

Scene I] THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

75

But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

85

Enter Musicians.

Come, ho! and wake Diana¹ with a hymn:
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear
And draw her home with music.

[Music.

70

Jes. I am never merry when I hear sweet music.

Lor. The reason is, your spirits are attentive².

For do but note a wild and vanton herd,
Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
Which is the hot condition of their blood;

75

If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
Or any air of music touch their ears,

You shall perceive them make a mutual³ stand,

Their savage⁴ eyes turn'd to a modest⁵ gaze

By the sweet power of music: therefore the poet⁶

Did feign that Orpheus⁷ drew trees, stones and floods;

80

Since nought so stockish, hard and full of rage,

But music for the time doth change his nature.

The man that hath no music in himself,

Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,

Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;

85

The motions of his spirit are dull as night

And his affections dark as Erebus⁸:

Let no such man be trusted. Mark the music.

Enter PORTIA and NERISSA.

Por. That light we see is burning in my hall.
How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a naughty world.

90

¹ Wake Diana—The huntress does not wish to be waked till dawn.

² Attentive—Sensitive.

³ Mutual—Common.

⁴ Savage—Wild, but not cruel

⁵ Modest—Docile.

⁶ The poet—Ovid.

⁷ Orpheus—Accompanied Jason on the *Argo*. Apollo gave a lyre to Orpheus. So sweet was the music that trees, rocks, and animals followed Orpheus to listen to his playing.

⁸ Erebus—A place of darkness. It is between earth and Hades.