶
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace :
And the owner of it, blest,
Ever shall in safety rest.

²⁴ This ceremony was in old times used at all marriages. Douce has given the formula from the Manual for the use of Salisbury. In the French romance of Melusine, the Bishop who marries her to Raymondin blesses the nuptial bed. The ceremony is there represented in a very ancient cut. The good prelate is sprinkling the parties with holy water. Sometimes, during the benediction, the married couple only *sat* on the bed ; but they generally received a portion of the consecrated bread and wine.

²⁵ *Prodigious* in the Latin sense of *unnatural*, *portentous*, or *ill-fated*.

²⁶ That is, take his *way*, *pursue* his course.

Trip away ; make no stay :
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt* OBERON, TITANIA, and *Train*.

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended, —
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend :
If you pardon, we will mend.
And, as I'm an honest Puck,²⁷
If we have unearnèd luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,²⁸
We will make amends ere long ;
Else the Puck a liar call :
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands,²⁹ if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends.

[*Exit*.

²⁷ *Puck*, it seems, was a suspicious name, which makes that this merry, mischievous gentleman does well to assert his honesty. As for the name itself, it was no better than *fend* or *devil*. In *Pierce Ploughman's Vision*, one personage is called *helle Pouke*. And the name thus occurs in Spenser's *Epithalamion* :

Ne let the *pouke*, nor other evill sprights,
Ne let mischievous witches with theyr charmes,
Ne let hobgoblins, names whose sence we see not,
Fray us with things that be not.

²⁸ Honest Puck, it seems, has a mortal dread of being *hissed*.

²⁹ Clap your hands, give us your applause.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 8. *And then the moon, like to a silver bow*

New-bent in heaven.—Instead of *New-bent*, the old copies have *Now-bent*, which is inconsistent with what has been said a little before, — “How slow this *old moon wanes!*” Corrected by Rowe.

P. 9. *This man hath witch'd the bosom of my child.*—The quartos and first folio have “This man hath *bewitch'd.*” The second folio rectifies the metre by omitting *man*. Theobald reads as in the text.

P. 12. *O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!*—The old copies have *love* instead of *low*. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 13. *I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child;
And she respects me as her only son.*

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues: &c.—The old text has the last two of these lines transposed. This manifestly upsets the proper order and sequence of the thoughts. The correction is Keightley's. Such transpositions are uncommonly frequent in this play.

P. 14. *By his best arrow with the golden head,—
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves;
By the simplicity of Venus' doves.*—The third of these lines

stands the second in the old copies. I concur with Singer in making the transposition; because, as he aptly notes, the passage clearly alludes to “the golden arrow of Cupid, that *knitted* souls, as opposed to the leaden one that makes loves unprosperous. The Poet doubtless had in mind Ovid, *Metam.*, i. 468–471:

Eque sagittiferâ prompsit duo tela pharetrâ
Diversorum operum: fugat hoc, facit illud amorem:
Quod facit, auratum est et cuspidè fulget acutâ;
Quod fugat, obtusum est et habet sub arundine plumbum.

- P. 15. *Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My hair should catch your hair, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,*

The rest I'd give, to be to you translated.—In the second of these lines, the old copies have *your words* instead of *yours would*. Corrected by Hanmer. In the last line, the old text reads “The rest *He* give.” Corrected by Lettson, who remarks how apt the old contractions *I'll* and *I'de* were to be confounded. Again, in the third line, the old copies read “My *ear* should catch your *voice*.” A strange reading indeed for the place. The reading in the text was proposed by Lettson. The reasons for it need not be better given than in his own words: “As the passage stands at present, Helena wishes her *ear* may resemble the *voice* of Hermia! I conceive that, in the first place, *heare*—*heare* [a common old spelling of *hair*] was transformed into *eare*—*eare* by a blundering transcriber. The verse was then operated upon by a sophisticator, who regarded nothing but the line before him, and was not aware of the true meaning of *my eye your eye*, but took *catch* in the ordinary sense, not in the peculiar sense of contracting disease, which it bears throughout the passage.”

- P. 16. Her. *His folly, Helen, is no fault of mine.*

Hel. *None but your beauty's: would that fault were mine!*
—In the first of these lines, the old text has *Helena* instead of *Helen*, and, in the second, *beauty* instead of *beauty's*. The latter correction is Mr. P. A. Daniel's.

- P. 16. *And thence from Athens turn away your eyes,*

To seek new friends and stranger companies.—So Theobald. The old copies have *strange companions* instead of *stranger companies*. The need of a rhyme for *eyes* pointed out and justifies the change. Also, in the third line before, the old text has “their counsell *sweld*”; which Theobald happily corrected to “their counsel *sweet*.”

ACT I., SCENE 2.

P. 18. *To the rest.*—*Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant.*—Staunton prints “To the rest yet, my chief humour,” &c., and explains *yet* by *now*. Dyce has it the same. I cannot understand why.

P. 19. *This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover's is more condoling.*—The old text has *lover* instead of *lover's*. Corrected by Mr. P. A. Daniel.

P. 21. Quin. *Take pains; be perfect: adieu.*—So Collier's second folio. The old text makes the words here quoted a part of Bottom's preceding speech.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 22. *I do wander everywhere*

Swifter than the moony sphere.—The old copies have "the moons sphere." This has been changed to "the moones sphere" by several editors. As White remarks, "moony sphere" was a recognized poetical phrase in Shakespeare's time. And Steevens pointed out a passage in Sidney's *Arcadia* as supporting the reading in the text: "What mov'd me to invite your presence, sister dear, first to my *moony* sphere." Whether *moonies* or *moony* be the right word, I think it is plain that the Poet would not have allowed a breach in the metre here.

P. 24. *That frights the maidens of the villagery;*

Skims milk, and sometime labours in the quern,

And bootless makes the, &c.—Here the old copies have *frights*, as correct grammar requires, and then drop the corresponding forms in the following verbs, printing *Skim, labour, make, &c.* Surely they ought all to run in the same number.

P. 24. *Fairy, thou speak'st aright.* So Collier's second folio. The old copies lack *Fairy*. Other attempts have been made, to complete the verse, but this is the best.

P. 25. *But room now, fairy! here comes Oberon.*—So Dyce. The old copies have "But roome Fairy." The more common reading is "But *make* room, fairy."

P. 26. *What, jealous Oberon!*—Fairies, *skip hence.*—The old text has "*Fairy, skip hence*"; which supposes that Titania is here speaking to Oberon; whereas the words are evidently addressed to her train of fairies. Corrected by Theobald.

P. 27. *The human mortals want their minstrelsy, —*

No night is now with hymn or carol blest. — The old editions read “want their *winter heere.*” This cannot possibly be right: it gives a sense all out of harmony with the context, and is further convicted of error by the strained explanations resorted to in its defence. Theobald at one time conjectured “want their winter *cheer*”; but he afterwards withdrew the conjecture: nevertheless it has been adopted by several editors. Keightley proposes “want their *Summer* here”; but I cannot see that this really helps the matter. I think the next line naturally points out *minstrelsy* as the right correction.

P. 27. *Therefore the Moon, the governess of floods,*

Pale in her anger, washes all the air ;

And thorough this distemperature we see

That rheumatic diseases do abound. — The old text has the last two of these lines transposed; which quite untunes the logic of the passage. The correction is Johnson's.

P. 28. *And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown.* — The old copies have *chin* instead of *thin*. The correction is Tyrwhitt's, and is very happy. Dyce ridicules the old reading: “In most of the modern editions Hiems figures with a chaplet of summer buds *on his chin.*”

P. 30. *I'd put a girdle round about the Earth*

In forty minutes. — So Collier's second folio and Lettsom. The old copies have *Ile* instead of *I'd*. See note on “The rest I'd give,” page 94.

P. 31. *The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.* — In the old copies, “The one *Ile* *stay*, the other *stayeth* me. The reading in the text is Thirlby's.

P. 31. *But yet you draw not iron, for my heart*

Is true as steel. — Lettsom suspects we ought to read *though* instead of *for*, and I suspect he is right, as he is apt to be. As *though* was often written *tho*, it might easily get misprinted *for*.

P. 32. *I will not stay thy question; let me go.* — In the old text, *questions* instead of *question*. Steevens conjectured the latter; Walker also. See foot-note 30.

P. 33. Puck. *Ay, here it is.*

Obe. *I pray thee give it me.*—The old copies read “*Ay, there it is*”; which, as Lettsom remarks, is inconsistent” with Oberon’s “*give it me.*”

P. 33. *I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,*

Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;

Quite over canopied with lush woodbine.—Instead of *whereon* and *lush*, the old copies have *where* and *lushious*. It does not seem to me possible that Shakespeare could have tolerated such haltings in the verse here. Elsewhere he uses *lush* with the same sense. The correction was made by Theobald, and is also found in Collier’s second folio.

P. 33. *And where the snake throws her enamell’d skin,*

Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in :

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night

Lull’d in this bower with dances and delight.—The order of these two couplets is reversed in the old copies, which breaks the continuity of the thought, making two transitions to Titania where both logic and grammar require there should be but one. Moreover, with the old order it would naturally seem that Oberon was to streak the snake’s eyes instead of Titania’s. The originals also read “*And there the snake,*” &c. In the fourth line, the old copies read “*Lull’d in these flowers.*” Instead of *flowers*, Collier’s second folio has *bowers*, which White adopts. I do not well see why the plural of that word should be used there. Lettsom proposed *this bower*, with the remark, “Probably *bower* was in the first instance miswritten *flower*; then succeeded the sophistication *these flowers*, an awkward attempt to procure sense.” The reading *this bower* is further approved in iii. 1, at the close, where Titania, after she has got smitten with Bottom, tells the attendant fairies to “lead him to *my bower.*”

ACT II., SCENE 2.

P. 34. *Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;*

Then, ’fore the third part of a minute, hence.—So Theobald. Instead of *’fore*, the old copies have *for*, which, as it must mean *during*, does not at all accord with the business on which Titania orders the fairies to depart. Heath proposes to substitute *in*, and then

explains, "That is, after your song and dance ended, vanish in the third part of a minute, and leave me to my rest." But *'fore* gives a sense quite as fitting, and infers an easier misprint; else I should prefer *ere*.

P. 36. *Pretty soul! she durst not lie*

Nearer *this lack-love, this kill-courtesy*. — The old copies have "*Neere* this lack-love," which Pope changed to "*Near to* this lack-love." The correction in the text is Walker's.

P. 37. *Transparent Helen! Nature shows her art,*

That through thy bosom makes me see my heart. — The old text has "*Transparent Helena*"; upon which Walker notes, "Read *Helen*, as in half-a-dozen other passages of this play." — Again, in "*shows her art*," the quartos omit *her* altogether; the first folio has "*her shewes art*"; the second, "*here shewes art*." Corrected by Malone. — In the second line also, the old copies have "*see thy heart*." Here, again, Walker says, "Read '*my heart*.' The old poetical commonplace; e. g., *As You like It*, v. 4:

That thou mightst join her hand with his
Whose heart within her bosom is."

P. 38. *And leads me to your eyes; where I o'erlook*

Love-stories, *written in Love's richest book*. — So Walker. The old copies, "*Loves stories*."

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 39. *There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisbe that will never please*. — Walker thinks we ought to read "There are *three* things," &c. Probably.

P. 41. *Let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus*. — The old copies have "*or let him hold*." Probably, as Dyce notes, "a mistake occasioned by *or* occurring twice just before." Corrected from Collier's second folio.

P. 42. *Thisbe, the flowers of odious savour sweet;*

So doth thy breath, my dearest Thisbe dear. — Instead of *savour*, the old copies have *savours*, which is evidently used as a verb,

and which is not in the style of the blunders that mark the interlude. The same is to be said of the second line, where the old text reads "So *hath* thy breath," which Pope corrected to "So *doth* thy breath."

P. 43. *An if I were, fair Thisbe, I were only thine.*—In the old copies, *An* is wanting at the beginning of this line, and what follows is printed "were fair, Thisbe." This quite upsets the metre of the line, whereas the verse is remarkably regular throughout the interlude. The printing, "If I were fair, Thisbe," is commonly retained upon the supposal of its being meant as a blunder of Bottom's. But such a blunder, it seems to me, were rather too fine-drawn to be appreciated on the stage. Perhaps we ought to read "If I were *true*, fair Thisbe," &c.; which is the meaning either way, as the words are spoken in reply to Thisbe's "As true as truest horse," &c.

P. 47. *Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.*—The old copies have "my *lovers* tongue"; which both untunes the metre and gives a wrong sense, as Bottom is plainly Titania's *love*, and not *her* lover. Corrected by Pope.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 49. *Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in knee-deep.*—The old text is "plunge in *the* deep." Coleridge proposed *knee-deep*, and Walker approves the happy correction.

P. 49. *So should a murderer look, — so dread, so grim.*—So Pope. The old copies have *dead* instead of *dread*. What sense *dead* should have there, I fail to perceive. Johnson found *dread* written in the margin of his copy.

P. 50. *And from thy hated presence part I so:*
See me no more, whether he be dead or no.—So Pope. The old editions omit *so*.

P. 52. *This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!*—Instead of *princess*, Hanmer reads *pureness*, and Collier's second folio has *impress*. Lettsom proposes *purest*, which is exceedingly apt. See, however, foot-note 14.

P. 53. *My heart with her but as guest-wise sojourn'd.*—The old editions have *to* instead of *with*. Johnson's correction.

P. 54. *Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.*

Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.—This repetition of *dear* for a rhyme looks hardly right. Walker suggests "aby it *ere*."

P. 55. *Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sister-vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us, — O, and is all forgot?
All school-day friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower.*—

Instead of *sister-vows*, the old text has *sister's vows*; also, *schooledaies* instead of *school-day*, and *needles* instead of *neelds*. Dyce says "there can be little doubt that Shakespeare wrote *neelds*,—which was a very common contraction of *needles*." Of course the change is made for metre's sake.—In the fourth line, also, the earlier old copies read "O, is all forgot?" omitting *and*, which was supplied in the second folio. Spedding proposes "O, is *it* all forgot?" I should prefer "O, is all *this* forgot?" The other two corrections are Capell's.

P. 55. *Two lovely berries moulded on one stem.*—Collier's second folio changes *lovely* to *loving*. Dyce rejects the change, on the ground that *lovely* was "sometimes used as equivalent to *loving*." And he quotes from *The Taming of the Shrew*, iii. 2, "And seal the title with a *lovely* kiss"; also from Peele's *Arraignment of Paris*, "And I will give thee many a *lovely* kiss." Which seems, indeed, to make good his point: but is it certain that in the text *lovely* is to be taken in the active sense of *loving*?

P. 56. *If you had any pity, grace, or manners,*

You would not make me such an argument.—So Collier's second folio; the old copies, "If you *have* any pity," &c.

P. 56. *Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.*—So Theobald. The old text reads "her weak *praise*." Hardly worth noting, perhaps.

P. 57. *No, no, sir:—do;*

Seem to break loose, take on as you would follow,

But yet come not.—A troublesome passage as it stands in the old copies. I give the folio reading, except that I supply the word *do*, which seems necessary to the sense. Dyce, at the suggestion of Lettson, supplies *you* instead of *do*; thus: “No, no, sir; *you* seem to break loose.” Demetrius is taunting Lysander, as if the latter were making believe that he wants to break loose from Hermia, who is clinging to him, and go apart with Demetrius, and fight it out. This sense, it seems to me, is much better preserved by *do* than by *you*. We have a like use of *do* a little before: “Ay, *do*, persèver, counterfeit sad looks.” Also in *King Lear*, i. 1: “*Do*; kill thy physician, and the fee bestow upon the foul disease.”

P. 57. *Out, loathèd medicine! hated potion, hence!*—The first quarto has “*O hated potion,*” the others, “*O hated poison.*”

P. 57. *Hate me! whereföre? O me! what means my love?*—So Collier’s second folio. The old copies read “what *newes* my love?” I cannot find any sense in *newes* here.

P. 63. *Ho, ho, ho, ho! coward, why comest thou not?*—So Capeli. The fourth *ho*, needful to complete the verse, is not in the old copies.

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 66. *Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch.*—So the old copies. Gray says, “Without doubt, it should be *Cavalero Peas-blossom*: as for *Cavalero Cobweb*, he has just been dispatched upon a perilous adventure.” Accordingly Dyce prints *Peas-blossom* instead of *Cobweb*: but this is assuming the mistake to be the Poet’s or printer’s, and not Bottom’s. I am not sure of that. See foot-note 3.

P. 67. *I have a venturous fairy that shall seek*

The squirrel’s hoard, and fetch thee thence new nuts.—In the old copies *thence* is lacking, a gap being left in the verse. Other insertions have been proposed,—“fetch *for* thee new nuts,” and “fetch thee *the* new nuts.” I concur with Dyce in preferring that in the text. Hanmer’s correction.

P. 67. *Fairies, be gone, and be awhile away.* —

Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms:

So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle. — In the old copies, what is here printed as the first line is thrust in between the other two. Lettsom suggested the transposition. — The old text also reads “and be *alwaies* away.” Theobald changed *alwaies* to *all ways*, which Dyce adopts. The reading in the text is Hanmer’s.

P. 68.

And her fairies sent

To bear him to my bower in Fairy-land. — So Dyce. The old editions have “her *fairy* sent,” which does not harmonise with the occasion.

P. 70. *Uncouple in the western valley; let them go.* — So the old copies. Dyce omits the words *let them*, for no other purpose, I suppose, but to avoid a line of six feet. But this, it seems to me, is hardly reason enough for such a step; for the Poet often intersperses Alexandrines among his regular pentameters; though, to be sure, he does it very little in this play. Of course, “let them go” refers to the *uncoupling* of the hounds, which were commonly tied or coupled together, to hold them back from pursuit of the game, till it were time to *let them go*.

P. 70. *When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the boar.* — The old copies have *beare* instead of *boar*. Hanmer and Capell printed *boar*; and Walker remarks that “the story of Meleager would be sufficient to suggest it to Shakespeare.”

P. 71. *Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells.* — I have stated, in foot-note 13, the principle upon which hounds were selected, to make up what was called a cry. As the matter is rather curious, I here add a passage from a writer contemporary with Shakespeare, as quoted in *The Edinburgh Review*, October, 1872: “If you would have your kennel for sweetness of cry, then you must compound it of some large dogges, that have deepe solemne mouthes, and are swift in spending, which must, as it were, beare the base in the consort; then a double number of roaring and loud ringing mouthes, which must beare the counter tenor; then some hollow, plaine, sweete mouthes, which must beare the meane or middle part; and soe with these three parts of musicke you shall make your cry perfect. — If you would have

your kennell for depth of mouth, then you shall compound it of the largest dogges, which have the greatest mouthes, the deepest flews ; and to five or sixe couple of base mouthes you shall not adde above two couple of counter-tenors, as many meanes, and not above one couple of roarers, which, being heard but now and then, as at the opening or hitting of a sent, will give much sweetnesse to the solemnes and gravenesse of the crye ; and the musick thereof will bee much more delightfull to the eares of every beholder."

P. 72. *My love to Hermia,*

Melted as melts the snow, seems to me now, &c. — So Dyce. The old copies are without *melts*. Capell and Collier's second folio read "Melted as *doth* the snow." Clearly there ought to be no breach in the metre here.

P. 73. *Come, my Hippolyta.* — So Steevens, approved by Walker. The old copies omit *my*.

P. 73. *But are you sure*

That we are well awaked? — This is not in the folio, and the words *But* and *well* are not in the quartos. Capell inserted them ; and Lettsom says, "I had hit upon the same conjectures long before I became acquainted with Capell."

P. 74. *I will sing it in the latter end of our play before the Duke : peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it after death.* — The old copies read "end of a play," and "sing it *at her death*." The former correction is Walker's, the latter Theobald's.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 77. *And, as imagination bodies forth*

The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen

Turns them to shape. — So Pope. The old copies have *shapes* instead of *shape*. One of the commonest misprints is that of singulars and plurals for each other.

P. 78. *That is, hot ice and wondrous swarthy snow.* — So Staunton conjectures. The old copies have "*strange snow*." Hanmer printed "scorching snow," and Collier's second folio has "seething snow."

P. 78. *A play it is, my lord, some ten words long.*—So Hanmer. The old copies, “A play there is”; Collier’s second folio, “A play *this* is.”

P. 79. *And what poor willing duty cannot do.*—So Theobald. The old text lacks *willing*.

P. 80. When *I have seen them shiver and look pale, &c.*—So Dyce. The old text has *Where* instead of *When*.

P. 81. *This man, with loam and rough-cast, doth present.*—The old copies here read “with *lime* and rough-cast.” But, in Wall’s speech, a little after, they have “This *loame*, this rough-cast,” &c. So, also, in iii. 1: “And let him have some plaster, or some *Lome*, or some rough-cast about him.”

P. 83. *It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse.*—Farmer would read “heard *in* discourse,” taking it as an allusion “to the many stupid *partitions* in the argumentative writings of the time.” I suspect Farmer is right.

P. 84. *Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.*—So Theobald. Instead of *mural*, the quartos have *Moon used*, the folio *morall*.

P. 84. *Here come two noble beasts in, a moon and a lion.*—Instead of *moon*, the old copies have *man*. Theobald’s correction.

P. 85. *Then know that I one Snug the joiner am,
No lion fell, nor else no lion’s dam.*—So Rowe, and Walker also, without knowing that Rowe had anticipated him. The old copies read “A lion fell.”

P. 85. *He is not crescent.*—The old text has *no* instead of *not*. Corrected in Collier’s second folio.

P. 86. Lys. *And so the lion vanished.*

Dem. *And then came Pyramus.*—The old copies invert the order of these two speeches. Spedding suggested the transposition.

P. 87. *For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams.*—The old copies, quartos and first folio, have *beames*, second folio, *streames*. Knight conjectured *gleams*, and Walker thinks “the alliteration requires” it.

P. 88. *And thus she moans.*—So Theobald. The old text has *meanes* instead of *moans*.

P. 89. *Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the Moon.*—The old copies have “*beholds the Moon*”; an obvious erratum.

P. 90. *Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire ;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier.*—The first two of these lines have troubled editors a good deal. Dyce pronounces it “a most perplexing passage.” Johnson proposed “Through this house *in* glimmering light.” White changes *Through* to *Though*; but his reading, together with his explanation, seems rather to darken what is certainly none too light. Lettsom conjectures “Through *this hall go* glimmering light.” This is both ingenious and poetical in a high degree; but he probably would not himself venture on so bold a change. I suspect that *By* is simply to be taken as equivalent to *by means of*. Taking it so, I fail to perceive any thing very dark or perplexing in the passage.

P. 91. SONG, AND DANCE.—The stage-direction here is usually printed as if what follows were the fairies’ song; which is clearly wrong, the following lines being *spoken* by Oberon, after the song and dance are ended. As for the fairies’ song on this occasion, it has never, I believe, been heard of since.

P. 91. *And the owner of it, blest,
Ever shall in safety rest.*—The old text inverts the order of these lines. The transposition is Staunton’s. Various other changes have been proposed, such as “*Ever shall it safely rest,*” — “*E’er shall it in safety rest,*” — and “*Ever shall’t in safety rest*”; but that in the text seems, on the whole, the most satisfactory.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

REGISTERED at the Stationers' in July, 1598, but with a special proviso, "that it be not printed without license first had from the Right-Honourable the Lord Chamberlain." The theatrical company to which Shakespeare belonged were then known as "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants"; and the purpose of the proviso was to keep the play out of print till the company's permission were given through their patron. The play was entered again at the same place in October, 1600, his lordship's license having probably been obtained by that time. Accordingly two editions of it were published in the course of that year, one by James Roberts, the other by Thomas Heyes. These were evidently printed from two distinct manuscripts, both of which had probably been transcribed from the author's original copy. The play was never issued again, that we know of, till in the folio of 1623. The repetition of certain peculiarities shows it to have been there printed, with some alterations, from the quarto of Heyes.

The Merchant of Venice was also mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Wit's Treasury*, 1598. How long before that time the play was written we have no means of knowing; but, judging from the style, we cannot well assign the writing to a much earlier date; though there is some reason for thinking it may have been on the stage four years earlier; as Henslowe's *Diary* records *The Venetian Comedy* as having been originally acted in August, 1594. It is by no means certain, however, that this refers to Shakespeare's play; while the workmanship here shows such maturity and variety of power as argue against that supposal. It evinces, in a considerable degree, the easy, unlabouring freedom of conscious mastery; the persons being so entirely

under the author's control, and subdued to his hand, that he seems to let them talk and act just as they have a mind to. Therewithal the style, throughout, is so even and sustained; the word and the character are so fitted to each other; the laws of dramatic proportion are so well observed; and the work is so free from any jarring or falling-out from the due course and order of art; as to justify the belief that the whole was written in same stage of intellectual growth and furnishing.

In the composition of this play the Poet drew largely from preceding writers. Novelty of plot or story there is almost none. Nevertheless, in conception and development of character, in poetical texture and grain, in sap and flavour of wit and humour, and in all that touches the real life and virtue of the workmanship, it is one of the most original productions that ever issued from the human mind. Of the materials here used, some were so much the common stock of European literature before the Poet's time, and had been run into so many variations, that it is not easy to say what sources he was most indebted to for them.

It is beyond question that there was an earlier play running more or less upon the same or similar incidents. For Stephen Gosson published, in 1579, a tract entitled *The School of Abuse*, in which he mentions a certain play as "The Jew, shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers." This would fairly infer that Shakespeare was not the first to combine, in dramatic form, the two incidents of the caskets and the pound of flesh: but, nothing further being now known touching the order and character of that older performance, we can affirm nothing as to how far he may have followed or used it in the composition of his play.

The original of the casket-lottery dates far back in the days of Mediæval Romance; and the substance of it was variously repeated, from time to time, by successive authors, till Shakespeare spoilt it for further use. It is met with in the *Gesta Romanorum*, an old and curious collection of tales; and, as the version there given is clearly identified as the one used by Shakespeare directly or indirectly, it seems hardly worth the while to notice, here, any of the other versions.

Anselm, Emperor of Rome, having been long childless, has at length a son born to him. His great enemy, the King of Naples, wishing to end their strife, proposes a marriage between his daughter and the Emperor's son. The latter consents, and in due time the princess embarks for Rome. A terrible storm arising, the ship is wrecked, and all on board perish except the princess. Before she can make good her escape, she is swallowed by a huge whale. But she happens to be armed with a sharp knife, which she uses so vigorously in her strange lodging, that the whale soon has the worst of it. The monster thereupon makes for the shore, and is there killed by a knight, who rescues the princess, and takes her under his protection. On relating her story, she is conveyed to the Emperor, who, to prove whether she is worthy of his son, puts before her three vessels: the first made of pure gold, and outwardly set with rich gems, but within full of dead men's bones; the second made of fine silver, but filled with earth and worms; the third made of lead, but full within of precious stones. On the first is inscribed "Whoso chooseth me shall find what he deserveth"; on the second, "Whoso chooseth me shall find what his nature desireth"; on the third, "Whoso chooseth me shall find what God has disposed to him." The Emperor then orders her to choose one of the vessels, telling her that, if she chooses that which will profit herself and others, she shall have his son. The princess chooses the third, and is forthwith married to the young prince.

The incidents of the bond, the forfeiture, the pound of flesh, and the mode in which the penalty is escaped, are also related in the *Gesta Romanorum*, but not in connection with that of the caskets. It is certain, however, that in this the Poet did not draw from the *Gesta*, but, directly or indirectly, from an Italian novel, by Giovanni Fiorentino, written as early as 1378, though not printed till 1500. The main points of the story are as follows:

Giannetto, the adopted son of a Venetian merchant, Ansaldo, gets permission to visit Alexandria. On his voyage he lands at Belmont, where he finds a lady of great wealth and beauty, and falls deeply in love with her. He returns to Venice, asks for a supply of money to enable him to prosecute his love-suit, and

Ansaldo borrows 10,000 ducats of a Jew on the condition that, if the money be not repaid by a certain day, Ansaldo shall forfeit a pound of his flesh, to be cut off by the Jew. Giannetto gains the lady in marriage; but, forgetful of the bond, prolongs his stay at Belmont till the day of payment is past. Hastening to Venice, he finds the Jew rigid in exacting the penalty, and not to be turned from it even by ten times the amount of the loan. The bride, knowing the merchant's position, disguises herself as a doctor of law, repairs to Venice, and gets herself introduced as a judge into the court where the case is on trial: for in Italy, at that time, nice and difficult points of law were determined, not by the ordinary judges, but by doctors of law from Padua, Bologna, and other famous law-schools. The lady, unrecognized by her husband, learns the nature of the case, and, after reading the bond, calls on the Jew to take the pound of flesh, but tells him he must take neither more nor less than exactly a pound, and that he must shed no blood. An executioner is at hand to behead him in case any blood be drawn. The Jew then says he will accept the 100,000 ducats offered; but, as he has declared up and down repeatedly that he will have nothing but the pound of flesh, the judge refuses to allow any repayment of money whatever; and the Jew in a rage tears up the bond and quits the court. Hereupon Giannetto, overjoyed at the happy issue, yields up to the judge, in token of his gratitude, a ring which his wife had given him on their marriage-day; and the judge, on returning home and putting off the disguise, rails at her husband in fine terms about his parting with the ring, which she says she is sure he must have given to some woman.

There is also an old ballad entitled "The cruelty of Gernutus, a Jew, who, lending to a Merchant a hundred crowns, would have a pound of his flesh, because he could not pay him at the day appointed." The ballad is of uncertain date; but Bishop Percy, who reprints it in his *Reliques* "from an ancient black-letter copy," justly infers it to have been earlier than the play, because "it differs from the play in many circumstances which a mere ballad-maker would hardly have given himself the trouble to alter." I subjoin so much of it as is pertinent to the occasion:

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

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

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

Whatsoever he would demand of him ;
And pledges he should have.
No, quoth the Jew with fleering looks,
Sir, ask what you will have.

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

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

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

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

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

Some offer'd for his hundred crowns
Five hundred for to pay ;
And some a thousand, two, or three,
Yet still he did deny.

And, at the last, ten thousand crowns
They offer'd, him to save :
Gernutus said, I will no gold, —
My forfeit I will have.

The bloody Jew now ready is,
With whetted blade in hand,
To spoil the blood of innocent,
By forfeit of his bond.

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

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

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

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

Gernutus now wax'd frantic mad,
And wots not what to say ;
Quoth he at last, Ten thousand crowns
I will that he shall pay ;

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



Shy. "Jessica, my girl, look to my house— I am right loth to go."

Merchant of Venice. Act 2, Scene 5.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

DUKE of Venice.		LAUNCELOT GOBBO, a Clown, Ser- vant to Shylock.
Prince of Morocco, } Suitors to Portia.		OLD GOBBO, Father to Launcelot.
Prince of Arragon, }		LEONARDO, Servant to Bassanio.
ANTONIO, the Merchant of Venice.		BALTHAZAR, } Servants to Portia.
BASSANIO, his Friend.		STEPHANO, }
SOLANIO, } Friends to Antonio and		PORTIA, a rich Heiress.
SALARINO, } Bassanio.		NERISSA, her Companion.
GRATIANO, }		JESSICA, Daughter to Shylock.
LORENZO, in love with Jessica.		
SHYLOCK, a Jew.		
TUBAL, a Jew, his Friend.		
Magnificos of Venice, Officers of the Court of Justice, Jailer, Servants, and other Attendants.		

SCENE, *partly at Venice and partly at Belmont.*

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter ANTONIO, SALARINO, and SOLANIO.

Ant. In sooth,¹ I know not why I am so sad :
It wearies me, you say it wearies you ;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,²
What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn ;

¹ "In sooth" is *truly* or in *truth*. *Soothsayer* is, properly, *truth-speaker* ; formerly used of men supposed to be wise in forecasting things.

² *To come by* a thing is to *get possession of* it, to *acquire* it. So the phrase is much used in New England, or was, forty years ago.

And such a want-wit³ sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Salari. Your mind is tossing on the ocean ;
There, where your argosies⁴ with portly sail, —
Like signiors and rich burghers⁵ of the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants⁶ of the sea, —
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Solan. Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,⁷
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still⁸
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind ;
Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads ;⁹
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,

³ A *want-wit* is a *dunce*, *simpleton*, or *dunderhead*. *Wit* was continually used for *mind*, *judgment*, or *understanding*.

⁴ *Argosies* are large ships either for merchandise or for war. The name was probably derived from the classical ship *Argo*, which carried Jason and the Argonauts in quest of the golden fleece.

⁵ *Signior* is used by Shakespeare very much in the sense of *lord*; *signiory*, of *lordship*, meaning *dominion*. Thus, in *The Tempest*, i. 2, Prospero says of his dukedom, "Through all the *signiories* it was the first." *Burghers* are citizens. So, in *As You Like It*, ii. 1, the deer in the Forest of Arden, "poor dappled fools," are spoken of as "being native *burghers*, of this desert city."

⁶ *Pageants* were shows of various kinds, theatrical and others; from a word originally meaning, it is said, a high stage or scaffold. Pageants of great splendour, with gay barges and other paraphernalia, used to be held upon the Thames. Leicester had a grand pageant exhibited before Queen Elizabeth, on the water at Kenilworth-Castle, when she visited him there in 1575; described in Scott's *Kenilworth*.

⁷ *Venture* is what is *risks*; exposed to "the peril of waters, winds, and rocks." — The Poet very often uses *forth* for *out*. So later in the scene: "To find the other *forth*." And elsewhere we have the phrases, "find his fellow *forth*," and "inquire you *forth*," and "hear this matter *forth*."

⁸ Here, as often, *still* has the force of *always*, or *continually*.

⁹ *Roads* are *anchorages*; places where ships *ride* at anchor safely.

Would make me sad.

Salar. My wind, cooling my broth,
 Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
 What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
 I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
 But I should think of shallows and of flats ;
 And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand,¹⁰
 Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs,
 To kiss her burial.¹¹ Should I go to church,
 And see the holy edifice of stone,
 And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
 Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
 Would scatter all her spices on the stream ;
 Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks ;
 And, in a word, but even now worth this,¹²
 And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
 To think on this, and shall I lack the thought,
 That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?
 But tell not me : I know Antonio
 Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

Ant. Believe me, no : I thank my fortune for it,
 My ventures are not in one bottom¹³ trusted,
 Nor to one place ; nor is my whole estate
 Upon the fortune of this present year :
 Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

Salar. Why, then you are in love.

Ant.

Fie, fie !

Salar. Not in love neither? Then let's say you're sad,

¹⁰ *Dock'd in sand* is *stranded*. — Italian ships were apt to be named from Andrea Doria, the great Genoese Admiral.

¹¹ To *vail* is to *lower*, to *let fall*. — The image is of a ship tilted over on one side, the other side up in the air, and the top-mast down in the sand.

¹² Here the actor may be supposed to make a gesture importing bulk or largeness. The Poet often leaves his meaning to be thus interpreted.

¹³ *Bottom*, here, is a transport-ship or merchant-man.

Because you are not merry ; and 'twere as easy
 For you to laugh and leap, and say you're merry,
 Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,¹⁴
 Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time :
 Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
 And laugh, like parrots at a bag-piper ;
 And other ¹⁵ of such vinegar aspect,
 That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
 Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.¹⁶

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

Salar. I would have stay'd till I had made you merry,
 If worthier friends had not prevented ¹⁷ me.

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

Enter BASSANIO, LORENZO, *and* GRATIANO.

Salar. Good morrow, my good lords.

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

You grow exceeding strange : ¹⁸ must it be so?

¹⁴ Janus, the old Latin Sun-god, who gave the name to the month of January, is here called *two-headed*, because he had two faces, one on either side of his head. There is also an allusion to certain antique two-faced images, one face being grave, the other merry, or a gloomy Saturn on one side, and a laughing Apollo on the other.

¹⁵ *Other* for *others* was a very frequent usage, especially in antithetic connection with *some*, as in this instance.

¹⁶ Nestor was the oldest and gravest of the Greek heroes in the Trojan war. The severest faces might justly laugh at what *he* should pronounce laughable.

¹⁷ *Prevented*, in old language, is *anticipated*. To *prevent* is literally to *go before*. So in the Prayer-Book, 17th Sunday after Trinity: "That thy grace may always *prevent* and follow us."

¹⁸ *Strange* for *estranged*, *distant*, or *stranger-like*. Repeatedly so.

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

[*Exeunt* SALARINO and SOLANIO.]

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

Bass. I will not fail you.

Gra. You look not well, Signior Antonio ;
You have too much respect¹⁹ upon the world :
They lose it that do buy it with much care.
Believe me, you are marvellously changed.

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

Gra. Let me play the Fool :²⁰
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come ;
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster ?
Sleep when he wakes ? and creep into the jaundice
By being peevish ? I tell thee what, Antonio,
(I love thee, and it is my love that speaks,)
There are a sort of men whose visages
Do cream and mantle like a standing pond ;
And do a wilful stillness entertain,
With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit ;²¹

¹⁹ *Respect*, in Shakespeare, often means *consideration*, or *concern*. So in *King Lear*, i. 1: "Since that *respects* of fortune are his love, I shall not be his wife." And so in North's Plutarch: "The only *respect* that made them valiant was, that they hoped to have honour."

²⁰ To *play the Fool* is, in Gratiano's sense, to act the part of a jester, such as that of Touchstone in *As You Like It*, or the Clown in *Twelfth Night*.

²¹ *Conceit* was used for *thought*, *conception*, *judgment*, or *understanding* ; as also *opinion* for *reputation* or *character*.

As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle*,²²
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark !
 O my Antonio, I do know of these,
 That therefore only are reputed wise
 For saying nothing ; who, I'm very sure,
 If they should speak, would almost damn those ears
 Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools,²³
 I'll tell thee more of this another time :
 But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
 For this fool-gudgeon,²⁴ this opinion. —
 Come, good Lorenzo. — Fare ye well awhile :
 I'll end my exhortation after dinner.

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

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

Ant. Farewell : I'll grow a talker for this gear.²⁵

Gra. Thanks, i'faith ; for silence is only commendable
 In a neat's tongue dried, and a maid not vendible.²⁶

[*Exeunt* GRATIANO and LORENZO.]

²² "As who should say" was a phrase in common use, meaning "as if any one should say," or "were saying." — A "Sir Oracle" is one who conceives himself to have oracular or prophetic wisdom ; a *wiseacre*.

²³ Referring to the judgment pronounced in the Gospel against him who "says to his brother, Thou fool." The meaning, therefore, is, that if those who "only are reputed wise for saying nothing" should go to talking, they would be apt to damn their hearers, by provoking them to utter this reproach. A thing is often said to *do* that which it any way *causes to be done*. The Poet has many instances of such usage. So in *Hamlet*, iii. 4 : "An act that *calls* virtue hypocrite."

²⁴ That is, "Do not bait your hook with this melancholy to catch this worthless fish." *Gudgeon* was the name of a small fish very easily caught ; and which none but *fools* would care to catch.

²⁵ *Gear* was often used of any business, matter, or affair in hand.

²⁶ Not good for the matrimonial market, unless she have the rare gift of silence to recommend her, or to make up for the lack of other attractions.

Ant. Is that any thing now?

Bass. Gratiano speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice. His reasons are as two grains of wheat hid in two bushels of chaff: you shall seek all day ere you find them; and when you have them, they are not worth the search.

Ant. Well; tell me now, what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?

Bass. 'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port²⁷
Than my faint means would grant continuance:
Nor do I now make moan to be abridged²⁸
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is, to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged.²⁹ To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
T' unburden all my plots and purposes
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

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

²⁷ "A more *swelling port*" is a grander and more imposing *appearance, deportment, or out-fit*. *Something* and *somewhat* were used indiscriminately. "A somewhat more swelling port" is the meaning.—*Grant*, in the next line, seems to be used, like *give*, with two accusatives.

²⁸ That is, *complain of being* abridged, or *curtailed*. Here, as often, the infinitive, *to be*, is used gerundively, or like the Latin *gerund*, and so is equivalent to *of being*.

²⁹ *Gaged* is *pledged*. So in *1 Henry IV.*, i. 3: "That men of your nobility and power did *gage* them both in an unjust behalf."

Lie all unlock'd to your occasions.

Bass. In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight³⁰
The selfsame way with more advisèd³¹ watch,
To find the other forth ; and, by adventuring both,
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,³²
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much ; and, like a wilful youth,³³
That which I owe is lost : but, if you please
To shoot another arrow that self³⁴ way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt, —
As I will watch the aim, — or to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Ant. You know me well ; and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance ;³⁵
And out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have :
Then, do but say to me what I should do,
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest³⁶ unto it : therefore speak.

³⁰ Arrows were variously formed for different ranges. A shaft "of the self-same flight" was an arrow made for shooting the same distance. — *His* for *its*, which was not then an accepted word, though it was just creeping into use. It does not once occur in our English Bible as originally printed in 1611. Instead of *its*, *his* is commonly used.

³¹ *Advisèd* is *deliberate*, *careful*, or *circumspect*.

³² *Childhood proof* is *childish instance* or *experiment* ; a method he had used when a child. So the Poet has "*childhood innocence*."

³³ A youth wilful, or *headstrong*, in *expense* is the meaning.

³⁴ *Self* for *same* or *self-same* ; a frequent usage. So in *King Lear*, i. 1 : "I'm made of that *self* metal as my sister."

³⁵ Here, as often, *circumstance* is *circumlocution*, or *talking round* a thing, instead of coming to the point at once.

³⁶ *Prest* is *prompt*, *ready* ; from an old French word. Spenser has it repeatedly in the same sense. The Latin *præsto* is the origin of it.

Bass. In Belmont is a lady richly left ;
 And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,³⁷
 Of wondrous virtues : sometimes³⁸ from her eyes
 I did receive fair speechless messages.
 Her name is Portia / nothing undervalued³⁹
 To Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia /
 Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth ;
 For the four winds blow in from every coast
 Renowned suitors ; and her sunny locks
 Hang on her temples like a golden fleece ;
 Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
 And many Jasons come in quest of her.
 O my Antonio, had I but the means
 To hold a rival place with one of them,⁴⁰
 I have a mind presages me such thrift,
 That I should questionless be fortunate.

Ant. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea ;
 Neither have I money, nor commodity⁴¹
 To raise a present sum : therefore go forth ;
 Try what my credit can in Venice do :
 That shall be rack'd, even to the uttermost,
 To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
 Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
 Where money is ; and I no question make,
 To have it of my trust, or for my sake.

[*Exeunt.*

³⁷ Meaning she is beautiful, and has what is better than beauty.

³⁸ *Sometimes* and *sometime* were used indifferently, and often, as here, in the sense of *formerly* or *former*.

³⁹ *Nothing undervalued* is not at all inferior in value. So, later in this play, we have "ten times undervalued to tried gold." And *nothing* as a strong negative is very frequent.

⁴⁰ The language is awkward: "as one of them," we should say.

⁴¹ *Commodity* is *merchandise*, any thing that might be pledged as security for a loan.

SCENE II. — *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

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

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

Por. Good sentences,³ and well pronounced.

Ner. They would be better, if well followed.

Por. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions : I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood ;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 a living daughter

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 113, 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.

curb'd by the will⁶ of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Ner. Your father was ever virtuous; and holy⁷ men, at their death, have good inspirations: therefore the lottery that he hath devised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead, — whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you, — will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love. But what warmth is there in your affection towards any of these princely suitors that are already come?

Por. I pray thee, over-name them; and, as thou namest them, I will describe them; and, according to my description, level at⁸ my affection.

Ner. First, there is the Neapolitan prince.

Por. Ay, that's a colt⁹ indeed, for he doth nothing but talk of his horse; and he makes it a great appropriation¹⁰ to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself. I am much afraid my lady his mother play'd false with a smith.

Ner. Then is there the County Palatine.

Por. He doth nothing but frown; as who should say, *An you will not have me, choose.* He hears merry tales, and smiles not: I fear he will prove the weeping philosopher¹¹ when he grows old, being so full of unmannerly sadness in

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 equivoque 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.*"

his youth. I had rather be married to a Death's-head with a bone in his mouth than to either of these. God defend me from these two !

Ner. How say you by¹² the French lord, Monsieur Le Bon ?

Por. God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man. In truth, I know it is a sin to be a mocker : but, he ! why, he hath a horse better than the Neapolitan's ; a better bad habit of frowning than the Count Palatine : he is every man in no man : if a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering ; he will fence¹³ with his own shadow. If I should marry him, I should marry twenty husbands. If he would¹⁴ despise me, I would forgive him ; for, if he love me to madness, I shall never requite him.

Ner. What say you then to¹⁵ Falconbridge, the young baron of England ?

Por. You know I say nothing to him ; for he understands not me, nor I him : he hath neither Latin, French, nor Italian ; and you will come into the court and swear that I have a poor pennyworth in the English. He is a proper¹⁶ man's picture ; but, alas, who can converse with a dumb-show ?¹⁷ How oddly he is suited ! I think he bought his

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 *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."

¹⁷ A *dumb-show* is an action or character exhibited to the eye **only** ; something like what we call a *tableau*.

doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet¹⁸ in Germany, and his behaviour every where.

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

Por. That he hath a neighbourly charity in him; for he borrowed a box of the ear of the Englishman, and swore he would pay him again when he was able: I think the Frenchman became his surety, and seal'd under for another.¹⁹

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

Por. Very vilely in the morning, when he is sober; and most vilely in the afternoon, when he is drunk: when he is best, he is a little worse than a man; and when he is worst, he is little better than a beast. An²⁰ the worst fall that ever fell, I hope I shall make shift to go without him.

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

Por. Therefore, for fear of the worst, I pray thee, set a deep glass of Rhenish wine on the contrary casket;²¹ for, if 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.

Ner. You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you

¹⁸ *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.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ *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*."

²¹ The *wrong* casket. So in *King John*, iv. 2: "Standing on slippers, which his nimble haste had falsely thrust upon *contrary* feet."

with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort²² than your father's imposition, depending on the caskets.

Por. If I live to be as old as Sibylla,²³ I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable; for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I pray God grant them a fair departure.

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

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

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

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

Enter a Servant.

How now! what news?

²² *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.

²³ 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 full, 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 Cumæ 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.

Serv. The four²⁴ strangers seek for you, madam, to take their leave : and there is a forerunner come from a fifth, the Prince of Morocco ; who brings word, the Prince his master will be here to-night.

Por. If I could bid the fifth welcome with so good heart as I can bid the other four farewell, I should be glad of his approach : if he have the condition²⁵ of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive²⁶ me than wive me.

Come, Nerissa. — Sirrah, go before. —

Whiles we shut the gate upon one wooer, another knocks at the door. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Venice. A public Place.*

Enter BASSANIO and SHYLOCK.

Shy. Three thousand ducats, — well.¹

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?

²⁴ An oversight, perhaps. There were *six* of them.

²⁵ *Condition* is *temper, disposition*. So used continually by Shakespeare, and other writers of his time.

²⁶ Devils were imagined and represented as of dark colour. So, in *Othello*, Iago says to Brabantio, "The Devil will make a grandsire of you," referring to the Moor's colour. — To *shrive* is to *absolve*; referring to the priestly act of confession and absolution.

¹ *Well* has here something of an interrogative force, and perhaps ought to be pointed interrogatively, — "Well?"

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.

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

Bass. Your answer to that.

Shy. Antonio is a good³ 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 at Mexico, a fourth for England; and other ventures he hath squandered abroad.⁴ But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, 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 your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into.⁵ 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 in Signior Antonio.

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

⁴ *Squandered* here is simply *scattered, dispersed*; a usage of the time.

⁵ 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.

Shy. [*Aside.*] How like a fawning publican he looks !
 I hate him for⁶ he is a Christian ;
 But more, for that, in low simplicity,
 He lends out money gratis, and brings down
 The rate of usance⁷ here with us in Venice.
 If I can catch him once upon the hip,⁸
 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,
 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

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.

⁹ *Soft!* is an old exclamation, meaning about the same as *hold!* *stay!* or *not too fast!* Often used by Shakespeare.

Do you desire? — [*To ANT.*] Rest you fair,¹⁰ good signior ;
Your Worship was the last man in our mouths.

Ant. 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.

Ant. And for three months.

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

Ant. I do never use it.

Shy. When Jacob grazed his uncle Laban's sheep, —
This Jacob from our holy Abraham was
(As his wise mother wrought in his behalf)
The third¹³ possessor ; ay, he was the third, —

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

Shy. No, not take interest ; not, as you would say,
Directly interest : mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were compromised
That all the eanlings¹⁴ which were streak'd and pied

¹⁰ That is, "may you continue well!" or, "good health to you!" So in *As You Like It*, v. 1: "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."

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.

Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes, being rank,
 In end of Autumn turnèd to the rams ;
 And, when the work of generation was
 Between these woolly breeders in the act,
 The skilful shepherd peel'd me certain wands,
 And, in the doing of the deed of kind,¹⁵
 He stuck them up before the fulsome¹⁶ ewes,
 Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
 Fall parti-colour'd lambs, and those were Jacob's.
 This was a way to thrive, and he was blest :
 And thrift is blessing, if men steal it not.

Ant. This was a venture, sir, that Jacob served for ;
 A thing not in his power to bring to pass,
 But sway'd and fashion'd by the hand of Heaven.
 Was this inserted¹⁷ 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.

Ant. 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 goodly outside falsehood¹⁸ hath !

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

Ant. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding¹⁹ to you ?

¹⁵ *Kind* in its radical sense of *nature*. The Poet has it repeatedly so. Also *kindly* for *natural*. See vol. ii., page 143, note 15.

¹⁶ The meaning of *fulsome* here appears from the words, " the ewes being *rank*." In Golding's Ovid, it is used of a sheep's *dugs* : " Whose *fulsome* dug's do yeeld sweete nectar."

¹⁷ " Was this inserted *in Scripture* ? " is the meaning, probably.

¹⁸ *Falsehood* for *knavery*, as *truth* sometimes for *honesty*.

¹⁹ Shakespeare always has *beholding*, the active form, in the sense of *beholden*, the passive. Of course it means *indebted*.

Shy. Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
 In the Rialto,²⁰ 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,²¹
 And all for use of that which is mine own.
 Well then, it now appears you need my help :
 Go to,²² then ; you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have moneys : you say so ;
 You, that did void your rheum²³ 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
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 ;

²⁰ 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."

²¹ *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.

²² *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.

²³ "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*.

*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 ?*

Ant. I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too.
If thou wilt lend this money, lend it not
As to thy friend ; — for when did friendship take
A breed²⁴ of barren metal of his friend ? —
But lend it rather to thine enemy ;
Who if he break,²⁵ 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 doit²⁶
Of usance for my moneys,
And you'll not hear me : this is kind I offer.

Bass. This were kindness.

Shy. This kindness will I show :
Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh,²⁷ to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me.

²⁴ *Breed*, here, is *interest* ; that which is *bred* from the principal.

²⁵ 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."

²⁶ *Doit* was a small Dutch coin, less in value than our cent.

²⁷ 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."

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

Bass. You shall not seal to such a bond for me :
I'll rather dwell²⁸ in my necessity.

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

Shy. O father Abraham, what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others ! — Pray you, tell me this :
If he should break his day,²⁹ 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 ; if not, adieu ;
And, for my love, I pray you wrong me not.

Ant. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

Shy. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's :
Give him direction for this merry bond ;
And I will go and purse the ducats straight ;
See to my house, left in the fearful guard³⁰
Of an unthrifty knave ; and presently
I will be with you.

Ant. Hie thee, gentle Jew. — [*Exit SHYLOCK.*
This Hebrew will turn Christian : he grows kind.

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

²⁸ *Dwell* here has the sense of *continue* or *abide*.

²⁹ To *break his day* was the current phrase for breach of contract.

³⁰ "*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."

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

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter the Prince of Morocco and his Train ; PORTIA, NERISSA, and other of her Attendants.

Mor. 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.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath fear'd² 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.

Por. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes ;³
Besides, the lottery of my destiny

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 *milk-sop*.

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*.

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, renownèd Prince, then stood as fair
 As any comer I have look'd on yet
 For my affection.

Mor. Even for that I thank you :
 Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets,
 To try my fortune. By this scimitar, —
 That slew the Sophy,⁴ and a Persian prince
 That won three fields of Sultan Solyman, —
 I would outstare the sternest eyes that look,
 Outbrave the heart most daring on the Earth,
 Pluck the young sucking cubs from the she-bear,
 Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
 To win thee, lady. — But, alas the while !⁵
 If Hercules and Lichas play at dice
 Which is the better man,⁶ 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,

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.

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.

And die with grieving.

Por. You must take your chance ;
And either not attempt to choose at all,
Or swear, before you choose, if you choose wrong
Never to speak to lady afterward
In way of marriage : therefore be advised.⁷

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

Por. First, forward to the temple :⁸ after dinner
Your hazard shall be made.

Mor. Good fortune then !
To make me blest or cursed'st⁹ among men.

[*Cornets, and exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter LAUNCELOT.

Laun. Certainly my conscience will serve me to run from this Jew my master. The fiend is at mine elbow, and tempts me, saying to me, *Gobbo, Launcelot Gobbo, good Launcelot, or good Gobbo, or good Launcelot Gobbo, use your legs, take the start, run away.* My conscience says, *No ; take heed, honest Launcelot ; take heed, honest Gobbo, or, as aforesaid, honest Launcelot Gobbo ; do not run ; scorn running with thy heels.*¹ Well, the most courageous fiend bids me pack :

⁷ *Advised*, again, for *cautious* or *considerate*. See page 120, note 31.

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.*"

¹ To scorn a thing with the heels appears to have been an old phrase for spurning or kicking at a thing. Shakespeare has the phrase again in *Much Ado*, iii. 4. Launcelot seems to be in chase of a quibble between the heels as used in kicking, and the heels as used in running.

*Via!*² says the fiend ; *away!* says the fiend ; *for the Heavens,*³ *rouse up a brave mind,* says the fiend, *and run.* Well, my conscience, hanging about the neck of my heart, says very wisely to me, *My honest friend Launcelot, being an honest man's son,*— or rather an honest woman's son ; for, indeed, my father did something smack, something grow to, he had a kind of taste ;— well, my conscience says, *Launcelot, budge not.* *Budge,* says the fiend. *Budge not,* says my conscience. Conscience, say I, you counsel well ; fiend, say I, you counsel well : to be ruled by my conscience, I should stay with the Jew my master, who — God bless the mark !— is a kind of devil ; and, to run away from the Jew, I should be ruled by the fiend, who, saving your reverence,⁴ is the Devil himself. Certainly the Jew is the very Devil incarnation ; and, in my conscience, my conscience is but a kind of hard conscience, to offer to counsel me to stay with the Jew. The fiend gives the more friendly counsel : I will run, fiend ; my heels are at your commandment ; I will run.

Enter Old GOBBO, with a basket.

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

Laun. [*Aside.*] O Heavens, this is my true-begotten father !

² "*Via!*" from the Italian, was much used as a sort of exclamatory imperative, meaning *away!* or *go ahead!*

³ *For the Heavens* was merely a petty oath. To make the fiend conjure Launcelot to do a thing for *Heaven's* sake, is a specimen of that "acute nonsense" which Barrow makes one of the species of wit.

⁴ *Saving your reverence* is a sort of apologetic phrase for saying something coarse or profane ; somewhat like our "If you will allow me to say so." "God save the mark" and "God bless the mark," are phrases of similar import. How the two latter grew into such use, or acquired such a meaning, is not very clear. But it appears that certain congenital *marks* on the person were regarded as ominous or ill-boding. So in *A Midsummer*, v. i : "Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar, nor *mark prodigious*, shall upon their children be." And so the phrases appears to have meant, "May God avert the evil omen!" or, "May God render the token auspicious!"

who, being more than sand-blind,⁵ high-gravel-blind, knows me not : I will try confusions⁶ with him.

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

Laun. Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but, at the next turning of all, on your left ; marry,⁷ at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house.

Gob. By God's sonties,⁸ 'twill be a hard way to hit. Can you tell me whether one Launcelot, that dwells with him, dwell with him or no?

Laun. Talk you of young Master Launcelot?— [*Aside.*] Mark me now ; now will I raise the waters.⁹— Talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. No master,¹⁰ sir, but a poor man's son : his father, though I say it, is an honest exceeding poor man, and, God be thanked, well to live.¹¹

⁵ *Sand-blind* is *dim-sighted* or *purblind*. The origin of the word seems unknown : perhaps it is a corruption of *semi-blind*. Of course Launcelot makes it the turning-point of a quibble.

⁶ To *try conclusions* is the old phrase for to *try experiments*. It is not quite clear whether Launcelot's *confusions* is a blunder for *conclusions*, or whether it is an intentional parody on the old phrase, by way of joke.

⁷ *Marry* was continually used as a colloquial intensive, having the force of *verily*, *indeed*, or *forsooth* ; like the Latin *heracle* and *edepol*. It grew from a custom of swearing by the Virgin Mary.

⁸ *Sonties* is most likely a corruption either of *saints* or of *sanctity*. *Saunctes* is an old form of *saints*.

⁹ Meaning much the same, apparently, as our phrase "to raise the wind" ; that is, to make an opportunity, or breed a controversy.

¹⁰ *Master*, which we have flattened into *mister*, formerly meant something as a title of respect. Shakespeare procured from the Heralds' College a coat-of-arms for his father, and had himself no right to be called *master* till he inherited the rank of gentleman thus conferred. Old Gobbo shrinks from giving his son the title, though he keeps calling him *master*, not knowing who he is.

¹¹ *Well to live* is an old phrase meaning the same as our *well off*. The old man is humorously made to contradict himself.

Laun. Well, let his father be what 'a will, we talk of young Master Launcelot.

Gob. Your Worship's friend, and Launcelot, sir.

Laun. But, I pray you, *ergo*, old man, *ergo*, I beseech you, talk you of young Master Launcelot?

Gob. Of Launcelot, an't please your mastership.

Laun. *Ergo*, Master Launcelot. Talk not of Master Launcelot, father; for the young gentleman — according to Fates and Destinies, and such odd sayings, the Sisters Three, and such branches of learning — is, indeed, deceased; or, as you would say in plain terms, gone to Heaven.

Gob. Marry, God forbid! the boy was the very staff of my age, my very prop.

Laun. [*Aside.*] Do I look like a cudgel or a hovel-post, a staff or a prop? — Do you not know me, father?

Gob. Alack the day, I know you not, young gentleman: but, I pray you, tell me, is my boy — God rest his soul! — alive or dead?

Laun. Do you not know me, father?¹²

Gob. Alack, sir, I am sand-blind; I know you not.

Laun. Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes, you might fail of the knowing me: it is a wise father that knows his own child. Well, old man, I will tell you news of your son: give me your blessing. [*Kneels, with his back to him.*] Truth will come to light; murder cannot be hid long, — a man's son may; but, in the end, truth will out.

Gob. Pray you, sir, stand up: I am sure you are not Launcelot, my boy.

Laun. Pray you, let's have no more fooling about it, but

¹² It was customary for young people to address any old man or woman as father or mother. Hence old Gobbo does not recognize his son on being called father by him. Shakespeare has other instances of the usage. So, in *King Lear*, Edgar, while leading the eyeless Gloucester, addresses him repeatedly as *father*, without stirring any recognition, or even suspicion, of the relationship between them.

give me your blessing : I am Launcelot, your boy that was, your son that is, your child that shall be.¹³

Gob. I cannot think you are my son.

Laun. I know not what I shall think of that : but I am Launcelot, the Jew's man ; and I am sure Margery your wife is my mother.

Gob. Her name is Margery, indeed : I'll be sworn, if thou be Launcelot, thou art mine own flesh and blood. [*Taking hold of his back hair.*] Lord worshipp'd might He be ! what a beard hast thou got ! thou hast got more hair on thy chin than Dobbin my fill-horse¹⁴ has on his tail.

Laun. [*Rising.*] It should seem, then, that Dobbin's tail grows backward : I am sure he had more hair of¹⁵ his tail than I have of my face, when I last saw him.

Gob. Lord, how art thou changed ! How dost thou and thy master agree ? I have brought him a present. How 'gree you now ?

Laun. Well, well ; but, for mine own part, as I have set up my rest¹⁶ to run away, so I will not rest till I have run some ground. My master's a very Jew : give him a present ! give him a halter : I am famish'd in his service ; you may tell every finger I have with my ribs. Father, I am glad you are come : give me your present to one Master Bassanio, who, indeed, gives rare new liveries : if I serve not him, I will run as far as God has any ground.¹⁷ — O, rare fortune !

¹³ Launcelot is overflowing with quirks, and here purposely inverts the order of his words. He probably means "your child that was, your boy that is, your son that shall be."

¹⁴ *Fill-horse* is *shaft-horse*, or horse that goes in the *shafts*; *fill* being a common form of *thill*.

¹⁵ *Of* and *on* were often used indiscriminately.

¹⁶ To *set up one's rest* was a phrase in frequent use for to make up one's mind. Said to be taken from the old game of primero, where it meant a determination to stand upon the cards one had in his hand.

¹⁷ In Venice proper it was not easy to find ground enough to run away upon. Not much surface there but water.

here comes the man : — to him, father ; for I am a Jew, if I serve the Jew any longer.

Enter BASSANIO, with LEONARDO and other Followers.

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

Laun. To him, father.

Gob. God bless your Worship !

Bass. Gramercy !¹⁸ wouldst thou aught with me ?

Gob. Here's my son, sir, a poor boy, —

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

Gob. He hath a great infection,¹⁹ sir, as one would say, to serve, —

Laun. Indeed, the short and the long is, I serve the Jew, and have a desire, — as my father shall specify, —

Gob. His master and he — saving your Worship's reverence — are scarce cater-cousins,²⁰ —

Laun. To be brief, the very truth is, that the Jew having done me wrong doth cause me, — as my father, being, I hope, an old man, shall frutify²¹ unto you, —

Gob. I have here a dish of doves²² that I would bestow upon your Worship ; and my suit is, —

¹⁸ *Much thanks!* from the French *grand merci*.

¹⁹ *Infection* is an honest blunder, probably for *inclination*.

²⁰ Old Gobbo seems to mean that his son and Shylock are not very near kindred, or do not love each other much. *Cater* is, most likely, from the French *quatre*.

²¹ *Frutify* is a Gobboism for *fructify*, which appears to have been a sort of cant term for *holding forth*; in speech, that is.

²² Upon this passage, Mr. C. A. Brown furnishes the following: "A present thus given, and in our days too, and of doves, is not uncommon in Italy. I myself have partaken there, with due relish, in memory of poor old Gobbo, of a dish of doves, presented by the father of a servant."

Laun. In very brief, the suit is impertinent²³ to myself, as your Worship shall know by this honest old man ; and, though I say it, though old man, yet, poor man, my father.

Bass. One speak for both. — What would you ?

Laun. Serve you, sir.

Gob. That is the very defect²⁴ of the matter, sir.

Bass. I know thee well ; thou hast obtain'd thy suit :
Shylock thy master spoke with me this day,
And hath preferr'd thee,²⁵ — if it be preferment
To leave a rich Jew's service, to become
The follower of so poor a gentleman.

Laun. The old proverb is very well parted between my master Shylock and you, sir : you have the grace of God, sir, and he hath enough.²⁶

Bass. Thou speak'st it well. — Go, father, with thy son. — Take leave of thy old master, and inquire My lodging out. — [*To his Followers.*] Give him a livery More guarded²⁷ than his fellows' : see it done.

Laun. Father, in. — I cannot get a service, no ; I have ne'er a tongue in my head. — Well, [*Looking on his palm.*] if any man in Italy have a fairer table ! which doth offer to swear upon a book, I shall have good fortune !²⁸ Go to ;

²³ Another Gobboism for *pertinent* or *appertaining*.

²⁴ *Defect* for *effect* ; another honest blunder.

²⁵ To *prefer* is, in old English, to *recommend*, and also to *promote*. Bassanio plays upon the two senses of the word.

²⁶ "He that hath the grace of God hath enough," or something such, appears to have been "the old proverb" in question. *Parted* is *divided* ; and Bassanio is supposed to have the better half.

²⁷ That is, ornamented. *Guards* were trimmings, facings, or other ornaments, such as gold and silver lace.

²⁸ Launcelot, applauding himself for his success with Bassanio, and looking into the palm of his hand, which by fortune-tellers is called the *table*, breaks out into the reflection : "Well, if any man in Italy have a fairer table, which doth *not only* promise, *but* offer to swear upon a book, *that* I shall have good fortune."

here's a simple line of life!²⁹ here's a small trifle of wives !
 alas, fifteen wives is nothing ! aleven³⁰ widows and nine maids
 is a simple coming-in for one man : and then to 'scape
 drowning thrice, and to be in peril of my life with the edge
 of a feather-bed, — here are simple 'scapes !³¹ Well, if For-
 tune be a woman, she's a good wench for this gear. — Father,
 come ; I'll take my leave of the Jew in the twinkling of an eye.

[*Exeunt* LAUNCELOT and Old GOBBO.

Bass. I pray thee, good Leonardo, think on this :
 These things being bought and orderly bestow'd,
 Return in haste, for I do feast to-night
 My best-esteem'd acquaintance : hie thee, go.

Leon. My best endeavours shall be done herein.

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Where is your master ?

Leon. Yonder, sir, he walks. [*Exit.*

Gra. Signior Bassanio, —

Bass. Gratiano !

Gra. I have a suit to you.

Bass. You have obtain'd it.

Gra. Nay, you must not deny me : I must go
 With you to Belmont.

²⁹ The line in the palm passing round the root of the thumb was called *the line of life* ; that which begins near the root of the little finger, and extends towards the root of the fore-finger, was *the line of fortune*.

³⁰ *Aleven*, says Dyce, is "a vulgarism (and archaism) for *eleven*, — formerly not uncommon."

³¹ Launcelot was an adept in the art of chiromancy, which in his time had its learned professors and practitioners no less than astrology. In 1558 was put forth a book by John Indagine, entitled "Brief introductions, both natural, pleasant, and also delectable, unto the Art of Chiromancy, or manual divination, and Physiognomy : with circumstances upon the faces of the Signs." "A simple line of life" written in the palm was cause of exultation to wiser ones than young Gobbo. "The edge of a feather-bed" is probably an absurd variation of the phrase "the edge of the sword."

Bass. Why, then you must. But hear thee, Gratiano :
 Thou art too wild, too rude, and bold of voice, —
 Parts that become thee happily enough,
 And in such eyes as ours appear not faults ;
 But where thou art not known, why, there they show
 Something too liberal.³² Pray thee, take pain
 T' allay with some cold drops of modesty
 Thy skipping spirit ; lest, through thy wild behaviour,
 I be miscónstrued in the place I go to,
 And lose my hopes.

Gra. Signior Bassanio, hear me :
 If I do not put on a sober habit,
 Talk with respect, and swear but now and then,
 Wear prayer-books in my pocket, look demurely ;
 Nay, more, while grace is saying, hood mine eyes
 Thus with my hat,³³ and sigh, and say amen ;
 Use all th' observance of civility,
 Like one well studied in a sad ostent³⁴
 To please his grandam, — never trust me more.

Bass. Well, we shall see your bearing.

Gra. Nay, but I bar to-night : you shall not gauge³⁵ me
 By what we do to-night.

Bass. No, that were pity :
 I would entreat you rather to put on
 Your boldest suit of mirth, for we have friends
 That purpose merriment. But fare you well :
 I have some business.

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

[*Exeunt.*

³² *Liberal* for *wanton*, *reckless*, or free beyond the bounds of decorum.

³³ People used to keep their hats on while eating dinner. While grace was saying, they were expected to take the hat off and hold it over the eyes.

³⁴ That is, grave appearance ; *show* of staid and serious behaviour. *Ostent* is very commonly used for *show* among old dramatic writers.

³⁵ *Gauge* is *measure* or *estimate*. — *Bar* is *except*.

SCENE III. — *The Same. A Room in SHYLOCK'S House.**Enter* JESSICA *and* LAUNCELOT.

Jes. I'm sorry thou wilt leave my father so :
 Our house is Hell ; and thou, a merry devil,
 Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness.
 But fare thee well ; there is a ducat for thee :
 And, Launcelot, soon at ¹ supper shalt thou see
 Lorenzo, who is thy new master's guest :
 Give him this letter ; do it secretly ;
 And so farewell : I would not have my father
 See me in talk with thee.

Laun. Adieu ; tears exhibit ² my tongue. Most beautiful
 pagan, most sweet Jew ! if a Christian did not play the knave
 and get thee, I am much deceived. But, adieu : these foolish
 drops do somewhat drown my manly spirit : adieu.

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

[*Exit.*SCENE IV. — *The Same. A Street.**Enter* GRATIANO, LORENZO, SALARINO, *and* SOLANIO.

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

¹ *Soon at* is an old phrase for *about*. So in *The Comedy of Errors*, i. 2 :
 "Soon at five o'clock I'll meet with you upon the mart." Also in iii. 1 :
 "And soon at supper-time I'll visit you."

² *Exhibit* is a Gobbolism for *inhibit* ; that is, *prevent* or *restrain*.

Gra. We have not made good preparation.

Salar. We have not spoke us yet of torch-bearers.³

Solan. 'Tis vile, unless it may be quaintly⁴ order'd,
And better in my mind not undertook.

Lor. 'Tis now but four o'clock : we have two hours
To furnish us. —

Enter LAUNCELOT, with a letter.

Friend Launcelot, what's the news?

Laun. An it shall please you to break up this,⁵ it shall
seem to signify.

Lor. I know the hand : in faith, 'tis a fair hand ;
And whiter than the paper that it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.

Gra. Love-news, in faith.

Laun. By your leave, sir.

Lor. Whither goest thou?

Laun. Marry, sir, to bid my old master the Jew to sup
to-night with my new master the Christian.

Lor. Hold here, take this : [*Gives money.*] tell gentle
Jessica

I will not fail her ; speak it privately ;

Go. [*Exit LAUNCELOT.*] — Gentlemen,

Will you prepare you for this masque to-night?

I am provided of⁶ a torch-bearer.

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

Solan. And so will I.

Lor. Meet me and Gratiano

³ Old language, meaning the same as *bespoken torch-bearers for us*.

⁴ *Quaintly*, derived from the Latin *comptus*, was often used in the sense of *graceful, elegant, or ingenious*.

⁵ *Break up* is old language for *break open*.

⁶ The prepositions *of, with, and by*, were often used indifferently. So in Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* : "He is invested *of* a precedent disposition." See page 124, note 12.

At Gratiano's lodging some hour hence.

Salar. 'Tis good we do so. [*Exeunt* SALAR. and SOLAN.

Gra. Was not that letter from fair Jessica?

Lor. I must needs tell thee all : She hath directed
How I shall take her from her father's house ;
What gold and jewels she is furnish'd with ;
What page's suit she hath in readiness.
If e'er the Jew her father come to Heaven,
It will be for his gentle daughter's sake ;
And never dare misfortune cross her foot,
Unless she do it under this excuse, —
That she is issue to a faithless⁷ Jew.
Come, go with me : peruse this as thou goest.
Fair Jessica shall be my torch-bearer. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. — *The Same. Before SHYLOCK'S House.*

Enter SHYLOCK and LAUNCELOT.

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

Laun. Why, Jessica !

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

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

Enter JESSICA.

Jes. Call you? what is your will?

Shy. I am bid forth to supper, Jessica :

⁷ *Faithless* in the sense of *unbelieving*, or *without faith*.

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

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

Shy. So do I his.³

Laun. And they have conspired together, — I will not say you shall see a masque ; but if you do, then it was not for nothing that my nose fell a-bleeding on Black-Monday⁴ last at six o'clock i' the morning, falling out that year on Ash-Wednesday was four year in the afternoon.

Shy. What, are there masques? — Hear you me, Jessica :
 Lock up my doors ; and, when you hear the drum,
 And the vile squealing of the wry-neck'd fife,⁵

¹ In i. 3, Shylock says, " I will *not eat* with you, drink with you, nor pray with you." Did the Poet commit an oversight, or did he mean to put the Jew at odds with himself out of hatred to the Christian?

² *To-night* here means what we call *last night*, or *the past night*.

³ *Reproach* is a Gobbism for *approach*. Shylock chooses to take him in the sense of *reproach*. And he expects Bassanio's reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This may have some bearing on the question whether Shylock has any hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's " losses at sea."

⁴ Easter-Monday. The origin of the name is thus explained by Stowe : " In the 34th of Edward III., the 14th of April, and the morrow after Easter-day, King Edward, with his host, lay before the city of Paris : which day was full dark of mist and hail, and so bitter cold, that many men died on their horses' backs with the cold. Wherefore unto this day it hath been called *Black-Monday*." — *Bleeding at the nose* was anciently considered ominous. — The closing part of the speech means *nonsense* merely.

⁵ There has been some dispute whether *wry-neck'd fife* mean the instrument or the musician. Boswell cited a passage from Barnabe Rich's *Aphorisms*, 1618, which appears to settle the matter : " A *fife* is a *wry-neckt musician*, for he always looks away from his instrument."

Clamber not you up to the casements then,
 Nor thrust your head into the public street,
 To gaze on Christian fools with varnish'd faces ;⁶
 But stop my house's ears, — I mean my casements :
 Let not the sound of shallow foppery enter
 My sober house. — By Jacob's staff,⁷ I swear
 I have no mind of feasting forth to-night :
 But I will go. — Go you before me, sirrah ;
 Say I will come.

Laun. I'll go before you, sir. —
 Mistress, look out at window for all this ;
 There will come a Christian by
 Will be worth a Jewess' eye.⁸

[*Exit.*

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

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

Shy. The patch⁹ is kind enough ; but a huge feeder,
 Snail-slow in profit, and he sleeps by day
 More than the wild-cat : drones hive not with me ;
 Therefore I part with him ; and part with him
 To one that I would have him help to waste
 His borrow'd purse. — Well, Jessica, go in :
 Perhaps I will return immediately :
 Do as I bid you ; shut doors after you :
Fast bind, fast find, —
 A proverb never stale in thrifty mind.

[*Exit.*

⁶ Alluding perhaps to the painted masks ; but meaning, withal, an insinuation of duplicity, or doublefacedness.

⁷ Hebrews, xi. 21 : " By faith, Jacob, when he was a-dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph ; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff."

⁸ The worth of a Jew's eye was the price with which the Jews used to buy themselves off from mutilation. The expression became proverbial, and was kept up long after its original meaning was lost.

⁹ This use of *patch* sprang from the motley or *patched* dress worn by professional Fools. Hence a general term of contempt. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 2 : " A crew of *patches*, rude mechanicals, that work for bread upon Athenian stalls."

Jes. Farewell ; and if my fortune be not crost,
I have a father, you a daughter, lost.

[*Exit.*

Enter GRATIANO and SALARINO, masked.

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

Salar. His hour is almost past.

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

Salar. O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons¹⁰ fly
To seal love's bonds new-made than they are wont,
To keep obligèd faith¹¹ unforfeited !

Gra. That ever holds. Who riseth from a feast
With that keen appetite that he sits down?
Where is the horse that doth untread again
His tedious measures with th' unbated fire
That he did pace them first? All things that are,
Are with more spirit chasèd than enjoy'd.
How like a younker¹² or a prodigal
The scarfèd bark puts from her native bay,
Hugg'd and embracèd by the strumpet wind !
How like a prodigal doth she return,
With over-weather'd ribs, and raggèd sails,
Lean, rent, and beggar'd by the strumpet wind !

Salar. Here comes Lorenzo : more of this hereafter.

Enter LORENZO.

Lor. Sweet friends, your patience for my long abode ;¹³
Not I, but my affairs, have made you wait :

¹⁰ Classic fable imagined Venus and her son Cupid to ride through the air in a chariot drawn by doves. So in *The Tempest*, iv. 1: "I met her deity cutting the clouds towards Paphos, and her son *dove-drawn* with her."

¹¹ "*Obligèd faith*" is *plighted* faith, or faith made obligatory by solemn vows, as in marriage.

¹² *Younker* meant a *youngster*, or a young *gallant*.

¹³ "*Long abode*" is long *tarrying*, or long *delay*.

When you shall please to play the thieves for wives,
I'll watch as long for you then. Come, approach ;
Here dwells my father Jew. — Ho ! who's within ?

Enter JESSICA, above, in Boy's clothes.

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

Lor. Lorenzo, and thy love.

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

Lor. Heaven and thy thoughts are witness that thou art.

Jes. Here, catch this casket ; it is worth the pains.
I'm glad 'tis night, you do not look on me,
For I am much ashamed of my exchange :¹⁴
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see
The pretty follies that themselves commit ;
For, if they could, Cupid himself would blush
To see me thus transformèd to a boy.

Lor. Descend, for you must be my torch-bearer.

Jes. What, must I hold a candle to my shames ?
They in themselves, good sooth, are too-too light.¹⁵
Why, 'tis an office of discovery, love ;
And I should be obscured.

Lor. So are you, sweet,
Even in the lovely garnish of a boy.¹⁶
But come at once ;
For the close¹⁷ night doth play the runaway,
And we are stay'd for at Bassanio's feast.

¹⁴ Her *change* of dress ; referring to her masculine attire.

¹⁵ A pun implied of light in a material and a moral sense.

¹⁶ Another pun. Jessica means that she ought to be hidden ; Lorenzo that her brightness is disguised.

¹⁷ *Close* is *secret*, properly ; here, what conceals or keeps dark,

Jes. I will make fast the doors, and gild myself
With some more ducats, and be with you straight.

[*Exit above.*]

Gra. Now, by my hood, a Gentile,¹⁸ and no Jew.

Lor. Beshrew me but¹⁹ I love her heartily ;
For she is wise, if I can judge of her ;
And fair she is, if that mine eyes be true ;
And true she is, as she hath proved herself ;
And therefore, like herself, wise, fair, and true,
Shall she be placèd in my constant soul. —

Enter JESSICA, below.

What, art thou come? — On, gentlemen ; away !
Our masquing mates by this time for us stay.

[*Exit with JESSICA and SALARINO.*]

Enter ANTONIO.

Ant. Who's there ?

Gra. Signior Antonio !

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

Gra. I'm glad on't : I desire no more delight
Than to be under sail and gone to-night.

[*Exeunt.*]

¹⁸ Gratiano is disguised with a mask, and in swearing by his hood he implies a likening of himself to a hooded monk swearing by his monastic character. — There is also a play on the word *gentile*, which signifies both a *heathen* and *one well-born*.

¹⁹ Here *but* has the force of *if not* ; — “ Beshrew me *if I do not* love her.” So in *Othello*, iii. 2 : “ Perdition catch my soul *but* I do love thee ! ” The exceptive *but*, as it is called ; from *be out*. — *Beshrew me* is an old adjuration, equivalent to *confound me*, or *plague take me*.

SCENE VI. — *Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.*

Flourish of cornets. Enter PORTIA, with the Prince of Morocco, and their Trains.

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

Mor. The first, of gold, 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?

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

Mor. Some god direct my judgment ! Let me see ;
I will survey 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 ?¹
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
As much as he deserves ! — Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand :
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,

¹ Alluding to the silver light of the Moon, or rather to the virgin Diana, who was the Moon-goddess of old mythology.

Thou dost deserve enough ; and yet enough
 May not extend so far as to the lady :
 And yet to be afeard of my deserving,
 Were but a weak disabling² 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,³ this mortal-breathing saint :
 Th' Hyrcanian deserts⁴ and the vasty wilds
 Of wide Arabia are as throughfares now
 For princes to come view fair Portia :
 The watery kingdom, whose ambitious head
 Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar
 To stop the foreign spirits ; but they come,
 As o'er a brook, to see fair Portia.
 One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
 Is't like that lead contains her ? 'Twere damnation
 To think so base a thought : it were too gross
 To rib her cerecloth⁵ in the obscure grave.

² *Disabling* here has the sense of *disparaging* or *depreciating*.

³ Christians often made long pilgrimages to kiss the shrine of a saint, that is, the place where a saint's bones were enshrined. And Portia, because she enshrines so much excellence, though still but "a traveller between life and death," is compared to such a hallowed shrine. *Shrine*, however, was sometimes used for *statue*, and so it may be here.

⁴ A wilderness of indefinite extent south of the Caspian Sea. — *Vasty* is *waste*, *desolate*, or *void*. So Bacon has the noun in his *Advancement of Learning* : "Their excursions into the limits of physical causes have bred a *vastness* and solitude in that tract."

⁵ That is, lead were unworthy even to enclose her cerements, or her

Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
 Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?⁶
 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
 Stampèd in gold, but that's insculp'd upon;⁷
 But here an angel in a golden bed
 Lies all within. — Deliver me the key:
 Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

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

Mor. O Hell! what have we here?
 A carrion Death,⁸ 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.*⁹

shroud. The Poet elsewhere has *rib* in the sense of *enclose* or *protect*: in *Cymbeline*, iii. 1, he speaks of England as "Neptune's park, *ribbed* and *paled* in with rocks unscalable and roaring waters."

⁶ This is said to have been just the ratio of silver and gold in 1600. Now it is less than as one to sixteen. — *Undervalued* is *inferior in value*. See page 121, note 39.

⁷ *Insculp'd upon* is *carved* or *engraved on the outside*. — The *angel* was so called from its having on one side a figure of Michael piercing the dragon. It is said to have been worth about ten shillings. Shakespeare has many punning allusions to it; as in *The Merry Wives*, i. 3: "She has all the rule of her husband's purse; he hath *legions of angels*."

⁸ A human skull from which the flesh has all decayed.

⁹ His courtship, which had been made warm by hope, is now chilled and frozen by an entire and hopeless failure.

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.¹⁰

[*Exit with his Train. Cornets.*

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

SCENE VII. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter SALARINO and SOLANIO.

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

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

Salar. He came too late, the ship was under sail ;
 But there the Duke was given to understand
 That in a gondola¹ were seen together
 Lorenzo and his amorous Jessica :
 Besides, Antonio certified the Duke
 They were not with Bassanio in his ship.

Solan. I never heard a passion² so confused,
 So strange-outrageous, and so variable,
 As the dog Jew did utter in the streets :
My daughter ! O my ducats ! O my daughter !
Fled with a Christian ! O my Christian ducats ! —

¹⁰ *Part for depart.* So the word was frequently used.

¹ *Gondola* is the name of the vehicles in which people ride through the liquid streets of Venice. In Shakespeare's time Venice was the common resort of all who went abroad to see the world ; as much so, perhaps, as Paris is now : so that to "have swam in a gondola" was a common phrase for having travelled.

² *Passion* for *passionate outcry* ; the cause for the effect.

*Justice ! the law ! my ducats, and my daughter !
A sealèd bag, two sealèd bags of ducats,
Of double ducats, stol'n from me by my daughter !
And jewels, — two stones, two rich and precious stones,
Stol'n by my daughter ! — Justice ! find the girl !
She hath the stones upon her, and the ducats !*

Salar. Why, all the boys in Venice follow him,
Crying, — his stones, his daughter, and his ducats.

Solan. Let good Antonio look he keep his day,
Or he shall pay for this.

Salar. Marry, well remember'd.

I reason'd ³ with a Frenchman yesterday,
Who told me, in the narrow seas that part
The French and English, there miscarried
A vessel of our country richly fraught : ⁴
I thought upon Antonio when he told me ;
And wish'd in silence that it were not his.

Solan. You were best to tell Antonio what you hear ;
Yet do't not suddenly, for it may grieve him.

Salar. A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
I saw Bassanio and Antonio part :
Bassanio told him he would make some speed
Of his return : he answer'd, *Do not so ;
Slubber*⁵ *not business for my sake, Bassanio,
But stay the very riping of the time ;
And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love :* ⁶

³ *Reason*, again, in its old sense of *converse*. See page 122, note 5.

⁴ *Fraught* for *freighted*. The Poet has it repeatedly so ; and many other such shortened preterites.

⁵ To *slubber* is to do a thing carelessly. So in Fuller's *Worthies of Yorkshire* : "Slightly *slubbing* it over, doing something for show, and nothing to purpose."

⁶ *Mind of love* probably means *loving mind*, or *mind full of love*. The Poet elsewhere has *mind of honour* for *honourable mind*.

*Be merry ; and employ your chiefest thoughts
To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently⁷ become you there.*

And even then, his eye being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible⁸
He wrung Bassanio's hand ; and so they parted.

Solan. I think he only loves the world for him.
I pray thee, let us go and find him out,
And quicken his embracèd heaviness⁹
With some delight or other.

Salar. Do we so. [Exeunt.

SCENE VIII. — Belmont. A Room in PORTIA'S House.

Enter NERISSA with a Servant.

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

Flourish of Cornets. Enter the Prince of ARRAGON, PORTIA,
and their Trains.

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

Arra. I am enjoind by oath t' observe three things :
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose ; next, if I fail

⁷ *Conveniently* is properly or fittingly. — *Ostents* for shows or manifestations. See page 145, note 34.

⁸ *Sensible* for sensitive or tender. The Poet has it repeatedly so.

⁹ That is, enliven the sadness which he clings to or cherishes.

Of the right casket, never in my life
 To woo a maid in way of marriage ; lastly,
 If I do fail in fortune of my choice,
 Immediately to leave you and be gone.

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

Arra. And so have I address'd¹ 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
 By² the fool multitude, that choose by show,

Not learning more than the fond³ 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.⁴

I will not choose what many men desire,
 Because I will not jump⁵ 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

¹ *Address'd* is *prepared* or *made ready*; a common usage of the time. So in *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 4: "Address yourself to entertain them sprightly."

² *By*, again, where we should use *of*. See page 124, note 12.

³ Here, as commonly in Shakespeare, *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. 1: "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."

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 !⁶
 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 :
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
 I will assume desert. — Give me a key,
 And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

[*He opens the silver casket.*

Por. Too long a pause for that which you find there.

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 !
Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.
 Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
 Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?

Por. T' offend, and judge, are distinct offices,
 And of opposèd natures.⁸

Arra. What is here?

[*Reads.*] *The fire seven times tried this :*
Seven times tried that judgment is
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss ;

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*.

⁷ *Ruin* here means *refuse* or *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.

Such have but a shadow's bliss.

There be fools alive, I wis,⁹

Silver'd o'er; and so was this.¹⁰

Take what wife you will to bed,¹¹

I will ever be your head: ¹²

So be gone, sir; you are sped.¹³

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.¹⁴

[*Exit with his Train.*]

Por. Thus hath the candle singed the moth.

O, these deliberate fools ! when they do choose,

They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.

Ner. The ancient saying is no heresy, —

Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

Por. Come, draw the curtain, Nerissa.

Enter a Servant.

⁹ To *wis* is to *think*, to *suppose*. Nares derives it from the Saxon *wissan*. The preterite occurs in St. Luke, ii. 49: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

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 *22d Iliad*: "Born all to *wroth* of woe and labour." The original meaning of *wrath* 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.

Serv. Where is my lady?

Por. Here : what would my lord? ¹⁵

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 regreets ; ¹⁶
To wit, besides commends and courteous breath,
Gifts of rich value. Yet I have not seen
So likely an ambassador of love :
A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly Summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord.

Por. No more, I pray thee : I am half afeard
Thou'lt say anon he is some kin to thee,
Thou spend'st such high-day ¹⁷ wit in praising him. —
Come, come, Nerissa ; for I long to see
Quick Cupid's post that comes so mannerly.

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

¹⁵ A sportive reply to the Servant's "Where is *my lady*?" So, in *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!"

¹⁶ *Sensible regreets* are *feeling salutations*; or salutations that may be felt, such as valuable presents. See page 159, note 8.

¹⁷ *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.

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 carcasses 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'd³ ginger, 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 sayest 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 *knapp* 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 fledged ; 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 ; —

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."

let him look to his bond : he was wont to lend money for a Christian courtesy ; — let him look to his bond.

Salar. Why, I am sure, if he forfeit, thou wilt not take his flesh : what's that good for ?

Shy. To bait fish withal : if it will feed nothing else, it will feed my revenge. He hath disgraced me, and hinder'd me half a million ;¹⁰ laugh'd at my losses, mock'd at my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies ; and what's his reason ? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes ? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions ? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is ? If you prick us, do we not bleed ? if you tickle us, do we not laugh ? if you poison us, do we not die ? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge ? if we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility ? revenge : if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example ? why, revenge. The villainy you teach me, I will execute ; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.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.*

Enter TUBAL.

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." See vol. ii., page 225, note 11.

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

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

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

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;¹² 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;¹³ 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.

Por. I pray you, tarry; pause a day or two
 Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
 I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
 There's something tells me — but it is not love —
 I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
 Hate counsels not in such a quality.
 But, lest you should not understand me well, —
 And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —
 I would detain you here some month or two
 Before you venture for me. I could teach you
 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,

¹² 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.

¹³ To *fee* an officer, or a lawyer, is to engage him by paying for his services in advance. Acceptance of such payment *binds* him.

That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
 They have o'erlook'd¹ 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,²
 Let fortune go to Hell for it, not I.
 I speak too long ; but 'tis to peise³ the time,
 To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
 To stay you from election.

Bass. Let me choose ;
 For, as I am, I live upon the rack.

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

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

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

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

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.

⁴ The Poet often has *doubt* for *fear* or *suspect* ; here he has *fear* in the sense of *doubt*. "Fear the *not* of enjoying 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*.

Por. Well then, confess, and live.

Bass. Confess, and love,

Had been the very sum of my confession:

O happy torment, when my torturer

Doth teach me answers for deliverance!⁶

But let me to my fortune and the caskets.

[*Curtain drawn from before the caskets.*]

Por. 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;

And what is music then? then music is

Even as the flourish when true subjects bow

To a new-crownèd 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

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.

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.*

To the sea-monster : ¹⁰ I stand for sacrifice ;
 The rest aloof are the Dardanian wives,
 With bleare'd 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, and the following Song, whilst BASSANIO comments on
 the Caskets to himself.*

*Tell me where is fancy bred,¹¹
 Or in the heart or in the head ?
 How begot, how nourish'd ?*

Reply. *It is engender'd in the eyes,
 With gazing fed ; and fancy dies
 In the cradle where it lies.*

*Let us all ring fancy's knell ;
 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.

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 clew, 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 which has misled the other suitors, who, as Portia says, "have the wisdom by their wit to lose." And the illusion thus engendered 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 distrust 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*.

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 approve¹³ 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 of sand,¹⁴ wear yet upon their chins
 The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars ;
 Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk !¹⁵
 And these assume but valour's excrement¹⁶
 To render them redoubted. Look on beauty,
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight ;¹⁷
 Which therein works a miracle in nature,
 Making them lightest that wear most of it :¹⁸
 So are those crispèd snaky golden locks,
 Which make such wanton gambols with the wind,

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. Shakespeare has *lily-livered* and *milk-livered* in the same sense ; and Falstaff 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 *exresco*, 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 152, note 15. Here, however, it is between *light* as opposed to *heavy*, and *light* in the sense of *vanity*.

Upon supposèd fairness,¹⁹ often known
 To be the dowry of a second head,
 The skull that bred them in the sepulchre.²⁰
 Thus ornament is but the guilèd²¹ shore
 To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf
 Veiling an Indian feature ;²² in a word,
 The seeming truth which cunning times put on
 T' entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
 Hard food for Midas,²³ 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 !

Por. How all the other passions fleet to air, —
 As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,

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 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, beinonster 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 revoke the favour.

✓ 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 !²⁴ What demi-god
 Hath come so near creation ? Move these eyes ?
 Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
 Seem they in motion ? Here are sever'd lips,
 Parted with sugar-breath : so sweet a bar
 Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
 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.²⁵ Yet look, how far
 The substance of my praise doth wrong this shadow
 In underprising it, so far this shadow
 Doth limp behind the substance. Here's the scroll,
 The continent²⁶ and summary of my fortune :

[*Reads.*] *You that choose not by the view,
 Chance as fair, and choose as true !*

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."

²⁵ Unfurnished with a *companion*. In Fletcher's *Lover's Progress*, Alcidon says to Clarangé, on delivering Lidian's challenge, which Clarangé accepts,

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 old English, is simply that which *contains* something.

*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.²⁷

Like one of two contending in a prize,
That thinks he hath done well in people's eyes,
Hearing applause and universal shout,
Giddy in spirit, still gazing, in a doubt
Whether those peals of praise be his or no ;
So, thrice-fair lady, stand I, even so ;
As doubtful whether what I see be true,
Until confirm'd, sign'd, ratified by you.

Por. You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand,
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,

²⁷ "I come in accordance with the written direction to give a kiss and to receive the lady."

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.

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,
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 belovèd 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 !

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

Gra. 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

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.

³⁰ " You have so much joy yourselves in each other, that you cannot grudge any to me."

And, when your Honours mean to solemnize
The bargain of your faith, I do beseech you,
Even at that time I may be married too.

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

Gra. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours :
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid ;³¹
You loved, I loved ; for intermission³²
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.

Por. Is this true, Nerissa ?

Ner. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

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

Gra. Yes, faith, my lord.

Bass. Our feast shall³³ be much honour'd in your marriage.

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

Ner. What, and stake down ?

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 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 he had been as prompt to fall in love as Bassanio.

³³ *Shall* for *will* ; the two being often used indiscriminately.

Gra. No ; we shall ne'er win at that sport, and stake down.
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 very³⁴ friends and countrymen,
Sweet Portia, welcome.

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

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

Solan. I did, my lord ;
And I have reason for'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. [*BASSANIO reads the letter.*]

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

Por. There are some shrewd³⁵ contents in yond same paper,

³⁴ *Very*, here, is *real* or *true* ; like the Latin *verus*.

³⁵ The proper meaning of *shrewd* is *sharp* or *biting* ; hence *painful*.

That steal the colour from Bassanio's cheek :
Some dear friend dead ; else nothing in the world
Could turn so much the constitution
Of any constant man. What, worse and worse !—
With leave, Bassanio ; I am half yourself,
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 ³⁶ 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 ³⁷ 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.

³⁶ *State* and *estate* were used interchangeably. So, a little before, we have *estate* for *state*, that is, *condition* : " Will show you his *estate*."

³⁷ Here, as often, *mere* is *absolute*, *entire*. So in *Othello*, ii. 2 : " Certain tidings importing the *mere* perdition of the Turkish fleet."

Besides, it should ³⁸ appear that, if he had
 The present money to discharge the Jew,
 He would not take it. Never did I know
 A creature, that did bare the shape of man,
 So keen and greedy to confound ³⁹ 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, ⁴⁰ have all persuaded with him ;
 But none can drive him from the envious ⁴¹ plea
 Of forfeiture, of justice, and his bond.

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

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

Bass. The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
 The best-condition'd and unwearied ⁴² spirit
 In doing courtesies ; and one in whom
 The ancient Roman honour more appears
 Than any that draws breath in Italy.

Por. What sum owes he the Jew ?

³⁸ *Should*, again, where present usage requires *would*.

³⁹ *To ruin*, to *destroy*, is the more common meaning of *to confound*, in Shakespeare and the writers of his time.

⁴⁰ Of greatest *importance* or *consequence*. See page 119, note 27.

⁴¹ *Envious* for *malicious*. So the word was constantly used. Also *envy* for *malice* or *hatred*.

⁴² *Condition'd* is *tempered* or *disposed*. See page 127, note 25.—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 137, note 9.

Bass. For me three thousand ducats.

Por.

What, no more?

Pay him six thousand, and deface the bond ;
 Double six thousand, and then treble that,⁴³
 Before a friend of this description⁴⁴
 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 :⁴⁵
 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 might but see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use*

⁴³ 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*."

⁴⁴ 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. 1; 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 it need not be pronounced so now, save when the rhyme requires it, as is very often the case in Spenser.

⁴⁵ *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*."

your pleasure : if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

Por. O love, dispatch all business, and be gone !

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

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. — *Venice. A Street.*

Enter SHYLOCK, SALARINO, ANTONIO, and Jailer.

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

Ant. 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.

Ant. I pray thee, hear me speak.

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

[*Exit.*

Salar. It is the most impenetrable cur
That ever kept² with men.

Ant. Let him alone :

¹ *Fond*, again, in its old sense of *foolish*.

² *Kept*, here, is *dwelt* or *lived* ; a common usage of the time.

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.

Ant. The Duke cannot deny the course of law,
 For the commodity³ 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.⁴ Therefore, go :
 These griefs and losses have so 'bated me,
 That I shall hardly spare a pound of flesh
 To-morrow to my bloody creditor. —
 Well, 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.

Lor. Madam, although I speak it in your presence,
 You have a noble and a true conceit¹
 Of god-like amity ; which appears most strongly
 In bearing thus the absence of your lord.

³ That is, *because of the commercial intercourse.* For is often thus equivalent to *because of.*

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.

¹ *Conceit*, again, for *conception, idea, or judgment.* See page 117, note 21.

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.

Por. 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 ;
 Therefore no more of it : hear other things.
 Lorenzo, I commit into your hands
 The husbandry ⁵ 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

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 *form* or *shape*. So in *Richard III.*: "I that am curtail'd of this fair *proportion*."

⁵ The *ordering*. The literal meaning of *husband* is *house-band*, which is here implied. Of course *manage* is *management*,

Not to deny this imposition,⁶
The which my love and some necessity
Now lays upon you.

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

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

Lor. Fair thoughts and happy hours attend on you !

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

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

[*Exeunt* JESSICA and LORENZO.]

Now, Balthazar,
As I have ever found thee honest-true,
So let me find thee still. Take this same letter,
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 speed⁷
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.*]

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 181, note 44.

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.

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

Ner. Shall they see us ?

Por. They shall, Nerissa ; but in such a habit,
That they shall think we are accomplishéd
With that we lack. I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace ;
And speak between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice ; and turn two mincing steps
Into a manly stride ; and speak of frays,
Like a fine-bragging youth ; and tell quaint⁹ lies,
How honourable ladies sought my love,
Which I denying, they fell sick and died ;
I could not do withal :¹⁰ 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,¹¹
Which I will practise.

Ner. Why, shall we turn to men ?

Por. Fie, what a question's that,
If thou wert near a lewd interpreter !
But come ; I'll tell thee all my whole device
When I am in my coach, which stays for us

⁹ *Quaint* is *ingenious, clever, or cunning*. See page 147, note 4.

¹⁰ A phrase of the time, signifying *I could not help it*. So in Fletcher's *Little French Lawyer* : "*I cannot do withal ; I have spoke and spoke ; I am betrayed and lost too.*" And in Chapman's *May-Day*, i. 1 : "*It is my infirmity, and I cannot do withal, to die for't.*"

¹¹ *Jack* was a common term of contempt.

At the park-gate ; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure twenty miles to-day. [Exeunt.

SCENE V. — *The Same. A Garden.*

Enter LAUNCELOT and JESSICA.

Laun. Yes, truly ; for, look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children : therefore, I promise you, I fear you.¹ I was always plain with you, and so now I speak my agitation² of the matter : therefore be of good cheer ; for, truly, I think you are damn'd. There is but one hope in it that can do you any good ; and that is but a kind of bastard hope neither.

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

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

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

Laun. Truly, then, I fear you are damned both by father and mother : thus when I shun Scylla, your father, I fall into Charybdis,³ your mother : well, you are gone both ways.

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

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

¹ Fear *for* you, or on your account. So in *Richard III.*, i. 1: "The king is sickly, weak, and melancholy, and his physicians *fear* him mightily."

² *Agitation* is a Gobbism for *cogitation*.

³ This refers to a proverbial saying which has been traced back as far as to Saint Augustine: "Ne iterum quasi fugiens Charybdim, in Scyllam incurras." Halliwell quotes an old saying to the same purpose: "He got out of the mucky and fell into the pucksy."

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

Enter LORENZO.

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

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

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

Laun. It is much that the Moor should be more than reason : but if she be less than an honest woman,⁴ she is indeed more than I took her for.

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

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

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

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

Lor. Will you cover, then, sir ?

Laun. Not so, sir, neither ; I know my duty.⁵

Lor. Yet more quarrelling with occasion !⁶ Wilt thou show the whole wealth of thy wit in an instant ? I pray thee,

⁴ What with the quibbles between *Moor* and *more*, and between *more* and *less*, Launcelot here approves himself a pretty swift punster.

⁵ Launcelot is playing upon the two senses of *cover*, which was used both for setting the table and for putting on the hat.

⁶ That is, going *at odds* or *in discord* with the occasion. Launcelot's punning is irrelevant to the matter in hand ; *out of time*.

understand a plain man in his plain meaning: go to thy fellows, bid them cover the table, serve in the meat, and we will come in to dinner.

Laun. For the table, sir, it shall be served in; for the meat, sir, it shall be covered; for your coming in to dinner, sir, why, let it be as humours and conceits shall govern.

[*Exit.*

Lor. O dear discretion, how his words are suited!
The Fool hath planted in his memory
An army of good words; and I do know
A many fools, that stand in better place,
Garnish'd like him, that for a tricky word
Defy the matter.⁷ — How cheer'st thou, Jessica?
And now, good sweet, say thy opinion:
How dost thou like the Lord Bassanio's wife?

Jes. Past all expressing. It is very meet
The Lord Bassanio live an upright life;
For, having such a blessing in his lady,
He finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth;
And if on Earth he do not merit it,⁸
In reason he should never come to Heaven.
Why, if two gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And Portia one, there must be something else
Pawn'd with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.

Lor. Even such a husband

⁷ To *defy* was often used for to *renounce*, *forsake*, or *give up*. So in *Henry the Fourth*, i. 3: "All studies here I solemnly *defy*, save how to gall and pinch this Bolingbroke." Shakespeare alludes, no doubt, to the habit, which then infected all classes, of sacrificing their matter, or letting it go, in their fondness of verbal trickery and trifling, or in their chase after puns and plays upon words. — *Tricksy* is *artful*, *adroit*, or what we might call *smartish*.

⁸ It refers to *blessing*, in the second line above.

Hast thou of me as she is for a wife.

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

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

Jes. Nay, let me praise you while I have a stomach.⁹

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

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

ACT IV.

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

Enter the Duke, the Magnificoes, ANTONIO, BASSANIO, GRATIANO, SOLANIO, SALARINO, and others.

Duke. What, is Antonio here ?

Ant. Ready, so please your Grace.

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

Ant. I have heard
Your Grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify¹
His rigorous course ; but, since he stands obdurate,
And that² no lawful means can carry me

⁹ An equivoque on *stomach*, which is used in the two senses of inclination to praise and of appetite for food.

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.

Out of his envy's³ 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 malice⁴
 To the last hour of act ; and then 'tis thought
 Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse,⁵ more strange
 Than is thy strange-apparent cruelty ;
 And, where⁶ thou now exact'st the penalty, —
 Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh, —
 Thou wilt not only loose⁷ the forfeiture,
 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

³ *Envy* in its old sense of *malice* or *hatred*.

⁴ "Keepst 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*.

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.

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
 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 ;¹³
 Some, that are mad if they behold a cat ;
 And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
 Cannot contain their urine for affection.¹⁴

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 ground of reason could be alleged. Thus, if a man had an individual crotchet 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 affectation.

¹³ A pig's head as roasted for the table. In England, a boar's head was 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."

¹⁴ Here, again, *for* is equivalent to *because of*. See page 133, note 3.—

Masters of passion sway it to the mood
 Of what it likes or loathes.¹⁵ 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,¹⁶ but of force ¹⁷
 Must yield to such inevitable shame
 As to offend, himself being offended ;
 So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
 More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
 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 ?

Ant. I pray you, think you question ¹⁸ with the Jew.
 You may as well go stand upon the beach,
 And bid the main ¹⁹ flood bate his usual height ;
 You may as well use question with the wolf,

Affection, in this place, means much the same as *impulse* ; more properly, the state of *being affected* or *moved* by any external object or impression.

¹⁵ An axiomatic saying, brought in here with signal aptness. Even the greatest masters of passion move and rule it according as it is predisposed. Shakespeare's power lies partly in that fact : hence, in his work, the passions are rooted in the persons, instead of being merely pasted on.

¹⁶ "*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 other instances.

¹⁷ *Of force* is the same as *perforce* ; *of necessity*, or *necessarily*.

¹⁸ *Question*, here, like *reason* before, has the sense of *talk* or *converse*. The usage was common, and Shakespeare has it repeatedly.

¹⁹ *Great, strong, mighty* are among the old senses of *main*.

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,²⁰ and the Jew his will.

Bass. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

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

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

Shy. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
 You have among you many a 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,

²⁰ " 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*.

Unless Bellario, a learnèd 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.

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

Enter NERISSA, dressed like a Lawyer's Clerk.

Duke. Came you from Padua, from Bellario ?

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

[*Presents a letter.*]

Bass. Why dost thou whet thy knife so earnestly ?

Shy. To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.

Gra. Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew,
Thou makest thy knife keen ; but no metal can,
No, not the hangman's axe, bear half the keenness
Of thy sharp envy. Can no prayers pierce thee ?

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

Gra. O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog !
And for thy life let justice be accused.²¹
Thou almost makest me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with Pythagoras,²²

²¹ " Let justice be impeached or arraigned for suffering thee to live."

²² 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

That souls of animals infuse themselves
 Into the trunks of men : thy currish spirit
 Govern'd a wolf, who hang'd for human slaughter,
 Even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet,
 And, whilst thou lay'st in thy unhallow'd dam,
 Infused itself in thee ; for thy desires
 Are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous.

Shy. Till thou canst rail the seal from off my bond,
 Thou but offend'st thy lungs to speak²³ 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 learnèd doctor to our court. —
 Where is he ?

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

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

Clerk. [Reads.] *Your Grace shall understand, that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick : but, in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome ; his name is Balthazar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant : we 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*

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."

²³ That is, *in speaking*. The infinitive used gerundively again.

no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation ;²⁴ for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

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

Enter PORTIA, dressed like a Doctor of Laws.

Give me your hand. Came you from old Bellario?

Por. I did, my lord.

Duke. You're welcome : take your place.
Are you acquainted with the difference
That holds this present question²⁵ in the court?

Por. I am informèd throughly²⁶ of the cause.
Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?

Duke. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.

Por. Is your name Shylock?

Shy. Shylock is my name.

Por. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow ;
Yet in such rule, that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn²⁷ you as you do proceed. —
[*To ANTO.*] You stand within his danger,²⁸ do you not?

Ant. Ay, so he says.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

²⁴ "Let his youthfulness be no hindrance to his being reverently esteemed."

²⁵ "The controversy for the deciding of which the present *inquiry* or *investigation* is held." *Question* in its proper Latin sense.

²⁶ *Through* and *thorough* are but different forms of the same word.

²⁷ To *impugn* is to *controvert*, to *oppose* ; literally, to *fight against*.

²⁸ "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."

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

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd ;²⁹

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 :
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest :³⁰ it becomes
 The thronèd monarch better than his crown ;
 His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,³¹
 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.³² I have spoke thus much

²⁹ 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."

³⁰ 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.

³¹ The *thing attributed* or *assigned* for the purpose of *inspiring* awe and of *symbolizing* majesty.

³² "Portia, referring the Jew to the Christian doctrine of Salvation, and 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

To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;
Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

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

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money ?

Bass. Yes, here I tender'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.³³ And, I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority :
To do a great right, do a little wrong ;
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be ; there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree establish'd :
'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 !

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

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

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

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in Heaven :
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul ?
No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit ;³⁴

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."

³³ *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.

³⁴ *Forfeit* for *forfeited*. This shortened preterite has occurred more than once before. See page 158, note 4.

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.

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

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

Shy. O noble judge ! O excellent young man !

Por. — For the intent and purpose of the law
 Hath full relation to the penalty,³⁵
 Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true. O wise and upright judge !
 How much more elder³⁶ art thou than thy looks !

Por. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

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

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

Shy. I have them ready.³⁷

³⁵ That is, the law relating to contracts is fully applicable in this case.

³⁶ Such double comparatives are frequent. So we have *more better, more braver*, and many others. Good grammar then.

³⁷ *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: "Balances, or a payre of *balance*."

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

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond?

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

'Twere good you do so much for charity.

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

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

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

Give me your hand, Bassanio : fare you well !

Grieve not that I am fall'n to this for you ;

For herein Fortune shows herself more kind

Than is her custom : it is still her use ³⁸

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 ; ³⁹

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

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. ⁴⁰

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife

Which ⁴¹ 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 :

³⁸ It is *ever* her *custom* or *wont*. *Still* and *use* in these senses occur very often. The usage was common.

³⁹ "Speak well of me when I am dead ;" or, perhaps, "Tell the world that I died like a man."

⁴⁰ An equivoque on *heart* ; and it rather heightens the pathos.

⁴¹ *Which* and *who* were used indifferently, both of persons and things.

I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

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

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

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

Shy. [*Aside.*] These be the Christian husbands ! I have
a daughter ;
Would any of the stock of Bárrabas ⁴²
Had been her husband rather than a Christian !—
We trifle time : I pray thee, pursue sentence.

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

Shy. Most rightful judge !

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

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

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

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

Shy. Is that the law ?

Por. Thyself shalt see the Act :

⁴² Shakespeare seems to have followed the pronunciation usual in the theatre, *Barabbas* being sounded *Barabas* throughout Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

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

Gra. O learnèd 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.

Por. Soft!

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

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

Por. Therefore prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less nor more
But just a pound of flesh: if thou 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
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.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

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

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

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

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

Shy. Why, then the Devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew:

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

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

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our 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.⁴³

Por. Ay, for the State ; not for Antonio.⁴⁴

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,

⁴³ "Submission on your part may move me to reduce it to a fine."

⁴⁴ 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.

When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

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

Ant. So please my lord the Duke and all the court
To quit the fine⁴⁵ for one half of his goods,
I am content ; so he will let me have
The other half in use, to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter :⁴⁶
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 pronouncèd here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew? what dost thou say?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

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

Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

⁴⁵ 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*.

⁴⁶ "That is, in trust for Shylock during his life, for the purpose of securing 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 declared to the one after the death of the other, or the estate would be rendered insecure to the future possessor. This is called a conveyance to *uses*." The anonymous author of the foregoing adds, that Shakespeare has rendered the old Latin law phrase pertaining to the case, "with all the strictness 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."

Gra. In christening shalt thou have two godfathers :
Had I been judge, thou shouldst have had ten more,⁴⁷
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

[*Exit* SHYLOCK.

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your Grace of pardon :⁴⁸
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.

[*Exeunt the Duke, Magnificoes, and Train.*

Bass. Most worthy gentlemen, I and my friend
Have by your wisdom been this day acquitted
Of grievous penalties ; in lieu whereof,⁴⁹
Three thousand ducats, due unto the Jew,
We freely cope⁵⁰ your courteous pains withal.

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

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

⁴⁷ 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."

⁴⁸ An old English idiom now obsolete. So in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, iii. 1 : "I shall desire you of more acquaintance."

⁴⁹ In *return* for which, or in *consideration* of which. So the phrase is, I think, always used in Shakespeare.

⁵⁰ The only instance I have met with of *cope* being used in the sense of *requite*. 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*.

I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

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

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

[*To BASS.*] And, for your love, I'll take this ring from you.
Do not draw back your hand : I'll take no more ;
And you in love shall⁵¹ not deny me this.

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

Por. I will have nothing else but only this ;
And now methinks I have a mind to it.

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

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

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

Por. That 'scuse serves many men to save their gifts.
An if⁵² 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.]

⁵¹ *Shall*, again, where we should use *will*. See page 177, note 33.

⁵² *An if* is an old reduplication, with the sense merely of *if*. So the old writers use *an*, or *if*, or *an if*, indifferently.

Ant. My Lord Bassanio, let him have the ring :
Let his deservings, and my love withal,
Be valued 'gainst your wife's commandment.⁵³

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.*

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

Enter GRATIANO.

Gra. Fair sir, you are well o'erta'en :
My Lord Bassanio, upon more advice,¹
Hath sent you here this ring, and doth entreat
Your company at dinner.

Por. That cannot be :
His ring I do accept most thankfully ;
And so, I pray you, tell him : furthermore,
I pray you, show my youth old Shylock's house.

⁵³ *Commandment* is properly four syllables here, as if written *commandment*. And so, in fact, it is spelt in the old copies. Perhaps the old spelling should in such cases be retained.

¹ Upon *further consideration*. See page 120, note 31. 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."

Gra. That will I do.

Ner. 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.

Por. Thou mayst, I warrant. We shall have old² swearing
That they did give the rings away to men ;
But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
Away ! make haste : thou know'st where I will tarry.

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

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*Belmont. Pleasure-grounds of PORTIA'S House.*

Enter LORENZO and JESSICA.

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

Jes. In such a night
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew,

² *Old* was a frequent intensive in colloquial speech ; very much as *huge* is used now. So in *Much Ado*, v. 2 : "Yonder's *old* coil at home." And in *The Merry Wives*, i. 4 : "Here will be an *old* abusing of God's patience and the king's English."

¹ 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.

And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,²
And ran dismay'd away.

Lor. In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow³ in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage.

Jes. In such a night
Medea gather'd the enchanted herbs
That did renew old Æson.⁴

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

Jes. 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.

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

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

² 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*.

³ Spenser in like sort makes the willow a symbol of forsaken love. So in *The Faerie Queene*, i. I, 9: "The willow, worne of forlorne paramours."

⁴ Twice before in this play we have had allusions to the story of Jason and his voyage to Colchos in quest of the golden fleece. Medea, daughter to the King of Colchos, 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.

Enter STEPHANO.

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

Steph. A friend.

Lor. A friend! what friend? your name, I pray you, friend?

Steph. Stepháno is my name;⁵ 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.⁶

Lor. Who comes with her?

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

Lor. He is not, nor we have not heard from him. —
But go we in, I pray thee, Jessica,
And ceremoniously let us prepare
Some welcome for the mistress of the house.

Enter LAUNCELOT.

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

Lor. Who calls?

Laun. Sola! — did you see Master Lorenzo and Mistress
Lorenzo? — sola, sola!

Lor. Leave hollaing, man: here.

Laun. Sola! — where? where?

Lor. Here.

Laun. Tell him there's a post come from my master, with

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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. The Poet has the same old thought still more sweetly in two other places.

his horn full of good news :⁷ my master will be here ere morning. [*Exit.*

Lor. Sweet soul, let's in, and there expect their coming.
 And yet no matter : why should we go in?—
 My friend Stepháno, signify, I pray you,
 Within the house, your mistress is at hand ;
 And bring your music forth into the air.— [*Exit* STEPHANO.
 How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
 Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
 Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night
 Become the touches of sweet harmony.
 Sit, Jessica. Look, how the floor of Heaven
 Is thick inlaid with patines⁸ of bright gold :
 There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
 But in his motion like an angel sings,
 Still quiring⁹ to the young-eyed cherubins :
 Such harmony is in immortal souls ;¹⁰

⁷ 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."

⁸ A small plate, used in the administration of the Eucharist : it was commonly of gold, or silver-gilt.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ So in Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, v. 38 : "Touching musical har-

But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it. —

Enter Musicians.

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

[*Music.*

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

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive :
For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
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 : ¹¹
Let no such man be trusted.¹² Mark the music.

mony, 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.*

¹¹ *Erebus* was the darkest and gloomiest region of Hades.

¹² 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

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams !
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

Ner. When the Moon shone, we did not see the candle.

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

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

Por. Nothing is good, I see, without respect :¹³
Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day.

Ner. Silence bestows that virtue on it, madam.

Por. The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
When neither is attended ; and I think
The nightingale, if she should sing by day,
When every goose is cackling, would be thought

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 understanding they strike a note most full of harmony. Whatsoever is harmonically composed delights in harmony ; which makes me much distrust the symmetry of those heads which declaim against all church-music. For myself, 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 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."

¹³ 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. This explanation is justified by what Portia says in the second speech after.

No better a musician than the wren.¹⁴
 How many things by season season'd¹⁵ are
 To their right praise and true perfection! —
 Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion,¹⁶
 And would not be awaked. [*Music ceases.*]

Lor. That is the voice,

Or I am much deceived, of Portia.

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

Lor. Dear lady, welcome home.

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

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

Por. Go in, Nerissa ;
 Give order to my servants that they take
 No note at all of our being absent hence ; —
 Nor you, Lorenzo ; — Jessica, nor you. [*A tucket¹⁷ sounds.*]

Lor. Your husband is at hand ; I hear his trumpet :

¹⁴ "The difference is in the hearer's mind, and not in the songs themselves ; 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.

¹⁵ A rather unpleasant jingle in *season* and *season'd*. The meaning is, that, by being rightly *timed*, the things are tempered and made fit for their purpose ; hence *relished*.

¹⁶ 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 favorite with the poets.

¹⁷ 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.

We are no tell-tales, madam ; fear you not.

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

Enter BASSANIO, ANTONIO, GRATIANO, and their Followers.

Bass. We should hold day with the Antipodes,¹⁸
If you would walk in absence of the Sun.

Por. Let me give light, but let me not be light ;¹⁹
For a light wife doth make a heavy husband,
And never be Bassanio so for me :
But God sort all !²⁰ 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.

Por. You should in all sense²¹ be much bound to him,
For, as I hear, he was much bound for you.

Ant. No more than I am well acquitted of.

Por. Sit, you are very welcome to our house :
It must appear in other ways than words,
Therefore I scant this breathing courtesy.²²

Gra. [*To NERISSA.*] By yonder Moon I swear you do
me wrong ;
In faith, I gave it to the judge's clerk :
Would he were gelt that had it, for my part,
Since you do take it, love, so much at heart.

¹⁸ This is making Portia pretty luminous or radiant. To "hold day with the Antipodes" is to have day at the same time with them.

¹⁹ Twice before in these scenes, we have had playing upon *light* : here it is especially graceful and happy. See page 172, note 18.

²⁰ *Sort* here has the sense of the Latin *sortior* : "God allot all," or *dispose* all.

²¹ Is *sense*' used for *reason* here ? Perhaps *all sense* is put for *every sense* or *all senses*. So the Poet has *house*' for *houses*, *horse*' for *horses*, &c.

²² This complimentary form, made up only of *breath*,

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

Gra. 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,²³ *Love me, and leave me not.*

Ner. What talk you of the posy or the value ?
You swore to me, when I did give it you,
That you would wear it till your hour of death ;
And that it should lie with you in your grave :
Though not for me, yet for your vehement oaths,
You should have been respective,²⁴ and have kept it.
Gave it a judge's clerk ! no, God's my judge,
The clerk will ne'er wear hair on's face that had it.

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

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

Gra. Now, by this hand, I gave it to a youth,
A kind of boy ; a little scrubbèd²⁵ boy,
No higher than thysel, the judge's clerk ;
A prating boy, that begg'd it as a fee :
I could not for my heart deny it him.

Por. You were to blame, — I must be plain with you, —
To part so slightly with your wife's first gift ;
A thing stuck on with oaths upon your finger,
And riveted with faith unto your flesh.
I gave my love a ring, and made him swear

²³ Knives were formerly inscribed, by means of *aqua fortis*, with short sentences in distich. The *posy* of a ring was the motto.

²⁴ *Respective* is *considerate* or *regardful* ; in the same sense as *respect* is explained, page 117, note 19. 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 !"

²⁵ *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.

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.

Gra. 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.

Por. What ring gave you, my lord?
 Not that, I hope, which you received of me.

Bass. If I could add a lie unto a fault,
 I would deny it ; but you see my finger
 Hath not the ring upon it,—it is gone.

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

Ner. Nor I in yours
 Till I again see mine.

Bass. Sweet Portia,
 If you did know to whom I gave the ring,
 If you did know for whom I gave the ring,
 And would conceive for what I gave the ring,
 And how unwillingly I left the ring,
 When nought would be accepted but the ring,
 You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

Por. If you had known the virtue of the ring,
 Or half her worthiness that gave the ring,

Or your own honour to contain²⁶ 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,²⁷
 Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me,
 And begg'd the ring ; the which I did deny him,
 And suffer'd him to go displeas'd away ;
 Even he that did uphold the very life
 Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady?
 I was enforced to send it after him :
 I was beset with shame and courtesy ;²⁸
 My honour would not let ingratitude
 So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady ;
 For, by these bless'd candles of the night,²⁹
 Had you been there, I think you would have begg'd
 The ring of me to give the worthy doctor.

Por. Let not that doctor e'er come near my house.

²⁶ *Contain* was sometimes used in the sense of *retain*. So in Bacon's *Essays* : " To *containe* anger from mischief, though it take hold of a man, there be two things."

²⁷ A *Civil Doctor* is a doctor of the Civil Law.

²⁸ "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 *gentle* course. And *Hamlet*, i. 1 : " Well ratified by law and heraldry ; " meaning the law of heraldry.

²⁹ 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."

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

Ner. And I his clerk ; therefore be well advised ³⁰
 How you do leave me to mine own protection.

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

Ant. I am th' unhappy subject of these quarrels.

Por. Sir, grieve not you ; you're welcome notwithstanding.

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

Por. Mark you but that !
 In both my eyes he doubly sees himself ;
 In each eye, one : —swear by your double self,
 And there's an oath of credit.

Bass. Nay, but hear me :
 Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
 I never more will break an oath with thee.

Ant. I once did lend my body for his wealth ;³¹
 Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,

³⁰ *Advised*, as before, for *cautious* or *circumspect*. See page 120, note 31.
 — *Well*, here, has the force of *very*.

³¹ 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.

Had quite miscarried : I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.³²

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

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

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

Por. I had it of him : pardon me, Bassanio ;
For, by this ring, the doctor lay with me.

Ner. And pardon me, my gentle Gratiano ;
For that same scrubbèd boy, the doctor's clerk,
In lieu of this,³³ last night did lie with me.

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

Por. Speak not so grossly. — You are all amazed :
Here is a letter, read it at your leisure ;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario :
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor ;
Nerissa there her clerk : Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And 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 :³⁴
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chancèd on this letter.

³² *Advisedly* is *deliberately* ; much the same as in note 30.

³³ *In lieu of*, again, in its old sense of *in return for*, or in *consideration of*.
See page 206, note 49.

³⁴ *Suddenly* for *unexpectedly* ; as in the *Litany* we pray to be delivered
from "*sudden* death."

Ant. I am dumb.

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

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

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

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

Ant. Sweet lady, you have given me life and living ;³⁵
For here I read for certain that my ships
Are safely come to road.³⁶

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

Ner. 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,

³⁵ Life and the *means of living*. Portia has given Antonio *life* in delivering him from the clutches of Shylock.

³⁶ In ii. 5, when Shylock is bid forth to Bassanio's supper, and Launcelot urges him to go, because "my young master doth expect your reproach," Shylock replies, "So do I his." Of course he expects that reproach through the bankruptcy of Antonio. This would seem to infer that Shylock has some hand in getting up the reports of Antonio's "losses at sea"; which reports, at least some of them, turn out false in the end. Further than this, the Poet leaves us in the dark as to how those reports grew into being and gained belief. Did he mean to have it understood that the Jew exercised his cunning and malice in plotting and preparing them? It appears, at all events, that Shylock knew they were coming, before they came. Yet I suppose the natural impression from the play is, that he lent the ducats and took the bond, on a mere chance of coming at his wish. But he would hardly grasp so eagerly at a bare possibility of revenge, without using means to turn it into something more. This would mark him with much deeper lines of guilt. Why, then, did not Shakespeare bring the matter forward more prominently? Perhaps it was because the doing so would have made Shylock appear too deep a criminal for the degree of interest which his part was meant to carry in the play. In other words, the health of the drama as a work of *comic* art required his criminality to be kept in the background. He comes very near overshadowing the other characters too much, as it is. And Shylock's character is *essentially tragic*; there is none of the proper timber of comedy in him.

After his death, of all he dies possess'd of.

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

Por. 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,³⁷
And we will answer all things faithfully.

Gra. Let it be so : the first inter'gatory
That my Nerissa shall be sworn on is,
Whether till the next night she had rather stay,
Or go to bed now, being two hours to day :
But, were the day come, I should wish it dark,
That I were couching with the doctor's clerk.
Well, while I live I'll fear no other thing
So sore as keeping safe Nerissa's ring. [*Exeunt.*

³⁷ 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.

CRITICAL NOTES.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Page 114. *Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood.*—The old copies have “burghers *on* the flood.” Corrected by Steevens. See the quotation from *As You Like It*, in foot-note 5.

P. 115. *And see my wealthy Andrew dock'd in sand.*—So Rowe. The old copies have “Andrew *docks* in sand.” Hardly worth noting.

P. 115. Salar. *Why, then you are in love.*

Ant.

Fie, fie!—So the old copies, leaving the verse defective. Dyce says, “I have little doubt that Shakespeare wrote ‘*In love! fie, fie!*’”

P. 118.

Who, *I'm very sure,*

If they should speak, would almost damn those ears, &c.—Instead of *who*, the old copies have *when*, leaving *would damn* without a subject. Collier's second folio retains *when*, and changes *would* to *'twould*, which Dyce adopts. The correction of *when* to *who* was made by Rowe.

P. 119. *Is that any thing now?*—The old copies read “*It* is that any thing now.” Hardly deserving of notice, but that Collier retains the old reading, and attempts to explain it.

P. 120. *I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,*

That which I owe is lost.—Instead of *wilful*, Warburton proposed *witless*, and Collier's second folio has *wasteful*. The latter is a plausible change.

ACT I., SCENE 2.

P. 122. *It is no small happiness, therefore, to be seated in the mean.*—So the folio. The quartos have “no *mean* happiness.” I prefer to be without the jingle of *mean* and *mean*.

P. 123. *Will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly, but one who shall rightly love.* — So the first quarto has the latter clause. The other old copies read “who *you* shall rightly love.”

P. 123. *And he makes it a great appropriation to his own good parts, that he can shoe him himself.* — Collier’s second folio reads “*approbation* of his own good parts.” Shakespeare has no other instance of *appropriation*; but he uses *approbation* for *proof*; and in that sense the word certainly accords well with the context.

P. 124. *If a throstle sing, he falls straight a-capering.* — The old copies have *Trassell* for *throstle*. Is *trassell* an old form of *throstle*? Probably *th* was sounded like *t*, in the latter word, and, in the former, *a* as in *what* or in *chap*: so that *trassell* and *trostle* would be but putting different letters for the same sound.

P. 125. *What think you of the Scottish lord, his neighbour?* — So the quartos. The folio substitutes *other* for *Scottish*; doubtless on account of King James. It may be worth noting that Collier’s second folio substitutes *Irish* for *other*.

ACT I., SCENE 3.

P. 128. *There be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves, — I mean pirates.* — So Collier’s second folio; the old copies, “*water theeves, and land theeves*”; which would naturally mean that the *land-thieves* were pirates.

P. 130. *Is he yet possess’d,*

How much we would. — One of the quartos and the folio read “How much *he* would”; the other quarto, “How much *ye* would.” The correction is Walker’s.

P. 131. *Was this inserted to make interest good?* — Collier’s second folio substitutes *inferred* for *inserted*. The Poet uses *infer* for *bring in* or *introduce*, and that meaning fits the context well. See footnote 17.

P. 131. *A goodly apple rotten at the heart:*

O, what a godly outside falschood hath! — So Rowe and Walker. Instead of *godly*, the old copies have *goodly*, the word having

probably been repeated by mistake from the preceding line. And Walker remarks that “*goodly* and *godly*, and, in like manner, *good* and *God*, have been confounded in various passages of our old writers.”

P. 134. *Whose own hard dealing teaches them suspect.* — So the second folio. The originals have “hard *dealings* teaches.” Confusion of singulars and plurals is among the commonest misprints.

ACT II., SCENE I.

P. 135. *The shadow'd livery of the burning Sun.* — So Collier's second folio; the old copies, “the *burnisht* Sun.” Modern editions print “*burnish'd* Sun,” but the epithet is surely an odd one, to say the least.

P. 136. *But, if my father had not scanted me,
And hedged me by his will.* — The old copies read “by his *wit*”; and *wit* has been explained “sagacity and power of mind.” The word was indeed used in a way to include that meaning; but *wit* is here undoubtedly a misprint for *will*, which was often written *wil*. The change is approved by several expressions used in i. 2: “Curb'd by the *will* of a dead father;” and “perform your father's *will*;” and “by the manner of my father's *will*.” Corrected by Capell.

ACT II., SCENE 2.

P. 140. *Do you not know me, father?* — Here *not* is wanting in the old copies, but is indispensable to the sense of the passage. Supplied by Dyce.

P. 144. *Nay, you must not deny me: I must go
With you to Belmont.* — The old copies print this speech as prose, and are without *Nay* at the beginning of it. But the speech was clearly meant to be verse, and *Nay* completes it as such. It was added by Hanmer and Capell.

ACT II., SCENE 3.

P. 146. *If a Christian did not play the knave and get thee, I am much deceived.* — So the second folio; the earlier editions, “*doe* not play the knave.”

ACT II., SCENE 4.

P. 147. *And whiter than the paper that it writ on
Is the fair hand that writ.* — So Hanmer. In the first line, *that* is wanting in the old copies, and is fairly required for the verse.

ACT II., SCENE 5.

P. 150. *Go you before me, sirrah ;
Say, I will come.*

Laun. *I'll go before you, sir.* — So Walker. The old copies read "*I will go before, sir.*" Hanmer rectified the metre by printing "*Sir, I will go before.*"

P. 151. *How like a younker or a prodigal.* — So Rowe. Instead of *younker*, the old copies have *younger* ; a palpable misprint.

P. 152. *I'll watch as long for you then. Come, approach.* — *Come* is Pope's insertion ; justifiable, probably, on the score of metre. I suspect that Ritson was right in proposing to read "*I'll watch as long for you. — Come, then, approach.*"

ACT II., SCENE 6.

P. 156. *Gilded tombs do worms infold.* — So Johnson and Collier's second folio ; the old copies, "*Gilded timber doe,*" &c.

ACT II., SCENE 7.

P. 159. *And even then, his eye being big with tears.* — Instead of *then*, the old copies have *there* ; doubtless repeated by mistake from the line before. Corrected by Dyce.

ACT II., SCENE 8.

P. 161. *I will assume desert. — Give me a key,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.* — The old copies read "*Give me a key for this, And instantly,*" &c. As the words *for this* are plainly superfluous both for sense and for metre, and as Hanmer, Ritson, Steevens, and Dyce concur in thinking them an interpolation, I have struck them out.

P. 162. *So be gone, sir; you are sped.* — So the second folio; the earlier editions omit *sir*.

ACT III., SCENE I.

P. 167. *Good news, good news! ha, ha!* — Where? *in Genoa?* — Instead of *where*, the old copies have *here*. Evidently wrong. Corrected by Rowe.

ACT III., SCENE 2.

P. 169. *There may as well be amity and league*

'Tween snow and fire, as treason and my love. — So Walker. The old text has “amity and *life*.” The latter is certainly a strange word for the place, and is made still more unfitting by what the same speaker says a little after, — “Promise me *life*,” &c.

P. 171. *How begot, how nourished?*

Reply. *It is engender'd in the eyes,* &c. — So Hanmer and Johnson, following the old editions, all of which, both quarto and folio, print *Reply* in the margin, and in the same line with “*How begot,*” &c. Other modern editions, generally, print “Reply, reply” in a separate line, between the two lines here quoted, and thus make it a part of the song itself. It is true, the old copies repeat the word, “*Replie, replie*”; but the word was evidently meant as a stage-direction. And it seemed to me that so the arrangement ought to be, long before I knew the printing of the old copies. Perhaps I ought to add that, in the second line, the quartos have *eye* instead of *eyes*, the reading of the folios.

P. 172. *There is no vice so simple, but assumes*

Some mark of virtue on his outward parts. — So the second folio. It is well-nigh superfluous to note that, instead of *vice*, the originals have *voice*; which is readily corrected from *virtue* in the next line.

P. 172. *How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false*

As stayers of sand, wear yet upon their chins, &c. — So the folio. Modern editions generally print *stairs*; for what reason, or with what propriety, is, I think, not very apparent: for, surely, *stayers*, in the sense of *props, supports, or stays*, agrees much better with the con-

text. And in most other places, if not in all, the folio has *stairs* spelt *staires*.

P. 173. *Thus ornament is but the guilèd shore
To a most dangerous sea ; the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian feature ; in a word,*

The seeming truth, &c. — Instead of “*guilèd shore*,” which is the reading of the quartos and the first folio, the second folio has “*gilded shore*.” This is merely an old way of spelling *gilded*, which is Rowe’s reading. I am apt to think that so we ought to read. Lettson has “little doubt that the Poet was thinking of Raleigh’s ‘Discovery of Guiana,’ and wrote *gilded*.” See, however, foot-note 21. — In the third line, the old editions read “Vailing an Indian *beautie* ; in a word,” &c. With this reading I believe all modern editors are dissatisfied, as indeed they well may be. Hanmer reads “Indian *dowdy*,” and Walker conjectures “Indian *gipsy*.” Collier’s second folio undertakes to heal the difficulty by changing the punctuation, thus: “Veiling an Indian : beauty, in a word,” &c. But the corruption is in the word *beauty*, which clearly has no business there, and probably crept in by a sort of contagion from *beauteous* in the preceding line. The Cambridge Editors propose “Indian *beldam*” ; which seems to me well worth considering. Lettson conjectured *favour*, which suggested to me the reading in the text. After having settled upon *feature*, I was glad to find that Mr. Spedding had anticipated me in that conjecture. It has some advantage over the others in the *ductus literarum*, as it involves a substitution of only two letters. And Shakespeare repeatedly uses *feature* in a sense well suited to the place. See foot-note 22.

P. 173. *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.* — Here the old copies have *pale* instead of *stale*, and *paleness* instead of *plainness*. *Stale* is Farmer’s correction ; and Dyce, who adopts it, remarks that the two words “are frequently confounded by early transcribers and printers.” We have *stale* coupled with *common* in 1 *Henry IV.*, iii. 2 : “So *common*-hackney’d in the eyes of men, so *stale* and cheap to vulgar company.” — Warburton changed *paleness* to *plainness*, which Staunton adopts, with the just remark, that “the *plainness*, which moves Bassanio *more than eloquence*, is the plain speaking of the inscription on the leaden coffer, contrasted with the tempting labels of its neighbours.”

P. 175.

But the full sum of me

Is sum of—something — Instead of *something*, which is the reading of the quartos, the folio has *nothing*. The latter, though generally preferred, savours, I think, rather too much of affectation of humility to accord well with Portia's character. Besides, she seems to be playing with the likeness of sound in *sum* and *some*.

P. 175. *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, &c. — In the old copies, the second of these lines stands thus: "But she may learne: happier then this;" which leaves both sense and metre defective. — In the fourth line, again, the old copies have *is* instead of *in*, which is the reading of Collier's second folio. The phrase *in that* for *inasmuch as* is often used by the Poet.

P. 178. *What, and my old Venetian friend Solanio.* — Here the old copies introduce, for the first time, a new name, *Salerio*; but the person is clearly the same who appears in the first scene of the play under the name of *Solanio*, and as the common friend of Antonio, Bassanio, and Salarino. In fact, the old copies present a strange confusion in regard to two of the names: *Salarino, Slarino; Solanio, Salanio, Salino, Salerio*. I therefore concur with Staunton and Dyce in substituting *Solanio* for *Salerio* wherever the latter occurs in this scene.

P. 179. *And I must have the half of any thing*

That this same paper brings you. — The old copies read "And I must *freely* have"; a redundancy both in sense and in metre. The word *freely* occurs five lines after; hence, probably, it crept in here out of place. Corrected by Pope.

P. 181. *Shall lose a hair through my Bassanio's fault.* — So the second folio. The other old copies are without *my*. To cure this defect in the metre, some editors change *through* to *thorough*, which is indeed but another form of the same word, and is often used by Shakespeare.

ACT III., SCENE 3.

P. 183. *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, &c. — So Capell, who is followed by Staunton. The old copies set a (:) after *law*, print *Will* instead of ' *Twill* ; and so make *commodity* the subject of *will impeach*. This greatly obscures, if it does not quite defeat, the meaning of the passage. Staunton aptly notes that, without the second line, "the passage is perfectly logical and easy." See foot-note 3.

ACT III., SCENE 4.

P. 185. *And use thou all th' endeavour of a man
In speed to Padua.* — *Mantua* in the old copies ; but *Padua* is spoken of repeatedly as the residence of Bellario.

ACT III., SCENE 5.

P. 189. *He finds the joys of Heaven here on Earth ;
And if on Earth he do not merit it,*

In reason he should never come to Heaven. — Here the old copies present a remarkable variety of readings. Instead of *merit it*, one of the quartos has *meane it, then* ; the other, *meane it, it* ; which latter the folio repeats, merely changing *In* to *Is* at the beginning of the next line. The reading in the text is Pope's. And it appears that Walker, without knowing of Pope's correction, hit upon the same as regards *merit it*, though he proposed to substitute " 'Tis reason " for " *In reason*."

ACT IV., SCENE I.

P. 192. *And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain their urine for affection.
Masters of passion sway it to the mood*

Of what it likes or loathes. — So the old copies, except that they have *swayes* instead of *sway*. The more common reading, which was first proposed by Thirlby, sets a (:) after *urine*, changes *Masters* to *Master*, and puts it in apposition with *affection*, and makes *affection*

the subject of *sways*. But it is not altogether clear to me how, or in what sense, affection may be said to be the master of passion. Then too, in Thirlby's reading, I am something at a loss what the second *it* refers to, whether to *affection* or to *passion*. The old reading, with the simple change of *sways* to *sway*, leaves no doubt on that point; and, if we take *affection* in the sense the Poet elsewhere uses it in, gives an apt and natural meaning; for it is strictly true that masters of passion do sway it, that is, passion, to the mood of its own predispositions. See foot-notes 14 and 15.

P. 193. *Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;*

Why he, a harmless necessary cat;

Why he, a wauling bag-pipe.—The old editions read “a woollen bag-pipe.” It has been urged, in defence of this reading, that bag-pipes were wont to be carried or kept in woollen cases: so were fiddles; but this would hardly make it proper, or even sense, to speak of them as woollen fiddles. Johnson proposed *wooden*, and Sir John Hawkins *swollen*; which latter Steevens adopted, and is Singer's reading. Collier's second folio has *bollen*, which is an old word meaning about the same as *swollen*; and Dyce adopts that reading. *Wauling* is Capell's happy conjecture; and it is remarkable that, in our own day, both Dr. Ingleby and Mr. A. E. Brae, each independently of the other, and without being aware of Capell's conjecture, hit upon the same correction. Mason aptly notes that “it is not by the sight of the bag-pipe that the persons alluded to are affected, but by the sound.”

P. 195. *To cut the forfeit from that bankrupt there.*—The old copies have *forfeiture* instead of *forfeit*. *Forfeiture* overfills the verse. The correction was made by Rowe, and was also proposed by Ritson. This scene has *forfeit* repeatedly in the sense of *forfeiture*.

P. 195. *O, be thou damn'd, inexorable dog.*—The old copies read “*inexecrable dog*”; which some approve, taking the prepositive *in* as intensive. *Inexorable* in the third folio.

P. 199. *Yes, here I tender't for him in the court;*

Yea, thrice the sum.—The old copies here read “*Yea, twice the summe.*” But it appears from two statements of the same point afterwards, that *thrice* is the right word.

P. 201. *From which lingering penance*

Of such a misery doth she cut me off. — So the second folio. The earlier editions read "Of such misery," omitting the *a*. Jarvis proposes "Of such-like misery"; Lettsom, "And searching misery."

P. 201. *Whether Bassanio had not once a lover.* — The old copies have "once a love." *Lover* was continually used for *friend*, and this play has it repeatedly so; but *love*, I think, was never used in that sense.

P. 203. *I take his offer, then.* — *This* instead of *his* in the old copies. The two words were very often misprinted for each other. Corrected by Capell.

P. 204. *And thou hast incurr'd*

The danger formally by me rehearsed. — So Hanmer. Instead of *formally*, the old copies have *formorly* and *formerly*.

ACT V., SCENE I.

P. 210. Jess. *And in such a night*

Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well. —

Loren. *And in such a night*

Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew, &c. — So some copies of the second folio. The *And* at the beginning of both speeches is wanting in the other old editions.

P. 212. Loren. *Sweet soul, let's in.* — In the old copies the words *Sweet soul* are made the conclusion of Launcelot's preceding speech. Corrected by Malone.

P. 215. *Peace, ho! the Moon sleeps with Endymion.* — The old copies have "Peace, *how* the moone sleeps." The misprint of *how* for *ho* or *hoa* occurs repeatedly. The correction is Malone's.

P. 217. *That she did give to me; whose posy was*

For all the world like cutler's poetry. — So Collier's second folio. The old text reads "did give me," omitting *to*, and so leaving the metre defective.

P. 217. *And riveted with faith unto your flesh.* — “And *so* riveted” in the old copies; the *so* having probably crept in here by mistake from the second line before.

P. 218. *You give your wife too unkind cause of grief.* — So Walker. The old copies have “too unkind *a* cause.” Such interpolations of *a* are very frequent, as Walker abundantly shows.

P. 221. *In Summer, when the ways are fair enough.* — So Collier's second folio. The old copies have *where* instead of *when*.





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