

is the personal attractiveness of Jessica herself. Her beauty appeals to the artistic beauty-loving Lorenzo, and calls forth an exclamation of admiration from Gratiano. In the Elopement Scene she shows a modesty that well becomes her; and in the other scenes in which she appears, she shows that she is by no means lacking in wit and intelligence. It is she, not Lorenzo, who plans the details of the elopement, and in the moonlight scene in Act V. she proves herself to be a match for Lorenzo in the contest of wits in which the lovers engage. And even if there were no sufficient dramatic justification for her conduct toward Shylock it must not be forgotten that the audience is likely to be indulgent towards her because of the romantic part she plays in the story. To lovers in the drama much can be forgiven.

Lorenzo is, for obvious reasons, of less dramatic importance in the play than Jessica. As far as we have an opportunity to judge of his character he is of a dreamy meditative nature, to whom the beauty of the music and the moonlight night at Portia's home strongly appeals. He is of a reflective turn of mind, as we judge from his conversation with Jessica, and is at the same time not without a sense of humour. But, true to his type, he is unthrifty, and he frankly confesses that the good news which Nerissa has brought to himself and Jessica from Venice comes to them like mamma to married people.

Gratiano. The chief characteristics of Gratiano that make him a favourite character in the play are his high spirits and sense of humour. Bassanio, it is true, says of him that he "speaks an infinite deal of nothing, more than any man in all Venice," and on at least two occasions in the play he delivers a set speech apparently just for the pleasure of talking. But his high spirits are infectious, and even if he is "too wild, too rude and bold of voice" on certain occasions, his boisterous mirth, nevertheless, adds greatly to our enjoyment of the play.

Nerissa forms a foil for Portia, just as Gratiano does for Bassanio. In her conversation with Portia in the beginning of the play she shows that she is vivacious and quick-witted. Portia, indeed, treats her rather as a friend and confidant than as her waiting-maid. Nerissa, on the other hand, enters into