

When nought would be accepted but the ring,  
You would abate the strength of your displeasure.

*Por.* If you had known the virtue<sup>1</sup> of the ring,  
Or half her worthiness that gave the ring, 195  
Or your own honour to contain<sup>2</sup> 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 200  
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 my honour, madam, by my soul,  
No woman had it, but a civil doctor,<sup>3</sup> 205  
Which did refuse three thousand ducats of me  
And begg'd the ring; the which I did deny him  
And suffer'd him to go displeased away;  
Even he that did uphold the very life  
Of my dear friend. What should I say, sweet lady? 210  
I was enforced to send it after him;  
I was beset with shame and courtesy;  
My honour would not let ingratitude  
So much besmear it. Pardon me, good lady;  
For, by these blessed candles of the night, 215  
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:  
Since he hath got the jewel that I loved,  
And that which you did swear to keep for me, 220  
I will become as liberal as you;  
I'll not deny him anything I have.

*Ant.* I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.

*Por.* Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding. 225

*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—

<sup>1</sup> Virtue—Power.

<sup>2</sup> Contain--Retain.

<sup>3</sup> Civil doctor—Doctor of civil law.