

How frantic must have been her emotions as she saw him deliberating between the three caskets! How horribly she must have felt as she saw his gaze rest for a moment on the gold and silver caskets! And, oh, what exquisite happiness must have been hers when Bassanio said:

“ But thou, thou meagre lead ;
Which rather threat’nest than dos’^t promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence ;
And here choose I, joy be the consequence !”

Joy was indeed the consequence, as sweetly expressed by Portia in the following words:

“ How all the other passions fleet to air,
As doubtful thoughts, and rash-embraced despair,
And shuddering fear, and green-eyed jealousy!
Oh, love be moderate, allay thy ecstasy,
In measure rein thy joy, scant this excess;
I feel too much thy blessing! make it less,
For fear I surfeit !”

Though possessed of enough in wealth and beauty to make almost any woman vain, she is not so. She wishes herself “tribled twenty times,” “a thousand times more rich” and “ten thousand times more fair,” all this to make her stand higher in the estimation of her husband.

Portia is very gracious in her manner to Bassanio after he has made his choice. She makes him complete master of herself and all she has. She gives him a ring and warns him never to part from it, lose it, or give it away, lest it presage the ruin of his love and be her vantage to exclaim upon him.

Bassanio was over joyed with his success and could not find words to express himself, but he swore to part from the ring only in death. How great must have been his joy and happiness to know that he was sole possessor of one so very