

Spanish prince. In the Trial Scene besides the strange nature of the suit, there is an added interest in the fact that Portia is the judge and that the wit of this "wise young judge" is matched against the cunning of Shylock. And, finally, the moonlight scene in Portia's grounds forms a picturesque conclusion to the series of unusual situations in the play.

Dramatic Irony. When the words or actions of a character in the play have for the audience a significance the opposite of that which is intended, this double significance constitutes dramatic irony. In *The Merchant of Venice* a number of the situations are in themselves ironical. The wealthy Antonio borrowing from his enemy Shylock, the deliberate Arragon choosing the casket with a death's head, Shylock insisting on "the very words" of the bond, these and other incidents in the play have a significance for the audience which they have not for the actors themselves, and in so far they are ironical. On two different occasions in the play this element of irony creates a humorous situation. In the Trial Scene both Bassanio and Gratiano swear that they would willingly sacrifice their wives in order to deliver Antonio; and after the return to Belmont Gratiano adds to the humour of the situation by his unconscious description of Nerissa as "a prating boy" and "a little scrubbed boy no higher than thyself."

Nemesis. In the course of any drama the author must see that the good qualities of his heroes are rewarded, and that the mistakes or crimes of which they are guilty are punished. Sometimes under certain conditions we feel that the punishment is peculiarly suited to the crime, and to this form of retributive justice we give the name of *Nemesis*. In *The Merchant of Venice* the element of nemesis appears in its most striking form in the case of Antonio and of Shylock respectively. In spite of the kindness and generosity of Antonio, the fact remains that he had treated Shylock unjustly: and furthermore, when he comes to borrow money of Shylock, we cannot help feeling that he is over-confident, and that in signing the bond he is running too great a risk. We are not surprised then when nemesis overtakes him, and in the "gaoler scene" in Act III. we feel that his humiliation is complete. But, on the other hand, Antonio's warm-hearted generosity