

Salarino came near naming the true cause of the sadness. Later on, Salarino notices that "affection wondrous sensible," Antonio's "eye being big with tears" at Bassanio's departure; and Salarino remarks that Antonio "loves the world" only for Bassanio. Moreover, previous to the opening scene of the play, Bassanio promised to tell Antonio of some lady. Of that, Salanio and Salarino know nothing. Perhaps Antonio, unaccustomed to self-examination, is not fully conscious of the cause of his own depression; but, in the presence of Bassanio, Antonio's sadness vanishes, Antonio's tongue is loosened, Antonio turns questioner—

"Well, tell me now what lady is the same
To whom you swore a secret pilgrimage,
That you to-day promised to tell me of?"

Antonio is beloved for his generosity, his magnanimity.
His words—

"My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlock'd to your occasions,"

and—

"Out of doubt you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have,"

almost make us err with indignant Bassanio, and interrupt Shylock's "Antonio is a good man" and ask, "Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?" It is Antonio's magnanimity that makes Bassanio exclaim—

"The dearest friend to me, the kindest man,
The best-condition'd and unwearied spirit
In doing courtesies, and one in whom
The ancient Roman honour more appears
Than any that draws breath in Italy."

What but magnanimity can be inferred from the words of the "true gentleman"—

"He seeks my life; his reason well I know:
I oft deliver'd from his forfeitures
Many that have at times made moan to me;
Therefore he hates me."

What but magnanimity caused him to make the pun—

"For if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it presently with all my heart."