

his reference to Antonio, painting in his sarcastic manner the injuries heaped upon his down trodden race.

“He hath degraded me and hindered me half a million, laughed at my losses, mocked my gains, scorned my nation, thwarted my bargains, cooled my friends, heated mine enemies and what’s his reason? I am a Jew. Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a christian?”

If you prick us do we not bleed? If you tickle us do we not laugh? If you poison us do we not die? And if you wrong us shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a christian what is his humility?—revenge. If a christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by christian example? why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.”

The preceding paragraph is not without foundation, as the Gentile of that day looked upon the Hebrew, as is still done to a marked degree, with a jealous eye.

Although he is inferior in society his ability as a financier and his success in business are predominantly superior. It was an unwritten but a well understood law that the “chosen race” were to bear the insults of all. Even to this day, nothing so calamitous and disgraceful in their eyes can befall a Jewish family as for one of them to marry outside of the race.

So when the old man returning from the dining with Antonio, learned that Jessica and her Christian lover were gone with his ducats and his precious, precious jewels, in his fit of rage he gave utterance to the lines: “I would my daughter dead at my foot and my jewels in her ear! would she were hearsed at my foot, and the ducats in her coffin.”

His every action seems to have some deep and well planned end in view. But once in his biography do we find