

The Last Page

The Quality of Portia

The quality of Portia is deceit:

"I am of Rome, my name is Balthazar;
Bassanio and I did never meet;
I'm not his prize by will of dear papa.
In civil laws I'm highly qualified –
A doctor, nay, a 'judge' if you prefer;
Venetian law is taken in my stride;
Not even to the Duke need I defer.
I am a man." Thus lies she as she stands,
And with her lies she trammels up the Jew:
His reason she insults; for in her hands
Sapere Aude is for Christians. Let him sue.
"Thy God, now ours, consigns thee yet to live.
The Law is our Law; Mercy, ours to give."

John R. Morss