

has won for him the admiration and affection of his friends: and the audience feel that it is only a matter of justice that some compensation should be made to him for all his losses and misfortunes. We know that he is to have one half of Shylock's goods in use until his death, and the audience is not ill-pleased to learn of the good news which Portia has in store for him at the close of the play, when she bids him unseal the letter announcing that three of his argosies have safely arrived in harbour.

In the case of Shylock, nemesis takes on a more complicated form. We know that Shylock had some good qualities,—among others his affection for his daughter and for his dead wife Leah; but to an Elizabethan audience the good elements in his character were far outweighed by his evil qualities,—his miserliness, his hatred of the Christians, and his desire for revenge upon Antonio. It was, then, only a form of nemesis, a judgment by which he was justly overtaken, when his own daughter forsook him and fled with a Christian, when he was robbed of money and jewels, and when finally he himself was forced to turn Christian and to leave the one half his goods in use to his hated enemy Antonio. But it is in the Trial Scene that the spirit of nemesis shows itself in its most striking form. Shylock will listen to no prayers for mercy: he will not accept the offer of thrice the money, but stands for justice and his bond. To all appeals on behalf of Antonio he returns the answer, "I cannot find it: it is not in the bond." And when at length his own weapons—his very words indeed,—are turned against him, it seems as if the judgment were peculiarly appropriate to the occasion.

The Choice of the Caskets.

The comparison of the three suitors in *The Merchant of Venice* so as to show their characters and the motives which governed them in the choice of the caskets, is one of the chief elements of interest in the study of the play. In Act I., Scene II., we are told that the choice of the caskets is not a mere lottery, but the means devised by a wise and virtuous father to make certain that his daughter will be chosen only by the man who truly loves her. In order to make sure that no one will offer to choose the caskets unless he is willing to risk