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Shakespear has drawn characters more beautiful to look upon, but none has he drawn closer to life than Shylock. The artist took great pains in his making; so that he stands out boldly defined, clear cut, strong as a man, strong as a Jew, strong as an individual. No character has called forth more comment and discussion except Hamlet, and his fact has testimony to the unbiased, impartial hand with which Shakespear worked. By some Shylock has been considered as the shamefully cruel plotter against Christian life, by others he is extolled as the noble defender of his race. To my thinking the great mistake of most critics is that of making the prominent and especially the both traits of Shylock's character distinctively Jewish. The laws of character are fixed and definite and similar causes produce similar

results in all men without regard to race or religion. A man is a man first of all; then a Jew or a Christian. The underlying principles of humanity are more fixed and immutable than any accident of race or religion.

Few know this so well as Shakespeare and he has successfully commingled in Shylock both elements characteristic of the Jew and both peculiar to the individual. As Shylock he is sagacious, cool headed, thoroughly self-possessed; as a Jew he ~~is~~ is avaricious, loyal to his religion, doggedly tenacious; as a man he hates and subserves revenge and his thirst for revenge is stronger than his avarice.

Shylock makes his first appearance with Bassanio who is trying to negotiate the desired loan. Observe Shylock's penetrating sagacity. He will hear and weigh well the terms of the loan.

over.

His indifference and deliberation are too much for Bassanio who shows irritation which is all the more provoked at Shylock curt I will be assured and that I may be assured I will bethink me. Of this situation as of all other but one in the play Shylock is master

[His cold, hard intellect fairly glitters
in its iciness] When he sees Antonio
approaching his power to hate shows
itself almost sublime. Hear him all
but growl with clenched ~~teeth~~ and
venom-darting eye, "How like a fawning
publican he looks! I hate him, If I
can catch him once upon the hip, I will
feed fat the ancient grudge I bear
him. Cursed be my tribe if I forgive
him." It was very wicked of Shylock
to hate Antonio. But the world is not
old enough yet to have learned well
that we should love our enemies ~~and~~
~~that a one good man may~~ or to see
good in the man who does us
injury. Antonio & his brother Christians
loaned money gratis and lowered
the rate of interest in Venice, thus
curtailing a legitimate source of
revenue as Shylock understood it.
At this distance of time and space

we impartial heavens say Antonio did well. Some thirty years ago pious God-fearing men (as we have since come to believe) came among us and encouraged our slaves to run away. The people on the other side of La Belle River said Brave, noble men. We said "Black hearted cowards! Thieves get you gone!" And some we led to the woods with halters round their necks and one, a woman we put into the penitentiary. Feeing Russian slaves is well enough; but feeing key-slaves looks for all the world like villiany and theft. So Shylock thought. He could see no motive but malice. Had Antonio been otherwise kind Shylock might have been without excuse. When Antonio comes upon the scene Shylock still hesitates though all the

time he intends to make the
loan; but before he does so he
will lend him me thrift and
show Antonio how little right he
has to expect favor at Shylock's
hands. Shylock shows a sense of
justice and a consideration for many
that is truly tender when he says
"Signior Antonio many a time and oft
In the Rialto have you called me
About my money and my usances.
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe."
Then with a sarcasm that kills
and a humiliation free that cannot
be upheld he continues
"You call me misbeliver cut-throat dog
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine
And all for use of that which is mine
Well then it now appears you need my help
Go, to then; You come to me and you say
"Shylock we would have moneys" You say so

You that did void your rheum upon my beard
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
Over your threshold; moneys is your suit:
What should I say to you? Should I not say
Hath a dog money? is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats? Or
Shall I bend low and in a bondsman's
With bated breath and whispering humbleness
Say this;
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wed. last
You spurn'd me such a day; another time
You call'd me dog. And for these courtesies
I'll lend you thus much moneys?"
~~[illegible]~~
In answer to this vehement recital of
his wrongs this christian Antonio who
in Shylock's power says "Good, Shylock
I pray thee hear me" now with
most unchristian insolence answers
"I am as like to call thee so again
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too."
No wonder if Shylock's hate is enraged
and his purpose to revenge is made stronger.
Well may he say since I am a dog beware my fangs.

After this, the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy or the blindest prejudice.

Shylock hates because he is an injured man, not because he is a Jew; and his hatred has the strength which belongs to his entire character. The forgiveness of an injury betokens a high degree of grace. To forgive a wrong inflicted by an inferior is not so hard; partly because we feel that weakness or the ignorance inspired the wrong doing, and we commiserate his low estate — partly, I am almost sure - though it does not seem like high ethical ground - because we are conscious of having the means of redress if we wish to use it; because too, we do not fear an entire overthrow from this weaker source - in short it is a force with which we are well able to cope. Injuries from equals sting deeper; and I am not sure that full free forgiveness comes until we have

placed ourselves beyond ~~their~~ the injurers power — at least until we are fairly sure that the offense will not be repeated. But how few rise to the lofty height of forgiving injuries inflicted by those in higher rank or power! It is "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely" that embitters the soul past all sweetening." The sense of being impotent in the tyrant's grasp, suffering now with no hope but to suffer, must paralyze all that is fine and beautiful in the soul.

The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled, trampled upon — all of which the Jew suffered — might well "sour the milk of human kindness" in the most forbearing soul.

The desire for revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of injury. Shylock longed for revenge as a

strong proud man who has been outraged and down-trodden. The desire for revenge is not peculiarly a Jewish characteristic - Shylock has been insulted as a man of business, his religion derided, his people defamed. He seems the repository for all the injuries of his race. In him we see the remains of a noble nature out of which all the genial sap of humanity has been pressed by accumulated wrongs. He can no longer live as happy men live - The sense of unavenged injury sits heavily upon his soul and in his passion for revenge even his avarice is forgotten. X ~~When he is asked what he is to gain by the forfeit hear the irresistible~~ logic of his reply- ~~If it will feed nothing else~~ To bait fish withal: if it will feed nothing else it will feed my revenge. He hath

Why should he deal gently with these christians. Having wronged him in every other way they must now come between him and his daughter, make of her a disobedient child, a thief a renegade to her religion. Thus his religion, his patriotism, his avarice, his affection, all concur to stimulate his enmity; and his personal hate thus reinforced overcomes for once his greed, and he grows generous in the prosecution of his aim. The only reason he will vouchsafe for taking the lb of flesh is "To bait fish withal if it will feed nothing else it will feed my revenge.

Then with irresistible strength and vehemence of passion he embraces

He hath

disgraced me, and hindered me
half a million; laughed at my
losses, mocked at 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
weapons, subject to the same diseases,
healed by the same means, warmed and
cooled by the same winter & Summer
as a Christian is? 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~~ 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 villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.

What a mixture of gall and pathos! It is dangerous to ask Shylock questions. Invariably he has the best of the argument. The reasoning of his adversaries is shorn of its strength when he brings against them his tremendous artillery of withering scorn and unanswerable fact. Nowhere in the play does any one for one moment hold strength against Shylock until at the end with all arrayed against him, he is overwhelmed and broken by an ingenious trick.

Shylock has the ~~keenest~~ boldest intellect in the play. His logic is coherent ~~unanswerable~~. His strength and his quickness at repartee baffling ~~for instance~~. power well might overshadow even the wise the, witty the beautiful the

high souled Portia. He is the only one not matchless Portia excepted whose soul is so aroused that he has no time for rhetorical speech making — none speak so directly none with such power as he. More terse idiomatic passages are not to be found in Eng. Lit. than Shylock's
Hear the logic with which he argues IV-1-89-10
His cold hard [illegible] no [illegible] lines
answers. He is the most dignified person in the play. He bears himself like one conscious of his worth though he is an outcast among a haughty race. His calm self possession can not but inspire admiration. Every step he takes except the last is firm. Nothing can daunt ~~him~~, nothing disconcert him; remonstrance cannot move, ridicule can not touch, obloquy can not exasperate him; when he has not provoked them he has been forced to bear them; and now that he does not provoke them he is hardened

against them. "Until thou canst rail the seal from off my bond thou but offendst thy lungs to speak so loud." With one exception Shylock does not fume and rage. He is dogged, persistent, ~~composed~~ calm. Portia is not more composed. His passion is too deep to rage and bubble on the surface. His purpose is unalterably fixed. Let ~~them~~ his enemies be shrewd he can be shrewder. Their contempt for him not one whit outweighs his contempt for them. Nor does he trouble himself to give answer to those who have not authority in the case. Note his manner of dispatching ~~Gra~~. & Baas. I am not bound to please thee with my answers. Hates any man the thing he would not kill? Wouldst thou have a serpent sting the twice? How quick his repartee in answering Gratiano's question over

Can no prayers pierce thee
"none that thou hast int enough
to make"

We would discredit Launcelot's accusation of miserlyness if Shylock did not himself confirm them in his conversation with Launcelot.

Shylock was avaricious; but wealth was the only reason for which he and his ~~people~~ race were at all tolerated. For him was no social or political recognition. To be a Jew was to be ~~was to be~~ an object of bitter insult and scorn. There was no chance for winning esteem. Every Jew was held responsible for the deeds of every other Jew whatever he may have been as an individual. Surrounded by enemies whom he was too pound to conciliate and without power to oppose, he had no life among them but money; no hold on them but interest; no feeling for them but hate no indemnity out of them but revenge.

The efforts of Christians to thwart his bargains seemed to him the greatest wrongs. But Shylock was no such monster as Marlowe's Barrabas exulting crime for its own its own sake. There is something of patriotism in his avarice and revenge. He would thus catch upon the hip one who wronged not only himself; but his sacred and loved nation as well.

To accomplish his purpose he was forced to resort to hypocrisy, in which as in every thing else he proved him self a master. Hear him say,

'I would be friends with you and have your love
Forget the shames that you have stained me with
Supply your present wants and take no doit
Of usance for my moneys, and

you'll not hear me;
This is kind I offer.
And for my love I pray you
wrong me not."
At last he dupes both Antonio and
Bassanio, who must have supposed
him a miracle of goodness to so sur-
pass them in practicing their own
faith. The degree of Shylock's moral
degradation but registers also the extent of
his oppression. The horrors of the
French Revolution were the result of
long continued tyranny not of inherent
wrong in the insurgents. While every
nature is moved to pity for Shylock
his relentlessness sends to the heart
a thrill of terror and causes the
eye to avert itself from such a
revolting spectacle. His malice is
terrible. "Gaoler look to him. This is
the fool that let out money gratis.
Gaoler look to him. I'll have my

bond. Speak not against my bond;
I have sworn an oath that I
will have my bond. I will not
hear thee speak; I'll have my
bond: otherefore speak no more.
I'll not be made a soft and dull-
eyed fool, To shake the head, relent
and sigh and yield
To christian intercessors. Follow not;
I'll have no speaking; I will have my bond
The court room scene is painful
in its intensity. The duke either in
hypocrisy or forgetting that the finest
fruits of the spirit ripen not under
such influence as was shed upon
Shylock, makes an appeal to his
mercy. Without a motion with a
firm steady voice Shylock answers,
"I have possessed your grace of what I purpose"
and proceeds to give me of his
matchless idiomatic speeches. &
By our holy Sabbath have I sworn

I have the due and forfeit of my bond.
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
I will ask me, why I rather chose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats: I'll not answer that:
~~Some men there are love not a gaping pig~~
But say, it is my humor: is it answered?
What if my house is troubled with a rat,
And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it ban'd? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig,
Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
Some, when they hear the bag-pipe: for affection
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes. Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rendered
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig;
Why he, a harmless necessary cat;
Why he, a wauling bag-pipe; but of force
Must yield to such inevitable shame
As to offend, himself being offended;

So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I fear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?"

Antonio gives yet another insult to his race. "I pray you, think you question with the Jew. You cannot soften his Jewish heart." As if continued wrong did not harden all hearts.

Every one is in a tremor except Shylock. The hour for his revenge has come. He feels secure in the law. The duke makes one more appeal for mercy, and in his reply Shylock's cold, hard intellect fairly glitters in its iciness. What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong? You have among you many a purchased slave, Which, like your asses and your dogs and mules You use in abject and in slavish parts, Because you bought them. Shall I say to you, Let them be free, marry them to your heirs? Why sweat they under burthens? let their beds

Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be seasoned with-with-such viands? You will answer
"The slaves are ours:" So do I answer you:
The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
So dearly bought; 'tis mine and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgement = answer; shall I have it?

His almost impious daring makes more timid souls shudder and quake when he exclaims, "My deeds upon my head! I crave the law, the penalty and forfeit of my bond."
By my soul I swear there is no power in the tongue of man to alter me. I stay here upon my bond.

When at last ~~this~~ by a mere quibble, this tower of strength is crushed into the poor, pitiable defeated Shylock it is not possible to restrain a deep compassion. Still he does not rage but inth-

a few ~~well~~ selected words he shows the utter dejection in his soul; "I pray you give me leave to go from hence. I am not well." How blind was their prejudice that even gentle Antonio, the just and loving Portia had not one tear to shed for the ruin themselves had made.

Bad as he was Shylock was not all bad. He had gentle traits. Long had he borne insults with patience. His love for Leah was strong and tender - which shows that he was not selfish for selfishness goes not with such a quality. Tenderly he cherished her betrothal gift. "I would not have given it for a wilderness of monkies". He loved Jessica and her theft and rebellion cut him to the quick. Hear the lonely old man groan "My own flesh and blood

to rebel!" She whom he was wont to call "Jessica, my girl" Leah's only child fled with his enemy! I believe from what I have observed in actual life that wrong conclusions have usually been drawn from Shylock's passion over Jessica's flight. When the discovery of an elopement is made the first manifestation on the part of the father is anger. The mother forgives at once and grieves. But the father rages in a storm of indignation. He has been disobeyed, his authority set aside. And to nothing does a man hold so dear as to his prerogative of authority. Later his tenderer feelings may be touched, he thinks how his child herself will be affected by her rash act and when the time for reconciliation comes comes he

may be as ready as the mother to forgive. But his first sensation is anger at the affront offered to his authority. Shylock's rage then was partly masculine partly oriental. It is well known that the orientals are given to extravaganza and high coloring. Shylock was loyal to his race and faithful to his religion. From Jewish scripture he justifies himself for taking interest and from Jacob's example he takes a warrant for using artifice to make it as large as possible.

The drama is founded in mere delight in human personality. The problems that lurk in the souls and in the lives of men interested Shakespear profoundly. Much has been said concerning Shakespear as a teacher of morals. A preacher

he was not. Art without an ethical purpose like drama of Shakespear yet produces and ethical effect. A faithful presentation of the facts of life does not leave us indifferent to good and evil, but rather rouses within us more than all mayims and all preaching can, an inextinguishable loyalty to good. Shakespear illustrates all the full force of object lessons - which our talked day teachers make so much noise about as if they had made a new discovery. Hamlet understood it. When he wished to convict the king he did not have a fine speech on treachery, treason murder and illicit love discarded for him. He said if I have enacted before the king a drama the same as that of which I suspect him guilty conviction is inevitable. The play the king wherein I'll catch the

conscience of the King. In the 19th century Ruskin wished to warn against religious bigotry. In a beautiful well set essay he writes, "Do not think that you have been born in a luminous point upon the surface of the globe where a perfect theology might be expounded to you from your youth up and where every thing you were taught would be true and every thing that was enforced upon you right. Do not think you have been so much the darling of the Heavens and favorite of the Gates as to be born in the very nick of time, and in the punctual place, when and where pure divine truth had been sifted from the errors of the nations."

Such presumption will be in you the very mainspring of cruelty and injustice. So armed your

power & harm done and work wrong is incalculable. The very veriest reader ponders on this deep saying. But even he before he gets the full meaning must cast about him for some illustration of the principle. He finds many and at last the principle confirmed by example learns a part of his wisdom and pervades his character. But the careless reader the many says what a strange notion. I wonder if it be true. I have heard this Ruskin is a weird creature and this I presume is one of his vagaries. and lightly it is forgotten. Three hundred years before Shakespear taught the same lesson. The more forcibly perhaps because he was not aiming to teach.

In olden times there was a race

of people called Jews. They believed themselves to be not only Gods favorite but his only people. They knew all the truth concerning God and to no other people was even a moiety of this truth vouchsafed. They reasoned if God holds the people around us so lightly and makes no revelation of himself to them we too will spurn them, will shake the dust of our feet against them will hold them as dogs. By and by when centuries had passed a prophet rose among this people saying we have not seen far enough. God is a common father of mankind and not of the Jew only. He is long suffering and full of mercy willing to save to the uttermost those that call on him. The gentiles gladly heard and with joyous hearts accepted

their places as children in the family of God. But the Jew was mad and his anger burned hot within him. He said we will have no innovations. For two years back to the time of Abraham we have heard no such teaching and we will not accept it. Moreover it is a libel upon God and on his loyal subjects should crucify the impostor. They did so; but his cause grew in a pace. Persecution but made it stronger. Soon the Jew, conquered in battle despoiled of his home was sent a wanderer on the face of the globe. The gentiles and their heresy spread wide and possessed the earth. Treasuring malice against the Jew for his murder of their master forgetting the masters dying words "Forgive them

they know not what they do," visited the iniquity of the misguided fathers upon the homeless wandering children even to the 1000th generation. With fire and sword with insult great and small relentlessly did the Christian gentile pursue the fugitive Jew. "Slay and spare not" "Lay on Macduff and damned be the man that daves cry hold" were the pursuers watchwords. And miracle of miracles they did not see their own cruelty. They called the Jew hard hearted dog inexorable and themselves the brother and disciple of him who said "Another commandment I give unto you that ~~you~~ love one another." Shakespear has shown us the result of sixteen centuries of such dealing. You may forget the formulated principle; but as well may you

try to forget the roar of Niagara, the silence of the great canon, the terror of a storm at sea as the picture of this soul which he there unveiled.
Aside he drew the curtain and forth great Shylock stood.
Milton bankrupted the language and yet could not paint the Devil himself stronger in inexorable hate, thirstier for the last drop in the cup of revenge than this Shylock with the wrongs of 16 centuries heaped upon his outraged soul. Since its first publication Shylock has been the central figure in the Merchant of Venice.
Shakespear like other great men was not well understood by those of his time. To them Shylock was the malicious malignant Jew. They saw not the many wrongs

that made him what he was. Consequently the public mind was all the more inflamed against his race and Shakespear was supposed to have caressed the narrowest bigotries of the age. Later generations find that the character teaches the most comprehensive humanity. They begin to understand that each man is his brothers keeper. It was man's inhumanity to man that made Shylock hate and revenge. He has now become almost a favorite and the reader is ready to pronounce Jewish revenge as good as Christian injury

If there is a state of future probation, Shylock is there under tenderer influences unfolding the fine germs of his nature so dwarfed and blighted here.