**PORTIA**

The quality of mercy is not strained.

It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven

Upon the place beneath. It is twice blessed:

It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest. It becomes

The thronèd monarch better than his crown.

His scepter shows the force of temporal power,

The attribute to awe and majesty

Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings,

But mercy is above this sceptered sway.

It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings.

It is an attribute to God himself.

And earthly power doth then show likest God’s

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this—

That in the course of justice none of us

Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea,

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice

Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.