

**THE NEW HUDSON
SHAKESPEARE; THE
MERCHANT OF VENICE**

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The New Hudson Shakespeare; The merchant of Venice by William Shakespeare & Ebenezer Charlton Black & Andrew Jackson George

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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & EBENEZER
CHARLTON BLACK & ANDREW JACKSON GEORGE**

**THE NEW HUDSON
SHAKESPEARE; THE
MERCHANT OF VENICE**

THE
EXCELLENT
History of the Mer-
chant of Venice.

With the extreme cruelty of *Shylocke*
the Jew towards the saide Merchant, in cut-
ting a full pound of his flesh. And the obtaining
of *Portia*, by the choyse of
three Caskets.

Written by W. SHAKESPEARE.



Printed by *J. Roberts*, 1600.




WS

THE NEW HUDSON
SHAKESPEARE

WS

THE MERCHANT
OF VENICE

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY
HENRY NORMAN
HUDSON, LL.D. 



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PREFACE

The text of this edition of *The Merchant of Venice* is based upon a collation of the Quartos of 1600 and the seventeenth century Folios. Exclusive of changes in spelling, punctuation, and stage directions, only five emendations by eighteenth century and nineteenth century editors have been incorporated into the text; and these, with every variation from the First Folio, are indicated in the textual notes. The only omissions are such passages as are out of place in a school edition.

The spelling and the punctuation of the text are modern, except in the case of verb terminations in *-ed*, which, when the *e* is silent, are printed with the apostrophe in its place. This is the general usage in the First Folio. Modern spelling has to a certain extent been followed in the text variants; but the original spelling has been retained wherever its peculiarities have been the basis for important textual criticism and emendation.

With regard to the general plan of this revision of Hudson's Shakespeare, Professor W. P. Trent, of Columbia University, has offered valuable suggestions and given important advice.

AUGUST 14, 1906

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

	PAGE
I. SOURCES	vii
SUBPLOTS	vii
MAIN PLOT	x
II. DATE OF COMPOSITION	xi
III. EDITIONS	xiii
QUARTOS	xiii
FOLIOS	xv
KOWE'S EDITIONS	xvi
IV. DRAMATIC STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT OF TIME AND PLACE	xvi
V. VERSIFICATION AND DICTION	xviii
BLANK VERSE	xviii
RHYME	xix
PROSE	xix
VI. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS	xx
VII. OUTLINE OF THE STORY	xxii
VIII. CHARACTERS	xxiv
ANTONIO	xxv
ANTONIO'S FRIENDS	xxvii
LORENZO AND JESSICA	xxviii
LAUNCELOT GOBBO	xxix
PORTIA	xxx
SHYLOCK	xxxv
IX. CONCLUSION	xl
CHRONOLOGICAL CHART	xliv

THE TEXT

	PAGE
ACT I	3
ACT II	32
ACT III	69
ACT IV	101
ACT V	124
INDEX OF WORDS AND PHRASES	141

INTRODUCTION

NOTE. In citations from Shakespeare's plays and nondramatic poems the numbering has reference to the *Globe* edition, except in the case of this play, where the reference is to this edition.

I. SOURCES

The Merchant of Venice is woven out of story-threads as old and as varied as human nature. Four distinct sets of these story-threads, two primary—the Caskets and the Pound of Flesh (or the Bond)—and two secondary—Jessica's Elopement and the Rings—are in the web of the complete plot. They may be regarded as subplots, and in this summary of sources will naturally be considered first, and in the order in which they come into the play.

THE SUBPLOTS

1. *The Caskets.* The device of the caskets, varied occasionally by the substitution of vats, or even of cakes and of pasties, for chests and coffers, is found in many languages and is probably of oriental origin. The underlying philosophy of choice as the foundation of moral activity may be read in the *Genesis* narrative of the fall of man and in the mythologies of all Indo-European peoples. In mediæval literature the caskets-form of the story takes definite shape in the Greek romance, *Barlaam and Josaphat*, by Joannes