

Christian. Now, the conversion of the pagan to Christianity is beyond all doubt a very meritorious act, and an exercise that has occupied the talents and attention of the world's greatest benefactors. It is to be further admitted that every one in a certain manner is entitled to use whatever influence he can in this direction, and what is allowed to everyone cannot be denied the Duke of Venice. He, consequently, enjoyed the right of attempting to christianize to the full extent of his desires and ability. But while his action in the above case may have been prompted by praiseworthy motives, it is apparent that this lawful privilege was shamefully abused, when in its exercise, he outraged justice by stooping to the unsanctioned use of physical force and Mahometan compulsion.

The third illustration of our principle is suggested by the celebrated casket scene. It will be remembered that Bassanio borrowed money from Antonio in order to press his claims to the hand of Portia. His suit was successful and both would have been immediately united in marital bliss, but for a circumstance which caused a slight delay and considerable anxiety. It appears that in marriage affairs Portia was not complete master of her own actions, but was restrained by the rulings of a dead father, who either in the dotage of age, or as a result of one of those good inspirations which dying men are supposed to enjoy, commanded that the selection of his daughter's husband should be left entirely to chance, and that it should be in no way influenced by the just and common arbitrament of love. It was further required that if luck should prove unpropitious, the unsuccessful suitor should swear, among other things,

never again to consult a lady in reference to marriage. True to modern evolutions of the comedy, the upshot of all was, that after several undesirable wooers had tried their fortunes and miserably failed, Bassanio in his turn met with a better fate, receiving the only answer that was worthy of his love.

Does not this by-plot also illustrate our principle? It undoubtedly does. Owing to the happy termination of the incidents we are inclined to overlook the wrong, but it is none the less a wrong on that account. No one will deny—not even the fiercest modern advocate of juvenile emancipation—that Portia's father was justified in showing an interest in his daughter's marriage, and in proposing any provisions or limitations her interests might suggest. This is the basis of the *right*, which however was mercilessly distorted when paternal caprice prompted him to formulate any such absurd conditions as are mentioned in the play. To the presumptive husband the result might possibly have been invaluable, in the estimation of those who are in sympathy with the adage "many a good hanging prevents a bad marriage," but having no choice in the matter, what was to restrain the unfortunate girl from being obliged to give up her whole life, perhaps to some unworthy wretch for whom she could entertain but little respect, and less affection. The unpardonable injustice to which she might have been submitted can be partly understood by conceiving her tearful separation from Bassanio, or by imagining a compulsory marriage with any of those worthless wooers whom she so skilfully describes in the first act to her companion Nerissa. Consequently, in this case the same disastrous agencies were at work,