

into that noble address which rings like a series of brilliant variations on the theme that "the quality of mercy is not strained."

Even after this Portia continues to appeal to Shylock on the claims of charity or mercy, but to all her appeals there is a reply of uniform tenor, that such claims are not in the bond. It is only after all efforts have failed to lift Shylock into the spiritual region of a higher morality, that Portia sees herself obliged to descend and join issue with him on his own moral plane.

"For, as thou urgest justice, be assured,
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest."

Then with fine dialectical skill she turns his morality against himself, by showing that the claim, which he presses against Antonio on the ground of justice, cannot, on the ground of justice, be enforced, inasmuch as its enforcement would come into collision with an older claim of justice which forbids the shedding of blood.

In this way the cause of the higher morality is vindicated by the claims of the lower morality annihilating one another. But a little incident at the close of the trial is apt to be passed without appreciation of its significance for the part which Portia plays in the development of the poet's idea. Is it meaningless that she declines the liberal fee offered by Bassanio for her services as advocate? This can scarcely be our judgment, if we note the reason she pleads for her declinature.

"He is well paid that is well satisfied ;
And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
And therein do account myself well paid ;
My mind was never yet more mercenary."

These words point to a new attitude of moral sentiment towards industrial work. Already this attitude is adopted in regard to the more spiritual work of human life, or rather no other attitude has ever been deemed morally appropriate. That work is always conceived as something which cannot be paid in the ordinary sense of payment,—something which is not commensurable with any currency in the world. The