

Were but a weak disabling of myself.

As much as I deserve? — why, that's the lady:

I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,

In graces, and in qualities of breeding:

But more than these, in love I do deserve.

What if I stray'd no farther, but chose here?

Let's see once more this saying grav'd in gold:

*Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire.*

Why, that's the lady; all the world desires her:

From the four corners of the earth they come

To kiss this shrine, this mortal breathing faint.

Th' *Hircanian* deserts and the vasty wilds

Of wide *Arabia* are as thoroughfares now,

For princes to come view fair *Portia*.

The wat'ry kingdom, whose ambitious head

Spits in the face of heaven, is no bar

To stop the foreign spirits; but they come,

As o'er a brook, to see fair *Portia*.

One of these three contains her heav'nly picture.

Is't like that lead contains her? 'twere damnation

To think so base a thought: it were too gross

To rib her searcloth in the obscure grave.

Or shall I think, in silver she's immur'd,

Being ten times undervalu'd to try'd gold?

O sinful thought! never so rich a gem

Was set in worse than gold. They have in *England*

A coin that bears the figure of an angel

Stamped in gold, but that's insculp'd upon:

But here an angel in a golden bed

Lies all within. Deliver me the key;

Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

*Por.* There, take it, prince, and if my form lie there,

Then I am yours.

[unlocking the golden casket.]

*Mor.* O hell! what have we here? a carrion death,

Within whose empty eye there is a scroll:

I'll read the writing:

All