

* English. *

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

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THE following questions relate to topics that came up for discussion in a class which I conducted last winter under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association of Toronto. They presuppose nothing more in the way of reading than an intimate acquaintance with the text, the only exception being the suggested comparison with a play of the classic type. If undue prominence seems to be given to the matters relating to the artistic structure of the play, and too little to the poetical character of the text, I can only say that from the latter point of view the number of possible questions is very great, and that each examiner would naturally ask questions very similar to those asked by any other examiner. Moreover, I am strongly of opinion that in dealing with Shakespeare's plays in the past too little attention has been paid to the drama as a work of art.

1. There are two stories in this play, (a) the bond story, and (b) the casket story. Give a brief synopsis of each, and show how Shakespeare has woven them into one plot so as to secure artistic unity.

2. The bond and casket stories were found by Shakespeare; the elopement and ring stories were invented by him as additions to the plot. Point out the dramatic purpose each of the latter is intended to serve in the development of the plot, and how it is made to serve it.

3. The classic dramatists regarded it as essential to keep the action of a play within a very limited time so as to secure artistic unity. The bond story runs through three months. Show how Shakespeare has dealt with the question of time so as to avoid inflicting tedium.

4. The classic dramatists deemed it essential, in the interest of unity, to confine the action of the play to a very limited space. The scenes of the bond and casket stories, respectively, lie far apart. Show how Shakespeare has dealt with the question of place so as to avoid creating the impression of a want of artistic unity.

5. The "Merchant of Venice" is classed as one of Shakespeare's "comedies." Discuss the appropriateness of the term "comedy" as applied to it, basing your criticism entirely on the contents of the play itself, and referring to passages for proof of the correctness of your opinion.

6. Justify or condemn Shakespeare's custom of mixing up tragic and comic scenes, situations, and characters in the same play. By comparison with a play of the classic type—Milton's "Samson Agonistes," for example—show the gain and loss from an artistic point of view.

7. Write a note on the ring episode in the play, discussing (a) the dramatic purpose it serves, (b) the manner in which it is woven into the plot and text, and (c) the artistic expediency of making it, instead of the trial scene, the last of the play.

8. The bond and casket stories are in themselves improbable to the verge of absurdity. Explain fully, by reference to passages in the text, how Shakespeare has reduced the improbability in each case to such an extent that it does not seriously mar one's enjoyment of the play.

9. Discuss fully Shakespeare's motives in the production of such a play as "The Merchant of Venice."

10. In view of the relative importance of the parts played in the drama by Antonio, Shylock and Portia, respectively, discuss the relative appropriateness of the following titles for the play: (a) The Merchant of Venice, (b) The Jew of Venice, and (c) The Heiress of Belmont.

11. There are two contradictory theories of Shylock's character prevalent among actors and critics, namely, (a) that he is a murderer at heart, from the beginning of the action, and (b) that he has at first some other purpose than murder in view, but is transformed into a murderer by subsequent events. Adopt and defend, by appropriate references to the text, either of these theories.

12. Discuss the question how far Shakespeare,

by the creation of Shylock, panders to the prejudices of his own day against the Jews, or how far he counteracts them.

13. By reference to Shylock's various acts and utterances on the stage, bring clearly to view the extent to which (a) intellectuality, (b) avarice, (c) patriotism, (d) religious feeling, and (e) domestic affection are elements of his personal character.

14. Discuss the question whether Portia sets out for Venice full of confidence in her ability to rescue Antonio, or full of anxiety as to the result of her efforts. Refer to the text of the play in support of your opinion.

15. Show the compatibility or incompatibility of Portia's intellectuality, wit, and heroism with the womanliness she manifests in the casket scene.

16. Discuss Portia's theory of marriage as one of entire surrender of person and property to her husband. Does Shakespeare make her, in virtue of this theory, more or less admirable than she would have been had she spoken of marriage as a union of equals?

17. Discuss the question whether Shakespeare has gone beyond the limits of admissible improbability in his various references to Antonio's ships, and explain the artistic necessity for the time and manner of the introduction of these references.

18. Account artistically for the sadness of Antonio in the opening scene of the play, and for the weariness of Portia in the second scene.

19. Show whether Shakespeare has complied with the dramatic conventionalism of his day by a fairly natural introduction of all his prominent *dramatis personæ* in the first act, and point out the devices by means of which he has complied with this requirement.

20. Where, in your opinion, is the "crisis" of the dramatic action placed? Prove the correctness of your view by reference to the plot and the characters.

21. Write a short essay showing how this play illustrates the working of the law of moral retribution. Did the desire to teach such a lesson form any part of Shakespeare's dramatic object?

22. What is the motive of Antonio's requirement, that Shylock do "presently become a Christian!" What is Shylock's view of demand when he says, "I am content!"

23. Describe fully the dramatic use made by Shakespeare of the position of aliens in relation to the laws of Venice.

24. How much of Portia's opinion as given in court may be regarded as legally sound, and how much of it unsound? How much of the opinion, and which part of it, is to be considered as coming from Bellario?

25. Shylock throws up his case on being told that the bond which gives him a pound of flesh does not allow blood to be shed or less than a pound to be cut; account for the suddenness of his collapse at this point in the case.

26. Is Portia's prolixity, before giving her legal opinion, a dramatic defect or a dramatic excellence in the play? What artistic motive prompted Shakespeare to prolong the scene in this way at the expense of progress in action? Refer to the text for proof of the correctness of your opinion.

27. Describe exactly the final disposition made of Shylock and his estate under the decision of the court in his suit against Antonio.

28. Refer to what you consider the strongest five "speeches" in the play, and give a careful analysis of any one of them so as to show why you so regard it.

29. Compare or contrast the two characters in any one of the following pairs: (a) Shylock and Antonio; (b) Shylock and Portia; (c) Portia and Bassanio; (d) Antonio and Bassanio.

30. Point out the dramatic purpose served by the introduction of any one of the following characters, and show how this has been brought about: (a) Nerissa, (b) Gratiano, (c) Lorenzo, (d) Launcelot Gobbo.

31. Give an estimate of Jessica as daughter, wife, and Jewess, accounting for her character by the influences amidst which she has been brought up.

32. What dramatic purpose is served by Shylock's defence of the practice of charging interest for the use of money? How was that practice regarded in Shakespeare's day?

33. What does Antonio mean by the following remarks:

(a) This were kindness.

(b) There is much kindness in the Jew.

(c) The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

34. Show what dramatic gain or loss results from, and what dramatic purpose is served by introducing the Prince of Morocco and the Prince of Arragon to make choice of the caskets on the stage.

35. Show the dramatic purpose of the dialogue between Shylock and Tubal (Act. III., Sc. 1.), and explain its bearing on the character of Shylock on any theory of the latter.

(Continued on page 74.)

* Science. *

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ZOOLOGY

SENIOR LEAVING.

NOTES OF A PRACTICAL LESSON ON THE EARTH-WORM.

Procure as large a specimen as possible, and also a young one. Lay out in the dissecting pan and cover with water. Make a drawing of the whole animal.

Has it dorsal and ventral aspects? If so how would you distinguish? Rub your finger backwards and forwards along its length, what causes the roughness? Draw out with forceps one of the setæ and examine with microscope, draw how many rows of setæ are present? Indicate their position on your first drawing. What is their function? Are all segments of the body similar? Which is the head? If you have difficulty in answering the last question place a fat live worm in alcohol and watch. The lighter swollen band of five or six segments towards the anterior part is called the clitellus. Count the number of segments to the clitellus in several specimens. Is the number constant? Prick a living worm. Examine a drop of the exudation with the microscope. Are there any corpuscles? What is the color of the blood? Examine carefully, in good light, the young specimen. What is the dark streak running along the dorsal side? Pass a bristle into the mouth as far as possible, pin your specimen down, carefully raise the body wall with forceps and open with your scissors from the head to the tail, pin back the flaps, wash carefully, and draw.

BOTANY

First question in botany suitable for senior pupils in public schools or form 1 high schools. The pupils have drawn in blank books the following plants:—Hepatica, spring beauty, dog's tooth violet, the common wild violet, marsh marigold, wild strawberry and Indian turnip. They have learned, incidentally, the more common botanical terms. They have their plant sketches open before them and are to answer the following questions:—

1. Tabulate all the points of similarity and of difference in the leaves of the hepatica and the strawberry.

2. In what respects do the flower-leaves of marsh marigold differ from the flower-leaves of dog's tooth violet.

3. What character would enable you to tell the spring beauty from the violet.

4. What parts are present in the flowers of the following plants:—Hepatica, spring beauty, dog's tooth violet, and marsh marigold?

5. How would you distinguish the pistil of the marsh marigold from that of the violet? Name another plant that has a pistil like the marsh-marigold.

6. Illustrate by drawings what you mean by petiole, lamina, filament, ovary, anther, net-veined, midrib, stamen, stipule, peduncle, spathe, and name a plant in which each is found.

7. When you consider the flowers of the six plants you have drawn, which two resemble each other the most closely?

A FIELD DAY IN BOTANY

A few days ago the pupils of one of the Public schools in Toronto accompanied by their teachers had a very pleasant and profitable outing in one of the parks, spending a couple of hours in collecting